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Ludwig Wittgenstein

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Notebooks: 1914-1916 (Classic Reprint) Ludwig Wittgenstein
Excerpt from Notebooks: 1914-1916

It was Wittgenstein's habit to work by writing down separate paragraphs, or 'remarks' as he sometimes called them - for they might comprise more than one paragraph - on the questions that were exercising him. Later he would seek for an arrangement of his results which would make a satisfactory book. This was as much hard work as the thinking that had gone into the 'remarks'; and he did not aim to incorporate all the remarks that he was satisfied with in the book that finally emerged. There is a great difference between a mere compilation from his notebooks, like the Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics or the present volume, and Philosophical Investigations or the Tractatus.

Most of the notebooks containing his preliminary work, belonging to all his periods of writing, were destroyed by his orders in 1950. These included a large number of notebooks from the time of germination of the Tractatus. Three of these last survived, however, by the accident of having been left in the house of his youngest sister, Mrs. Stonborough, at Gmunden, instead of in Vienna. They were written in the years 1914-16 when Wittgenstein was 25-7 years old. The first two are continuous. They form the main body of the present volume. The Appendices comprise two sets of notes, one composed in 1913 and given to Russell, and the other dictated to G. E. Moore in Norway in 1914; and, further, such passages from Wittgenstein's letters to Russell as bear on the Tractatus.

We publish this material as an aid to students of the Tractatus. Most of it is no easier than the Tractatus itself; it naturally shews development; thus when it appears to present views different from those of the Tractatus, there is no need to reconcile the two. It should not be used without more ado as evidence for particular interpretations of the Tractatus. It does shew clearly, however, what problems formed the context of Wittgenstein's remarks in the Tractatus: in this way it will serve to cut short some argument where wholly irrelevant contexts are supposed by an interpretation.

We have marked the paragraphs that are more or less similar to entries in the Tractatus.

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