

Nuno Venturinha, ed.
Wittgenstein after his Nachlass.
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Nachlässe do not come more complicated and puzzling than Wittgenstein's. While it is easier to access now there is an electronic edition, it remains difficult—one is tempted to say next to impossible—to negotiate. Wittgenstein tended to express his thoughts sketchily and without explanation, and it is often unclear exactly which ones he was and was not satisfied with, even when he put them down on paper. In this collection items in the *Nachlass* (or related documents) are examined with an eye to illuminating what Wittgenstein was up to during the thirty or so years he was engaged in philosophy.

In his introduction, 'The Wonders of the Jungle', Venturinha discusses the history of the *Nachlass* and Wittgenstein's published writings. The story has been told before but it is exceptionally well told here (and brought up-to-date). The account of the achievements and shortcomings of Wittgenstein's literary executors is judicious, the discussion of Rush Rhees's editing practices remarkably fair (2). I would only question whether commentators have been unreasonably slow to resort to the *Nachlass* (4). The manuscript material is, I would argue, at least as much in need of interpretation as the published work.

The first essay in the book, Luciano Bazzocchi's 'The "Prototractatus" Manuscript and Its Corrections', focuses on the composition of the remarks in the *Prototractatus* that Wittgenstein added last. Adopting a 'hermeneutical' approach that is both 'theoretical and philological' (27), Bazzocchi explores the question of how Wittgenstein went about supplementing the early 'logic-based *Abhandlung*' (13). Taking the work to have been completed in 1916, he holds that the key to understanding the development of the work is to see that Wittgenstein resolved the problem of the so-called general form of the proposition in tandem with the thought that all propositions are of equal value. This is intriguing and Bazzocchi gives us a lot to ponder. Still I hesitate. Was the *Abhandlung* written in 1916 rather than 1917, and was there a need for 'a solution of genius' (18)?

Next, Ilse Somavilla examines Wittgenstein's coded remarks, remarks for many years thought to have been suppressed because they reflect badly on Wittgenstein. Maybe unsurprisingly, this turns out to be a myth. Now available and decoded, the remarks are by no means unsavory. After poring over the early published notebooks, the diaries from the 1930s and the *Nachlass* itself, Somavilla concludes that Wittgenstein's use of code had to do principally with his 'intensely personal struggle with ethics and religion' (43). While allowing that he does not exploit code consistently, she provides good reasons for thinking that he opted for it mostly when broaching questions he took to be philosophically off-limits and wanted to express thoughts he deemed 'unsayable'.

In the third essay, ‘Wittgenstein at Work: Creation, Selection and Composition of “Remarks”’, J. G. F. Rothhaupt corrects common misunderstandings about the work posthumously published as *Philosophical Remarks* and summarizes his findings about Wittgenstein’s 1930-1932 manuscripts and typescripts. Rothhaupt reports that in the course of his studies he noticed that many of the remarks in MSS 107-112 are marked with a squiggle and conjectures that they were intended for a book which he judges to be ‘an outstanding project of Wittgenstein’s life and oeuvre’ (58). In addition he ventures the startling hypothesis that various remarks in TSS 208, 210 and 211, being numbered, were initially destined for a different work from the ‘Proto-Big Typescript’ (TS 212), in fact intended for a philosophical dictionary starting with ‘*Absicht*’ and ending with ‘*Zeit*’ (60-61).

The following two essays, ‘The Wittgenstein Archive of Francis Skinner’ and ‘The Whewell Court Lectures’, provide information of a somewhat different sort. Wittgenstein announced more than once that his lectures were ‘a form of publication’ (89), and Arthur Gibson and V. A. Munz discuss the records of Wittgenstein’s lectures left by Francis Skinner and Yorick Smythies, two of his most trusted students and closest friends. Gibson describes the content and peculiar history of Skinner’s archive, while Munz reviews Smythies’ archive and explains why beating it into publishable shape is no simple job. Selections from both sets of notes are said to be on the way, something that promises to contribute significantly to what we know about Wittgenstein. The main periods covered (1933-1936 and 1938-1940) are not exactly well-understood.

In ‘Robinson Crusoe Sails Again’, P. M. S. Hacker revisits the debate over the possibility of Robinson Crusoe possessing a language. He stresses that Wittgenstein’s use of ‘*Praxis*’, ‘*Gepflogenheiten*’ and ‘*Institutionen*’ does not mean that Wittgenstein saw rule-following as a social affair, argues that Wittgenstein had no objection to the possibility of someone being born with the ability to speak a language, and provides evidence from the *Nachlass* showing Wittgenstein was perfectly happy with castaways, solitary cavemen and monolingualists. This is an effective antidote to the ‘community interpretation’ of Wittgenstein’s thinking about rules. Even those convinced by Hacker’s earlier writings with Gordon Baker on the topic (or their own reading of the texts) will not, I imagine, begrudge him going through the business one more time. Also, it is surely to the good that Hacker treats the rule-following considerations of *Investigations* §§143-242 separately from the private-language considerations of §§243ff.

David Stern comes at the same topic from another direction. In ‘Tracing the Development of Wittgenstein’s Writing on Private Language’, he specifies the sources of the remarks in the *Investigations* about the concept of a private language, notes problems posed by the *Nachlass* and winds up with comments on a number of passages from *Investigations* §§243ff. Along the way he warns against interpreting Wittgenstein as a ‘philosophical grammarian’ (120) and states that ‘great caution is needed in handling Hacker’s claim [about Robinson Crusoe and solitary cavemen]’ (124). What Stern is mainly out to establish, however, is bigger—that the material on private language in the *Investigations*, the bulk of which comes from 1944, is ‘less didactic, and more dialogical’ than the material written earlier (113) and Wittgenstein, early and late, should be

regarded as moving ‘back and forth between proto-philosophical theorizing and Pyrrhonian criticism of such theories’ (120).

In ‘Concepts and Concept-Formation’ Joachim Schulte likewise appeals to the *Nachlass* to clarify something Wittgenstein says in the *Investigations*, this time Wittgenstein’s response (in section xii of Part II) to the question: ‘If concept-formation can be explained by facts of nature, shouldn’t we be interested not in grammar, but rather in that which is its basis in nature?’ (129). Schulte isolates the source material, draws attention to points suppressed in the final version of the *Investigations* and sees the paragraphs in the *Nachlass*, which come from 1946 and 1948, as revealing tensions in Wittgenstein’s thought. This is valuable and interesting, but when I reread the passage in the *Investigations* that bothers Schulte, I did not find it especially murky—another indication, perhaps, that the *Nachlass* can obscure as well as clarify.

Venturinha’s central idea in his own contribution, ‘A Re-Evaluation of the *Philosophical Investigations*’, is that ‘Wittgenstein was occupied until his death with Part I [of the book]’ (150). When the *Nachlass* is scrutinized, Venturinha contends, it is clear that Wittgenstein was at work on the subject from 1929 on and, had he lived, he would have incorporated much of the late work into Part I along with what the editors chose to publish as Part II. Moreover, Venturinha takes issue with the widely-held suggestion that Wittgenstein’s post-1946 philosophy constituted ‘a new phase in [his] thinking’ (143). I am sympathetic to his criticism of this line of interpretation but doubt that proponents of the idea of a ‘third Wittgenstein’ will concede that the differences between the two bodies of work are less substantial than they maintain.

In the final essay, ‘Towards the New *Bergen Electronic Edition*’, Alois Pichler acknowledges deficiencies in the current edition of the *Nachlass* and canvasses suggestions for its improvement. Nobody will complain if links with the correspondence are added, to say nothing of other primary sources and ‘biographical and historical-cultural commentary’ (163). More contentious would, as Pichler notes, be ‘the inclusion of philosophical commentary and ontologies’ (170). This could be a boon to scholarship—it would, for instance, make tracking down Wittgenstein’s assorted remarks about private language that much easier. But I fear this additional material would be mostly used to bolster speculative readings of the published texts. What are needed—I am sure Pichler and his fellow contributors would agree—are detailed studies of the material in the *Nachlass* (and closer analyses of the published works).

Two appendices round out the collection. In ‘The Ramsey Notes on Time and Mathematics’ Venturinha reproduces a document that he tentatively identifies, following Brian McGuinness, as a draft of the paper Wittgenstein read at the Aristotelian Society meetings in July 1929 (in lieu of ‘Some Remark on Logical Form’). And in ‘Wittgenstein’s 1938 Preface’ Venturinha reprints an English translation of an early Preface for the *Investigations*. (This was produced, Venturinha believes, at a different time from Rhees’s translation of a pre-War version of the *Investigations*, possibly by Wittgenstein himself with Theodore Redpath’s assistance.) Both documents are worth having. Though deserving a line-by-line commentary—it is more an outline than a

readable text—the draft sheds light on Wittgenstein’s thinking in mid-1929, and the 1938 preface differs in fascinating, if small, ways from the preface in the published work (for instance it begins with the words: ‘In this and the following volumes’, something Wittgenstein would not have written were he not planning a multi-volume work that included, presumably, remarks on the foundations of mathematics).

It cannot be said that *Wittgenstein After his Nachlass* shows the *Nachlass* to be the key to opening all the locks, never mind proves, as sometimes suggested, that Wittgenstein cannot be understood solely on the basis of the published work. The reason the collection pays its way is that it brings out the complexity of the *Nachlass* and the problems it presents, clarifies where some of the published writings come from and, most importantly, provides glimpses into the mind that produced the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*. What is more, there is some excellent sleuthing and many morsels to savor. The book is a work of pure scholarship, but nowadays this is, I fancy, no bad thing.

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