

ABSTRACTS

MANUEL ALMAGRO HOLGADO (University of Granada, Spain)

Similar Background or Similar Structure?

How can we understand the propositions, beliefs, reasons and practices of those who belongs to cultures significantly different from ours? An intuitive Wittgensteinian response to this challenge could be that we must be trained, we must be instructed in that particular *form of life*—conceived the notion not in its biological interpretation. The instruction will be supported by many other practices we share. And how do we track what counts as a correct or appropriate understanding? How could we know that our interpretation is the correct one? An intuitive Wittgensteinian response could be what Kripke calls the skeptical solution to the skeptical paradox consisting on how we can know that we are following one rule and not another relatively different: it is the correction and sanction by the community—i.e. the reaction our actions and claims receive by others—what allows us to know whether we are *correctly following the rule* or not. But that's not the end of the story. What are the conditions that allow us to gain familiarity with a way of life significantly different from our own? What is the background we need to begin to understand other cultures?

In this talk we explore two different possible pathways. The first is to assume that we can understand people from cultures significantly different from ours because we share in a sufficient way the set of things we assume not to doubt, the *riverbed*. According to this first possibility, all cultures in fact share a sufficient set of practices and assumptions, and it is this bed, this background, that enables us to understand people from cultures different from our own. The second way is to think that understanding people from cultures significantly different from ours does not necessarily depend on whether we actually have a sufficiently similar background; we simply need to assume that our propositions make sense because there is a set of things that we do not question, even though this set of things does not actually coincide. The idea of this second way is to think that this kind of structural similarity, the background-figure structure, is sufficient for us to begin to familiarize ourselves with other cultures and try to understand them.

We will favor the second way over the first and argue that it seems more consistent with the idea, taken seriously, that we can easily fail to identify what our commitments are, what is the rule we follow. As Wittgenstein pointed out, “to think one is obeying a rule is not to obey a rule” (PI 201).

GORAZD ANDREJČ (University of Gröningen, Netherlands)

The Politics of Interreligious Understanding and Its Sources of Normativity

Religions are often made into something more or something less than they typically are. To present religions as unproblematic sources of inspiration for a harmonious coexistence is as misguided and problematic as it is to present them as all-encompassing and radically incommensurable cultures “by nature”.

In this talk, I will examine the normative drivers behind these different pictures of religions and the related discourses on interreligious relations. Normative claims about interreligious relations, understanding, disagreement, incommensurability, and alike, can come from within religions and hence be theological in nature, or from different kinds of (secular) political ideologies which have a stake to present “religion” and interreligious relations in particular ways. Examples of the latter type of normative frameworks in Europe today are the conservative, the identitarian (nationalist or civilizationist) and the liberal-progressive political visions of European political communities and of the role(s) of religion(s) in them. While the conservative and the identitarian perspectives typically overstate the cultural particularity of religions (esp. Christianity and Islam), the liberal-progressive perspective typically downplays it.

Examples of theological kinds of normativity are inherent in the optimistic theological idea that “religions, if interpreted correctly, aim at peace and do not include evil”, or the conservative idea – present in some forms of Christianity, Islam, but also other religions – that the grammars of different religious traditions are uniquely particular which, in some theological circles, includes the claim that religions are incommensurable (in some versions this is, of course, combined with the idea that “my own religion is uniquely true and God-given”).

The aforementioned normative ideas, either religious-theological or secular, tend to either make interreligious understanding unnecessarily difficult or misrepresent it as being much easier and more trivial than it normally is, ignoring the depth and the power of religious-cultural forms of life. With the help of Wittgensteinian philosophy of religion and “modest pragmatist” political philosophy (Stout, Medina), I will argue, first, that the grammatical disparity between religions is never “radical”. The “common spirit” of humanity (Wittgenstein, RFBG 151) can work as a basis for interreligious understanding. However, establishing an idea of “the common spirit of humanity” as a such basis, as well as resisting it or “disallowing it” to be that, are *both* ideological endeavours. While there is normally no easy or straightforward

translation between concepts or claims of different religions, at least partial translation is normally possible, which must be examined and can be done only on case by case basis. In support of this interpretation, which also itself necessarily includes a normative aspect, I will give a few examples of interreligious understanding (or a lack of it) from Central Europe and the Balkans.

ANDREA AVERSA & GIOVANNI GIGLIOTTI (University of Calabria)

Wittgensteinian Approaches to Rationality and Intercultural Conflict

What can Wittgenstein tell us about the intercultural conflict and the problem of rationality? This is the main question to which we would like to direct our efforts. The way we address the present subject already reveals the background in which we are locating us. In fact, by talking about the "problem of rationality", we are not only giving it a particular point of view (to which we will try to give argumentation), but we are as well referring to a specific historical context: the debate based on Peter Winch's publication *Understanding a primitive society* in 1964. Indeed, this is a milestone to which we need to refer us if we want to think about this issue. Taking this into consideration, we strongly believe, together with Nicolas Sánchez Durá, that Peter Winch's work is also necessary to shed light to the relation between Wittgenstein's philosophy of language and the intercultural conflict, understood as a clash of different paradigms of rationality. For this reason, we would like to see through the paradigmatic case about the conflict between magic and science, which characterized the history of cultural anthropology. Specifically, the aim of the present work is to examine the strong opposition between radical relativism and ethnocentric reductionism on this question. In this sense, we would try to show how Wittgenstein permits us to think that we should not find a *solution*, on the contrary, we should *dissolve* this problem by the clarification of concepts. In our opinion, this is the characteristic wittgensteinian approach.

However, from our point of view, in Wittgenstein's philosophy there is a plurality of intuitions able of providing us not only one but multiple philosophical strategies for the solution (or better, *dissolution*) of the cultural conflicts. In this respect, we could ask ourselves: is the

strategy and Wittgenstein's conclusions comparable with the ones deducible from Peter Winch's works?

Our intention is to address all of these unanswered questions using the dialogue method, in which both of the speakers could support different points of view, both related to Wittgenstein's philosophy and his strategy of clarification of concepts.

GABRIELE BARONI (University of Valencia)

Context, Form of Life and Language Games: Guatemala's New Religions in Wittgenstein's Perspective.

In the *Philosophical Investigations*, the main work of the second Wittgenstein, the expression *language game* refers to "the whole, consisting of language and the actions into which it is woven". (IF §7) The language game is strictly related to a *form of life*. Speaking language is part of an activity or a *form of life*. (IF §23) In other words, language is not a set of meanings independent of those who use it; language is a thread integrated into the fabric of life. We could add that the language is not independent, but depends on the community of its users. Religious belief then refers to a form of life or, better still, it arises as a need from a form of life, because it is what gives meaning to a religious form of life. Life is what gives meaning to religious language. From these concepts, the idea of this research work was born. The field work lasted 9 months, and took place on the border between Mexico and Guatemala. The purpose was to observe and isolate the religious language games interwoven into a peculiar, underlying, form of life. The case we are going to analyze is the cult of San Simon de Guatemala. The objective of this study was to test Wittgenstein's "toolbox" in the anthropological field. Does it make sense to talk about *seeing* something *as, following a rule, context, hinge, perspicuous vision, family resemblance*, in a community of speakers engaged in performing magic-religious rituals, so far from us?

CARLA CARMONA (University of Sevilla) & NEFTALÍ VILLANUEVA (University of Granada)

Normativity and Situated Judgements: Jumping Over One's Own Shadow?

This paper addresses the question whether we can build a true intercultural normativity from a Wittgensteinian perspective. It combines what has been called Wittgenstein's internalism (Hark, 1990) and the view that situated judgments can lead to rational, yet contingent, resolutions of disagreements (Kinzel & Kusch, 2017).

We focus on evaluative disagreements, that is, disagreements that exceed the realm of the factual –where no presupposition of a shared standard is necessarily in place. In that context, we explore and elaborate the idea that in the de-idealized dialogical interaction between different points of view in itself, the rules of the discussion can be set. The distinction between “rule” and “judgement” that has been established in the context of the sociology of science (Collins, 1985; Kinzel & Kusch, 2017) will be fundamental for the development of our proposal.

Besides, we aim at providing a possible way out of the problem of how to obtain a true intercultural vocabulary. With Wittgenstein's idea in mind that the rules of language are units of measurement which are constitutive of our practices (*PG* §133), we examine further the concept of situated judgement in order to explore how words can be charged with new meanings by using them in alternative ways to those already existing. This could help us develop intercultural conceptual frameworks which are truly beyond any form of ethnocentrism.

In the process, we show that this proposal is inspired by an unusually flexible conception of rationality and by a relativistic approach to the problem of intercultural dialogue –both of which are consistent with Wittgenstein's philosophy.

LEO K. C. CHEUNG (The Chinese University of Hong Kong)

Wittgenstein, Xunzi and the Possibility of Intercultural Understanding

A continuity of Wittgenstein's early and later philosophies consists in the view that philosophical problems are products of the misunderstanding of our language. A difference between them, however, is that in the *Tractatus* the misunderstanding is that of the logic of language, or the logic-governed use of words, while in the *Philosophical Investigations (PI)* the rule-governed use.

The *Tractatus* holds that our language has a general logic, showable by the use of the rules of logical syntax of an adequate symbolism. This is supported by the picture theory, originated from Heinrich Hertz's Bild Theorie in *The Principles of Mechanics*. The later supports Hertz's theory of adequate language of mechanics, where a language of mechanics is adequate if it is logically permissible, correct and appropriate.

The Tractarian picture theory generalizes the Hertzian theory of adequate language of mechanics to ordinary language as an adequate picture of reality. The rules governing the significant combination of words constitute the logic of language. In order for a combination of words to be significant, it must be logical permissible. However, unlike an adequate image (picture) of objects in the reality of mechanics, it need not be true or correct. Nevertheless, ordinary language, as an adequate picture of reality, must be appropriate, in the Hertzian sense that "two permissible... images [Bilder; pictures] of the same external objects may yet differ in respect of appropriateness" (Hertz 1899/2004: 2). Therefore, first, a language, or a picture, of reality is adequate if it is permissible and appropriate. Second, it is possible to have two different adequate languages of reality. In particular, the picture of a pointing-in-cube and the picture of a pointing-out-cube in TLP 5.5423 belong to two different adequate (permissible and appropriate) languages, respectively, because each of them has a logical form one cannot find it in another. A user of one of them cannot understand some logical forms of the propositions of another. This shows that the *Tractatus* accepts the possibility of local incommensurability of adequate languages.

Later, Wittgenstein devotes considerably many *PI* sections to investigate the nature of rule-following. The main idea is that a rule can be grasped in the actual cases of "obeying the rule" and "going against it" (§201). Rule-following therefore does not have a general logic, but

consists in the actual practice and use. Two persons with different forms of life then may have different incommensurable rule-following activities. Since language is a rule-governed activity of the use of words, it is “part of an activity, or of a form of life” (§23). This leads to the thesis of the autonomy of grammar in the *PI*. An immediate corollary is again the possibility of local incommensurability of languages.

I argue in this paper that both the early and the latter Wittgenstein hold that intercultural understanding between two users of two locally incommensurable languages, respectively, is possible, because of their shared humanity. The latter is shown, for the case of the early Wittgenstein, by its discussions on ethics and the meaning of life, while, for the case of the later Wittgenstein, by its discussions on rule-following in the *PI*.

Xunzi (3rd BCE) defines the (great) *dao* in *Book 21: Dispelling Blindness* (my translation) of the *Xunzi* as follows:

The *dao* is in itself constant and governs all changes [夫道者體常而盡變].

The *dao* is therefore the most general principle governing all instances of change—including that of Heaven (the nature, reality) and Human. The *dao* of Heaven—the most general (descriptive) law of nature—and the *dao* of Human—the most general (normative) law of ethics and politics, are unified under the *dao*.

The (great) sage is the one who knows the *dao*. In order for the sage to achieve that, the heart-mind, or the subject, must be detached from any specific instances of change. Xunzi therefore must hold that knowledge of the *dao* is possible *only if* the heart-mind (Humanity) and Heaven share the same *dao*. I call such a position “nomic transcendentalism.”

In *Book 22: On the Correct Use of Names*, Xunzi puts forward a sophisticated referential theory of naming, accounting for both proper names and names of natural kind. He also believes that human beings and the myriad things can be classified into different disjoint or overlapping groups in accordance with different conventional rules, and thence natural kinds and their names. Hence, two locally incommensurable languages are possible.

Naming, and thus mutually communicable languages, is possible because it grounds in Xunzi's nomic transcendentalism; that is, in the *dao* shared by both Human (humanities) and Heaven (reality), or the common nomic nature of languages (humanities) and reality. The grounding guarantees that even if there are cultural differences in human natures, there is a core shared by different humanities—the *dao*, such that intercultural communication and understanding are possible. Xunzi therefore also accepts the possibility of intercultural understanding between two locally incommensurable languages.

MEENA DHANDA (University of Wolverhampton, United Kingdom

Caste Identity, Prejudice and Anti-Casteism

Philosophy taken as the activity of clarification, elaboration or invention of concepts takes place in the context of problem solving. To engage meaningfully in the lives of people inhabiting a caste world we must articulate what it means to face caste prejudice and to build solidarities of resistance to casteism. The problem is entrenched collective hypocrisy: deep-seated prejudices are passed over as benign matters of identity. Cultural practices attuned to existing hierarchies continually renew privileges and prejudices. Can engaged philosophical thinking make a difference to this recurring social malady? What is the hope that philosophy after Wittgenstein can offer? The talk will present caste identity and caste prejudice in the diaspora as a challenge to inter-cultural understanding. Conflicting interpretations of socio-cultural practices associated with caste obstruct consensus on remedies for prejudice. At one extreme, the apologists of caste reject talk of casteism as a product of 'colonial consciousness'. At the other extreme, advocates of anti-casteism demand statutory legal protection for victims of caste discrimination akin to protection against race discrimination. These conflicting positions are hinged to self-interested sense-making needs of a divided internal public of the 'caste world'. Bystanders from outside the 'caste world' are left in awkward positions ranging from disinterest through multiculturalist tolerance to reluctant support for different interpretations of little understood social practices. Taking the lack of consensus on instituting legal remedies for caste discrimination in the UK as a backdrop, the paper will examine deeper underpinning historical, ideological and cultural contestations on the meaning of caste, caste prejudice and anti-casteism. The value of attending to internal critiques of inherited traditions will be highlighted using the debate between Ambedkar and Gandhi on understanding caste. Can the inhabitants as well as bystanders of the 'caste world' take a collective stand against casteism? Or is anti-casteism condemned to remain agonistic? The caste question raises general

epistemological *and* ethical problems. First, we will question: is the Wittgensteinian idea of ‘shared practices’ rich enough to allow critical investigation of the multifarious ways in which simulations of practices buttress the habitual and unthought transmission of prejudice? Second, we will put forward the view that to acknowledge that one *can* respond to the affliction of pain caused by prejudice one does not require an epistemological leap of faith. Face to face with a wince, a shrinking or a dampening of the spirit ethical blindness sometimes masquerades as an epistemological block, for example, if the unmoved observer offers the excuse that he *cannot* respond because he does not understand the cause of the pain. A pregnant pause before ethically responding to the visible pain caused by prejudice is arguably different from procrastination awaiting adequate explanations through understanding of the context, the history, the configurations of actors, actions and events that led to the pain. I will argue that Wittgenstein’s reminders of the ‘primitive’ response tell us not to obstruct the ethical for the spurious epistemological.

ERAN GUTER (The Max Stern Yezreel Valley College, Israel)

Aspect Blindness and the Courage to See

Wittgenstein’s notion of noticing an aspect occupies a unique position between what we see and how, and the value of things for us, how we draw in significance. This includes noticing our own humanity and seeing humanity in others. Aspect blindness denotes a hindrance of such capabilities. In this paper I focus on the intrinsic connection between aspect- and meaning blindness and Wittgenstein’s discussion of the “experience of meaning.” The idea that words in a language have, according to Wittgenstein, “soul,” “face,” and “character” pertains to the preconditions, and the lived, embodied realities, of our understanding of our own humanity. I propose that this betokens the singular relevance of these ideas to our ability to become acquainted with humankind (*Menschenkenntnis*, as Wittgenstein calls it), hence to intercultural understanding. This connection has already surfaced in Stanley Cavell’s discussion of “soul blindness” (a rather philosophically extended rendition of Wittgenstein’s original idea) in *The Claim of Reason* and in subsequent papers. My discussion unfolds along three interconnected lines: historical, contextual and methodological. (1) History: I trace the origins of Wittgenstein’s notion of aspect blindness to Spengler’s *Decline of the West*, which propelled

much of Wittgenstein's thinking in his middle-period. I argue that Wittgenstein's deployment of the idea aspect blindness remains embedded in the original context of the comparative morphology of cultures. Wittgenstein's grappling with his own blindness vis-à-vis the manifestations of modern culture is surely a case in point. (2) Context: Aesthetics, as Wittgenstein construed it, enables an everyday conversation, which "does not explain anything away," characterized by the peculiar logical complexity pertaining to interrelations between language games. I argue that this remains central to his notion of aspect blindness. In particular, the context of the master simile of "language as music," which has pervaded Wittgenstein's thinking from its earliest stages, rendering music as paradigmatic to Wittgenstein's later notion of *Menschenkenntnis*, significantly remains at the heart of the discussion. I focus my attention on Wittgenstein's contention, often glossed over by other scholars, that "aspect-blindness will be akin to a lack of a 'musical ear'" (PI II 214). The capabilities that come under "the musical ear" range from being versed in musical material and style, through matters of cognition, to the ability to make sense of musical structure, that is, to characterize, and most importantly to collaborate musically. All these capabilities underscore the possibility of participating. Thus, I argue, the simile suggests that aspect blindness is neither a disability, nor a chronic defect, nor anything out of the ordinary, but rather it betokens the possibility of overcoming separateness, and the effort which is called for. This in fact accords with Wittgenstein's construal of the moment of finding one another (*sich finden*), which marks the dawning of an aspect in conversation, as the language game becomes incorrigible, leaving no room for the concept of doubt (or knowledge). (3) Methodology: Following Juliet Floyd's recent innovative account of the evolution of Wittgenstein's use of aspect phrases, I suggest that it would be instructive to understand noticing an aspect in terms of characterizing and phrasing. Floyd's account has the advantage of showing how Wittgenstein's discussion of aspect blindness is actually part and parcel of his deepening interest in the specific techniques of characterization involved in symbolizations and representations of all kinds, and in their measure of success and failure. Aspect blindness pertains precisely to whatever might hinder, in the most everyday sense, our ability, or even our willingness to characterize, to draw in significance in a specific way, to see depth. I conclude that Wittgenstein's notion of aspect blindness orients us to acknowledge, in the most concrete terms, the mundanity of our failures to see something as something, or even other human beings as human beings, and the courage that one needs to gather in order to negotiate between the transparency and fluidity of self-expression and the comprehensibility of our rigid methods for explaining things. Aspect blindness may prompt an opening move in

a language game which would allow us to find one another. In this sense, Wittgenstein's discussion of aspect blindness betokens a moral imperative for intercultural understanding.

BRITT HARRISSON (University of York, United Kingdom)

Brideshead Revisited: Intercultural Understanding and/as Hinge Epistemology

In Evelyn Waugh's 1945 novel *Brideshead Revisited: The Sacred and Profane Memories of Captain Charles Ryder*, self-professed agnostic Charles recounts his relationships with various members of the Roman Catholic Flyte family over a period of twenty years. In the 1960 Preface to the second edition, Waugh states that the theme of his book is "the operation of divine grace on a group of diverse but closely connected characters" (1960, 8). Specifically, the novel includes a dramatic portrait of Charles Ryder's own religious conversion as he shifts from initially dismissing Catholic beliefs and practices as so much nonsense, indeed *witchcraft*, to becoming a Catholic himself.

In this presentation, I will use the resources offered by Waugh's novel, together with Wittgensteinian insights into the role that bedrock plays in our human form (and forms) of life to provide reasons in support of the following claims:

- 1) understanding other cultures is not solely, and cannot be reduced to just, propositional knowledge;
- 2) such intercultural understanding is constituted by the integration of propositional knowledge, know-how and acquaintance knowledge; moreover, none of these types of knowledge is logically prior to either one, or both, of the others;
- 3) such intercultural understanding or *integrated* knowledge, as I'm currently characterising it, is epistemically valuable: *contra* Danièle Moyal-Sharrock for whom bedrock practices and know-how are non-epistemic;

4) intercultural understanding conceived of as integrated knowledge has the potential to illuminate the wider philosophical project of recognising and appreciating the gradability and open-endedness of understanding *per se*.

Support for these claims will take the form of gathering reminders about the way in which people's actions, beliefs, values, languages, institutions, religions, organisations and works of art, craft, technology and commerce etc., are constitutive of our and others' historical and contemporary cultures and cultural practices.

Key to the gathering of reminders I will be emphasising the extent to which the Wittgensteinian ambition to '*show you [us] differences*' is helpfully combined with reminders about the importance of '*showing you [us] similarities*'. For as I hope to articulate, Charles Ryder's conversion to Catholicism is partly, perhaps, a way of his coming to 'live with' and 'share a life with' those he loves but whom he can no longer even meet.

In addressing the moral questions that are part of this conference's *raison d'être*, I will briefly explore the extent to which:

5) it is not immoral to try and fail to understand other cultures; yet:

6) once an attempt is underway to understand other cultures, then the way this is conducted has a moral dimension and thus value - as encountering others and/or their practices, values, objects and institutions etc., is inescapably moral.

One possible consequence of these claims is that the very idea there be such thing as intercultural understanding may well be oxymoronic, for once such substantial understanding is achieved, the 'target' culture in question is no longer distinct from one's own culture. In coming to understand, one is freshly enculturated into what then ceases to be a culture of the 'other'.

WITOLD JACORZYNSKI (CIESAS Sureste, Mexico)

The Challenge of Interculturalism: Wittgenstein's Approach

This paper has four main sections: the first section aims to elucidate the concept of “interculturalism” as it is used in educational and political projects. I will use as an example of the interculturalist theoretical frame an approach proposed by the Argentinian philosopher Nestor García Canclini who defines interculturalism not only as coming to terms with different beliefs but also as a negotiation-oriented experience. He argues that the interculturalism should be both opposed to the Europocentric absolutist view of the cultural relationship and the relativist stand which corresponds to the multiculturalist political program.

The second section describes a case for study: a story of the domestic violence in Chenalho, a contemporary Maya village in the Highlands of Chiapas in the southern Mexico. The act of violence – cutting a woman's hand by her husband – is described in a local mythology as a fight against the mystic *vaijel* (nagual) – the woman's *alter ego* – who attacked the man in the form of the Serpent. Four attitudes to this act will be described and analysed: 1) the absolutist Europocentric stance; 2) the traditional Maya attitude based on the beliefs in *vaijeltak* supernatural beings; 3) the multiculturalist/relativistic stance; 4) the interculturalist view based on “negotiation.” It will argue that the concept of negotiation is not sufficient to legitimate the moral solution to this dilemma.

The third section of this presentation outlines Wittgenstein's position in the interculturalist debate, especially his view expressed in the paragraphs 23 y 66 of *Philosophical Investigations* and 609-612 of *On Certainty*. According to Wittgenstein's view, the players of different language games involving rules or beliefs that cannot be reconciled, may combat each other using reasons but, when reasons end, recur to persuasion. This happens when missionaries convert natives. From these passages, a new approach to interculturalism can be developed, one that suggests that a common experience can be attained by using common language games, in particular that of persuasion. If the persuasion language-game were unknown in a certain culture, one could teach it in order to create a common space in which to interact with the Other.

The fourth section of this paper applies the Wittgensteinian solution to the case of domestic violence in Maya Chenalhó. We will conclude that persuasion, in some cases (including the case of domestic violence described in this paper), can be seen not only as a possible but also a morally necessary condition of intercultural experience.

SOFIA MIGUENS (Universidade do Porto, Portugal)

Truth in Ethics and Intercultural Understanding: Cora Diamond on a dispute between Bernard Williams and David Wiggins.

In this paper I present and assess Cora Diamond's approach to ethics (Diamond 2019, *Reading Wittgenstein With Anscombe, Going On to Ethics*) as a guide to the questions of intercultural understanding. Diamond does not deal with ethics as an isolated part of philosophy, a field of technical, specialized or applied issues one deals with once one is perfectly sure of how thinking goes and what it does. Rather, she connects questions in ethics with very basic issues of meaning and philosophical method. In other words, for Diamond questions in ethics ultimately border questions regarding sense and nonsense. I will try to exemplify what this amounts to by following her reading of a dispute about truth in ethics which took place between Bernard Williams and David Wiggins and concentrating on an example which particularly exercises her, that of a nineteenth century debate about slavery.

I will also pay special attention to two ideas which articulate the connection between Diamond's approach to ethics with her general position on thought, according to which thought is something vulnerable to going wrong. The ideas are that: (1) there are thinkables that do not have an intelligible negation; (2) there are situations in which our thought has gone astray.

ALICE MORELLI (Ca' Foscari University of Venice, Italy)

Seeing Differently, Behaving Differently. Intercultural Understanding between Ethics and Aesthetics.

My talk will focus on the importance of Wittgenstein's morphological-comparative method for the understanding of other conceptual systems and cultures. The acknowledgment of the contingent and ungrounded nature of our conceptual system prevents us from judging

alternative systems as strange, or unnatural. This observation encompasses both an epistemic concern and an ethical concern. Nowadays, there is a widespread tendency to emphasize the ethical tone of Wittgenstein's philosophy, especially by looking at Cavell's reflection on the rediscovery of the ordinary. However, I shall suggest that if there is indeed an ethical tone, this should be understood differently. In particular, I will argue that intercultural understanding constitutes an ethical consequence reached through an aesthetical tool, that is, the sharpening of the eye: if you see differently, you are then able to behave differently. I will show that (1) according to Wittgenstein, ethics is intimately connected to aesthetics, and (2) that what is to be human is a "general fact" that should be taken into account in the philosophical investigation aiming at clarity, rather than the end of the investigation itself. I will conclude that, if there is an ethical implication of Wittgenstein's philosophy – and I think there is – it should not be understood as a slightly Aristotelian pursuing of a better life; rather, it can be a non-philosophical development – in this case, applied to intercultural understanding – of a conceptual clarification which is reached through the education of sensibility.

GILAD NIR (University of Leipzig, Germany)

Ethical Truth, Ethical Nonsense and Ethical Transformation

Cora Diamond (2019) argues that for (some) ethical propositions to count as true is for there not to be anything else to think about the matter. Thus to deny such an ethical truth, or to hold views that conflict with it, is not to truly think. What Diamond says about truth in ethics also applies in other non-ethical contexts, one example being Anscombe's grammatical remark, "‘someone’ is not the name of someone". In theoretical contexts, the point of such claims is to signal ways in which words can be used determinately, and to mark out less determinate uses of words as nonsensical. Similarly, Diamond argues that interrogating anyone who denies ethical truths (her main example, taken from Wiggins, is "that slavery is unjust") will sooner or later yield the result that we cannot make sense of what that person says; the concepts they seem to employ will fail to hang together, and the person's persistence in denying the claim will cast that them outside of what we recognize as the realm of ethics.

Diamond's argument is not ignoring the reality of ethical disagreement, or the historical and cultural differences that reveal such gaps. Her point, rather, is that there is no way for us to remain true to our own ethical values and the kind of thinking they require, unless we

acknowledge the morally alien thinker as a failed thinker. To fail to do that would be a form of relativism. And her way of responding to relativism can arguably count as an application of Wittgenstein's response to the self-alienation that afflicts the philosopher who attempts to take a sideways-on view on our sense-making practices. Much speaks in favor of following Diamond on this point.

But in her attempt to avoid relativism, Diamond might seem to be leaving too little room for the kind of respect that is called for in an intercultural encounter: is it ever legitimate to deny that someone is not merely wrong, or thinking differently, but not even thinking? The main task of the present paper is to show how this objection can be overcome. The objection, if it is not merely another guise of relativism, still fails to grasp the context in which Diamond (following Wittgenstein) entitles herself to call other persons' words nonsense and to diagnose cases of failed ethical thought. Both in theoretical cases of nonsense and in cases of ethical disagreement there is no easy way to diagnose the relevant kind of failure without entering into an extremely close encounter, one which in fact bespeaks both respect for the other as well as the recognition of an overwhelming agreement in form of life between us and those we criticize. Likewise, though there can be no hope of altering the other's view simply by notifying them that its negation is the case, that does not mean that there is no hope at all for getting across to the other. To bring someone to overcome nonsense, in the theoretical realm, and to overcome a flawed ethical view, in the moral realm, is an endeavor which requires not information, but transformation.

NEIL O'HARA (University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom)

Local Moral Certainty and the Possibility of Cross-Cultural Understanding

Some of our cross-cultural moral differences seem irreconcilable. The notion of local moral certainty, outlined by Neil O'Hara (2018), opens a new possibility for understanding such irreconcilability. O'Hara's account, which draws on the Wittgensteinian notion of basic moral certainty, highlights the role played by a particular class of moral belief within discrete moral communities. On this view, some moral beliefs act as foundation for other less certain moral

beliefs, and some of these foundational beliefs are held so only within specific historical communities. And these beliefs are understood as indubitable, and not open to change through rational means. Plausible examples of this, argued for by O'Hara, might be the wrongness of the cultic use of pigs' blood in ancient Judaism, or the rightness of hospitality among the modern Pashtun. These moral beliefs are not shared by all humans, at least not as basic certainties; yet they form part of the indubitable ground of the moral frameworks of some historical communities.

If human moralities are structured this way, what hope is there of cross-cultural moral understanding, especially where local moral certainties are involved? In this paper I point out some reasons for thinking mutual moral understanding possible, even if some local moral beliefs are beyond rational doubt in some cultural contexts. In short, I argue that, though we may not always be able to believe with local-certainty-believers, some significant level of understanding is possible. However, I also explore the limits of such understanding, and conclude that we must necessarily be outsiders from a particular moral community, if local moral certainties are at stake.

CONSTANTINE SANDIS (University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom)

“Foreign Thoughts and Conceptual Enlightenment”

If the past is indeed a foreign country, then it is plausible to expect the conditions for understanding the foreign present to parallel those of historical understanding. Collingwood famously suggests that such understanding involves the re-enactment of past thoughts. *Mutatis mutandis*, I maintain that we can only understand contemporary foreign cultures by going through the thought processes of those who participate in them. I propose a moderate account of this, according to which the relevant understanding doesn't require one to 'read' anybody else's mind but, rather, to acquire a better grasp of the things (relationships, activities, objects) their reasoning is directed at. The Wittgensteinian view that such understanding increases as we become initiated in foreign practices finds a more poetic expression in the Ojibwa belief that they understand animals better than 'the white man' because their ancestors married the animals and learned their ways. This involves a form of conceptual enlightenment which I illustrate with reference to ongoing reports of Japanese encounters with 'ghosts'.

CHON TEJEDOR (University of Valencia)

Justice, Entitlement and the Conditions for Intercultural Understanding

What counts as understanding a culture significantly different from ours? What is involved in gaining such an understanding? Philosophical approaches to the problem of intercultural understanding typically focus on the intelligibility or rationality of the beliefs, propositions or practices of other cultures. In this paper, I argue that, whilst these approaches have clear strengths, they tend to fall foul of three distorting assumptions:

- 1) That intercultural understanding is, paradigmatically, a one-directional process of observing, decoding or interpreting the beliefs, propositions or practices of another culture, where these can be treated as essentially static epistemic objects.
- 2) That our own culture is epistemically *transparent* to us and unproblematic.
- 3) That the question of intercultural understanding is an epistemological or linguistic one that can, in principle, be treated independently of ethical considerations.

Building on Wittgenstein's early understanding of the ethical dimension of conceptual clarification and on José Medina's work on epistemic resistance, I argue that intercultural understanding requires epistemic justice between cultural interlocutors and is therefore an inherently relational ethico-epistemic process.
