

**Using Wittgenstein in Contemporary Philosophy.
Fifth Symposium of the International
Ludwig Wittgenstein Society**

*Universidad Complutense de Madrid, Madrid –
20-21 May 2015*

The 20th and 21st of May 2015 the celebration of the Fifth Symposium of the International Ludwig Wittgenstein Society, consecrated to the contemporary uses of the philosophy of this essential thinker of the XXth century, took place in the Complutense University of Madrid. The congress was organized by Professor Ángeles J. Perona by commission of Stefan Majetschak, president of the International Ludwig Wittgenstein Society. Professor J. Perona leads a research team, whose members formed the organizing committee of the event and took on the majority of the debates coordination. This team has been working for two decades on the problem of rationality and its rules in different thinkers, but especially on the receptions of the Wittgensteinian legacy. Professors Majetschak and Perona, with the Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy of the Complutense University of Madrid, Rafael Orden Jiménez, presided the opening ceremony of a congress that stood out for two reasons: first, because it showed the validity and influence that Wittgenstein has nowadays in very different trends of philosophy and second, because his thought invades every field of philosophy, from logic to political philosophy, including epistemology, philosophy of language or philosophy of religion.

Alan Janik (University of Innsbruck) opened the congress the 20th of May with a plenary lecture entitled “The Legacy of Wittgenstein: A Critical Overview and a Modest Proposal”. He tackled the different reception of Wittgenstein in analytic philosophy and in deconstruction, as well as the relation of philosophical problems with language. Ángeles J. Perona (Complutense University of Madrid) was chair of the following debate. Antoni Defez (University of Girona) was in charge of the second plenary lecture and with his speech “Antirealism, Human Creativity and Authenticity. Some Romantic Roots in Wittgenstein’s Thought”, also accounted for the conflicts that emerge of the language-reality relationships. In particular, he focused on how the antirealist attitude of Wittgenstein tries to dismantle the underlying metaphysical realism of modern philosophy, together with his scientism, his idea of progress and his intention to know “reality”. Oscar L. González Castán (Complutense University of Madrid) was responsible of moderating the debate that followed this presentation. The plenary lecture of Martin Kusch (University of Vienna), “The ‘System Response’ to Radical Skepticism in *On Certainty*”, analyzed how skepticism takes charge of the relationship between the ordinary doubt and the philosophical doubt, and of the relation between the ordinary error and the philosophical error. Wittgenstein’s conclusion, showed in the book *On certainty*, is

that the skeptic doesn't succeed because he is incapable of giving a solution to the problem of continuity.

After this plenary lecture a debate coordinated by Juan José Acero (University of Granada) took place and also a contributions table in which Tero Vaaja (University of Jyväskylä) and David Pérez Chico (University of Zaragoza) intervened. Vicente Sanfélix (University of Valencia) was chair of the following debate. With the talk "Wittgensteinian Criteria and Embodiment of the Inner" Vaaja explained how in the Wittgensteinian notion of "criteria" mental states are interweaved with the bodies and the contexts. Chico exposed in his talk "Cavell y Wittgenstein sobre la certeza", Wittgenstein's reception on the work of Stanley Cavell, who analyzes how skepticism converts judgments refereeing the existence of the world into an epistemological problem, first questioning this existence and denying it afterwards.

Oskari Kuusela (University of East Anglia) was in charge of closing the session with his plenary lecture "Wittgenstein and the Philosophy of Logic: How to be a Naturalist without Being an Empiricist?" followed by a later debate coordinated by Luis Manuel Valdés Villanueva (University of Oviedo). In this plenary lecture Kuusela studied the novelty that Wittgenstein's philosophy, against empiricism and apriorism, meant for logic, which is why Wittgenstein is considered to have introduced the Second Revolution of Logic after the first one, led by Frege and Russell.

The first plenary lecture of Wednesday 21th of May was that of Naomi Scheman (University of Minnesota): "Everything lies open to view", though perhaps only from 'elsewhere': Wittgensteinian therapy and the 'others' of European modernity". Astrid Wagner (Technical University of Berlin) was chair of the following debate. Scheman explained from Wittgenstein the emergence of marginality, resistance and transgression from the inside of the philosophical activity. If it is accepted that the three classic receiver groups of philosophy are philosophers, who transform problems into theories; humans in general, aware of the fact that those conflicts, inherent to our condition, don't disappear; and modern western subjects, as participants of a singular subjectivity of an specific tradition, the "others", don't belong to those groups and are excluded from the philosophical sphere.

Later there was a contributions table dedicated to the political consequences of Wittgenstein's thought, with the participation of Emiliano Lalicata (Studi di Palermo University) with his talk "Wittgenstein Theorist of the Commonwealth: Hardt/Negri's Wittgenstein" and Miguel Ángel Quintana Paz (European University Miguel de Cervantes) with his talk "Five Uses of Wittgenstein against Marxism", followed by a debate coordinated by Javier Vilanova (Complutense University of Madrid). According to Lalicata, Hardt and Negri define the Commonwealth making use of the Wittgensteinian theory of language games and forms of life. The Commonwealth would be a political space with no sovereignty beyond the singularity and related to the plane of immanence, not to transcendence. Quintana establishes that, despite Wittgenstein's eagerness for praxis, there are clear reasons to distance his theory from Marxist positions. For instance, the acknowledgement of the plurality derived from language games originates a plural notion of politics, non-determined by Marxist historical dialectic.

Afterwards, there was a round table in which María Cerezo (University of Murcia) participated with her speech “Analogical terms in the *Tractatus*: a revision of old, new and elucidatory interpretations”, Nuno Venturinha (University Nova of Lisbon) with his exposition “The Timeliness of Wittgenstein’s Religious Epistemology” and Rosa M. Calcaterra (University Roma Tre) with her presentation “Concrete reality. Wittgenstein’s and pragmatist overcoming of the realism-antirealism contraposition”. Cerezo, based on the idea that philosophy, according to Wittgenstein, consists in elucidations, explained the meaning of this concept as well as the notion of “analogical terms”. Venturinha took on the consequences of Wittgenstein’s philosophy for the epistemology of religion and Calcaterra revised how the grounds of knowledge are at stake in the debate realism/anti-realism and how the work of the last Wittgenstein is defined by the abandonment of the desire of certainty and the acknowledgement of a plural concept of reality. Stella Villarmeia (University of Alcalá) was chair of the following debate.

After the debate there was a contributions table with three talks: that of Marco Damonte (University of Genoa) entitled “Wittgenstein’s Legacy for the Future of Natural Theology”, that of Karsten Schoellner (University of Potsdam) with the title “A Wittgensteinian form of moral expressivism” and that of Janyne Sattler (Federal University of Santa Maria, Brazil) under the epigraph “Wittgenstein’s Thought and the Future of Moral Philosophy”, followed by a debate coordinated by José María Ariso (International University of La Rioja). Damonte focused his analysis on Wittgenstein’s contributions to the philosophy of religion, conceived as a sphere of life non commensurable to others, capable of creating new languages and with a non-translatable grammar, but not for that considered irrational; and that even if it doesn’t allow to see, it does habilitate us to perceive. Schoellner maintained the thesis that Wittgenstein’s position is close to the moral expressivism as moral judgments would be expressions of “attitudes” which allow connecting the moral judgment with the action. Sattler showed the reception of Wittgenstein in Anscombe, Gaita and Elliott, not when it comes to the content of their theories, but regarding the anti-metaphysical or anti-theoretical way of thinking philosophy. They reject the theoretical activity of academia as mere exegesis and give importance to literature and other alternative forms of expressing truths.

A contributions table with two talks took place right after, that of Thomas Raleigh (Norwegian University of Science and Technology) entitled “How to talk about sensations?” and that of Maria João Mayer Branco (University Nova of Lisbon) with the title “Wittgenstein on Hearing, Understanding and Expressing the Meaning of Music: Advantages of his Use for Contemporary Philosophy of Music”. The first dealt with the question concerning the status of sensations in their relations with physical objects, from the perspective of the phenomenology of conscience and of semantics. Branco explored the theory of Wittgenstein in relation to communication, expression and especially to music, conceived as a thought whose language is indescribable but capable of inaugurating new forms of comprehending knowledge. The chair of the following debate was Isabel G. Gamero (Complutense University of Madrid).

Alice Crary (The New School for Social Research, New York) was in charge of the closing plenary lecture, “Wittgenstein on Objectivity Revisited: Why it Matters”, with a final debate coordinated by Stefan Majetschak (Kassel University). Crary presented the relations between the mental field and the physical one and explained the existence of a very narrow concept of objectivity, that gets rid of the objective character of all that related with the perceptive or affective subjectivity, and of another concept which is wider and does include the subjective qualities. The congress was closed with the satisfaction that the multiple interpretations of Wittgenstein’s philosophy, that sometimes come into conflict, suppose, besides the validity of this thinker, a great philosophical enrichment and a huge diversity of options for the contemporary philosophical inquiry.

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