

*Christian Erbacher (ed.): Friedrich August von Hayek's Draft Biography of Ludwig Wittgenstein. The Text and Its History. Leiden: mentis Verlag 2019, 88 pages, 25,13 € (Paperback), ISBN 978-3-95743-157-8*

Friedrich A. von Hayek's draft biography of Ludwig Wittgenstein, now made available in print for the first time, illuminates the institutional connections and class divisions which informed the practice of biography in academic philosophy after 1945. It demonstrates the new role public memorialization of the philosopher came to play in the work of postwar creatives affiliated with Europe's aging upper middle classes. Most notably, it speaks to the aims and intentions of those educated class students of Wittgenstein's affiliated with the Faculty of Moral Sciences at the University of Cambridge, the academic institution for which Wittgenstein served as Lecturer and Professor of Philosophy from 1930 to 1947.

The book's three components – an introduction by editor Christian Erbacher, the 1953 draft biography by Hayek (dated November 1959) and an afterword by the Wittgenstein scholar Allan Janik – are distinguished from one another by typography. Also included is a helpful index of names. The draft biography itself draws on those documents written by Hayek, now housed in the von Wright and Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Helsinki. The introduction, “The First Wittgenstein Biography and why it has never been published”, previously available in *Mitteilungen aus dem Brenner-Archiv* (2015), is here reproduced with amendments by the author. As Erbacher details, the draft biography first came into being when Hayek, a cousin of Wittgenstein's, volunteered his services as an established author to the newly created Wittgenstein literary estate, shortly following Wittgenstein's passing in April 1951. Erbacher rightly describes the draft as a “project of writing a biography” (13). A lawyer and social scientist by training – and, like Wittgenstein, a Viennese – Hayek is presented by Erbacher as a heretofore unacknowledged authority on Wittgenstein. Increasingly after 1945, academics in the field of the human sciences took to making more public those discussions they previously had shared with one another in close-knit, professional and largely homosocial circles. Grouping together select writings by Cambridge thinkers like Wittgenstein, G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell, authors like Gilbert Ryle, A. J. Ayer, G. J. Warnock and John Passmore fused together life with work in a series of publications for academic and popular presses. Through the use of biography along with philosophy, their combined efforts would make “philosophical analysis” accessible to an entirely new English-speaking middle-class public, itself the realization of public investment in arts and literature in the postwar United Kingdom.