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Reviewed by Mauro Luiz Engelmann

Review: *Wittgenstein: Lectures, Cambridge 1930–1933: From the Notes of G. E. Moore*, edited by David G. Stern, Brian Rogers, and Gabriel Citron

Mauro Luiz Engelmann

This book is the result of serious and meticulous editorial work, and it makes available a new source of material for Wittgenstein-studies and the history of analytical philosophy. With the attention to details and background information, the book introduces a new generation of edited lectures, far superior to the ones published in the past. The quality of the work reminds one of the edition of Wittgenstein's diaries in James Klagge and Alfred Nordmann, eds., *Ludwig Wittgenstein: Public and Private Occasions* (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003) and of letters in Brian McGuinness, ed., *Wittgenstein in Cambridge: Letters and Documents 1911–1951* (Wiley–Blackwell, 2012).

The editorial introduction to the book provides readers not familiar with the material with a clear overview. The editors explain in detail the nature of Moore's complete notes, available for the first time, their relevance, how they connect with Wittgenstein's development, and their *sui generis* position in relation to other notes of Wittgenstein's lectures taken by some of his students. The introduction also presents a comparison between the complete notes published in the volume and the notes that Moore had already published himself in *Mind* (1954–55) and in his *Philosophical Papers* (1959) as "Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930–33" (the lectures also appear in *Philosophical Occasions 1912–1951*). The book gives all necessary background of citations and mentioned names in the lectures in informative footnotes, which are connected with an index and some biographies of historic figures

(for instance, Ernst Haeckel). Some biographies could have been richer in details, especially of those figures who played a relevant role in Wittgenstein's cultural environment (for instance, Gottfried Keller and Heinrich Hertz), but the very concern over presenting them in order to help the readers already shows the seriousness of the edition. The appendix also contains a short paper by Moore on Wittgenstein's so-called "rules of grammar", written for a discussion in a class taught by Wittgenstein in February 1932, and some notes taken by John King recording Wittgenstein's reply to Moore. In his paper Moore criticized Wittgenstein's understanding of his peculiar notion of "rule of grammar" and the way Wittgenstein seemed to explain "necessity" grounded in that notion in 1931 and 1932. Arguably, Moore's critique played an important role in Wittgenstein's subsequent understanding of the notion. An interesting fact about the book, explained in the introduction, is that Moore's original notes are accessible at wittgensteinsource.org. If in doubt, the reader can check online the facsimile of the published notes, Moore's summary notes, and the original essay on "grammar". The reader might also find interesting Stern's discussion of editing policies in "Reflections on Editing Moore's Notes in *Wittgenstein: Lectures, Cambridge 1930–33*" (*Belgrade Philosophical Annual* 30, 2017).

The complete notes of G. E. Moore now available are particularly significant because they document part of the transition of Wittgenstein's middle period, which one could call his "early middle period" (1929–33). Lectures from 1930 show Wittgenstein struggling with ideas from the *Tractatus* and views concerning phenomenology that he adopted after his return to philosophy in 1929. Lectures from 1931 onwards show how he was beginning to articulate the ideas of a synoptic view or representation of "grammar" and a new method. Quite interesting, among other things, is the centrality of the notion of "grammar" at the time and how such a notion is meant to account for different necessary sentences, which is precisely the topic

that raises Moore's suspicions in his paper from 1932. Thus, the appendix "Moore's short paper on Wittgenstein on Grammar" (367–78) already mentioned is very welcome. Here, however, one must be very careful. One cannot forget that remarks from the early middle period are part of a specific context, and that if similar remarks appear later in Wittgenstein's works their sense may change significantly. Although Wittgenstein scholars know about the importance of the notion of "context", sometimes they are prone to forget about it when dealing with Wittgenstein's own remarks appearing in different places. Notes from 1932 and 1933 also show Wittgenstein re-evaluating the *Tractatus* and presenting some its ideas in a new context. These discussions could shed some light on interpretational disputes regarding the book, if properly understood.

However, more important than the discussion of aspects of the *Tractatus* and some topics connected with the *Philosophical Investigations* is that the lectures are very helpful for the understanding of two works or unfinished-works of Wittgenstein's from the early middle period itself: the *Philosophical Remarks* (1930) and the *Big Typescript* (1932–33). Central ideas in the context of *Philosophical Remarks* such as experiential propositions understood as hypotheses, physical objects as part of language, intention, the critique of Russell's epistemology in the 1920s, are all discussed in an illuminating way in the Lent and May terms of 1930. Also introduced and discussed is Wittgenstein's philosophy in the *Big Typescript*, where the centrality of the notion of "grammar" is expressed by means of a calculus conception of language that limits the application of Wittgenstein's new method of doing philosophy, namely, the method whose goal is finding misleading analogies and misleading trains of thought that generate philosophical problems. The application of the method and many aspects of the calculus conception of language appear in lectures from 1931–33. Thus, if one calls *Philosophical Remarks* Wittgenstein's "first philosophy" and the *Big Typescript* his "second philosophy" after his return, Moore's notes are an important tool

for us to understand both philosophies in their context and the transition from the one to the other as well.

Concerning *Philosophical Remarks*, there is something possibly misleading in the editorial introduction that I need to address. The editors claim that *Philosophical Remarks* was used as a fellowship dissertation in December 1930 (xxxiv). The fact is that almost all the remarks contained in it were written before the middle of March 1930, but certainly none after 24 April 1930, and in April or May Wittgenstein indeed handed in a typescript to Russell in order to renew a fellowship. There are letters from Russell, Moore, and Wittgenstein that attest that. However, no letters, remarks in manuscripts or records of any kind that show the existence of the "December dissertation" or that Wittgenstein needed it for his December fellowship have been presented at this point. In fact, if he needed such a dissertation in December, and records were found for that effect, it would still be surprising if the hypothetical dissertation turned out to be *Philosophical Remarks*, since none of the remarks that Wittgenstein wrote from the end of April until December 1930 appear there. So, given that "Wittgenstein's thought was changing rapidly during the first half of the 1930s" (xliii), as the editors point out, it would be strange for him to leave out of the "December dissertation" remarks written during that period.

There are other reasons that make this book important. The very extensive notes were taken by Moore, who was not only a great philosopher, but someone who had discussions with Wittgenstein for many years. Besides, the book contains a significant amount of new material from lectures in 1932–33, which was not included in Moore's published notes. However, it is not just a question of quantity. The complete notes are far richer than the notes Moore published. They preserve exactly the sequence of lectures and introduce new topics. Besides discussions on philosophy of logic and mathematics, particularly interesting are discussions about Freud and Frazer, and some about Darwin. Alice Ambrose's *Wittgenstein Lectures: Cambridge, 1932–*

1935 contains some of the remarks, but with less details and in a rather unclear context. Moore's notes are far more detailed. The discussions about Frazer during the May Term of 1933 are singularly relevant, for they give us a link between the first set of remarks on Frazer from 1931 and the second set from 1936 (see "Remarks on Frazer's *Golden Bough*" in James Klagge and Alfred Nordmann, eds., *Philosophical Occasions: 1912–1951*, 115–55). Something similar must be said about discussions on religion, ethics and aesthetics, which are far thinner in Ambrose's published notes. Those lectures are a link between the "Lecture on Ethics" and the *Lectures & Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology, and Religious Belief* from 1938 and later, edited by Cyril Barrett, and the recently published (2017) *Wittgenstein's Whewell's Court Lectures: Cambridge 1938–41*, edited by Volker Munz and Bernhard Ritter. (The latter book is also part of a new generation of edited lectures.) What seems to unify all those topics is the idea that "philosophic-scientific explanations" concerning religion, aesthetics, and ethics are quite limited, and that a new kind of investigation ("descriptive aesthetics", etc.) is preferable. A background unification for all those discussions, I think, is Wittgenstein's dissatisfaction with modernity (see, for instance, the "Foreword" to *Philosophical Remarks*). One can see that in those lectures he is trying to unify his personal views and his "grammatical philosophy" at the time.

However, one should not think that the publication of the complete version of Moore's notes makes the notes published by Desmond Lee and Alice Ambrose dispensable. They are still very useful for several reasons: it may be important to contrast notes, some points may have escaped Moore, and the fact that Moore was not present in all lectures and discussion sessions. (Desmond Lee's *Wittgenstein's Lectures Cambridge, 1930–1932*, 5–6 and 9–10, are good examples.) In fact, the comparison with the notes edited by Desmond Lee points to relevant information missing from the new Moore notes. The editors duly inform the reader that Moore was absent or did not take notes on the

fourth meeting in February 1930, when Wittgenstein held a lecture and discussion combined according to Lee. However, they could have informed the reader about what was discussed on that occasion as well, namely, Ogden and Richards *The Meaning of Meaning* and, more importantly, Russell's *The Analysis of Mind*. This topic is important for many reasons, but the first that comes to mind is that it also appears as a relevant topic in *Philosophical Remarks*.

Moore's own "Wittgenstein's Lectures in 1930–33" still remains relevant as well, for there one finds him struggling with Wittgenstein's views and giving important inputs about some problems and tensions in Wittgenstein's "grammar". In fact, what one should keep in mind is that in order to appreciate Wittgenstein's philosophies from the early middle period, one must consider all the material available as a whole: the previous published lectures by Lee and Ambrose, Moore's complete notes, Moore's published notes and, of course, Wittgenstein's own manuscripts.

Independently of particular points discussed in this review, the fact is that the edition of Moore's complete notes introduces a new, higher standard for the publication of Wittgenstein's lectures. (A second edition of Lee's and Ambrose's notes mirrored in its editorial work would be very welcome.) I must recommend it to anyone interested in Wittgenstein's work and philosophical development, but also to those interested in the history of analytical philosophy in general. The fact that Moore attended Wittgenstein's lectures, took detailed notes, and challenged him in some ways is certainly a first rate event.

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