

PART II

Paolozzi: on Reading Wittgenstein

6.

Paolozzi reads Wittgenstein: Moments in a Research Process

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1. Premise

At the beginning of the 1990s, while I was looking for an image for a book cover on Wittgenstein I was about to finish writing, I happened to stumble rather randomly upon Eduardo Paolozzi, particularly upon one of his 12 screenprints (number V titled *Wittgenstein the Soldier*) from the series *As Is When* (1964–1965). From that moment on, my interest in Paolozzi and in his relationship with Wittgenstein never faded. I even tried writing to Paolozzi to ask him about the genesis and meaning of this relationship – although with little success, to speak the truth. Indeed, in replying to my letter in 1992, he simply stated that Wittgenstein had been important to him years ago, but was by now – so to speak – completely out of his picture. However, this did not diminish my interest, convinced as I was and still am of at least two things: (a) that Wittgenstein wasn't a mere spark or pretext, a simple repertoire of images and quotes for Paolozzi – I dare say, furthermore, that it is impossible to fully understand Paolozzi's work, or at least the wide range of his production in the 1960s, without working out his relationship to Wittgenstein; (b) that Paolozzi – as an artist and like an artist – recognized various aspects or traits of Wittgenstein's thought and let them come to light in a period when they were still concealed or invisible to the majority of the philosopher's readers and interpreters with a philosophical background. In this sense, one could say that Paolozzi's work fully belongs to the general story of Wittgenstein's critical reception. For this very reason, when addressing the relationship between Paolozzi and Wittgenstein, it is hardly enough to speak in general terms of an effect or influence on the artist, while it would be sufficient in many other cases.¹ At least, this is what I believe and what I feel needs to be claimed.

2. Paolozzi meets Wittgenstein: context, mode and spirit

As suggested by the programmatic subheading of my chapter, what I would like to do here, in brief, is describing the main issues and topics that a research on Paolozzi and Wittgenstein cannot

avoid to address – especially if developed along the lines of the aforementioned premise. Anyway, they are issues and cruxes in the research I am currently trying to focus on and to analyze progressively. I would discern three aspects in this research. The first one concerns the reconstruction of the cultural environment where Paolozzi met Wittgenstein. What should be initially verified is, whether and to what extent Paolozzi's Wittgenstein coincided with the image of Wittgenstein that was accepted and widespread among philosophers reading and interpreting him in the 1950s and 1960s. In order to do so – that is, in order to understand the level of originality Paolozzi's meeting with Wittgenstein or of the possible mediation or conditioning by means of the then prevailing philosophical interpretations – it is necessary to retrace at least to some extent the history of Wittgenstein's reception in the 20th century, which is far from linear.

However, the most relevant aim for this research is perhaps the second aspect of this reconstruction, which is based on Paolozzi's direct testimony and statements on the mode and spirit of his encounter with Wittgenstein.² As will be shown, Paolozzi never stopped highlighting what an impression the man Wittgenstein had made on him and how he was led to identify himself with some traits of the philosopher's life, disposition and lifestyle. Hence, in an excerpt of his famous interview with Richard Hamilton (Spencer 2000: 125-128), right after mentioning to the interviewer who questioned him about his relationship with Wittgenstein that he was struck by the “very slim book” – which was *A Memoir* by Norman Malcolm (1958)³ – and by what is told “about this strange man, a tormented lonely man”, Paolozzi added straight away in an epigraphic style that there might have been on his part a sort of identification with this strange, lonely and tormented man: “Here there might be a bit of identification” (Spencer 2000: 127-128).

However, for Paolozzi this identification was only an aspect of his relationship with Wittgenstein – and likely not the most important one. As a matter of fact, he never forgot that his encounter with the Austrian philosopher was first of all the meeting with a language and a philosophy – rather than with the philosopher's life – and that what really mattered wasn't what he felt for

Wittgenstein, but – so to speak – the way Wittgenstein acted on his oeuvre. Hence, immediately after speaking of his identification with Wittgenstein, Paolozzi carried on by introducing an adversative particle (“but”) and specifying “the key thing” is “the actual work”:

I think that for the first time I have a necessity to embrace some kind of language in relationship to the processes I’m involved with. And I find his is the most sympathetic language. Some people need, perhaps, Greenberg, I need Wittgenstein. (Spencer 2000: 128)

In conclusion, whilst Paolozzi had certainly identified himself to some extent and in some way with the man Wittgenstein, anyway – as an artist – he evidently needed the philosopher Wittgenstein and his language.

It goes without saying that this entire part of research is only justifiable – and this is the third and last aspect of the chapter – if it works as a prelude to a systematic analysis and close-up to the ‘Wittgensteinian’ works of Paolozzi, especially – though not exclusively – to the series *As Is When*. The particular aim is to understand how much of these works is borrowed from Wittgenstein, but also what of Wittgenstein and which Wittgenstein lives and acts in them. In this chapter I will, of course, concentrate on the works of the 1960s,⁴ as well as on the passages and places in Wittgenstein’s writings that struck Paolozzi and “entered” his works in the form of titles, but especially as parts of the works themselves. Particularly, I shall try to demonstrate that Paolozzi was impressed by several Wittgensteinian passages that in the 1960s seemed rather enigmatic – if not at all odd – to readers of philosophical background. As will be shown, this is certainly true for two screenprints of *As Is When* that will be discussed thoroughly in the following pages: screenprint X, titled *The Spirit of Snake*; screenprint XI, which bears the title *He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder*; eventually also screenprint IX, titled *Assembling Reminders for a particular purpose*, which will only be quoted briefly.

3. Wittgenstein and Paolozzi: “a kind of combined autobiography”

It seems useful to start from various testimonies, which catch Paolozzi speaking of his encounter with Wittgenstein. According to the artist’s own tale in an interview with William Lipke in 1966 (Spencer 2000: 147-150), he first acknowledged Wittgenstein in 1951, the year the Austrian philosopher died.⁵ Indeed, by the end of that year the magazine *World Review* had published an article by Maurice Cranston devoted to Wittgenstein, which contained “a fair amount of biographical notes” (Spencer 2000: 147). However, this first encounter bore neither evident nor immediate fruits:

It didn’t look to me as though one could use a philosopher as a theme at that time.

So I sort of pigeon-holed the idea, as one pigeon-holes ideas now that are to be used later on. (Spencer 2000: 147)

Again according to Paolozzi, the second stage of his itinerary towards Wittgenstein was reading an essay by Erich Heller (1959: 40-48) published as an English translation on the magazine *Encounter* (Paolozzi specifies 1956 as the publishing year, though it was instead 1959). The third stage, however, was undoubtedly the most relevant, marked by the reading of a small book, the aforementioned *A Memoir* by Malcolm:

I think the thing that triggered me off was the ‘Memoir’ which I found devastatingly moving somehow. (Spencer 2000: 147)

As this interview clearly suggests, as well as the prior one with Hamilton does, Paolozzi was profoundly struck – I dare say, even seduced – by the man Wittgenstein, like so many did before and after the artist. In Paolozzi’s case an important role was played by the discovery of a strong and deep consonance between events in his own life and others in the life of Wittgenstein. In some ways, Wittgenstein was a kind of mirror for Paolozzi, which reflected the artist’s own image more distinctly and neatly. Hence, it comes to no surprise that he even confessed that through his works he intended

to identify himself in Wittgenstein and eventually get to the composition of “a kind of combined autobiography” (Spencer 2000: 147).

What was it, though, in the life of Wittgenstein that struck Paolozzi and which similarities did he spot in his own life? Paolozzi puts several on the list⁶; for instance, Wittgenstein was like him a foreigner in England⁷ and, again like him, sometimes mistrusted and even rejected the English establishment.⁸ Paolozzi recalls for instance how Wittgenstein disliked Cambridge and the English academic lifestyle; and further the disgust he felt for the kind of professional philosophy that found his apical expression in *Mind*, the most famous – then and now – English philosophical journal. However, he also recalls that Wittgenstein, although of a rather strange and very rich Viennese family, chose to renounce his paternal inheritance after World War I and adhered to – as Paolozzi would strangely put it – “the doctrine of poverty” (Spencer 2000: 128). Paolozzi was also impressed by the fact that Wittgenstein had studied engineering in Manchester and that he got from there first to mathematics and then to logic. This becomes clear when remembering how much Paolozzi – both in his life and works – was fascinated by machines, mechanic diagrams and mechanisms; he once even asserted, although with a good amount of irony, that of all the things he possibly liked of England there was “the aeronautical world, the world of the motor car” (Spencer 2000: 128).

Again resting upon the remembrances of Malcolm, Paolozzi recalled that Wittgenstein felt so disgusted after his lectures he needed to run to the cinema to contrast this feeling. Indeed, Malcolm wrote:

Wittgenstein was always exhausted by his lectures. He was also revolted by them. He felt disgusted with what he had said and with himself. Often he would rush off to the cinema immediately after the class ended. [...] He insisted on sitting in the very first row of seats, so that the screen would occupy his entire field of vision [...]. He wished to become totally absorbed in the film no matter how trivial or artificial it was [...]. He was fond of the film stars Carmen Miranda and Betty Hutton. Before he came to visit me in

America he demanded in jest that I should introduce him to Miss Hutton. (Malcolm 1958: 26-27)⁹

There are at least two things to point out in this long quote that Paolozzi especially liked. The first one is that Wittgenstein would resort precisely to the “totally absorbed” spectator experience, in order to describe the difference between living inside an image and looking at it “from outside” as if it was something “lifeless and isolated”:

Let us imagine we are sitting in a darkened cinema and entering into the film. Now the lights are turned on, though the film continues on the screen. But suddenly we are outside it and see movements of light and dark patches on a screen. (Wittgenstein 1967: §233)

Paolozzi may hardly have known this; rather, it is plausible he was struck by Malcolm’s final comments on Wittgenstein’s cinematic preferences. Considering Paolozzi’s intense and obsessive relationship with various media and materials of popular and mass culture, it isn’t hard to imagine how he must have been fascinated in reading Malcolm’s testimony at discovering that Wittgenstein’s taste favoured – instead of cultured cinema or art films¹⁰ – popular films, American movies filmed for the general audience (especially *westerns* and *musicals*); or at discovering that – instead of reading *Mind* – Wittgenstein preferred by far reading *detective stories*, in particular the most “popular” ones published in the USA by Street & Smith (Malcolm 1958: 32-33).

This could further explain, at least to some extent, why Paolozzi in the aforementioned quote decided to differentiate his need of Wittgenstein with the necessity – by far more widespread at the beginning of the 1960s – that many artists and critics had as regards Greenberg. It goes without saying that Paolozzi didn’t want to overturn – aided by Wittgenstein – the hierarchy instituted by Greenberg between *Avant-Garde and Kitsch*¹¹, that is between art and popular culture; he rather intended to

challenge – also by means of Wittgenstein – the very idea that such a hierarchy had to (or could) be traced.

As becomes now evident, as well as it was explicitly told by the artist to Hamilton and Lipke in the aforementioned interviews, the aspects that tie the life of Wittgenstein to Paolozzi's were well exploited in the twelve screenprints included in the portfolio *As Is When* – together with a few sculptures of the same period, especially the aluminium sculpture *Wittgenstein at Cassino* of 1963 – thus contributing to set the draft of the eagerly wanted “combined autobiography”. Urged by Lipke, Paolozzi explains for instance what in his own life linked him to *Wittgenstein at Cassino*:

The sculpture called *Wittgenstein at Cassino* is my connection with him in the sense that my parents came from near Cassino, and he was a prisoner of war there; had written most of the *Tractatus*¹² by that time and had it in his knapsack. (Spencer 2000: 147)¹³

As regards *Wittgenstein at Cassino*, however, in the interview with Hamilton Paolozzi adds something that deserves to be highlighted: namely, that the title came after the work; that is, only after having accomplished the work he convinced himself – so to speak – to bestow the title *Wittgenstein at Cassino*:

But sometimes, the title has come after the work, you know; for example, there are two sculptures called *Wittgenstein at Cassino*; I found that having made the sculpture, which was titleless, having read the life of Wittgenstein, that I wanted to identify myself with this particular man; and I found that the sculpture itself, which is symbolically a figure between two buildings, you know, in a sense, tied in for me completely and almost totally, with the idea of this particular man at this particular point in his life, which tied in with me, being at this particular point in my life. (Spencer 2000: 127)

Here Paolozzi is certainly trying to oppose the temptation to interpret his ‘Wittgensteinian’ works as some sort of – more or less extemporaneous – illustrations of several episodes in

Wittgenstein's biography. A sculpture such as *Wittgenstein at Cassino* is not *about* Wittgenstein at Cassino; it rather is the "place" where the life of the philosopher meets upon the artist's life and where these two lives somehow clarify each other.¹⁴ The character "between two buildings" is Wittgenstein, but it is Paolozzi too, who felt like Wittgenstein trapped and suspended as a foreigner "between two buildings" – that is, between two languages, cultures, lifestyles.¹⁵

4. Paolozzi reads Wittgenstein

In any case, what was the prevailing image of Wittgenstein in the period in which Paolozzi encounters his life and works? We may start with a text used by Paolozzi in 1967 from the London art and literature magazine *Ambit*.¹⁶ The text I am referring to is part of a collage titled *Moonstrips-General Dynamic F.U.N.*, which is related to a set of two portfolios – one edited in 1967 (*Moonstrips-Empire News*) and then the other one in 1970 (*General Dynamic F.U.N.*) – and was drawn from the aforementioned article by Cranston of 1951, which begins as follows:

Ludwig Wittgenstein, who died in Cambridge last April, was probably the greatest of the twentieth-century philosophers, although he was quite unknown to the general public. (Paolozzi 1967: 8)¹⁷

This was certainly true in 1951, though one must add that Wittgenstein was then almost unknown not only to the general public, but even to the majority of professional philosophers; furthermore, many in Europe and outside Europe would have considered grossly exaggerated the statement that Wittgenstein likely was "the greatest of the twentieth-century philosophers" – although attenuated by the word "probably".

In the coming years, at the beginning of the 1960s, when Paolozzi worked on *Wittgenstein at Cassino*, on *The World divides itself into Facts* (another aluminium sculpture of 1963 titled after proposition 1.2 of the *Tractatus*) and on *As Is When*, things had changed, at least to some extent. In

1953 the *Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein 1953) were published posthumously and in the following years his literary executors disseminated with due regularity several relevant texts from the philosopher's immense bequest.¹⁸ In those same years a few monographs had appeared: for instance in 1958 the little sympathetic book by David Pole (1958) and in 1959 the important work on the *Tractatus* by Elisabeth Anscombe (1959),¹⁹ his disciple and literary executor.²⁰ In all of these works there are – more or less explicitly – two dominant convictions, which would be contested only later on in the 1970s: (a) that there had been two distinct and counterposed Wittgensteins, the neopositivistic one of the *Tractatus* and the one of the *Investigations* who gave birth to the so called “Ordinary Language Philosophy”; (b) that Wittgenstein was to be fully considered an English philosopher, although he was born in Vienna and insisted in writing in German.²¹ Those who questioned this latter belief were indeed very few; among these outsiders was certainly Heller, foremost because of his birthplace, who in the English version of his essay – which Paolozzi had read – compared Wittgenstein to writers and intellectuals of Viennese and Habsburg tradition such as Robert Musil or Franz Kafka.

As far as we know, the writings of Wittgenstein that Paolozzi surely knew about and used were the *Tractatus*, the *Investigations* and the *Notebooks 1914-1916*; aside from the references to Cranston, Heller and Malcolm (plus von Wright, author of the *Biographical Sketch* included in the *Memoir* by Malcolm), Paolozzi didn't explicitly mention any of *Blue and Brown Books*, *The* the critical literature on Wittgenstein.²² In a way, one could say that Paolozzi's reading of Wittgenstein was direct or unsophisticated, meaning that he was not very conditioned by the running interpretations of his time. Hence, it is by no means a chance that he didn't feel obliged to chose between the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations*: apparently, for Paolozzi and for his oeuvre they are “the same”; furthermore, it probably isn't an accident that Paolozzi always displayed Wittgenstein's texts not only in the English translation, but also in the original German version – except for screenprint I (*Artificial Sun*) and screenprint VIII (*Futurism at Lenabo*).²³ Hence, to the contrary of many English interpreters of

his time, Paolozzi (almost) never forgot that Wittgenstein was not English and that English was neither his mother tongue nor the language of his philosophy.

Anyway, it probably was this direct or naive gaze that allowed Paolozzi to see things many readers – who were much more philosophically oriented (or conditioned) – did not see at the time. Some examples deserve to be listed. The first one concerns the aforementioned screenprint X, which bares – already in the title *The Spirit of Snake* – some of Wittgenstein’s less English and much more Viennese writings. Indeed, Wittgenstein’s annotations that Paolozzi registers on this screenprint date back to October 15, 1916,²⁴ and are to be intended as a sort of cut and thrust with Otto Weininger – specifically with the section *Animal Psychology* in the chapter on *Metaphysics* in his *On Last Things*, a book that Wittgenstein loved very much (Weininger 1912).²⁵ English readers of Paolozzi’s time certainly didn’t know that Weininger was so important to Wittgenstein,²⁶ as well as they surely ignored the existence of Weininger himself. It comes to no surprise, then, that these “strange” notes on snakes, lions, elephants, flies and wasps not only couldn’t be understood, but probably were not even considered and thus analyzed. However, the debate with Weininger and his “theory of the human being as *microcosm*”²⁷ outlined in these pages of the *Notebooks* would later prove instrumental for the *Tractatus*. It certainly is a fact that – without Weininger – proposition 5. 621: “The world and life are one”, and particularly 5.63: “I am my world. (The microcosm)”, wouldn’t have been written; although the *Tractatus* would then reproach to Weininger himself (or also to Weininger) for not seeing “the solipsism, when its implications are followed out strictly, coincides with pure realism” (Wittgenstein 1921-22: 5.64).²⁸ That Paolozzi perceived the relevance of this passage can be proved also by screenprint III (*Experience*), where he reported (in German on top and in English on the bottom margin) four annotations from *Notebooks 1914-1916* of November 9, 1916, of which the third one deals exactly with the aforementioned coincidence between solipsism (idealism) and realism: “All experience is world and does not need the subject” (Wittgenstein 1961: 89).²⁹

Although he probably ignored this ‘Weiningerian’ background, between the 19 annotations of October 15, 1916, Paolozzi chose by great intuition exactly those 5 annotations for his screenprint X, where Wittgenstein reminds us how misleading it might be to assert as an idealist (or solipsist) “that spirit of the snake [...] is *your* spirit”, if one doesn’t immediately ask “why I have given a snake just this spirit” (Wittgenstein 1961: 85). If it is true that the spirit of the snake is my spirit, it is also true that the snake isn’t – so to speak – something inert or indifferent. If I gave the snake this exact spirit, which is different from the one I gave or could give to the lion or the wasp, this happened because I recognized in the snake precisely something of myself, something of my spirit, which is different for instance from that which I could see of myself or of my spirit in the lion or the wasp.

Indeed, similar statements could be made about the encounter of the artist Paolozzi with the philosopher Wittgenstein: if Paolozzi projected himself in Wittgenstein, this happened exactly because he recognized in Wittgenstein himself or something of himself. This is probably the reason why only in screenprint X there is – on the bottom left side – Wittgenstein’s face (the first time horizontally and the second time vertically); furthermore, it comes to no surprise that in this screenprint – made of rather dull colors and characterized by winding lines – accordance prevails on any oppositional tension (subject/world; world/experience; man/animal; open/closed).

The second example concerns screenprint XI, which borrows its title (*He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder*) from proposition 6.54 of the *Tractatus*,³⁰ the latter being transcribed in its entirety on the left (in English) and right (in German) margin of the print. Both in the title and in the work the attention goes to that image of the ladder which, once used, must be thrown away; an image with many ancestors, both ancient (e.g. the pirronian scepticism and the mystical tradition) and modern, and that was used by thinkers that Wittgenstein was well acquainted to, such as Schopenhauer, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche or Fritz Mauthner.³¹ Certainly, it comes to no surprise that also Paolozzi was attracted by this proposition, which impressed and even struck many philosophers who found it as seductive as difficult to accept. If the entire *Tractatus* really was nonsense, thus – as

Ramsey ironically observed in 1929 – we should “take seriously that it is nonsense, and not pretend, as Wittgenstein does, that it is important nonsense” (Ramsey 1990: 1). Nor should it anyway seem strange that such a culturally strong image as the ladder succeeded in capturing the attention of the artist Paolozzi.³²

In any case, over many decades proposition 6.54 – together with the equally famous proposition 7 (“What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence”) – was confined among the oddities of a work that, if it deserved to be read, this certainly wasn’t the case for its final paradox, but rather for its original ideas on the world as a “totality of facts” or on thought as a “logical picture of facts” (Wittgenstein 1921-22: 1.1 and 3) etc. The situation changed radically during the 1990s, when a new generation of interpreters started arguing that the key to the entire *Tractatus* was to be searched precisely in proposition 6.54. Despite Ramsey’s belief, according to these so called ‘neo-Wittgensteinian’ interpreters Wittgenstein had never demanded that the nonsense of the *Tractatus* be seen as a (philosophically) important nonsense; on the contrary, he led us to understand that his propositions – although they seem reasonable and appear to contain essential truths about the world, about logic etc. – are plainly nonsensical: they are not propositions, even though they have its very appearance.³³ The aim of all this is rather therapeutical: “[t]he experience of coming to realise this [= that the propositions in question are plainly nonsensical] should, Wittgenstein hopes, curb any subsequent urge to philosophise” (Tejedor 2015: 3), where “to philosophise” means: searching by means of philosophy, seen as a sort of super-science (the likes of metaphysics), the kind of truth about the world, thought and language (we don’t possess yet).

How does then screenprint XI fit into all of this? It appears to picture the moment, when the ladder is about to be thrown away; it isn’t the ladder we climbed up anymore (or onto which we think we climbed up); however, it is still there – or even better – its parts are still there, which seem in a kind of vortex – like a jigsaw puzzle – trying to come together again and reforming that ladder we want to throw away. Hence, the ladder is not disposed off without resistance and its pieces in

comforting colours stick out of a dark and rather inhospitable background. In a sense, screenprint XI persuades us to ask ourselves, whether it is really possible to throw away the ladder or, even, whether we actually want to dispose of it. Perhaps we are neither ever on the ladder nor beyond it, but at least – as philosophers and artists – we are constantly, that is *immer wieder*, throwing it away. This screenprint thus appears to define a transition and not a condition: we are always in the mode of “throwing away”.

At this point, however, we might be led to think that what we see are not ladder pieces, but the ladder itself: a ladder that we cannot climb on and thus cannot dispose of; or maybe we may believe there never was a ladder; at a deeper glance, in fact, the pieces of this apparent game of joints cannot fit together. Be that as it may, what should be highlighted in this screenprint is how Palozzi comprehended, as an artist, the internal tension of proposition 6.54; he nearly glimpsed at what Wittgenstein would later observe in a paragraph of 1929 – which Paolozzi couldn’t possibly have known – and that almost appears as a link between the *Tractatus* and the subsequent *Investigations*:

I might say: if the place I want to reach could only be climbed up to by a ladder, I would give up trying to get there. For the place to which I really have to go is one that I must actually be at already. / Anything that can be reached with a ladder does not interest me. (Wittgenstein 1998: 10)

5. Paolozzi and Wittgenstein: “almost a kind of happening”

In the often mentioned interview with Hamilton, right after enumerating several noteworthy aspects of Wittgenstein’s biography, we know Paolozzi adds that, in any case, the most relevant thing to him is having found in Wittgenstein’s language the answer to a necessity he had never felt before: “a necessity to embrace some kind of language in relationship to the processes I’m involved with” (Spencer 2000: 128). In its plain and strict sense this statement might refer to the use he made of

Wittgenstein's writings by inserting excerpts from the *Notebooks 1914-1916*, the *Tractatus* and the *Investigations* in the screenprints of *As Is When*. But this is exactly the point: how did he properly use them?

As I have shown, for Paolozzi these texts don't stand alone, that is prior and outside of his works. While the screenprints of *As Is When* are not merely illustrating Wittgenstein's texts, even the latter must not be considered, so to speak, the artworks' philosophical ancestors. The screenprints, as well as the coeval 'Wittgensteinian' sculptures, art not applications (whatever kind of they might be) of Wittgenstein's philosophy, nor did Paolozzi ever try to find in Wittgenstein a sort of philosophical legitimacy for his art. However, if Wittgenstein's texts are part of his works, because they are inscribed in them, the texts are not – so to speak – melted together as with the usual technique of collage. Hence, they are not turned into Paolozzi's language, but rather let Wittgenstein's language resonate in Paolozzi's work, whatsoever their origin: cut out from an edited book, as is the case of screenprint IV (*Reality*), or written in block letters along a stripe, like in screenprint I (*Artificial Sun*).³⁴ That is precisely why Wittgenstein's texts never access the centre of the work, but rather stay on its outskirts or at the margin. As Paolozzi mentioned, indeed, he discovered he could give his works “an extra edge [...], by using Wittgenstein, connecting his language with each print” (Spencer 2000: 127). It is almost as if he bared in mind what Wittgenstein wrote in the *Tractatus* about the good and bad exercise of the will:

If the good or bad exercise of the will does alter the world, it can alter only the limits of the world, not the facts – not what can be expressed by means of language. / In short the effect must be that it becomes an altogether different world. It must, so to speak, wax and wane as a whole” (Wittgenstein 1921-22: 6.43).

Henceforth, to Paolozzi Wittgenstein's language works like the good exercise of the will: it doesn't enter the work, but it helps the work growing “as a whole”. For this very reason, when recalling Wittgenstein's language, Paolozzi doesn't contradict himself in asserting shortly after that:

“when one is working, one is assembling a sculpture, that side by side with this activity, there is no flow of words which match this situation” (Spencer 2000: 127). This interpretation is clearly confirmed in those same years by the statement on his collaboration with Jim Dine and by the comparison he makes between Wittgenstein:

Maybe the word collaboration is really a kind of substitute or symbol for another state of things. An orthodox interpretation of the word collaboration, assumes that something is discussed at great length by two individuals; that decisions are made; that a plan is worked out. This, I don’t think, was the case [with Jim Dine]. Rather, it was a kind of spontaneous human situation, almost a kind of happening. My own Wittgenstein work was really a kind of collaboration with Wittgenstein” (Spencer 2000: 150).

Here Paolozzi is apparently suggesting that, in a way, his ‘Wittgensteinian’ works are both his works as well as Wittgenstein’s; or, to curb this enthusiasm, they were born listening to Wittgenstein and, so to speak, sitting side by side.

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- Wittgenstein, L. 1998. *Culture and Value: A Selection from the Posthumous Remains*. Revised edition by eds. A. Pichler, G. H. von Wright and H. Nyman. Trans. P. Winch. Oxford: Blackwell.

¹ As regards the complexity of the idea of influence see Janik (2006: 11-21), where to find a comment on an annotation of Wittgenstein explaining in which way he had been influenced by a series of thinkers: “I think I have never *invented* a line of thinking but that it was always provided for me by someone else & I have done no more than passionately take it up for my work of clarification. That I show Boltzmann, Hertz, Schopenhauer, Frege, Russell, Kraus, Loos, Weininger, Spengler, Sraffa have influenced me.” (Wittgenstein 1998: 16)

² Speaking of “encounter”, of course I don’t mean a real meeting, that – although theoretically possible (Wittgenstein died in 1951, when Paolozzi was 26 years old) – never happened, but an encounter with Wittgenstein’s works and writings available at the time, which described his character and thought.

³ Paolozzi is here referencing the often-republished book by Norman Malcolm, friend, disciple and interpreter of Wittgenstein.

⁴ As regards later works referencing Wittgenstein the following should at least be mentioned: the 1994 collage (and various screenprints) titled *A Logical Picture of Facts is a Thought (3) Tractatus '21-'22*. “Paolozzi took a portrait photograph of Wittgenstein and spliced it with other elements, including Greek and Aztec spiritual reliefs and the face of John Lennon. In a satisfying concordance with this procedure, Wittgenstein himself had experimented with photography, producing photographs of a composite nature, which overlaid an image of himself with that of his sisters” (Collins 2014: 217). The final reference is related to Wittgenstein’s interest in the “composite portraiture” technique of Francis Galton (1812–1911).

⁵ Wittgenstein was born in Vienna on April 26, 1889, and died in Cambridge on April 29, 1951.

⁶ In this regard, see also Collins (2014: 148): “The more Paolozzi learned about him [Wittgenstein], the more he felt sympathetic to the man, such as his being a foreigner, his dislike of the Establishment, and his love of the cinema”. Anyway, it is important to stress that even for Collins the relationship with Wittgenstein became truly relevant for Paolozzi in the early 1960s, when he convinced himself that “he could use a philosopher and his ideas as a theme in his work”.

⁷ As shown before, even in the interview with Richard Hamilton Paolozzi insists on this point, that is the fact that Wittgenstein “was a foreigner” (Spencer 2000: 128). Of course, it should be noted that Paolozzi belonged to an Italian immigrant family, while Wittgenstein came from a very rich and high bourgeois family in Vienna and that he initially moved to England not for work, but for studying engineering in Manchester and later philosophy with Bertrand Russell at Trinity College in Cambridge. However, Paolozzi was not interested in class differences, but rather in that sense of foreignness that makes people – be they rich or poor – plain foreigners. It might be of some interest that in Wittgenstein’s

opinion a philosopher is in himself or herself a foreigner: “The philosopher is not a citizen of any community of ideas (*Denkgemeinde*). That is what makes him into a philosopher”. (Wittgenstein 1967: §455)

⁸ According to Malcolm, Wittgenstein felt “a great distaste” not just for the English establishment, but even “for English culture and mental habits in general”. (Malcolm 1958: 28)

⁹ This excerpt from Malcolm appears on the lower side of screenprint XII: *Wittgenstein at the Cinema admires Betty Grable*.

¹⁰ “A foolish & naïve American film can in all its foolishness & *by means of* it be instructive. A fatuous, non-naïve [affected] English film can teach nothing. I have often drawn a lesson from a foolish American film”. (Wittgenstein 1998: 65-66)

¹¹ This is obviously the title of Greenberg’s probably most famous essay (Greenberg 1939).

¹² Imprisoned on the Italian front in November 1918, after being kept in Verona and later Como, Wittgenstein was eventually sent to prison camp at Cassino in January 1919; he stayed until August of that same year. On this period see McGuinness (1988: 267-277). Paolozzi’s remark that in this period Wittgenstein “had written most of the *Tractatus*” is misleading, because the *Tractatus* was substantially finished in August 1918.

¹³ It might be of some interest that the reference to Cassino returns in three sculptures (in bronze) titled *The Manuscript of Monte Cassino* (1991) and commissioned by the City of Edinburgh, which are placed on Picardy Place in front of the Metropolitan Cathedral of St Mary, a place linked with Paolozzi’s childhood. Explaining the reasons for the Latin text (it is a text of an anonymous author sent to Paul the Deacon, the Benedictine monk of the eighth century A.D. who wrote the *Historia Langobardorum*) running alongside the three sculptures (the foot, the ankle and a big hand) Paolozzi noted that this text should serve as “a double link between the Cathedral and the origins of not only my father and grandfather but to many Italians who came from these regions to make Scotland their home” (Spencer 2000: 321-322); see also Collins (2014: 260-261).

¹⁴ In fact, these considerations on the relationship between works and titles are coherent with Paolozzi’s later statement about the strange tendency “to find a connection between the title and the object (Spencer 2000: 147).

¹⁵ It cannot be excluded that – in enclosing the character in-between two buildings – Paolozzi was thinking of a then uncontested belief, which is that there had been – so to speak – two philosophically different Wittgensteins: a “first” Wittgenstein, the author of the *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* (1921-1922), and a “second” Wittgenstein, the author of the *Philosophical Investigations* (published posthumously in 1953).

¹⁶ As recalled by David Brittain, Paolozzi’s contribute to *Ambit* “took the form of a series of ambitious collages that sought to fuse two of these two passions – image-making and literature – into a new form: ‘visual literature’” (Brittain 2009: 4).

¹⁷ One shouldn’t forget that during his life Wittgenstein published only the *Tractatus* and just a few other short texts and that what was known of his philosophical activity after the *Tractatus* derived from his teaching and from several dictations circulating as typewritten documents among his disciples and friends.

¹⁸ In 1956 the first edition of *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* (Oxford: Blackwell); then in 1958 *The Blue and Brown Books* (Oxford: Blackwell), which will originate the essay by Erich Heller recalled by Paolozzi in his interviews; in 1961 a new translation of the *Tractatus*, which was the translation adopted by Paolozzi; again in 1961 the *Notebooks 1914-1916* (Oxford: Blackwell).

¹⁹ This work is still read and discussed today.

²⁰ Other monographs published in the same period are: Stenius, E. 1960. *Wittgenstein’s Tractatus*. Oxford: Blackwell, a work that introduces the long series of kantian interpretations of Wittgenstein; Griffin, J. 1964. *Wittgenstein’s Logical Atomism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press; Pitcher, G. 1964. *The Philosophy of Wittgenstein*. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall; Black, M. 1964. *A Companion to Wittgenstein’s Tractatus*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press.

²¹ As a matter of fact, by no chance Wittgenstein received nonchalantly an ample chapter in one of the most widespread histories of English philosophy of the twentieth century: Warnock, G. J. 1958. *English Philosophy since 1900*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

²² Although there is a paragraph of his interview with Hamilton where Paolozzi points out he know about books being published “which are trying to assess and criticize Wittgenstein; this is the very latest literature on philosophy which is concerned with attacks on Wittgenstein, which makes it pretty up to the minute, I would think...” (Spencer 2000: 128). It’s almost certain that Paolozzi is referring to Gellner, E. 1959. *Words and Things: A Critical Account of Linguistic Philosophy and a Study in Ideology*. London: Gollancz, a book that became famous exactly because of its attack against Wittgenstein and Ordinary Language Philosophy or, as Gellner preferred to name it, “Linguistic Philosophy”.

²³ This is true for the following screenprints: III (*Experience*), IV (*Reality*), IX (*Assembling Reminders for a particular purpose*), X (*The Spirit of Snake*), XI (*He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder*).

²⁴ On the margin of the screenprint Paolozzi displays the original German version and the English translation of the following of Wittgenstein’s annotations, which are here reported in the English translation: “Only remember that the spirit of the snake, of the lion, is *your* spirit. For it is only from yourself that you are acquainted with spirit at all. / Now of course the question is why I have given a snake just this spirit. / And the answer to this can only lie in the psycho-physical parallelism: If I were to look like the snake and to do what it does then I should be such-and-such. / The same with the elephant, with the fly, with the wasp. / But the question arises whether even here, my body is not on the same level with that of the wasp and of the snake (and surely it is so), so that I have neither inferred from that of the wasp to mine nor from mine to that of the wasp” (Wittgenstein 1961: 85).

²⁵ For the English translation by S. Burns see Weininger, O. 2001. *On Last Things*. Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press. That this text was particularly dear to Wittgenstein can be deduced by a letter to his older sister Hermine of November 18, 1916, which can be read in Wittgenstein (1996). In the 1960s little was known about the relationship between Weininger and Wittgenstein, nor was the connection thus evident between various annotations of the *Notebooks* and several pages from Weininger. As regards the relationship between Wittgenstein and Weininger see Stern and Szabados (2004), especially about this point the essay by Stern: Weininger and Wittgenstein on “Animal Psychology”: 169–197.

²⁶ In the mentioned annotation of 1931 Wittgenstein puts Weininger at the eighth place (the order is probably chronological) in the list of thinkers that influenced him and helped him in his “work of clarification” (Wittgenstein 1998: 16).

²⁷ “The fundamental thought and the presupposition of the book, the basis on which rests *all* that follows, is the theory of the human being as *microcosm*. Because the human being stands in relation to all things in the world, so all these things must surely exist in him. This thought about the microcosm is being taken seriously for the first time in this book: *according to it, the system of the world is identical with the system of humankind*” (Weininger 2001: 96). According to Weininger, all of this “is entirely in harmony with the thesis of all philosophical idealism, that in the objects of the external world we only have appearance before us, and not ‘things in themselves’” (Weininger 2001: 97).

²⁸ It is a proposition forestalled precisely in the annotations of October 20, 1916: “This is the way I have travelled: Idealism singles men out from the world as unique, solipsism singles me alone out, and at last I see that I too belong with the rest of the world, and so on the one side *nothing* is left over, and on the other side, *the world*. In this way idealism leads to realism if it is strictly thought out” (Wittgenstein 1961: 86).

²⁹ The other annotations reproduced on screenprint III are: “Is belief a kind of experience? Is thought a kind of experience? [...] The act of will is not an experience”. This screenprint, which is very articulated and appears like a big mechanism composed of many other mechanism, reminds us in an irresistible manner of the following passage in the *Blue Book*: “It is misleading [...] to talk of thinking as of a ‘mental activity’. We may say that thinking is essentially the activity of operating with signs” (Wittgenstein 1958: 6).

³⁰ “My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them – as steps – to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up on it.) / He must transcend these propositions, and then he will see the world aright” (Wittgenstein 1921-22: 6.54).

³¹ Allow me, please, to refer about all this to Perissinotto (2008: 149-169).

³² Paolozzi certainly wasn’t the only artist who was inspired by proposition 6.54 and to the image of the ladder, which is contained in it.

³³ Taking proposition 6.54 of the *Tractatus* seriously or literally is an attitude belonging to so called “resolute” or “neo-Wittgensteinian” interpretations of the *Tractatus*, which see in Cora Diamond and James Conant two of the most influent representatives. See in this regards for instance the essays collected in Crary and Read (2000).

³⁴ Screenprint I (*Artificial Sun*) bares in the lower side, only in its English translation, the first proposition of the *Tractatus*: “The world is all that is the case”, written in block letters and followed by the indication (again in block letters) “Tractatus logico-philosophicus Ludwig Wittgenstein”; while the fourth screenprint (*Reality*) includes even eight printed propositions of the *Tractatus* (in the original German version on top left and in the English translation by Pears and McGuinness on the bottom left): 2.063: “The sum-total of reality is the world”; 2.1: “We picture facts to ourselves”; 2.11: “A picture presents a situation in logical space, the existence and non-existence of state of affairs”; 2.12: “A picture is a model of reality”; 2.13: “In a picture objects have the elements of the picture corresponding to them”; 2.131: “In a picture the elements of the picture are the representatives of objects”; 2.14: “What constitutes a picture is that its elements are related to one another in a determinate way”; 2.141: “A picture is a fact”. Screenprint XI, as we know, bares proposition 6.54.