

Report on the Philosophy Drama Project which received a Grant from the APA

1. *the grant from the APA*

The APA were both very generous and very encouraging when I approached them for support for a Philosophy Drama Project, giving us a grant of US\$2000. All involved in the project are most grateful for this grant-in-aid to what must have seemed to the grant committee as a most unusual request. The chief adjudicator of the APA review process involved took the trouble to write to me personally saying that "it [the play] was terrifically interesting and beautifully done...I much look forward to seeing it on stage...So many, indeed virtually all details throughout struck me as just right in tone and spirit... Almost forgot: absolutely brilliant closing line of Ottoline's [coming after the reference to Wittgenstein 's "Tell them I had a wonderful life.": 'What about *them*?'"

2. *aim and advertising*

An important part of the project was to bring philosophy, in this case the life and thought of that troubled genius, Ludwig Wittgenstein, to a public that would not normally come in contact with it. Thus considerable emphasis was placed on advertising. Besides sending posters to universities, we sent advertising materials by "mail shot" to reading groups, café clubs and literary societies in and around London. Riverside Studios, Hammersmith, west London, where the production was to take place, also advertised the play on its web site. The producer/director of the drama production, Nick Blackburn, was interviewed on an arts radio station in London (Resonance 104.4fm). The hour long program also included a pre-recorded interview with the author, William Lyons. In all these advertising materials and events it was mentioned that the production had been supported by a grant from the APA.

3. *the production*

The play, entitled "Wittgenstein – The Crooked Roads", was performed at the Riverside Studios, Hammersmith, London, from April 19th to May 7th 2011. The theatre company who produced the play, Fleet Productions, comprised young and enthusiastic performers most of whom had recently graduated from the University of Cambridge. The production was avant-garde, unconventional and full of life. (*A programme for the production is enclosed.*)

The first two performances, 19th and 20th April, were previews. On the 20th April a large group of people (c. 20-25) from the British Wittgenstein Society were in the audience and the cast and author met with them afterwards. They were very pleased with the production. The performance of the 21st April was the premiere and the Director of the Austrian Cultural Forum in London, Dr Pieter Mikl, whose Forum was a conspicuously generous supporter of the project, was in attendance with his wife.

4. the Q&A

After the performance of 28th April 2011, when 102 people were present, there was a Question and Answer session involving the author, William Lyons, and the producer/director, Nicholas Blackburn. Felicitously the date coincided with newspaper reports in Britain of the finding of Wittgenstein manuscripts among the papers of Wittgenstein's friend and confidant, the mathematician Francis Skinner. So there was a strong interest in learning about Wittgenstein as well as in discovering how the author came to write the play, how the producer/director decided to put on the play and chose the avant-garde style of production.

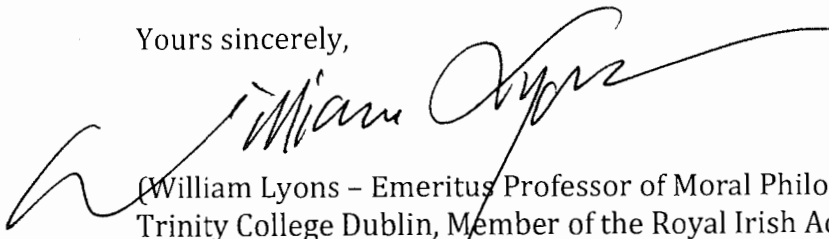
I should mention that Wittgenstein's great niece, Margaret Stonborough, was present on this occasion and mentioned some family anecdotes about Wittgenstein. Afterwards she introduced herself to the author and said how much she had enjoyed the play, remarking that the actor who played Wittgenstein, Rob Heath, had conformed to her idea, passed on by her family, of how her great uncle had been.

5. the reviews

While Riverside Studios was evidently too off-off-the West End to come to the notice of the national newspapers reviewers, it received a lot of attention from the regular online arts magazine reviewers. (*These are attached*). The young theatre company who produced the play, Fleet Productions, Wiltshire, England, headed by Nick Blackburn, talk of touring with the Wittgenstein play but I have yet to hear the details. I hope that the play will eventually be performed somewhere in the United States in the not too distant future, though I presume that it would be beyond the resources of Fleet Productions to tour that far from home.

It only remains for me to express my deep gratitude to the APA for its typically generous and practical help and encouragement for this unusual philosophical project.

Yours sincerely,



(William Lyons – Emeritus Professor of Moral Philosophy 1837 and Fellow of Trinity College Dublin, Member of the Royal Irish Academy and emeritus member of the APA)

15. IV. 2011.

THE LONDONIST

Theatre Review: Wittgenstein @ Riverside Studios

BY LONDONIST · APRIL 26, 2011.

'Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must be silent.' These are Ludwig Wittgenstein's most famous words and, strangely enough, not the most accurate description of this new play about his life. For *'Wittgenstein (The Crooked Roads)'* is undaunted by his famously incomprehensible ideas. It's a hugely imaginative production that grabs philosophical enquiry by the shoulders and gives it a good shake.

Ludwig Wittgenstein is regarded as one of the greatest philosophers of the 20th Century. Spanning most of his life, from his earlier encounters with Bertrand Russell in Cambridge to a final trip to New York, this is a play which deals with the man, his ideas and his disillusionment.

It's clear from the start that this is to be no normal rendition of Wittgenstein's life. Pre-recorded actors flicker on television screens and interact with the live cast (perplexing), a First World War artillery bombardment is evoked by rattling chairs on the floor (ingenious) and cigarettes are replaced by balloons (just plain bizarre). That's not mentioning the moments played out atop a small table, and the actors playing multiple characters in one scene.

This is a show brimming with ideas and, while they sometimes seem a little unnecessary, these playful techniques never smack of gimmickry. Rather they lend a lightness to proceedings, a sense of fun which aids in the digestion of some baffling philosophical ideas.

At the core of the play is Rob Heap's fine performance. His straight and

twitching portrayal of Wittgenstein captures perfectly the philosopher's frustrations and humanity. It's an intensive performance that is played off beautifully against his more whimsical companions.

Looking about, it's clear whom *Wittgenstein* has attracted. Tweed and corduroy abound, suggesting a partly academic audience. This is, we feel, a play for those with a little philosophical grounding. After all, its writer, William Lyons, is Professor Emeritus of Philosophy at Trinity College, Dublin. Yet this learned background is part of the play's success.

'*Wittgenstein*' is not afraid to air philosophical ideas. Did we understand them all? No. Will you understand them? Probably not. Does that matter? Not a bit. In fact that's the whole point. As we find in the brilliant viva scene, very few people understood Wittgenstein, not even his previous teachers.

Wittgenstein (The Crooked Roads) runs at Riverside Studios until 7 May. Tickets £15 (£10 concs.)

By Jon Davis

Theatre Reviews, London (online)

Chris Ellis, Theatre Reviews, London – **5 stars**

"Thoroughly enjoyed last night's performance: delightfully constructed and enacted: not easy to understand, but so what, why not."

David 28, Theatre Reviews, London – **5 stars**

"A moving and beautifully cast production. Highly recommended."

Sally 38, Theatre Reviews, London – **4 stars**.

“As the character G.E. Moore, played by Richard Dodwell, half says in the play: ‘Though I don’t understand it, I am quite sure Wittgenstein (The Crooked Roads) is a work of genius.

A thoroughly enjoyable evening. A very complex and riveting subject dealt with both seriously and with jest. Director Nick Blackburn gave us a subtle and beautifully crafted look at the turmoil of Wittgenstein’s life, while providing enough material to make sure I left with a thousand questions to ask.”

Victoria Claringbold*, Theatre Reviews, London – **2 stars**.

““Bizarre and often confusing.... Wittgenstein is played by Rob Heaps who seemed to fluff his lines a lot... Unfortunately, the many scenes and lack of real magnetism from the lead made it hard to enjoy and understand. The staging was dynamic and the music was definitely diverting though perhaps not in the way it was intended.”

[*She saw only a preview.]

Julie 29, Theatre Reviews, London - **5 stars**

“Victoria Claringbold appears to have completely lost grasp of the sheer intelligence of this fine piece of experimental theatre – which masterfully recreates one of philosophy’s most eccentric and troubled minds for the stage. I thought Rob Heaps’ performance to be one of the finest I’ve seen... I think the illusion that he “seemed to fluff his lines a lot” is an accolade to the director, who seemed to have wanted to give us the illusion – through earpieces the actors were wearing – that all the characters are struggling within their own interior world. After all, this isn’t theatre for the lazy minded!

Oddly, at a post-dhow talk I recall a woman named Margaret, the great niece of Ludwig Wittgenstein, to say that Rob Heaps performance was very “probable”. I don’t think as an actor he could have asked for a better compliment!”

“Blog” comments

Guy Bennett-Hunter – blog (22nd April 2011).

“Loved Lyons's play re Wittgenstein. Production v unpolished. Owed to Jarman, showed Witt as a fascinating man.”

Kate 11982

“Just seen a very creative play on Wittgenstein at Hammersmith, Riverside.”

A personal email to me from Margaret Stonborough [great niece of Ludwig Wittgenstein]

“Many congratulations on your excellent play. How anybody can make a play about philosophical ideas work without dwelling on the sex or the Nazis is a total mystery but you did brilliantly. I hope your play goes on to much wider circulation.

It was lovely to meet you and see you answer the questions [at the author and director Q&A session] deftly and with great charm. Oh yes, the woman who queried the way you made Great Uncle Ludwig speak raised an interesting point. Within the conventions of theatrical speech, I bet he did talk just like that: explosive; frighteningly precise; endlessly searching. My father was a bit like that too but sadly with none of the brilliance. It all seemed right to me. I thought Rob Heaps did an excellent job bringing out Great Uncle Ludwig's force of thought and vulnerability. He even got some of the charisma and the charm which that family had in spades apparently when they were not frightening you to death!.

By the way, a very minor point, my grandfather was Jerome Stonborough (John was my father) but perhaps that was just a slip of the actor's tongue.

Congratulations once again. I would love to meet you properly and have a coffee or something? Perhaps when Brian McGuinness [an award-winning biographer of Wittgenstein] is in this country?

Love,
Margaret

PS Did I tell you this? My grandmother (Gretel) said to me when I was about 10:
'You should always tell the truth, child: the truth can never hurt'. Says it all really,
doesn't it?"



5/20

Ludwig Wittgenstein

Samuel Beckett III

WITTGENSTEIN (THE CROOKED ROADS)
A PLAY BY WILLIAM LYONS


CAST

ROB HEAPS
LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

ISABELLE SCHOELCHER
BERTRAND RUSSELL
MICHAEL DROBIL
DEAN OF THE MORAL SCIENCES FACULTY

RICHARD DODWELL
G. E. MOORE
NORMAN MALCOLM

CLARA PEREZ
LADY OTTOLINE

NICK BLACKBURN
KRAUS

WITH SYLVESTER MCCOY

CREW

DIRECTOR AND PRODUCER
NICK BLACKBURN

LIGHTING DESIGNER
DUNCAN FLIGHT

TECHNICAL MANAGER
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DESIGN ASSOCIATE
LEE HAMPSON

PRESS MANAGER
RICHARD DODWELL

WITH THE GENEROUS SUPPORT OF THE AUSTRIAN CULTURAL FORUM
AND A DONATION BY THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL ASSOCIATION

The MIT Press NEWS



**James C. Klagge is Professor and Chair
of Philosophy at Virginia Tech.**

Wittgenstein in Exile James C. Klagge

Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1922) and *Philosophical Investigations* (1953) are among the most influential philosophical books of the twentieth century, and also among the most perplexing. Wittgenstein warned again and again that he was not and would not be understood. Moreover, Wittgenstein's work seems to have little relevance to the way philosophy is done today. In *Wittgenstein in Exile*, James Klagge proposes a new way of looking at Wittgenstein—as an exile—that helps make sense of this. Wittgenstein's exile was not, despite his wanderings from Vienna to Cambridge to Norway to Ireland, strictly geographical; rather, Klagge argues, Wittgenstein was never at home in the twentieth century. He was in exile from an earlier era—Oswald Spengler's culture of the early nineteenth century.

Klagge draws on the full range of evidence, including Wittgenstein's published work, the complete *Nachlaß*, correspondence, lectures, and conversations. He places Wittgenstein's work in a broad context, along a trajectory of thought that includes Job, Goethe, and Dostoyevsky. Yet Klagge also writes from an analytic philosophical perspective, discussing such topics as essentialism, private experience, relativism, causation, and eliminativism. Once we see Wittgenstein's exile, Klagge argues, we will gain a better appreciation of the difficulty of understanding Wittgenstein and his work.

"James Klagge's portrayal of Wittgenstein as an exile is original, engaging, and persuasive. In a crowded field, it is a genuinely useful addition to the secondary literature and should be read by all those interested in understanding both Wittgenstein himself and his philosophy." — Ray Monk, author of *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*

"Fascinating and convincing. This book makes a central contribution to Wittgenstein studies." — Marjorie Perloff, Sadie Dernham Patek Professor of Humanities, Stanford University, and author, *Wittgenstein's Ladder*

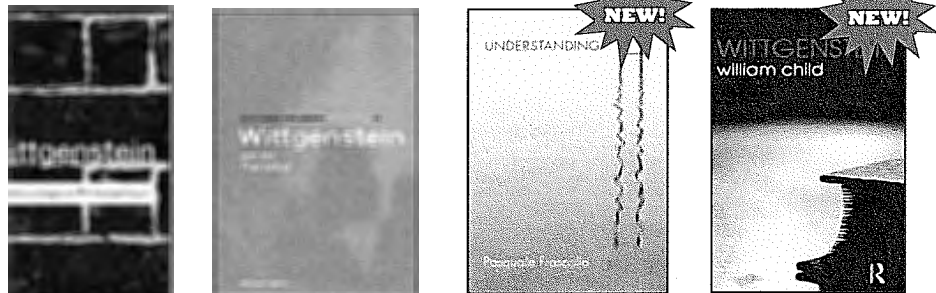
"A subtle and fascinating study of Wittgenstein as outsider, with respect to both the world in which he lived and the intellectual consensus in philosophy and the mind sciences with which his views were (and are) so dramatically at odds. Klagge addresses the intriguing questions of why Wittgenstein felt he would not be understood, and why we, increasingly, may fail to understand him." — Louis Sass, author of *The Paradoxes of Delusion: Wittgenstein, Schreber, and the Schizophrenic Mind*

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Wittgenstein

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PROLOGUE
44 BEDFORD SQUARE, LONDON. 1951.

ACT 1: CERTAINTY

- ONE**
RUSSELL'S ROOMS, TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE. 1911.
- TWO**
RUSSIAN FRONT. 1916.
- THREE**
PRISONER OF WAR CAMP, CASSINO, ITALY. 1918.

ACT 2: DOUBT

- ONE**
VIENNA. 1919.
- TWO**
TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE. 1929.
- THREE**
PRAGUE. 1936.
- FOUR**
TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE. 1935.
- FIVE**
TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE. 1938.
- SIX**
MIDSUMMER COMMON, CAMBRIDGE. 1938.
- SEVEN**
TRINITY COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE. 1939.

ACT 3: WITHDRAWAL

- ONE**
KILLARY HARBOUR, CONNEMARA. 1948.
- TWO**
CORNELL UNIVERSITY, ITHACA, NY. 1949.
- THREE**
ITHACA, NY. 1949.

EPILOGUE
44 BEDFORD SQUARE, LONDON. 1951.

While based upon the life and work of the most famous philosopher of the twentieth century - Ludwig Wittgenstein - THE CROOKED ROADS is a piece of drama. A playwright, like a cad, takes liberties.



Wittgenstein at the Movies

Cinematic Investigations

Edited by Béla Szabados
and Christina Stojanova

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