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The *Philosophical Investigations* and Syncretistic Writing

Syncretistic writing

In Chapter IV of his *Schreiben und Denken*, the Austrian linguist Hanspeter Ortner distinguishes and describes ten writing strategies ("Schreibstrategien"). One of them is "syncretistic writing".¹ A simple application of Ortner's definition and description of syncretistic writing to the genesis of the *Philosophical Investigations* (PI) makes clear that the PI can be said to be of syncretistic origin.² Wittgenstein's writing of the PI³ can be characterized by Ortner's seven features of syncretistic: his writing (1) hops all over the place ("Sprunghaftigkeit"); (2) combines disparate elements from his writings ("Verbindung von weit Auseinanderliegendem"); (3) is semantically open, under-determined and under-determining ("Unterdeterminiertheit und semantische Offenheit"); (4) postpones gestalt formation/elaboration ("Aufschub der Gestaltbildung"); (5) invites and offers many opportunities for creative ideas ("viele Chancen für und Einladungen an den kreativen Einfall"); (6) gives freedom to choose the points of departure and reference ("Freiheit bei der Wahl des/der Startpunktes/e und des/der Gesichtspunktes/e"); (7) is hierarchically under-determined ("hierarchische Unterbestimmtheit"); (8) works side-by-side with the already "finished" and the newly begun which implies long text building processes and parallel operations ("lange 'Bauzeit' und Nebeneinander von Fertiggestelltem und Neubegonnenem").⁴

In the following, I will try to show in more detail how the genesis of the PI is characterized by these seven features. First, the writings that constitute the PI's genesis are characterized by a strong discrepancy between the sequence of remarks in their textual order and the sequence of remarks in their physical order. Texts are put together from chronologically and argumentatively dispersed units. One example is Wittgenstein's rearrangement of remarks from an earlier dictation (TS 208) into a new text in 1930 (TS 209, published by Rush Rhees as *Philosophical Remarks*). In this new text, he abandoned both the original argumentative order and the chronological order and did not necessarily obey the criteria of consistency and coherence, not even on linguistic levels such as demonstrative reference. The work that emerges is seen by many as an unordered agglomerate of remarks although I have argued that this view can be challenged.⁵ The second example is the revision and rearrangement of the so-called Big Typescript (TS 213) in 1933-34, which is paradigmatic in its triple use of (1) the text in the typescript, (2) the handwritten revisions of it in the typescript, and (3) text in other manuscripts. In his edition of the *Philosophical Grammar* (1969), Rush Rhees has tried to take this complicated network of revisions into account and to follow it painstakingly and faithfully; by looking at the manuscript sources for this edition⁶ one realizes how much "hopping all over the place" was going on in the originals. Thirdly, MS 142, the "Urfassung" of the PI, was produced in 1936-37 from remarks stemming from different places in manuscripts and typescripts and various loci of discourse. MS 157b, 13v, contains a list of references to pages in TS 213 from which parts of the text were to be taken to write the "philosophy chapter" of this first PI version; other sources include MS 140 (last page), MS 152, MS 156a, MS 156b and MS 157a, all yielding materials, lists and drafts for the text of MS 142. The final example is TS 228: in the later stages of the PI genesis, Wittgenstein selected about 400 remarks from this typescript to include them in TS 227, the typescript used as the printer's copy for the PI.

The presence of these features alone, *hopping all over the place* and *combining disparate elements*, would not be sufficient to establish syncretistic origin. However, the PI genesis is also marked by other features of the syncretistic such as *openness and semantic under-determinacy*. This includes forms of textual variation: when writing the PI, Wittgenstein makes heavy use of (diachronic and synchronic) variants (the latter, typically occurring within one and the same remark, I call "alternatives"). Three examples, all taken from the genesis of the first sections of the PI, may suffice. In July 1931, Wittgenstein embarks on a long-lasting discussion of "the mistake" Augustine made in the description of how he had learnt language (*Confessiones* I/8). But his account of what this mistake actually consisted of varies from text to text. Even in the PI it is not clear what the mistake was that Augustine made: one part states that Augustine's description of learning language does not pay sufficient attention to the fact that different word classes exist since it suggests that there is only *one* word class, namely the class of names (PI, §1). Other parts attribute to Augustine the belief that all words are names (PI, §6). PI §6 states that Augustine does not even describe language correctly in relation to *names*; in contrast to this, however, §§3-4 concede that Augustine *does* correctly describe language with regard to names. Again other parts suggest that Augustine's description reveals a mistake of attitude rather than a mistake of reasoning: neither a wrong position nor a faulty generalization lies at the heart of Augustine's description, but rather an attitude of neglect or of drawing our attention to only *one* aspect (PI, §1). The second example concerns the issue of how, in different variants, *Bedeutung* (meaning) is related to *Hindeuten* (pointing):⁷ in the first versions, *Hindeuten* seems to be the basic notion from which *Bedeutung* is derived, but the PI Urfassung suggests the idea that *Bedeutung* is the primitive form. The third example again relates to Augustine's mistake: What lies behind it? Is it such a simple thing as a wrong description of language learning, or is the wrong description already the

expression and result of a wrong, "primitive" conception of the world? Different answers are given in the genesis of the PI. Wittgenstein's investment in producing textual variants is impressive.⁸ Both the diachronic variants at different points in the history of the texts and the alternatives within a remark document and bear semantic under-determinacy and openness. They can introduce new perspectives on a subject or open up different lines for proceeding further into it. And, as we have seen, not even the "final" PI is free from semantic openness, nor from either textual or conceptual ambiguity.⁹

As the exact meaning of remarks is often left open, or as the meaning of the text is not always fixed but multiplied and varied, so too is the form of the work: the genesis of the PI is, in some places, characterized by conscious enrichment with further *gestalts*, and generally a *postponing of the fixation of gestalt*. It is clear that after his return to Cambridge in 1929 Wittgenstein aimed to produce a new book that was to be published,¹⁰ but that he did not come up with a satisfactory vision of the form of this book until November 1936. Even after having gained such a vision, he did not succeed in bringing the work to publication in his lifetime. One reason for this was surely that he never had the feeling of having put the absolutely *right* content into the absolutely *right* form. His biggest problem was to find a way to avoid both the scylla of a collection of aphorisms and the charybdis of a closed hierarchy and taxonomy. In the *Tractatus* he had achieved cohesion and focus through strong ties of textual connectors (with *a is b, b is c, c is d ...* as a fundamental *gestalt* principle)¹¹ and a hierarchical tree-structure¹² – but the PI would become an "album" of fragments.¹³ We find a few other attempts at structuring that lie in between these two forms, among them two more academic ones: the hierarchical one in TS 213 (1933-34) and the attempt at rigid step-by step linear structuring in the Brown Book complex (1935-36). Wittgenstein abandoned both these attempts at more standard academic forms, the latter with harsh criticism in

late autumn 1936 (see MS 115, 292). What came after the Brown Book? The album form. But is the PI album a form whose *gestalt* principles are easy to recognize? Although I find it very difficult, I will later in this chapter make an attempt to see and understand the form principles of the PI, considering the fact that Wittgenstein calls his PI an "album".

The PI preface clearly tells us that Wittgenstein had at different times held different views regarding the form his book should take. It is also clear that he had a vision from early on: "the essential thing was that the thoughts should proceed from one subject to another in a natural order and without breaks." The author of the PI abandoned that vision in late 1936, or he re-conceived what "natural order" should mean. What he ended up with was a form that permitted him "to travel over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction". Thus, he settled on a form which not only permitted him to proceed with very little *closed* gestalt but also demanded further gestalt-shaping from the reader. The preface makes an important point: it is the philosophical investigation itself which *compels* us to such philosophical criss-cross travelling. The PI's non-linear album form is thus a response to a *requirement*. But neither the postponing of gestalt-formation nor the choice of an open gestalt such as the album prevents or frees the writer from at least sometimes drafting text and content arrangement and sequence. Therefore, lists of remarks and content tables find their natural place in the PI genesis also *after* 1936. An album does not lack a gestalt, but rather has a very specific gestalt, a gestalt that is crucially different from a text book. A form which develops and promotes openness and criss-crossing is not a form *without* structure, but rather a form with a structure that does exactly *that*: it develops, maintains and promotes openness and criss-crossing. This form could not be a hierarchical one. While the genesis of the *Tractatus* may be seen as crucially involving attempts at diminishing *hierarchical under-determinacy*, the genesis of the PI is characterized by a departure from fighting hierarchical under-determinacy. Therefore, the album

form is not to be regarded as a shortcoming in achievement, or as the achievement of no form, but as an achievement of a special kind. The alternative to hierarchy and linearity is not *no* form, but just a very different form which shall enable both the author and the reader to do in better ways what they can also do with hierarchy and linearity, and, in addition, to do other things which they *cannot* do with hierarchy and linearity. Clearly, invitations to and opportunities for creative ideas as well as *giving (to both the author and the reader) freedom to choose the points of departure and reference needed* are better taken care of by a criss-cross album form than by a hierarchical and linear form.¹⁴

The PI genesis is characterized by the co-existence of the already "finished" and the newly begun. While indeed some of the remarks that made it into the PI underwent little textual change since their first drafts and were thus fully formed on their first building, others were subjected to a long process of construction and re-construction: perhaps they were first erected in one form and then taken apart and combined anew with others – all this over many years. Let us look again at the first sections of the PI, more specifically §§1-4, which has subsisted as a unit since the beginning of 1931. None of the sentences of the "final" TS 227 version had been there from the beginning in 1931, but some of them had still been "sort of there" and underwent relatively little change thereafter.¹⁵ In terms of changes on conceptual levels, the first idea of bringing in Augustine's description was to use it as a positive object of comparison: Augustine's description is too simple a description of (how we learn) language, but still a correct description of a language *simpler* than ours. This use of and perspective on Augustine's description is also present in the last version. From 1936 onwards,¹⁶ however, although the earlier approach was not given up, a different and clearly negative tone becomes more dominating: Augustine's description is the expression and documentation of a primitive view of language (or even the world) which is at the basis of much

philosophical confusion and leads to many problems. Augustine's description and the views it embodies become one of the main targets, if not the key targets, of the PI. A different case, however, is the history of PI §§89-133. While one can say that most of PI §§1-4 existed from the beginning as a discursive *unit*, this never seems to have been so for the remarks from the philosophy chapter before 1937 (and it is disputed whether they even are actually in the PI¹⁷). Some of this "chapter's" remarks are first found in separate and dispersed places and were only bundled together in the making of TS 213.¹⁸ They did not, however, pass over from TS 213, the Big Typescript, to the PI without significant change, but in the spring of 1937 underwent a thorough revision which focused on what particular conception of philosophy they (and the PI *Urfassung* as a whole) should promote. Clearly, the author believed that they – in their TS 213 version – had carried a wrong conception. In the course of this revision, some remarks and passages were left out while new ones emerged and were included.¹⁹

In this section I have tried to show that it makes good sense to look at the origin of the PI as being strongly syncretistic in Hanspeter Ortner's terms. However, whether one is actually willing to acknowledge the features of the PI genesis described here as characteristic for the writing and text work which led up to Wittgenstein's PI may depend on one's view of the question as to whether the function of syncretistic writing can be more than just preliminary. Additionally, it may also depend on one's view and evaluation of Wittgenstein's philosophical programme. Ortner himself classifies Wittgenstein as a "puzzle-writer".²⁰ I think he does so, firstly, on the basis of attributing to Wittgenstein a vision of philosophy which cannot permit the syncretistic to be more than a stage to be overcome, and, secondly, on the basis of his (Ortner's) own specific view of what both philosophy and scholarly writing are or should be. While Ortner may admit that the genesis of the PI bears marks of the syncretistic, he tries to find in this genesis something, in his view, "better"

than merely syncretistic writing, precisely because he considers the syncretistic as something to be overcome and as perceived by Wittgenstein himself as something to be overcome. In contrast to this, I hold that an analysis of the PI genesis which is "ideologically" unbiased to the largest possible degree will end up classifying the author of the PI as a syncretistic writer. I additionally want to argue that the syncretistic – in the sense introduced by Ortner, but applied not only to text *production* (writing) but also to text *forming* (the making of *works*) – is in tune with Wittgenstein's own understanding and description of what philosophy and philosophical investigation is.

Consequently, I not only regard Wittgenstein as the author of the PI as a syncretistic writer, but I also look at the PI's philosophy as "syncretistic philosophy": a philosophy which defends and promotes the features of the syncretistic as natural and necessary aspects of doing philosophy. This is indeed in contrast to Ortner's normative conception of writing which embodies the ideal of linearly ordered writing and composition. The opposition between the syncretistic on the one hand and Ortner's ideal on the other is brought up by Ortner himself; as he explicitly says, the syncretistic *is* the opposite of "discursive linearity".²¹ Thus, both Ortner and the PI author see a contrast between the two: Ortner values the second higher than the first; interestingly, *the author of the PI*, however, welcomes and requires, even for the purpose of *work forming*, the first and dismisses the second.

While Ortner himself regards Wittgenstein as a "puzzle-writer", he still develops a concept of the syncretistic which is fully applicable to the PI genesis. As said, I disagree with Ortner's classification of Wittgenstein as a "puzzle-writer" and assume that our disagreement stems from different views regarding what syncretistic writing and philosophy, as conceived by the Wittgenstein of the PI, can and should achieve, and how. At the same time, I stand entirely on the shoulders of Ortner's work and use his concept of syncretistic writing not only for the study of the

PI genesis but also of its *form*. Looking at the relation between the genesis and the form of a work, we are faced with a potential asymmetry: the fact that the genesis of a work is syncretistic does not imply that the work itself is syncretistic too. Many writers work syncretistically,²² but their results will still not be syncretistic. The genesis of some of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* was definitely syncretistic – but the final work was not. Therefore, the fact that the PI has not only a syncretistic origin, but also a syncretistic form deserves considerable attention. In the next section, I will first elaborate on the claim that the PI really *is* of syncretistic form. Then I will (try to) give further reasons *why* the PI has received this form. I will, however, in this chapter not be able to do more than just scratch the surface of the big question concerning what *we* should make of the syncretistic form in philosophy, especially in the context of today's *academic* philosophy.

Syncretistic form

"Syncretistic" literally means "combining": the combining of beliefs and views, but also practices (especially in the field of "Weltanschauung"), in ways that can even be incoherent or inconsistent. A work combining a wide range of different and varied methodological approaches and stylistic features such as the PI²³ is syncretistic in this non-technical sense. Ortner acknowledges this use of "syncretistic".²⁴ In addition, "syncretistic" has for Ortner a specific sense: lacking linear-discursive order.²⁵ This is an issue explicitly addressed by the PI as well and clearly expressed in its preface. The preface stresses two points: not only does the PI lack linear-discursive order, but it even opposes it; and it does so with a *fundamentum in re*, not only *in homine*. The PI does not literally speak of "syncretistic", but of "album" (PI, Preface). How do "album" and the syncretistic relate to

each other? Does "album" add something which is not contained in "syncretistic"? In the following section, I will first reflect upon what an album is and then see how this reflection can relate to the syncretistic. I start by identifying characteristic features of an album (e.g. a photo album):

- Albums are collections of units assembled for later inspection.
- Albums assemble what already exists in its own right before the album; what makes an album specific and new is the particular arrangement or composition of the items.
- Albums do not need to be complete and comprehensive in order to be albums.
- There can be different ways of arranging the items in an album (the chronological one, the thematic one ...), and different ways of reading and looking at the album.
- Albums can give different and diverging views of one and the same object. No statement needs to be made about whether a particular view is correct, and the criss-cross relations between these views is often under-explicated and under-documented.
- Albums can contain representations of items from a wide range of different situations without needing to make something out of this diversity.

In what sense can the PI be an album? This I understand to be a question about the *form* of the PI. So, to answer it, let us first try to identify central features of the form of the PI. Then, in a subsequent step, we can see whether PI features of form match album features:

- The PI text is composed of remarks (mostly *fragments*, not aphorisms).²⁶
- The PI text is the result of a careful arrangement of what has been elsewhere before.

- In the PI, not all the topics which one might expect to be discussed are in fact discussed, and the topics discussed are not discussed comprehensively.
- In the PI, the same topic is often dealt with in many different places and from different perspectives – and one and the same remark often addresses several topics.
- The PI displays incoherence, inconsistency, ambiguity and textual openness; the internal structure of cross-reference is under-explicated and under-documented in the PI.
- The PI contains both real-life and invented cases / samples.²⁷

Every analyst of the PI's form should be able to agree with this list of form features of the PI.

While one need not think of an "album" at all in order to come up with this list, I think that many will still be able to agree that the items in the list can be regarded as exemplifications of the more general album features. We can thus say that the two lists match well and that there seems to be an intimate relationship between the form of the PI and what we understand by "album". But can we also say that the PI's album form stands in an intimate relationship to the syncretistic? Is there something which all three, the PI, albums and the syncretistic, have in common? According to Ortner's own understanding, it is non-linearity which characterizes the syncretistic, and, according to Wittgenstein, it is the non-linear criss-cross form which also characterizes his PI "album". I do not think that albums by their very nature are non-linear, but the album form definitely invites non-linear composition and also reception. It seems to me now that what I have earlier called "album in the wide sense",²⁸ and what includes *stylistic multiplicity and polyphony*, is better described in terms of the syncretistic. Yet there is another feature of the PI which is well captured by "syncretistic": the heuristic and creative functions of its form. Again, Ortner confines this function of syncretistic writing to *writing*, the process of text production only,²⁹ but it seems to me that we

need not and should not confine it in this way. It can be a feature also of the resulting *work* and the way it shall be read: "I should not like my writing to spare other people the trouble of thinking. But, if possible, to stimulate someone to thoughts of his own." (PI, Preface) In my view, the syncretistic has an epistemic-heuristic and creative role both in the production and in the reception of the text.³⁰

At first sight it may seem rather unimportant and irrelevant to try to find out why Ortner classifies Wittgenstein as a puzzle-writer rather than a syncretistic writer. It may also seem unimportant to ask why he restricts the syncretistic to text *production* and consequently does not speak of syncretistic *works*. But trying to answer these questions actually helps us to gain a better understanding not only of what is at stake with Ortner's assessment, but also of what was at stake for Wittgenstein when he left behind the Brown Book complex and began in the autumn of 1936 what today is called the PI "Urfassung". An important question for him at this time must have been whether philosophy can benefit more from non-linear and criss-cross writing and composition than from work oriented towards linearity and text book systematicity: could it even be imperative that he adopts non-linear criss-cross procedures for the treatment of philosophical problems? The PI preface answers this question clearly in the affirmative. Most philosophers and academics, however, would answer no. So too does Ortner: first of all, he does not apply the notion of the syncretistic to anything other than text *production*; the syncretistic is a feature of text genesis only. Secondly, even *if* the syncretistic was also a feature of *works*, for Ortner it could not have a distinctive positive value. For Ortner, as for most of us, the syncretistic is only "on the way to" something better, and it is to be overcome by that something better:

- "Syncretism is a way of working which the tentative and experimenting intellect applies if it cannot cope with a way of working that is more elaborated, or if it does not yet have a way of working that is more elaborated ..."
- "The heyday of syncretism is the incubation period ..."
- "With syncretism, the writer wants to expand the status-quo in order to coherently and consistently integrate new parts of the world into the already developed knowledge base."
- "Syncretistic writing is writing which searches to establish higher (= better) gestalts, and for that purpose continuously has to revise and break down lower gestalts."³¹

But is this necessarily so? Can we not accept that the syncretistic may be an author's preferred method, even if s/he *is* capable of the other, "better" methods and strategies? "The heyday of syncretism is the incubation period": can the syncretistic not have an equally important function at the time of completion and reception? Was the PI's syncretistic form not consciously chosen as the better one, with a focus on both the problems to be treated and the reader to be inspired and helped – chosen by someone whom we consider to be one of the 20th century's most important philosophers? Consequently, the value of syncretistic writing would not only be as a means of incubation, and therefore not only an author's writing device, but would have a function for forming the *work*? Could it have a function for the reader too? When Ortner says that with syncretistic writing the writer actually seeks to expand the status quo to more coherent and consistent higher gestalts, is he really still talking of syncretistic writing – or is he rather ascribing to syncretistic writing a function which it in fact does not have according to his *own* definition, and which it should not have either? Here we find ourselves not only at the centre of normative writing theory, but also at the centre of the difficulties of Wittgenstein scholarship: can we utilize

Wittgenstein well by trying to do criss-cross philosophy in the PI spirit rather than by first identifying and then applying discursive-linear strands of argument in his work? Can we do it for *academic* philosophy? Wittgenstein himself seems to have been rather pessimistic about the influence he might have. Like Ortner, most of us seem to be held captive by the picture (PI, §115) that progress in writing and thinking is progress in respect to the following points: gestalt-elaboration, continuous integration, improved consistency and coherence, linearity. In this model, syncretistic writing can never be more than an element and a phase of text production which is to be overcome by something better, and – since syncretistic forming is by definition something to be avoided – it is even more unlikely ever to be considered a positive principle of *work* forming. One is inclined to agree with Ortner:³² syncretistic writing should typically be practised by inexperienced writers only, or, when used by experienced writers, overcome when they are about to produce the work to be published. Nevertheless, we must face the fact that an eminent thinker and writer such as Wittgenstein thought differently and challenged our view with his PI. It is in fact precisely this dominant view of ours that the PI opposed, and to which it tried to present an alternative.

The PI is usually seen as a *continuation* of the Brown Book. Thus, the similarities of the two texts are emphasized more than their differences. This blurs fundamental differences between the two in form and method: while the Brown Book focuses on linearity, step-by-step procedure and systematicity, the PI employs a criss-cross procedure. The very method which was central to the Brown Book and was indeed its backbone – the linear language-game method – was "de-linearized" and "fragmentized"³³ in the transition to the PI.³⁴ According to Rush Rhees' editorial note to *Eine Philosophische Betrachtung*, Wittgenstein had dismissed the Brown Book enterprise on the basis of wrong method: Moore told Rhees that Wittgenstein had told him (Moore) that in *the*

Brown Book he had followed the wrong method, but in this manuscript [TS 220] he had applied the correct method.³⁵ What was the *Brown Book's* wrong method; which is the right one? In the 1938 PI preface drafts, Wittgenstein says: "I begin these publications with the fragment of my last attempt to arrange my philosophical thoughts in an ordered sequence. This fragment has perhaps the advantage of giving comparatively easily an idea of my method."³⁶ There has been some discussion about which "fragment" this was which Wittgenstein wanted to begin his publication with in 1938. I suggested it was MS 142 (or its typed version TS 220) which he began immediately after the abandonment of the German translation of the *Brown Book* in MS 115.³⁷ The 1938 preface drafts make it clear that Wittgenstein wants to start his publication(s) with a) the "fragment" of his last attempt at ordering his philosophical thoughts in a series, and that this fragment b) shows his method. *Which* method this is is clearly described in the same drafts: it is the method of criss-crossing rather than the method of linearity. Now, whereas the *Brown Book* complex is an example of the method of linearity, in MS 142 it is the method of criss-crossing which is exemplified. Wittgenstein says in both the preface drafts and the final PI preface that this method was an adequate response to the *nature* of the investigation; the criss-cross method was responding to the demands of the subject area, and was thus responding to a requirement. From this, I think, we should be able to infer not only that "fragment" refers to MS 142 / TS 220, but also that in 1936 the criss-cross method had been consciously upheld and transferred from the *writing* of the PI remarks (1929–1936) to their *forming* into the PI *work* (1936): it had been transferred from the process to the product.³⁸

In this chapter I have so far tried to show that the PI has a syncretistic genesis and that the principles of the syncretistic were also employed in the late autumn of 1936 for the creation of the PI form: the PI is not only of syncretistic origin but also of syncretistic form. That in the PI the

principles of genesis were also made the principles of form I considered significant. I have drawn attention to the PI preface which documents and defends this move with reference to the nature of the philosophical investigation required. I will conclude this chapter by trying to give my analysis of Wittgenstein's choice of syncretistic form yet more substance by relating it to some additional reflections about possible reasons for making the PI the way he did. After all, if the *Tractatus* was (at least partly) of syncretistic origin and did in fact not end up in syncretistic form, why should the PI have ended up as being syncretistic? Why was the syncretistic chosen for the PI? One of the reasons may have been that the syncretistic was more in tune with the nature of the writer than any other form; the syncretistic may thus have been chosen out of an ideal of authenticity and sincerity. The PI *product* should mirror and be in harmony with the PI text *production*, and with the author's own writing nature.³⁹ Moreover, the syncretistic may have been chosen out of opposition to a philosophy of "progress": the syncretistic PI form was to promote or preserve an alternative to scientific philosophy as defended by Bertrand Russell or Rudolf Carnap, or at least: a space for something which is needed *in addition* to scientific procedure. This is most strongly expressed in a draft to a preface six years earlier, where for the first time criss-cross procedure is positively described and opposed to linear procedure:

Each sentence that I write is trying to say the whole thing, that is, the same thing over and over again & it is as though they were [*alternative: they are as it were*] views of one object seen from different angles. ... One movement orders one thought to the others in a series, the other keeps aiming at the same place.

One movement constructs & takes (in hand) one stone after another, [*alternative*: picks up one stone after another] the other keeps reaching for the same one. (CV, 9 ff.)⁴⁰

Compare this with what Rudolf Carnap says in the preface to his *The Logical Structure of the World*: "... in slow careful construction insight after insight will be won. ... Thus stone will be carefully added to stone and a safe building will be erected at which each following generation can continue to work."⁴¹ These two reasons cannot of course be separated from the PI's conception of philosophy and its conception of the nature of philosophical problems itself. We may also want to relate the fact that the PI received a syncretistic and criss-crossing album form, and retained it until its last version, to the role the PI was to have as a work "in contrast to the *Tractatus*", as is also stated in the PI preface: "It suddenly seemed to me that I should publish those old thoughts and the new ones together: that the latter could be seen in the right light only by contrast with and against the background of my old way of thinking." There is one aspect to this which has been strongly emphasized recently by James Conant: PI §133 defends that in philosophy we have to use many methods rather than only one. While the *Tractatus* had followed basically one method, the PI introduces, follows and defends many methods: "There is not *a* philosophical method, though there are indeed methods, like different therapies." (PI, §133) Conant thinks there is a "distinction in philosophical conception between the methodological monism of the early Wittgenstein (who seeks to present *the* method of clarification) and the methodological pluralism of a later Wittgenstein (who seeks to present an open-ended series of examples of methods – a series that can be continued in both unforeseen and unforeseeable ways – and that can be broken off at any point). ... This transition from a definite article ("the" logic of our language) in Early Wittgenstein to a plurality

("grammars") in Middle Wittgenstein presages and prepares the ground for a subsequent transition, yet again from a definite article ("the" method) in Middle Wittgenstein to a further plurality ("methods") in Later Wittgenstein. ..."⁴² Not only the "early" but also the "middle" Wittgenstein had, in contrast to the Wittgenstein who made the PI, aspired to produce a work with *one* method only.⁴³

The PI holds that philosophy *needs* many methods. But what are these methods to be derived from? From philosophy's own problems – the "many" methods shall be derived from the ways one struggles or has struggled with one's philosophical problems:

It was true to say that our considerations could not be scientific ones. ... We must do away with all *explanation*, and description alone must take its place. And this description gets its light, that is to say its purpose, from the philosophical problems. (PI, §109)

And this was, of course, connected with the very nature of the investigation. For this compels us to travel over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction. (PI, Preface)

The nature of philosophical problems is such that they are multi-layered and multi-rooted.⁴⁴ Their treatment compels us to philosophical criss-cross travelling; Wittgenstein had been travelling in this way since 1929 – but sometimes (e.g. when producing the Brown Book) he had forgotten that he was doing *this*, and should be doing precisely this. It is syncretistic writing more than any other type of writing that permits one to develop and utilize *many different methods*. It is the syncretistic as a *form* of the work which again asks the reader to engage in the many different methods and perspectives. This way the syncretistic can find its powerful way into the PI:

The forms of creativity required for the discovery of fruitful methods in philosophy and the forms of creativity required for the fruitful application of such methods to particular problems of philosophy are recognized by Later Wittgenstein as two aspects of a single task, each of which requires an unending cultivation of the other.⁴⁵

At the beginning of Chapter IV of his *Schreiben und Denken*, Hanspeter Ortner also discusses differences between writing that shares knowledge, writing that expands knowledge and writing that creates new knowledge.⁴⁶ What is syncretistic writing best at? Probably not knowledge sharing, but rather the extension of existing knowledge and the creation of new knowledge.⁴⁷ Syncretistic writing is actually a strategy central to epistemic-heuristic writing, the writing which has the creation of new knowledge as its primary cognitive function. Is it even the case that through syncretistic writing and syncretistic form we can gain knowledge which is not available otherwise? Gottfried Gabriel thinks that not only science and logical reasoning, but also literature and the poetic have a cognitive value.⁴⁸ In a recent interview he states:

We cannot equate the academic form of philosophy with philosophy in general. Being scientific is not a necessary condition for cognition. Arts and literature also have a cognitive value. ... That's why I think that what we need is a reconciliation of logical and poetic discourse. Both forms of discourse are fully justified, depending on what the concrete aim of articulation is. They do not necessarily oppose one another. ... just as there are smooth transitions in the color spectrum, so that you can go from red to green, there are also intermediate forms in philosophy. The thesis that the different forms of philosophy are

complementary concerns not only the extremes, but also these in-between cases. Ultimately, the issue at stake is a reconciliation of analytic and continental philosophy by means of analyzing the transitions among the different forms of philosophy.⁴⁹

According to Gabriel, both analytic and continental philosophy (where a place for the poetic is retained) are required for the creation of philosophical knowledge and expertise. The poetic and literary on the one hand and the analytic on the other are complementary and add both to cognition and truth. Wittgenstein's PI represents an intermediate form in philosophy, mediating between the analytic and the continental.

I have tried to show in this chapter that the Wittgenstein of the PI saw the syncretistic (which belongs under the poetic and literary) as required for philosophical engagement. In a notebook entry from December 1933 Wittgenstein had stated:

I believe I summed up where I stand in relation to philosophy when I said: really one should write philosophy only as one *writes a poem*. That, it seems to me, must reveal how far my thinking belongs to the present, the future, or the past. For I was acknowledging myself, with these words, to be someone who cannot quite do what he would like to be able to do.

(CV, 28)⁵⁰

This remark stands in remarkable contrast to Carnap's opposition to "Dichtung" in philosophy, as Carnap had expressed it in his preface to the *Aufbau*: "... Consequently they have taken the strict and responsible orientation of the scientific investigator as their guideline for philosophical work, while the attitude of the traditional philosopher is more like that of a poet. ... This requirement for

justification and conclusive foundation of each thesis will eliminate all speculative and poetic work from philosophy. ...".⁵¹ We can say that Wittgenstein – if the *Tractatus* was his first work of "Dichtung" in philosophy (something Gabriel would assert) – achieved with the PI Urfassung his second. While the Brown Book had been poor in terms of the poetic, in MS 142 the dialogical, the metaphorical, the simile, the analogical and the means which I have described above as elements of the syncretistic are given philosophical functionality.⁵² One example is the PI §18: it invites the one who philosophizes in Carnap's spirit to look at language in a way which is guided by a liberating metaphor. Bouwsma writes that Wittgenstein appreciated (at least in September 1950) Plato's "allegories, the myths" – but not his arguments.⁵³ This appreciation of the poetic in Plato fits well with the choice of syncretistic form for the PI.

Is there an opposition between poetic and syncretistic philosophy on the one hand and analytic philosophy on the other? The Wittgenstein of the 1930 preface drafts and also of the PI seems to have seen a deep opposition between the two. The PI's form and philosophy were intended as alternatives and in opposition to forms of analytic philosophy, which Wittgenstein found in his time was becoming more and more dominant. But independently of whether one will agree with Wittgenstein on whether there is such an opposition, one will have to recognize and acknowledge that the Wittgenstein of the PI seems to have considered the syncretistic a required part of philosophical writing and also of philosophy as such – the syncretistic has to be a feature of both the process *and* the work. This already seems to be enough of a challenge, a challenge not only to analytic philosophy but to our academic standards in general.⁵⁴

Notes

1. Ortner 2000, 505 ff.
2. Ortner's complete list of writing strategies includes: (1) writing in one go; (2) writing of one idea to one text version; (3) writing of one idea to several text versions; (4) writing, through several text versions, of one idea to several new ideas; (5) planning with subsequent writing out of the plan; (6) writing down of text-externally elaborated results; (7) linear step-by-step writing; (8) syncretistic writing; (9) writing of parts; (10) puzzle-writing ("Puzzle-Schreiben"). Ortner's German labels and short descriptions are as follows: (1) "(Scheinbar) nicht-zerlegendes Schreiben. Schreiben in einem Zug, Schreiben im Stil der pensée parlée, écriture automatique. Typ des Aus-dem-Bauch-heraus-(=Flow)Schreibers"; (2) "Einen Text zu einer Idee schreiben. Typ des Einzigtext-, des Einen-Text-zu-einer-Idee-Schreibers"; (3) "Schreiben von Textversionen zu einer Idee. Typ des Mehrversionenschreibers, des Versionenneuschreibers"; (4) "Herstellen von Texten über die redaktionelle Arbeit an Texten (Vorfassungen), von verbesserten Versionen durch Arbeit am vorliegenden Text. Typ des Text-aus-den-Korrekturen-Entwicklers"; (5) "Planendes Schreiben (Plan = eine Version in Kurzschrift). Typ des Planers"; (6) "Einfälle außerhalb eines Textes weiterentwickeln. Konzeptuell extralingual + niederschreibend. Typ des Niederschreibers"; (7) "Schrittweises Vorgehen – der Produktionslogik folgend. Typ des Schritt-für-Schritt-Schreibers"; (8) "Synkretistisch-schrittweises Schreiben. Typ des Synkretisten"; (9) "Moderat produktzerlegend. Das Schreiben von Produktsegmenten. Typ des Textteilschreibers"; (10) "Schreiben nach dem Puzzle-Prinzip. Extrem produktzerlegend. Typ des Produkt-Zusammensetzers". My view is that Wittgenstein's writing contains exemplifications of all of these strategies, but that the Wittgenstein of the PI is best

classified and described as a syncretistic writer (strategy 8). Ortner, however, classifies Wittgenstein as a puzzle-writer (strategy 10).

3. I distinguish two main phases: from 1929 to 1943, with the "Urfassung" (1937) and "Pre-war" (1938), and from 1943 to 1951, with the "Intermediate" and "Final" versions as the high peaks.
4. Translations of terminology and quotations from Ortner into English are mine.
5. Pichler 2009, 57-97.
6. See Biggs and Pichler 1993, 50 ff.
7. For more details on this and the following issue see Pichler 1997, 38 ff.
8. See more on this in Pichler 1994, 91 ff. For examples stemming from the genesis of PI §§1-4 see Pichler 1997, sect. 2.
9. Allan Janik connects Wittgenstein's writing of alternatives with Hertz's concern "for showing us how alternative modes of presentation and representation can dissolve philosophical problems" (2006, 60).
10. Pichler 2004. 78 ff.
11. Also the deviation from this principle is significant: see the transition from TLP 2 to TLP 3 and from TLP 3 to TLP 4: "logisches Bild" / "logical picture" is the only term exempted from the $a \text{ is } b - b \text{ is } c - c \text{ is } d$ schema (see Stenius 1969, 18 ff., and Erbacher 2010, 82).
12. See Bazzocchi 2008, 125-40.
13. Pichler 2004.
14. According to Janik, Wittgenstein inherited the ideal of "Lückenlosigkeit" from Frege, but saw eventually that "only such a seeming potpourri of fragments could *fittingly* express his message" (2006, 108).

15. Pichler 1997.
16. See *ibid.*, 78 ff.
17. See for example Savigny 1991, 307-19.
18. See esp. TS 212.
19. It has been standard to present the story as though the so-called PI philosophy chapter had been more or less taken over from the Big Typescript (see esp. Hilmy 1987). In my opinion, this view has, however, been successfully challenged by Stern (2006, 205-29), Pichler (2007, 123-44) and, more recently, Conant (2011, 620-45).
20. Ortner 2000, 543 ff.
21. "Ich verwende den Begriff *synkretistisch* als Gegenbegriff zu *linear geordnet-fortschreibend-diskursiv*." (Ortner 2000, 496)
22. For examples see Ortner 2000, 491 ff.
23. See Pichler 2004, 199 ff.
24. Ortner 2000, 497.
25. *Ibid.*, 496.
26. I do not claim that Wittgenstein wrote no aphorisms; most of the remarks published in *Vermischte Bemerkungen / Culture and Value* are in my view aphoristic.
27. The two lists are based on material published earlier (Pichler 2009; taken, with revisions, from *Wittgenstein: Como ler o album?* Organized by Arley R. Moreno. Published by Coleção CLE, Campinas, Brazil. Used by permission of the publisher).
28. *Ibid.*

29. "Ein weiterer Ertrag dieser Strategie: Gedanken – solange die Tätigkeit des Schreibens dauert, Gedanken bis zum letzten Augenblick, Gedanken auch, die erst beim Schreiben entstehen" (Ortner 2000, 529).
30. So far there has been relatively little discussion of Wittgenstein's "album". Exceptions include Binkley (1973), Schobinger (1991), Pichler (2004), Moreno (2009), Gründler (2011), Keicher (2011, with a focus on Wittgenstein's photo album) and, most recently, Gorlée (2012). Moreno calls the process which led up to the PI, Wittgenstein's "Big Diary"; the PI "album" is one of several possible outcomes from that process. Gorlée provides a comprehensive investigation of Wittgenstein's "album" and related notions such as "fragment" and "fragmentariness" from a semiotic point of view.
31. Ortner 2000, 533, 535-6.
32. Ibid., 493.
33. Pichler 2004, 136.
34. One should expect that a study of the Skinner Wittgenstein materials (see Gibson 2010) would shed additional light on the move from the Brown Book to the PI.
35. My translation; the original German reads: "Wittgenstein, sagte Moore weiter, habe ihm erklärt, er sei im *Brown Book* der falschen Methode gefolgt, in diesem Manuskript dagegen habe er die richtige Methode angewandt. Moore gab zu, er wisse nicht, was Wittgenstein damit meinte." (EPB, 12 ff.)
36. I quote from a Wittgenstein *Nachlass* typescript which contains the English translation of the German "Pre-war version" of the PI preface and was edited and published by Venturinha (2010). This typescript was discovered only recently and is kept in the Austrian National Library under Cod. Ser. N. 39,544. The original German is in TS 225.

37. Pichler 2004, 62.
38. Josef Rothhaupt has recently suggested the fragment was the compound of MS 140, MS 114 and MS 115 (2011, 249); Peter Keicher has earlier suggested it is the first remark of MS 116 (2000, 225 ff.). But these items can only be the "fragment" inasmuch as they can be shown to exemplify the criss-cross method. In my view, it is MS 142 and TS 220 which do this much better than any other piece up to 1938.
39. On this see more in Pichler 2004, 222 ff.
40. The *Nachlass* source is MS 109, 200 ff., from November 1930. For a brief general study of all of Wittgenstein's (drafts for) prefaces, see Keicher 2004.
41. Carnap 1967, XVII. The original German from *Der logische Aufbau der Welt* (1928) – which Wittgenstein must have alluded to – reads: "... es wird in langsamem, vorsichtigem Aufbau Erkenntnis nach Erkenntnis gewonnen ... So wird sorgsam Stein zu Stein gefügt und ein sicherer Bau errichtet, an dem jede folgende Generation weiterschaffen kann." (1961, XVIII ff.) I discuss the contrasting relation between Carnap's 1928 preface and Wittgenstein's 1930 preface draft more comprehensively in Pichler 2009. The view that Wittgenstein's 1930 preface draft might refer to Carnap's preface to his *Aufbau* was to my knowledge first defended by Georg Henrik von Wright (1993, 97 ff.). On Wittgenstein's similar relation to Russell's conception of philosophy see Baker and Hacker 1983, 259 ff.
42. Conant 2011, 632 and 640.
43. Conant puts strong emphasis on the year 1937 and that it was in that year that Wittgenstein awoke to a new conception of philosophy: "It is this conception of what he seeks, in seeking *the* method of philosophy, that Wittgenstein finally came to abandon in Norway in 1937" (ibid., 642). I think that *if* a date is stressed, it should be November 1936 when Wittgenstein

embarked on the syncretistic "Urfassung" of the PI in MS 142. If the PI's philosophical methods are tied to the syncretistic and the album form (as I have tried to show), then Wittgenstein's new conception of philosophy is practised from *November 1936* onwards. Wittgenstein's spring 1937 work on the PI's "chapter on philosophy", which is the focus of Conant's claim, is definitely a crucial element in expressing this new conception of philosophy, but it is just that: an expression of an old conception abandoned and a new one already found and practised. Thus, I see the 1937 "meta-philosophical" remarks as a reflection upon and stock-taking and documentation of a philosophical practice since November 1936 which sought expression and documentation, rather than as the mark of a new beginning. Naturally, as Conant himself states (*ibid.*, 624), any talk of *terminus post* or *ante quem* can be misleading, but if one wants to invoke a date (as Conant himself does), it is November 1936 rather than spring 1937. Stressing the later date blurs the point which Conant himself wants to emphasize in the end: with the shift to the PI, a change in methods and practice took place rather than only a change in the conception of methods and practice. Conant's emphasis on 1937 could, however, be defended if one could show that Wittgenstein's spring 1937 work on the "chapter on philosophy" had a significant retroactive effect, so that the MS 142 material written before underwent renewed editing along with, or subsequent to, the meta-philosophical work.

44. Pichler 2007, 130.

45. Conant 2011, 643.

46. Ortner's terminology is: "Wissen wiedergebend", "Wissen erweiternd" and "Wissen schaffend" (2000, 348).

47. *Ibid.*, 537.

48. See for example Gabriel 1991.

49. Gabriel 2012, 170.

50. The *Nachlass* source is MS 146, 25v, with its fair copy version in MS 115, 30).

51. Carnap 1967, XVI ff. The original German reads: "... Das hat zur Folge, dass die strenge und verantwortungsbewusste Grundhaltung des wissenschaftlichen Forschers auch als Grundhaltung des philosophisch Arbeitenden erstrebt wird, während die Haltung des Philosophen alter Art mehr der eines Dichters gleicht ... Aus dieser Forderung zur Rechtfertigung und zwingenden Begründung einer jeden These ergibt sich die Ausschaltung des spekulativen, dichterischen Arbeitens in der Philosophie. ..." (Carnap 1961, XVIII ff.)

52. In Pichler 2004 I have made an attempt at explicating this functionality in some detail.

53. Bouwsma 1986, 60 ff.

54. This paper has come about through presentations at a number of conferences and meetings: in Aachen (2010, org. K. Herrmann, D. van Hulle and A. Gellhaus), Innsbruck (2011, org. A. Janik, U. Lobis and J. Wang), Marifjøra (2011, org. K. S. Johannessen and S. Säätelä) and Paris (2012, org. A. Soulez). I want to thank these meetings' organizers and participants for helpful discussion. For valuable comments I also want to thank H.-W. Gabler, Gottfried Gabriel, D.L. Gorlee, J. Klagge, A. Moreno, D. Smith (who also helped me with translating parts of Ortner 2000 into English), S. Szeltner and N. Venturinha.

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