

SSHAP 2026

Titles and Abstracts

Keynote Speakers

Mike Hymers

“Verificationism, Behaviourism and Private Language: The Reception of PI §§243-315”

Abstract: Early readers of the Philosophical Investigations were tempted by verificationist and behaviourist interpretations of the passages on private language—interpretations that still influence readers decades later. Part of the explanation for the temptation in the former case is that verificationism had already been associated with something like arguments against private language in the writings of Schlick, Carnap and Ayer, which helped to shape the expectations of interpreters and which also led them to expect a single, decisive argument—the Private Language Argument. In the case of behaviourism the temptation is explained, in part, by verificationist assumptions, but also by (among other factors) a failure to appreciate that a logically private language would derive its uninterpretability by others from the alleged superprivacy of experience.

Sofia Miguens

On ‘Gulfs Between Us’ and the ‘Stock of Thoughts’; Cora Diamond on conceptual change and philosophical method

Abstract: I start with a phenomenon Cora Diamond deems important for thinking about thinking. She calls it, after Wittgenstein, ‘gulfs between us’. She contrasts it with Frege’s idea of a ‘stock of thoughts’ which is available to us as thinking beings. I set out to explore how Diamond connects the gulfs between us with her views on making sense anew and philosophical method. For that I look at two ideas she recruits from Anscombe: asymmetry in thought (cases in which ‘there is nothing else to think but that p’) and guidance of thought (setting up, or indicating, paths our thinking can take and blocking others). I go through her book *Reading Wittgenstein With Anscombe Going On to Ethics* (Diamond 2019) searching for how these two ideas work in ethics, in particular around the example ‘Slavery is unjust and insupportable’, thought in a context (19th century debates, in the US between, abolitionists and pro-slavery thinkers) where there do seem to be other thoughts to think but that p (that ‘Slavery is unjust and insupportable’). I am interested in repositioning our appreciation of Diamond’s work on ethics. Such work, which includes celebrated essays such as “Eating Meat and Eating People”, or “The Difficulty of Reality and the Difficulty of Philosophy”, is often taken as being mostly a defense of how literature, and imaginative engagement, illuminate the nature of moral understanding better than arguments do. Although this is important (and in fact true) I argue that underneath it lie important ideas about thought, language and the nature of philosophy which she works on in order to go beyond Frege’s idea of ‘stock of thoughts’. In this light, ethics comes out not just as applied philosophy, done once we perfectly understand what philosophy is, but rather instrumental in understanding what philosophy is and does.

David Stern

“Georg Henrik von Wright and the Creation of The Wittgenstein Papers”

Abstract: Georg Henrik von Wright was not only the creator of “The Wittgenstein Papers,” the first guide to Wittgenstein’s unpublished writings, but also the editor of many of his posthumous publications. This contribution to Wittgenstein scholarship was not just a matter of making Wittgenstein’s writings available to readers and researchers; it also involved any number of far-reaching decisions about how best to organize and present those material. Those decisions received relatively little attention at the time, but have since become a focus of attention as Wittgenstein experts have become increasingly aware of the extent to which what we take for granted about his writings is the product of that editorial framing. In this talk, I take another look at von Wright’s role in what has become known as the “creation of Wittgenstein,” with a particular focus on the construction of the Wittgenstein papers.

Panels

Filippo Casati, David Cerbone, David Lindeman, Edward Witherspoon

Reading the Early Wittgenstein Alongside Heidegger: On the Limits of Language, Thought, and Logic

[In Person]

This panel presents several interpretations of the *Tractatus* which in various ways make use of the work of Heidegger, especially in connection to the limits of language, thought, and logic.

Tess Dewhurst, Mark Textor, Simon Wimmer

Judgement in British Idealism and Realism

[Online]

What is judgement? Does it connect us with reality? How is it related to knowledge? This panel tackles these questions by reconstructing and assessing the contributions of the British Idealist F. H. Bradley, his realist contemporary John Cook Wilson, and the slightly younger realist G. F. Stout. We focus on figures who have not received as much attention as some of the more famous early 20th century realists in order to bring to the fore how varied and sophisticated critical reactions to British Idealist views of judgement were at the time.

Juliet Floyd, Tom Ricketts, Sanford Shieh

Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* and Modality

[In Person]

Works by Floyd, Ricketts and Shieh have emphasized and explored for some time the importance of the modal notions of possibility and necessity in Wittgenstein’s early work, construed not in terms of a possible worlds semantic model, but rather in terms of a primitive contrast between saying what is the case and reflecting on how this gives rise to modal notions in the face of fundamental features of Frege’s and Russell’s conceptions of logic. Such modality remains consistent with Diamond’s well-known criticisms of metaphysical

readings of the *Tractatus*. Notions such as negation, order, formality, generality, following-from, showing, picturing, Russell's multiple-relation theory and truth-function have been treated across several different works. This panel will explore how these interpretations may be grounded and developed to further illuminate the *Tractatus*.

Jim Hutchinson, Richard Lawrence, Tabea Rohr

Frege's Logic and Theory of Science

[In Person]

This panel aims at understanding the relationship Frege sees between logic and the general theory of science. We will focus especially on how Frege's view of logic is rooted in debates about mathematics and the empirical sciences in the 19th century. Together, the three talks will suggest that, while Frege's precise view of logic in relation to science might be indefensible today, a version of his core idea can still be endorsed in the 21st century.

Talks

Reshef Agam-Segal

Aesthetic Characterization

[In Person]

I propose a Wittgensteinian resolution of a Kantian tension between subjective and intersubjective dimensions of aesthetic evaluation: Aesthetic evaluation is essentially personal, so other's testimony and expertise cannot be sufficient basis for our evaluations; yet, they can and do somehow shape them. I distinguish between kinds of aesthetic evaluations—'characterizations,' and 'rankings'—and utilize a Wittgensteinian distinction between two attitudes—regarding objects habitually as one among others, and regarding them as a world unto themselves—to clarify what is involved in aesthetic characterization, and how the Kantian tension there is resolved.

Derek Anderson

Revisiting Putnam's Internal Realism

[In Person]

I argue that Lewis (1984) misinterprets Putnam's infamous model-theoretic argument and the conception of internal realism that it supports. On the reading I argue for, Putnam was not a Global Descriptivist, nor did he conclude that every consistent theory was true. His model-theoretic argument was meant to show that reference must always be constrained by the ontology of an empirical theory in good standing. The resulting interpretation of Putnam's internal realism implies an interesting alternative to Lewis's reference magnetism, a deflationary metasemantics that fits well with Putnam's other commitments to semantic externalism.

Javier Arango

Beyond the Schism: Recovering a Convergence in the Later Wittgenstein and Later Carnap

[In Person]

The later philosophies of Ludwig Wittgenstein and Rudolf Carnap are often taken to mark a defining schism in mid-twentieth-century analytic philosophy between anti-formal

ordinary-language philosophy and formal rational reconstruction. This paper challenges that view. I argue that their later work shares a non-doctrinal conception of philosophical problem-solving. Examining Carnap's method of explication alongside Wittgenstein's language-games, I show that for both, philosophical problems are not theoretical questions demanding new knowledge, but conceptual impediments arising from the overextension of ordinary concepts. Philosophical progress consists in dissolving such disturbances. The divide reflects divergent attitudes toward constructed languages rather than a purely philosophical opposition.

Roberta Ballarin

Quine on the Propositional Attitudes and Exportation

[In Person]

In this paper, I analyze Quine's view of the propositional attitudes at the time of "Quantifiers and Propositional Attitudes" (Q&PA) and *Word and Object* (W&O). I argue that at the time, 1956 to 1960, Quine's interest is in the propositional attitudes themselves, not just the semantic formalization of attitude reports. I also argue that in both texts Quine introduces two distinct oppositions: (1) between notional and relational attitudes; and (2) between transparent and opaque attitudes. In the paper, I explain what the distinction between the two ambiguities consists in, and how they intersect, and develop an analogy with modality. I then analyse the rule of exportation that Quine introduces in Q&PA, which legitimizes the transformation of opaque positions into transparent ones. Famously, Kaplan in "Quantifying In" (1968) attacks Quine's rule of exportation, arguing that it legitimizes the move from the notional and general belief expressed by "Ralph believes that there are spies" to the relational and specific belief expressed by "There is someone that Ralph believes to be a spy", thus obliterating the vast distinction between notional and relational beliefs so dear to Quine. Quine agreed with Kaplan, but I show that exportation reduces opaque to transparent attitudes, but does not lead to the collapse of the contrast between notional/generic and relational/specific attitudes. However, I also argue that Quine should not have endorsed the rule. Not because of the alleged collapse, but rather because it is at odds with his fundamental tenet that real predications are extensional.

Kelli Barr

Science Without Scientists: In Search of a Lost Sociology in the History and Philosophy of Science

[In Person]

Does a positivistic understanding of science need scientists? This paper tells the story of a short-lived ménage à trois in the 1950s between history, philosophy, and the social studies of science. I present novel historical evidence of efforts toward this by Alistair Crombie and Friedrich Waismann at Oxford in the UK and compare with Philipp Frank's agenda in the US, advanced through the Institute for the Unity of Science and the National Science Foundation. Together, these efforts constitute an offshoot of the Vienna Circle and an unrecognized influence on the international emergence of analytic philosophy from logical positivism.

Melina Bentes

Wittgenstein's Influence on the Problem of Open Texture and Why It Matters to Legal Philosophy

[Online]

The concept of open texture (Porosität der Begriff) is one of the most influential insights that Frederick Waismann presents in his work *Verifiability*, published in 1945. It motivated significant future developments in Philosophy and provided means to analyse the open texture of ordinary language in diverse contexts, for instance, in the legal scenario. The author that inaugurated this philosophical enterprise was H. L. A. Hart, who interpreted and applied Waismann's concept to Law and revolutionized the history of legal philosophy hitherto. But the period when Waismann's concept was coined is formed by a hazy moment in the history of analytic philosophy for it seems as their ideas form an amalgam that neither Waismann's nor Wittgenstein's scholars are able to define clear influences of one upon other. Because of this confusion, it is not possible to trace back a clear current of thought about the development of many further philosophical ideas of both authors, many of which had their beginning during this period. My intention is to show how this concept was strongly influenced by Waismann's discussions with Wittgenstein during the 1930s, mainly dealing with the problem of verification of hypothesis, and, from this claim, demonstrate how Wittgenstein's approach to the issue influenced H. L. A. Hart's own approach to the problem of open texture in legal language. With this deliberation, I hope to state clearly how Wittgenstein probably had more influence upon Hart and the tradition of analytical legal philosophy which arose from it, than most philosophers (and legal philosophers) generally admit and that Hart's revolutionary insight about open texture and legal philosophy has a significant debt with Wittgenstein's philosophical thought.

Francesca Boccuni & Andrea Sereni

Logics and Abstractions

[Online]

[Abstract Missing]

Stef Bracke

Leibniz as a Formalist Logician? Russell on the Mathematical and Philosophical Aspects of Symbolic Logic

[In Person]

I argue that Russell took up Leibniz's Universal Characteristic in his own logical work. Although Russell rejects the idea—which he attributes to Leibniz—that the Characteristic was of any philosophical importance, he did acknowledge its mathematical use. As a mathematical idea, Russell did integrate Leibniz's Characteristic into his own logic. By unravelling this issue, we stand to gain new insights into what according to Russell are the philosophical and what are the mathematical aspects of symbolic logic.

Agnese Casellato

Individualism and Indeterminacy

[Online]

Davidson has argued that Quine's radical translation thought experiment issues in a private theory of language. More specifically, he has called Quine's theory of translation "individualist". I understand individualism as the claim that knowledge of language supervenes on the speaker's subjective beliefs. In this paper I defend the thesis that Davidson's criticism of Quine is mistaken. Far from radical translation representing an obstacle for a public view of language, the behaviorist assumptions of the thought experiment rule out philosophical theories like individualism. I believe Davidson's interpretation of Quine makes misconceived assumptions. These are mainly two: Quine's meaning skepticism is seen as just an epistemological claim about the limits of semantical knowledge as opposed to an ontological thesis about the philosophical utility of semantical concepts, and radical translation is seen as an analysis of ordinary language or portrayal of ordinary speakers' knowledge of language instead of as a scientific thought experiment.

James Connelly

Vindicating Wittgenstein on Private Language: the 'No Independent Disagreement' Argument of PI §258

[In Person]

Stephen Law (2007, 2025) identifies several distinct interpretations of Wittgenstein's private language argument and aims to show that on none of them does Wittgenstein offer a cogent argument. In this paper, I will focus on one of these interpretations, namely the 'No Check, No Rule' interpretation, and aim to show that a correct reading of the passages from PI which this interpretation draws on (notably PI §258) can circumvent Law's criticisms. Over the course of the paper, it will become clear that the argument in question can better be described as the 'No Independent Disagreement' argument.

Richard Creath

Answering Quine's Challenge to Analyticity

[In Person]

Quine demanded "empirical criteria" for analyticity. And it is a demand that must be met, at least in descriptive semantics, if Carnap is to do what he hopes to do in pure semantics. Quine's objections to Carnap's semantical rules, however, should apply, not only to analyticity, but equally, if at all, to syntactic matters such as vocabulary and grammar and also to reference. Quine does not object to 'refers' or 'is a word', probably because he believes that the required empirical criteria can be found. This paper then explores how to provide empirical criteria for 'is a word' and 'is a sentence' by outlining an empirical theory of norms, which are taken to be social phenomena. The theory would have the requisite empirical criteria, and the norms would have enough structure that they can be explicated as parts of one of Carnap's semantical constructions. Finally, the same strategy can be pursued to answer Quine's challenge to analyticity.

Paolo Degiorg

Ryle and Sellars on Thoughts and Immediate Experiences

[In Person]

This paper examines Sellars' critique of Ryle in *Empiricism and the Philosophy of Mind* to draw a lesson about the nature of the mental as such. I first argue that Sellars, despite mischaracterizing Ryle as a philosophical behaviorist, offers an illuminating response to Ryle's misgivings about his own account of sensation. Then, I suggest that Ryle's work, in turn, provides conceptual resources for working through the dilemma that motivates the first episode of Sellars' myth of Jones. Ryle does this by treating the notion of "intelligent capacities" as a fundamental category of mind; in Sellars' account, by contrast, this notion plays at best a secondary role.

Samuel Descarreaux

Doxastic Functions of Action-schema in Geometrical Reasoning: Helmholtz, Poincaré, Piaget
[In Person]

This talk examines how Helmholtz, Poincaré, and Piaget understood the relationship between representational and geometrical concepts of space through action-schemas in mathematical reasoning. Helmholtz grounded geometry in physical experience with rigid bodies, while Poincaré adopted conventionalism where experience guides but doesn't determine geometric structures. Building on Poincaré, Piaget traced spatial understanding's development through cognitive activity. Despite risking psychophysical reductionism, all three demonstrate how action-oriented functions—as factual grounds, guiding occasions, or conceptual schemas—actively participate in mathematical reasoning beyond mere imagery, extending post-Kantian understanding of intuition's role in mathematics.

Elisa Diambri

Ryle's Theory of Habit as a Non-Behaviourist Contribute to Descriptive Metaphysics
[Online]

Gilbert Ryle's theory of habit in *The Concept of Mind* (1949/2009) has often been interpreted as a form of soft behaviourism, according to which habits are uniform behavioural dispositions exhaustively analysable in terms of patterns of conduct. This paper challenges that reading. By reconstructing Ryle's distinction between habits and intelligent capacities and situating it within his methodological project of "logical geography", I argue that the behaviourist label misrepresents both the substance and the metaphilosophical orientation of Ryle's theory of habit. Properly understood, Ryle's dispositional account of habit contributes to a Strawsonian form of descriptive metaphysics rather than to behaviourist reductionism.

Louis Doulas

Somewhere Between Cambridge and Vienna: Stebbing, Positivism, and the Philosophy of Science
[In Person]

Arthur Eddington's "two tables" problem holds that modern physics reveals the solid table of everyday experience to be unreal, leaving only the "scientific table" of mostly empty space. Susan Stebbing's famous 1937 critique of Eddington is standardly read as turning on

language. This talk argues that such linguistic readings miss what is most important in her response, obscuring her deeper commitments about how the everyday and scientific worlds relate. Careful reconstruction of her response yields a more systematic, positive picture of her philosophy of science—one that doesn't obviously turn on language or the "correct usage of words."

Gary Ebbs

The Methodological Roots of Putnam's Semantic Externalism

[In Person]

My goal is to clarify Putnam's semantic externalism by showing that he developed it in two main stages. The first stage comprises his recommendation that we seek an explication of reference that is compatible with our normal procedures of belief fixation, and his proposals for providing such an explication. The second comprises his recommendation that we seek, in addition, an explication of our prescientific notion of meaning that is compatible with our normal procedures of belief fixation, his identification of two obstacles to providing such an explication, and his proposals for overcoming these obstacles.

Joshua Eisenthal

An Unrestricted Interpretation of the Picture Theory of the *Tractatus*

[In Person]

Abstract: One of the few points that most interpretations of the *Tractatus* agree on is that Wittgenstein's picture theory of representation applies primarily to elementary sentences, and only derivatively to non-elementary sentences. This is despite the fact that, when Wittgenstein talks about sentences as pictures in the *Tractatus*, he seems to be talking about the kinds of ordinary (non-elementary) sentences that we say out loud or write down. In this paper, I outline an interpretation of the picture theory according to which it applies in the same way to all sentences with sense, both elementary and non-elementary alike.

Ties van Gemert

Reason and Intuition: Louis Couturat and the French spiritualist tradition

[Online]

Louis Couturat is often portrayed as a French disciple of Russell who attempted, but ultimately failed, to introduce modern logic and the analytic method into a largely hostile French philosophical environment. This paper seeks to complicate that familiar narrative. I will contend that Couturat's philosophical commitments were deeply indebted to the French spiritualist tradition. I will argue that it was Couturat's Platonic conception of philosophy that led Couturat to recast Russell's philosophical project as a form of neo-Leibnizian rationalism. Contra Gandon, I will maintain that this reading of Russell was productive rather than 'outrageously simplifying' (Gandon 2017, 129).

Jeremy Heis

Frege on Identity and Equality

[In Person]

The primary goal of this talk is to explain when and why Frege came to believe that equality just is identity, and to show that this change in Frege's view, though clearly the change in Frege's philosophy of identity that was most important from Frege's own point of view, has been overshadowed – indeed, almost completely ignored – by subsequent philosophers' singular concern with the senses of proper names.

Michael Hicks

Sellars and Carnap on Practical Necessity in the Manifest Image

[In Person]

A key difference between Wilfrid Sellars and Rudolf Carnap lies in the former's emphasis on the role of the manifest image. This emphasis is often misunderstood as in tension with Sellars's austere scientific realism--the necessity of the manifest image is merely practical. Correcting this interpretation complicates the contrast with Carnap. In this paper, I argue that ultimately that contrast stems from Sellars's commitment to a philosophical account of intentionality: even theoretical language has to have a practical dimension in order to count as empirical, as concerning the world in which it is produced.

Jim Hutchinson

Preventing Errors with Language in Frege's Mature Period

[In Person]

Frege's early work contains several linguistic claims aimed at preventing non-linguistic errors by removing linguistic illusions which, partly for psychological reasons, cause such errors. I think bearing this in mind helps us understand linguistic claims in his mature period. For example: authors have debated about whether introducing his notion of sense aims to justify the identification of Basic Law V as a logical principle, but I think the focus on justification is misplaced. That is justified in other ways, but the opening of "Über Sinn und Bedeutung" shows how sense can remove linguistic illusions that can nevertheless prevent its acceptance.

Peter Hylton

Quine's Alleged Sequacity

[In Person]

Quine claimed that his 1934 Lectures on Carnap were "abjectly sequacious"; I disagree. Carnap holds that our serious cognitive endeavours begin with the free choice of a language, as a system of rules. Quine begins with the sentences that we already accept, and with the language in which those sentences are framed; here language is a system of speech dispositions. Quine holds that there is choice (and thus room for tolerance) in how we systematize the language, but that is a very different matter from Carnap's full-width Tolerance. These differences prefigure Quine's later conscious and overt break with Carnap.

Ryo Ito

A Defence of Moore's Philosophy of Common Sense

[In Person]

In this paper, I argue that G. E. Moore's well-known proof of the external world does not treat so-called Moorean propositions as irrefutable grounds for knowledge but rather as premisses accepted even by the sceptic who doubts the existence of the external world. I attempt to motivate this interpretation by looking into the broad historical contexts in which Moore produced the proof.

Henry Jackman

Pragmatism and Pure Experience

[In Person]

While William James's philosophy is most frequently associated with his writings on truth and the justification of belief, a good portion of his final decade was devoted to trying to develop a worked-out metaphysical picture tied to his notion of "pure experience". James's work in this area famously hit a major stumbling block in the form of Dickenson Miller's and Boyd H. Bode's objections to how his view could account for "how two minds can know one thing", and one of the most puzzling features of James's response to these objections is that the answer suggested by his own pragmatism is dismissed off-hand as an inadequate "common sense" solution. James takes the problem of how "two minds can know one thing" to be that of how the same (token identical) percept could be part of two streams of consciousness at once, but it's hard to see how any discussion of what we "pragmatically mean" by phrases like "knowing one thing" or "thinking about the same object" should involve multiple people having a token-identical experience. Nevertheless, James seems to commit himself to this requirement, in spite of the fact that such shared experiences seem incompatible (as Miller and Bode point out) with the notion of experience developed in his own *Principles of Psychology*. James often presented his pragmatism and radical empiricism as being independent (if complementary) but his attitude here might suggest that there is a deeper tension between the two than he supposes. However, this paper will show that this tension is more of a reflection of James's temperamental shifts while writing on these topics than with theoretical commitments internal to either pragmatism or radical empiricism themselves, and that many James's views on pure experience can be separated from his radical empiricism.

Adam Jackson

Wittgensteinian Quasi-Fideism? Missing the Existential Aspect

[In Person]

I will argue that despite vast improvements over the historical version of fideism attributed to Wittgenstein, Duncan Pritchard's quasi-fideism seems to miss what I call the 'existential aspect' of Wittgenstein's religious thought. However, the reason that Pritchard's account misses such an aspect of Wittgenstein's religious thought is not because Wittgenstein does not think that hinge commitments underlie religious practice. Rather, I argue that it is because Wittgenstein thinks that, despite their appearing so, the kinds of hinge commitments that underlie religious practice are not epistemic, but instead are existential.

Dylan Jones

Chauncey Wright's Influence on American Pragmatism and its Reception of Logical Empiricism

[Online]

Chauncey Wright's positivistic empiricism served as the critical foil against which Peirce and James developed their early pragmatism. By examining Wright's clashes with Peirce on the place of metaphysics in science, and with James on the role of teleological thinking in psychology, this paper argues that early pragmatist opposition to these views prefigured pragmatism's later ambivalent reception of Logical Empiricism. Recovering Wright's influence reveals that pragmatists like Dewey viewed the Vienna Circle not as a novel challenge, but as a familiar form of positivism they believed pragmatism had already overcome at its birth.

Griffin Klemick

Sellars's Two Responses to Moral Skepticism

[In Person]

I've argued that Sellars offered two independent responses to skepticism, a transcendental one and a pragmatic one, and that the pragmatic one is more promising. Here I extend this interpretation to Sellars's treatment of moral skepticism. Sellars sketched in turn a pragmatic response to such skepticism, on which our commitment to the general welfare is justified by our desire for a full life, and a transcendental response to such skepticism, on which it's justified by being implicit in even thinking of ourselves as rational. The latter faces two seemingly-insurmountable difficulties; the former can overcome one serious challenge.

Michael Kremer

A Trip into the Archives: Gilbert Ryle in 1926

[In Person]

In 1926, the young Ryle presented a paper to the Oxford Philosophical Society, "S is P." Relying on archival sources (notes by F. C. S. Schiller, correspondence, and marginalia), I reconstruct its content and sources. It combines neo-Kantian influences (previously discussed by Vrijen and McGuinness) with that of Cook Wilson's Statement and Inference to argue that every statement is a "potted inference" and depends on grounds of validity which it does not state, and that the subject-predicate form cannot capture true logical form. Time permitting, I may discuss echoes of this view in Ryle's mature philosophy.

Jacob Lettie

Logical Empiricism, Tarskian Truth, and Empirical Confirmation

[In Person]

In 1936, Carnap claimed that Tarski's new account of truth enabled a clearer distinction between truth and confirmation. Tarski had indeed provided a procedure for defining 'true' such that this term is not interchangeable with terms like 'confirmed' and 'verified'. However, I will argue that on a logical empiricist Tarskian account of truth, a sentence still must be confirmable (though not strictly verifiable) to be true. This is because Tarski excluded uninterpreted languages from the scope of his account, and because the logical

empiricists held that only sentences which are in some way empirically confirmable are meaningful.

Madeleine Levac

The Meaning of "Seeing"

[In Person]

Can one literally see an object not present to the sense of sight, not present even through a photograph or other medium? This question, first introduced to the literature by some scattered remarks of G.E. Moore's (1906, 1952), has remained open for almost a century now. I trace its longevity to a series of early mistakes that have never been corrected. Understanding how the literature on the verbs of perception went awry is a matter of historical interest, but it is not just that; it is also a crucial step towards bringing this debate to a satisfying close.

Jessica Luo

Neither Mind Nor World: G.E. Moore's "The Nature of Judgment" as Transcendental Philosophy

[In Person]

G.E. Moore's 'The Nature of Judgment' (1899) has historically been read as propounding a view of concepts as metaphysically fundamental constituents of reality known as 'Platonic Atomism' by way of a collection of largely unjustified though provocative assertions. Against this reading, I argue that Moore's claims are in fact justified by transcendental considerations introduced through Moore's opening critique of F.H. Bradley's abstractionist theory of concept formation. The resulting 'theory of concepts' is not a theory about a mind-independent reality but rather a view concerning the necessary presuppositions for treating judgment on its own terms as irreducible to either psychology or metaphysics.

Soroush Marouzi

Pragmatism and the Politics of Rationality in Interwar Britain

[Online]

This paper reinterprets Frank Ramsey's philosophy by situating it within the intellectual and political climate of early interwar Britain. It argues that Ramsey's work on decision theory and pragmatism was deeply intertwined with contemporary debates about human rationality and postwar social reconstruction. By reconstructing these debates and drawing on archival and historiographical sources, the paper presents Ramsey's philosophical and economic contributions as politically charged responses to the perceived problem of "mass irrationality" after World War I.

Robert May & Rachel Boddy

Frege in Creation

[Online]

The view that in mathematics entirely new objects can be generated by means of definitions flies in the face of two of Frege's core views: first, that definitions are only concerned with signs and, second, that mathematical objects are recognized, not created by us.

Unsurprisingly, then, Frege rejected creative definitions [schöpferischen Definitionen] as "a first-class invention". But opposition isn't argument and in this talk we discuss whether Frege has a neutral criticism and, if so, on which assumptions it rests. We identify Frege's main argument (in *Grundgesetze* vol. 2) and argue that it provides the right context for understanding what Frege sees as the essential difference between his lawful way of introducing value-ranges as objects and the stipulative use of creative definitions.

Maxine McCuller

A Grammatical Morphology of Aspects: Aspect Perception as Imagination.

[In Person]

While Ludwig Wittgenstein's use of the "duck-rabbit" illustration has gained recent popularity, few have concentrated on other aspect perception examples in the *Philosophical Investigations*. My presentation aims to bring these other salient examples to light, by arguing that (i) these examples are related morphologically, i.e., by family resemblance connections of their overlapping similarities and differences, and (ii) one such "family" of examples are those that invoke an observer's use of creative imagination. The role of imagination can also, I argue, shed light on the felt significance of this "family" of examples.

Jacob McDowell

Wittgenstein vs. the Conceptual Engineers

[In Person]

While other philosophers have claimed to have found a conservative attitude to conceptual change in the later Wittgenstein's writings, Tamara Dobler has recently brought Wittgenstein into service for the project of conceptual engineering. I disagree that Wittgenstein's philosophy is inherently conservative, but I also believe it is importantly at odds with the project of conceptual engineering. I believe, the project of conceptual engineering is founded upon certain pictures of 'meaning' and 'concepts' whose rejection was one of the most fundamental parts of the later Wittgenstein's philosophy.

Scott Metzger

Margaret Macdonald on the Problem of Universals and Communication

[In Person]

I recover Margaret Macdonald's early work on the problem of universals and communication by presenting her pragmatic theory of universals as a response to A.J. Ayer's 1933 Aristotelian Society presentation, which she attended as a graduate student. Ayer's presentation left an impression on the young Macdonald, who pressed him on the problem of solipsism in communication during the Q & A (as described in her letters to Max Black), and in her 1934 Dissertation. I show that Macdonald drew from both C.S. Peirce and C.I. Lewis to develop a pragmatic theory of universals that did not fall peril to the same issues as Ayer's theory.

Nikolay Milkov

A New Look on the Priority Dispute between Wittgenstein and Carnap

[Online]

Wittgenstein's allegations against Carnap in plagiarism from the summer of 1932 are well-known. Wittgenstein claimed that in his paper "Physicalistic Language as the Universal Language of Science" (1932) Carnap borrowed material both from the *Tractatus*, as well as from the protocols of his talks with Schlick and Weismann. To the clarification of the Prioritätsstreit between Wittgenstein and Carnap was dedicated extensive literature (Coffa 1991, Hintikka 1996, McGuinness 2002, Pears 1988, Stern 2013, Uebel 1995). In this paper I suggest a new interpretation, based on a fresh reading of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* which was just published in a book-form.

Mousa Mohammadian

Peirce Meets "Science and Values"

[In Person]

This paper argues that Charles Sanders Peirce anticipated key insights of contemporary science-and-values debates. Against the standard reading shaped by Hans Reichenbach's context distinction, I show that Peirce saw scientific inquiry as inherently value-laden: values guide questioning, hypothesis formation, and communal evaluation. His fallibilism, social conception of inquiry, and account of abduction together support a model in which ethical, social, and cognitive values are constitutive of scientific reasoning while remaining disciplined by experimentation and the regulative ideal of truth.

Kevin Morris

Parallelism, Epiphenomenalism, and Overdetermination Circa 1900

[Online]

I discuss the role of the causal completeness of the physical, often expressed in terms of a commitment to a mechanism about the nervous system, in the dialectic surrounding mental causation circa 1900. I focus on how these thinkers responded to the epiphenomenalist counterfactuals sometimes claimed to follow from mechanism, that sequences of physical occurrences would continue unabated if mind and conscious were removed. I discuss connections between these debates and the contemporary dialectic surrounding reductive and nonreductive physicalism and the charge that it follows from the completeness of the physical that distinct mental causes overdetermine their physical effects.

Philippe Nguemetan

The Vienna Circle and Africa: Influences and Receptions.

[In Person]

The Vienna Circle, a group of Austrian philosophers and scientists in the 1920-1930s, had a significant influence on global philosophy. But what about its influence in Africa? This article explores the connections between the Vienna Circle and African thinkers, particularly through the works of Paulin Hountondji, Marcien Towa, Meinrad Hebga and others thinkers (...) In *The rationality of an African Discourse on Paranormal Phenomena*, Meinrad Hebga even praises Popper, for whom too sharp a distinction should not be drawn between science and metaphysics. The aim of this reflection is, firstly, to show that the debate has continued on the philosophical scene in sub-Saharan Africa and, secondly, to subject logicist reductionism to the study of endogenous cultural facts and to a new pedagogy of action.

Brent Odland

A Brief History of Type Distinctions

[In Person]

Most would date the advent of type theory with the publication of Bertrand Russell's *Principles of Mathematics*, where it was originally suggested as a potential solution to the set theoretic paradoxes plaguing Frege's logic as developed in *Begriffsschrift* and extended in *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik*. However, Church credits an anticipation of the theory to Schroder. Similarly, Putnam credits Peirce with an anticipation of type theory. Interestingly, Peirce's quasi-type distinctions point back even further, to the distinction in medieval logic between first and second intentions. My paper explores these anticipations of modern type theory and tries to answer the question of whether there is any common ground between the problems they were intended to address and those of modern type theory.

Perceval Pillon

Formal Commitment of Formal Systems and Philosophical Fruitfulness

[In Person]

Formal methods, especially logical systems, are now widely used in philosophical analysis, yet their methodological justification is rarely examined. Carnap's notion of explication offers an initial framework for understanding formalisation as the replacement of vague concepts by precise ones, but his account remains incomplete, particularly regarding formalisation as a philosophical goal. This paper examines the claim that formal systems can fruitfully formalise target phenomena—such as concepts or forms of reasoning—without presupposing their meaning. We argue that this claim is not self-evident and requires philosophical support. Our central hypothesis is that formal systems carry content in the form of commitments: syntactic, axiomatic, inferential, and semantic. These commitments interact with the pre-formal core meaning of the phenomenon under study and may either clarify or distort it. Recognising this interaction allows for a more controlled and methodologically informed use of formal tools in philosophy.

Jimmy Plourde

Are the Complex Propositions of the *Tractatus* Pictures of Reality?

[In Person]

In the *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein accounts for the meaningfulness and truth of propositions through his picture theory. A proposition is meaningful if it represents a possible situation via its logical structure, independent of its truth value; it is true if it corresponds to reality or is a correct picture of a fact (Plourde 2017). While this account works for elementary propositions, it does not apply straightforwardly to complex propositions. Unlike their elementary counterparts, complex propositions lack a structure representing how some things stand to one another. Since logical connectives do not denote anything, there also appear to be no "complex facts" in reality for them to depict. Consequently, many commentators argue that Wittgenstein accounts for the meaningfulness and truth of complex propositions solely truth-functionally, and that they are not to be taken as pictures of reality at all (Zalabardo 2015). This reading, however, introduces a division in Wittgenstein's accounts of

meaningfulness and truth and also introduces an important limitation to the scope of the picture theory, making it less central to the *Tractatus* as it appears to be. In this paper, I challenge this dominant interpretation. While I agree that Wittgenstein avoids committing to complex entities and that he understood meaningfulness and truth of complex propositions partly on the basis of their truth-functionality, I provide an alternative account demonstrating how complex propositions function as pictures within Wittgenstein's broader conceptual framework, an account which is based on how Wittgenstein understands the meaningfulness and truth of complex propositions. The position I defend thus agrees with Joshua Eistenthal's (Unpublished and 2023) view that the picture theory applies to all propositions with sense and that the standard "bottom-up" approach mistakenly treats the specific conditions of elementary propositions as the definition of picturing itself, but diverges from his account of a picture on some respects.

Michael Rieppel

Quantifying Into Quotes

[In Person]

In §8 of the *Begriffsschrift*, Frege construes identity as a relation between signs. In their recent book, Pardey and Wehmeier defend Frege's sign-based construal against the objection that it would prohibit quantification into identity contexts, and go on to argue that the vindicated view offers the right account of identity statements in natural language. In this paper I investigate the semantics Pardey and Wehmeier offer in response to the objection, and show that on it, quantification into certain quotational contexts should be possible. Since natural language does not permit such quantifying-in, the sign-based account is not correct.

Brendan Ritchie

Helen Knight and Peter Geach on Goodness

[In Person]

Peter Geach argued influentially in 1956 that 'good' always picks up on kind-relative criteria and is consequently primarily descriptive in meaning. Oliver Thomas Spinney has drawn attention to a 1936 paper by Helen Knight in which she makes a parallel argument regarding aesthetic goodness. Spinney suggests that this makes her paper a significant precedent; however, Ross had discussed these ideas earlier, and Geach's thesis is important because of its generality. But the actual substance of Knight's argument has become more important in retrospect, because aesthetic goodness has often been seen as absolute rather than kind-relative.

Reinhold Schwenzer

Hans Hahn's Early Mathematical Work and the Origins of His Critique of Intuition in Mathematics

[In Person]

This paper reexamines the origins of Hans Hahn's critique of intuition in mathematics by focusing on the relation between his early mathematical work and his philosophical views on mathematics, a largely unexplored connection. While existing interpretations emphasize Hahn's logicist commitments (Volkert 1986, Thiel 1997, Uebel 2005), the paper argues that

his philosophical views on mathematics were decisively shaped by his earlier work in real analysis. Hahn's critique of intuition, articulated in *Die Krise der Anschauung* (1933), is interpreted as Hahn's response to innovations in analysis associated with Cantorian set theory and Lebesgue's theory of integration rather than prior logicist commitments.

Emanuel Stefan

The Blind Spot Conjecture: Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, Gödel's Incompleteness Theorems, and the Limits of Self-Elucidation

[Online]

This paper draws a structural comparison between Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* and Gödel's incompleteness theorems. I argue that both highlight an inherent limit to self-elucidation. I analyze bipolarity as a precondition for sense in Wittgenstein and representability as a precondition for provability in Gödel, and investigate the self-referential mechanisms of TLP 6.54 and Gödel's sentence G. I propose that the ineffability of logical form and the unprovability of consistency stem from the same representational constraint, and I formulate the Blind Spot Conjecture: no system of representation can, from within itself, fully express its own conditions of intelligibility.

Fredrik Stjernberg

Frege's Arguments for the Central Status of Logic. Which Logic, What Arguments?

[In Person]

My talk concerns Frege's defence of the centrality of his logical system, as formulated in the Foreword to *Grundgesetze* (Frege 1893/2013), and how his arguments fare when discussing modern alternatives to his logic, such as intuitionistic logic. One argument is transcendental, the other is pragmatic. I spell out his arguments in more detail than Frege does, and bring them into the contemporary debate.

Timur Uçan

The Epistemological Significance of the Comparison of Humans and Machines in the Works of C. I. Lewis, A. Turing, and L. Wittgenstein

[Online]

The comparison, metaphor, or analogy of humans and machines is centrally involved by the achievement of functional analyses involved by some medical practices, and is a major source of philosophical puzzlements and controversies. Indeed, some relatively widespread (pre)conceptions about relevant ways of contrasting humans and machines tend to generate confusions about our and their achievements. I accordingly propose, on the background of the study of recent researches dedicated to aspects of the works of Turing, Wittgenstein, and C. I. Lewis, an epistemological elucidation of the significance of this comparison.

Wim Vanrie

How Many Things Are There? Wittgenstein and Ramsey on Identity and the Axiom of Infinity

[In Person]

Accepting the *Tractatus*' claim that identity is not a genuine relation, Ramsey sought—in 'The Foundations of Mathematics'—to salvage the Axiom of Infinity. Relying on his conception of functions-in-extension, he introduced a novel propositional function ' $Q(x,y)$ ' to replace the sign of identity. I investigate Wittgenstein's later critique of Ramsey's procedure. Pace interpreters such as Marion, it does not rely on contentious constructivist assumptions. Rather, Wittgenstein seeks to show that Ramsey is confused about the nature of the symbol ' $Q(x,y)$ ', and that the actual use he makes of it reveals that it is not a genuine propositional function at all.

Claudine Verheggen

The Significance of Wittgenstein's Remarks on Agreement

[In Person]

Against James Shaw, I argue that the notion of agreement that plays a crucial role in the later Wittgenstein's positive remarks about meaning is that of "contractual" agreement, that is, agreement between people who share judgments or beliefs as the result of some interaction between them. Against Saul Kripke, I argue that this is the notion that is needed to solve the new problem that arises once the sceptical problem about meaning is dissolved rather than solved.

Andreas Vrahimis

Intuition, Description, and Scientific Explanation: Stebbing's Dialogue with Schlick

[In Person]

Stebbing and Schlick represented opposed tendencies within analytic philosophy during the 1930s. This paper examines their parallel criticisms of 'intuitive knowledge', connecting these with their different responses to the debate over scientific description versus explanation. Schlick explicitly tied his quasi-Machian argument against intuitive knowledge to his opposition against the (metaphysical) requirement for explanations. By contrast, even if she had earlier developed a critique of the epistemic status of lived experience rather similar to Schlick's, during the 1930s Stebbing opposed both Machian descriptivism about science, and Schlick's radical divorcing of experienced content from known form.

Michael J. White

A Skolem-like 'Paradox' of Categoricity for Second-order Theories

[In Person]

I present a 'paradox' (which is not a strict antinomy) pertaining to internal categoricity of second-order formal theories (my example is second-order Peano arithmetic) that resembles Skolem's 1922 'paradox' (also not a strict antinomy) pertaining to the proof of the existence of a uncountable set in first-order set theory (which can have models of only countable cardinality). I argue that the paradox of categoricity that I develop cannot be resolved by means of the resources of Second-Order Proof Theory Internalism (SOPT-Internalism), which is a program arguing that meta-mathematic investigations can/should be undertaken within the context of the proof theory of second-order logic. I conclude that my arguments suggest that categoricity, quasi-categoricity, κ -categoricity, etc. must remain ineluctably dependent on

the ‘semantic ascent’ that is familiar from classical model theory but deprecated by SOPT-internalists.

Byeong-uk Yi

Russell on Denoting Phrases: The Pseudo-Phrase Theory

[In Person]

Russell’s ‘‘On Denoting’’, published in 1905, is widely considered one of the most important articles in analytic philosophy. While most discussions of the article focus on the theory of definite descriptions first presented therein, the article presents a general theory of denoting phrases, which include but are not limited to definite descriptions. In this article, I discuss central theses of the general theory, which I call the pseudo-phrase theory. We can see that the theory is a generalization of Frege’s pseudo-phrase theory of a subgroup of denoting phrases, those featuring quantifiers in general categorical propositions, the likes of every, some, and no. Russell’s generalization of Frege’s theory for all denoting phrases (including definite descriptions) was facilitated by his success in giving an elementary language analysis of sentences involving definite descriptions. This has resulted in the highlight cast on the so-called contextual analysis of definite descriptions and the related notion of ‘‘incomplete symbol’’ formulated in *Principia Mathematica*. While the analysis has substantial significance in its own right, however, it is not essential to the general theory of denoting phrases. Contextual analyses of denoting phrases in elementary languages, I argue, neither yield nor are required by the pseudo-phrase thesis on the phrases.

Haziran Zeller

Logic and Dialectics: How Ryle and Adorno Criticized Phenomenology in the 1930s

[Online]

This paper examines the largely overlooked intellectual encounter between Theodor W. Adorno and Gilbert Ryle during Adorno’s Oxford years (1934–1938), focusing on their respective critiques of phenomenology. Situating their exchange within the broader context of 1930s debates (Davos!), the paper reconstructs the systematic dimensions of their engagement. Drawing also on historical and biographical aspects, and including new archival material, it argues that while Adorno and Ryle converge in a logical critique of phenomenology, they ultimately diverge due to fundamentally different conceptions of logic - analytic versus dialectical.