

WITTGENSTEIN IN CROATIA

On the occasion of 75 years of Wittgenstein in Croatian philosophy (1941–2016)

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Wittgensteins and Croatia

Wittgenstein never lectured in or even visited Croatia no matter if by the time of finishing the “Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus” (TLP) in 1918 Croats and Austrians were citizens of the same state, i.e. Austro-Hungarian Empire. Nevertheless, his philosophy was and still is of some importance to few Croatian philosophers squeezed between Croatian major schools of thought in 20th and 21st centuries.

Philosophy of 21st century as everything else as well is becoming more and more online, and so is Wittgenstein’s philosophy too. Internet no matter if it is just a medium, forces some new rules on contents of a message, and consequently on philosophical texts as well. 2 to 3 scrolls with a computer mouse is a limit. Style must be short, clear and direct, and so content too.

There is an irony in the fact that Wittgenstein, while being at least sceptical about the progress of civilization and technological advancements of his times, with his style of writing in short sections nicely fits in this online philosophy, in fact much better than most of the 20th century philosophers. Just imagine Hedigger, Gadamer, or Quine online. In comparison with them *Ludwig online* seems to be OK. His works, commentaries, and even discussions on his philosophy are available on official and personal websites, online journals, and even on various accounts on social networks.

In this context it is of some importance to inform general philosophical community on the occasion of 75th anniversary of reception of Wittgenstein’s philosophy in Croatia given the fact that he was important philosopher of 20th century, and that Croatian philosophy is moving toward its 1000 years of existence if as the beginning one counts publication of “On Essences” by Herman of Dalmatia in 1143.

Connections of Wittgenstein and his philosophy to Croatia and Croatian philosophy are indirect. The first connection was his father Karl Wittgenstein (1847–1913) who was and is known in Croatia because he financed

the work of Croatian Sculptor Ivan Meštrović in Paris in 1908 and 1909. Meštrović is famous for his sculptures “The Bowman” and “The Spearman” in Chicago (installed in 1928). Karl tried to influence Meštrović’s work, as we know from their letters, but at the end Meštrović did it his way. In Paris he made 59 sculptures and among them there is the bust of Mrs. Wittgenstein, i.e. Ludwig’s mother Leopoldine (for which Meštrović got 4.000 francs from Karl and which will be exhibited in Zagreb 2017).

By that time Ludwig already moved from Berlin to Manchester to study aeronautics, so it is unknown was he familiar with Meštrović’s works, while it is known that among books that he brought with himself to Manchester was “*Machinae novae*” (“New Machines” published in 1595) by Croatian philosopher, logician, and inventor Faust Vrančić (famous for his invention of parachute and for jumping with it). Later on Wittgenstein moved from philosophy to mathematics and to logic and finally to philosophy and finished his first major work “*Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*” by 1918. However, it seems that philosophers in Croatia were unaware of this work, even after its publication in 1921/1922, as well as after the publication of “*Philosophical Investigations*” (PI) in 1953.

The second indirect connection of Wittgenstein and Croatia is via his brother Paul (1887–1961) who was a pianist and had his *début* in Vienna in 1913, but he was wounded on Russian Front in 1914 and his right arm was amputated. Afterwards he developed a career of a one-hand pianist and various composers such as R. Strauss, B. Britten, S. Prokofiev, and M. Ravel composed for him. He was a guest in Croatia in Zagreb in 1930, and he was willing to give all the works of Ivan Meštrović from “The Karl Wittgenstein Collection” to Zagreb in exchange for one more concert, but Zagreb Philharmonic refused the offer.

These indirect connections are appropriate because they fit nicely with Ludwig’s attitude on style, i.e. comparing his philosophical work with work of various artists (e.g. draughtsman, composer, poet, painter, sculptor, and architect, especially in “*Culture and Value*”), and claiming that a writing style as any other style in art is an expression of general human necessity (in “*Public and Private Occasions*”). Concerning Croatia, Wittgenstein wrote that he was never in Balkans (in “*On Certainty*”), and he mentions Croats in a negative context by quoting Schiller from “*Wallenstein, Die Piccolomini*” (Act. 1, Scene 1, in “*Zettel*”).

Compared to these connections the last connection with Wittgenstein and his philosophy by Croatian philosophers was also indirect since the present author had an occasion to meet and discuss his philosophy with his student professor Wasfi A. Hijab in 2002 in Kirchberg am Wechsel, and other Croatian philosophers as it seems on some occasions met his other students.

It is not known to the present author did any Croatian philosopher attended Wittgenstein's lectures or discussed philosophy with him.

A mention of Wittgenstein before 1945

Concerning the reception of his philosophy, for a while it was thought in Croatia that the first mention and consequently the reception of Wittgenstein's philosophy in Croatian philosophy started in 1960 with translation of TLP by G. Petrović and his quite long and unusual afterword to the translation. The reception issue may be true, since research is still going on, but it must not be confused with the first mention of Wittgenstein in Croatian philosophy, because for a fact it is not. In the period between 1922 and 1960 Wittgenstein wasn't mentioned by the majority of Croatian philosophers, even in their works which were concerned with topics in which one would expect such mention. Negative answers should be given for the following philosophers.

Before 1945 Croatian Christian philosophers such as Šanc, Zimermann, Keilbach, and Grimm while writing on topics close to Wittgenstein's mention e.g. positivism, Vienna Circle, J. S. Mill, Carnap, Shclick, Hempel, Reichenbach, Russell, Peano, and Frege, but not Wittgenstein.

Positivists in the same period, i.e. before 1945, such as Brichta, Podhorsky, and Richtmann mention logical analysis, positivism, Comte, Boltzmann, Mach, Maxwell, and Helmholtz, but again no Wittgenstein.

In the same period, i.e. before 1945, in Continental schools of Croatian philosophy, and philosophers such as Bazala, Vuk Pavlović, and Krstić, even in their works on logic and language, mention Boole, Peirce, Russell, and e.g. "language materialism" but not Wittgenstein (this is the result of only one stage of research which is not finished yet, since it is possible that Wittgenstein is mentioned in lecture notes and various manuscripts which still need to be researched). So it seems that Croatian philosophers didn't even know about Wittgenstein in the first half of 20th century.

However, Croatian philosopher Stjepan Pataki (1905–1953) famous for his work in epistemology, pedagogy, philosophy of education, and for the longest doctoral dissertation title in history of Croatian philosophy (15 words, 139 characters with spaces) wrote an encyclopedic entry "Bečki krug (Wiener Kreis)" (Vienna Circle) for "Croatian Encyclopedia" in 1941. (Pataki, 1941, vol. 2, pp. 323–324) In this entry Pataki writes the following.

"The Vienna Circle builds an anti-metaphysical world-view (reality) by use of logistics as a scientific method of philosophy. Majority of members are under influence of L. Wittgenstein, the student of English philosopher and mathematician B. Russel[l], and his wok *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (London, 1922). He claims that all human knowledge can be expressed in mathematical way in

one system of mutually non-contradictory propositions by signs and symbols, and their relations (mathematics, logic, logical calculus, logical algorithm, and logistics).” (Pataki, 1941, vol. 2, pp. 323, translated by the present author)

Later in this entry Pataki explicates four goals of logistics, major contributions of Carnap, and mentions The Berlin Circle (Reichenbach) and Warsaw Circle (Lukasiewicz, Tarski etc.). As far as the present author is concerned, this is the first mention of Wittgenstein and his philosophy in Croatian philosophy by Croatian philosopher in period between 1922 and 1960 (20 years after the first publication of TLP).

Curiosity of this entry is that it is written quite clearly and impartially by a philosopher who wasn't positivist, and in times in Croatia when, in 1941, Pataki was probably aware of so-called “Conflict on the Left” among communists, which ended not so well for positivist group around Richtmann and Podhorsky.

Later on after 1945 in early editions of “Yugoslav Encyclopedia” which was in part based on “Croatian Encyclopedia” this entry was omitted (however, in later editions, but decades later, the entries on Vienna Circle and Wittgenstein appear again). So to the general regret of all sides included perhaps in the described process and due to the fact that contrary to say Carnap or Quine, Heidegger or Gadamer, Maritain or von Balthasar, Wittgenstein was probably the greatest philosopher of the 20th century, but he didn't get even the appropriate treatment in Croatian encyclopedias, not to mention other types of mentions and commentaries.

The reception of Wittgenstein after 1945

Finally, in 1960 TLP was translated, and reception of Wittgenstein started due to the translation by G. Petrović and his mentioned strange “Afterword”. However, the philosophical community had to wait for 38 years for Croatian translations of other works, namely “Philosophical Investigations” (PI), “On Certainty” (OC), “Blue and Brown Books”, “Prototractatus”, “Lecture on Ethics”, and in part “Diaries 1914–1916”, “Philosophical Grammar”, and “Culture and Value” (see References).

Concerning the reception of Wittgenstein's philosophy, it started in 1960 by translation of TLP, but only started. First serious, precise, and well argued analyses of his works and ideas started in 1970s with papers by N. Sesardić (1970) I. Supek (1974), I. Macan (by his doctoral dissertation in Innsbruck in 1974, and a series of papers and a book in period 1976–2009), H. Festini (series of papers and a book in period 1976–1992) and M. Pavičić (papers in period 1979–1982). Perhaps the fastest reaction to the publication of Wittgenstein's book was N. Sesardić's mentioning of Wittgenstein's “On

Certainty” which was published in English translation in 1969, and Sesardić mentions it in his paper “O izvjesnosti” (On Certainty) in 1970.

In 1980s Macan and Festini continued to publish and in 1990s they were the first to publish books on Wittgenstein’s philosophy, Festini in 1992, and Macan in 1996 (extended version of his doctoral dissertation from 1974). These two philosophers by their publications in international journals, by publications of books on Wittgenstein, by continuity of their work which spans over three decades, and by editing translations of Wittgenstein’s works in the Croatian translation (by Macan) mark the beginning of full-blooded reception of his philosophy in Croatia.

However, their receptions are different and perhaps influenced in different way. They are different so far as the interpretations of Wittgenstein on which they rely are somewhat different as well, i.e. Festini relies to some degree on interpretations by J. Hintikka, while Macan on interpretations by J. Schulte and P. Hacker.

In 1990s works on Wittgenstein are marked by continuation of papers and books by Macan and Festini, and by a series of new authors whose major interest is not Wittgenstein rather some broader topic such as language, logic, philosophy of mind, etc. (authors such as N. Miščević, J. Zovko, B. Marušić, D. Kolak and others). Miščević wrote a detailed text on Wittgenstein in series “Hrestomatija filozofije” (“History of Philosophy”) in 1996. It is important that these authors from 80s and 90s publish their papers in international journals and participate on international symposia and conferences on Wittgenstein, so this part and period of Croatian philosophy engaged in Wittgenstein becomes internationally recognized. This participation probably started by Pavičić’s participation with a paper on Wittgenstein on International Wittgenstein Symposium in Kirchberg am Wechsel in Austria in 1979 after whom many Croatian philosophers participated on this symposium (a large number of participants over the years, until 2017, almost every year since it is an annual symposium).

In 2000s a new generation of Croatian Wittgenstein scholars emerged. They publish papers in international journals, participate in international conferences, and publish books on Wittgenstein in Croatian and in English (books in Croatian are published by K. Krkač in 2003 and A. Periša in 2010, and in English by Krkač in 2012).

This group of authors is a bit bigger and it is recognized in Croatia and internationally (K. Krkač, J. Lukin, D. Mladić, A. Periša, K. Peternai, N. Soimun and others). Their work is market with participation in lively ongoing debates in European and world community of Wittgenstein scholars.

2000s are marked so far by the first student symposium on Wittgenstein’s philosophy held in 2003 at “Faculty of Philosophy of The Society of Jesus in Zagreb” (from 2016 “Faculty of Philosophy and Religious Studies”)

and by publication of papers from the symposium. On that 2003 symposium besides participation of 28 students, also participated Austrian Wittgenstein scholars (A. Weiberg and P. Kampitz from Vienna, and E. Runggaldier from Innsbruck), and one Croatian Wittgenstein scholar (I. Macan from Zagreb) with plenary lectures. Papers were published in the conference proceeding “Don’t think, but look! Philosophy of Ludwig Wittgenstein” (2003, eds. M. Škorić and N. Somun).

In 2010s this dynamic work of Croatian Wittgenstein scholars continues by publications of books on Wittgenstein, and papers on his philosophy in international journals and conference proceedings. Authors from 2000s continue to publish in 2010s (Krkač, Lukin, Periša and others) and some new authors emerged in this decade and they also participate in ongoing global debates (J. Điri).

This was a short historical overview on Croatian reception of Wittgenstein’s philosophy. Completely different issue is about topics, approach, and after all quality of works by Croatian Wittgenstein scholars, and this is perhaps the most important topic. Concerning the quality, most of the papers published in international publications outside of Croatia (since some papers were published in international journals which are published in Croatia), perhaps the highest points are publications in “ILWS Conference Papers” (published by ALWS), in some journals specialized for Wittgenstein’s philosophy such as “Wittgenstein Studien” (published by De Gruyter), and on–line on some specialized web–sources that contain secondary literature on Wittgenstein (such as on–line available ALWS Archive).

A short commentary on reception of Wittgenstein in Croatian philosophy

The question is simple — What, compared to comparables, substantially characterizes and differs Croatian Wittgenstein scholars? First thing is that they participate in global debates and mostly that they take the side of European schools of interpretation of Wittgenstein’s philosophy (mostly Austrian, German, and British scholars). However, there are other voices as well (some defending so–called “New Wittgenstein” or American approach).

Second thing is that they don’t hesitate in formulating sometimes strange interpretations of his philosophy and try to defend them on international level. Last but not least, besides major topics such as language, TLP, FI, Croatian scholars often engage in interpretation of so–called lesser works such as “Diaries”, “Remarks on Philosophy of Psychology”, “On Certainty”, etc., and of so–called minor topics such as ethics, religion, science, method, etc. Some of such interpretations were made long before they become worldwide topics. This is what makes this unusual group a bit special.

Concerning the future, some further research and work still has to be done. In limits and the scope of the present note certainly the research of reception of Wittgenstein's philosophy has to be completed. In the scope of overall work on Wittgenstein certainly other works should be translated, especially in view of the fact that some Wittgenstein's manuscripts and typescripts are nowadays available online. Finally, stronger participation in European and worldwide debates on Wittgenstein's philosophy should be undertaken, mostly by younger generations of scholars.

The last note needs a minor addition. Namely, one shouldn't get the idea which is probably insinuated by the content of the present note, that Wittgenstein scholars in Croatia are a big and consistent group over the years, because they are not. In every decade or two there is only one internationally recognized Wittgenstein scholar from Croatia, at best two or three. This seems to be a small number, but it is really quite a lot given that in Croatian there around 150 philosophers, and that Wittgenstein isn't quite popular compared to various old and new positivist, Continental, Christian, or neo-Marxist philosophers.

However, this whole note is only a preliminary sketch, or just one "photography", in some future "album" of what has been done on Wittgenstein's philosophy by Croatian philosophers in last 75 years. Given the fact that his philosophy was never a dominant interest of Croatian philosophical community which nowadays has around 150 members at best, neither in 20th, nor in 21st century, nor a part of any major schools such as continental, Marxist, postmodern, and analytic (mostly naturalist), this much being done in 75 years by the few can be regarded as a good job.

Of course, there is more to be done as mentioned previously and especially in view of globally recognized anniversaries of TLP, i.e. 100 years from finishing and/or publishing of TLP work in 2018 and 2021/2022, and 70 years from publishing of PI in 2023.

As an interesting fact at the end, and in view of the topics from the beginning of this note, it can be mentioned that in 2000s two papers which are connected with Wittgenstein were published, one by K. Šerman "On the problem of truth in Architecture" (in Croatian, 2000) which relies a lot on Loos, Engelmann, and Wittgenstein as an architects, and one by V. Barbić "Works of Ivan Meštrović in collection of Karl Wittgenstein in Vienna" (in Croatian, 2000) which is interesting in view of the fact that as mentioned on February 2nd 2017 the exhibition "Challenges of the Modern: Zagreb — Vienna around 1900" was opened and among works there was also Meštrović's sculpture of Wittgenstein's mother Leopoldine "Poldy" Wittgenstein.

List of Croatian translations of Wittgenstein's works and works on Wittgenstein

The following list of works is first of all probably incomplete. Many of journal issues and books were researched in order to complete this list, but not all. What needs to be researched as well are various manuscripts and lecture notes by Croatian philosophers because there is some probability of mentioning of Wittgenstein in period 1922–1960. Perhaps it would be interesting to research daily newspapers and weekly magazines in order to see was there any mention in 1951 when Wittgenstein died.

Secondly, this list is divided in topics because this seems to be more appropriate than simple chronological order of publications. The reason is that by their choice of topics authors were concentrated around some central and some marginal topics and issues of Wittgenstein's philosophy.

Thirdly, concerning doctoral theses there were only three, i.e. by I. Macan in Innsbruck (in 1973), by A. Periša in Vienna (in 2002) and by K. Krkač in Zagreb (in 2003), and all of them are published as books. In this context the BA and MA theses would also be interesting.

Note: if the text in the following list is published in Croatian, English translation will be supplied in square brackets.

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- TLP Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus London: Routledge & Kegan Paul Ltd, 1961. (1960., MH 2005.).
- LE Predavanje o etici (*Lecture on Ethics*) Philosophical Review 74 (1965.) 3–12, (2014.) (FFDI 1996.).
- PG Filozofska gramatika (*Philosophical Grammar*) Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969. (partly Eu. glas. 17/2012.).
- BB Plava i smeđa knjiga (*Blue and Brown Books*) Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1958. (Globus 2009.).
- PI Filozofska istraživanja (*Philosophical Investigations*) Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 4th ed. 2009. (Globus 1998.).
- OC O izvjesnosti (*On Certainty*) Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1969. (Globus, 2007.).
- CV Raznolike primjedbe (*Culture and Value*) Oxford: Blackwell, 2nd ed. 1998. (partly ŠK 1996.).

Works on Wittgenstein by Croatian philosophers

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*Abstract***WITTGENSTEIN IN CROATIA**

On the occasion of 75 years of Wittgenstein in Croatian philosophy (1941–2016)

In the paper the author supplies an overview of the secondary research of Wittgenstein's philosophy in Croatia in period 1941–2016. It was commonly assumed that the reception of his philosophy in Croatia started in 1960 when TLP was translated, and accompanied with substantive afterword by G. Petrović. However, the author found an earlier mention and description of Wittgenstein's philosophy from TLP, which appeared in 1941 in the entry "Bečki krug (Wiener Kreis)" in "Croatian Encyclopedia" and was written by Croatian philosopher Stjepan Pataki. The entry is cited and analyzed. In addition, the author provides the list of translations of Wittgenstein's work to Croatian, and the list of a majority of secondary literature on Wittgenstein by Croatian philosophers in the same period.

KEY WORDS: Croatian philosophy, first mention of Wittgenstein in Croatian philosophy, Stjepan Pataki, Ludwig Wittgenstein

