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## Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Nachlass* in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register

### **Abstract**

The contribution reports the inclusion of Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Nachlass* into the UNESCO Memory of the World register.

The UNESCO program *Memory of the World*<sup>1</sup> was established in 1992. As part of this program, each member state can nominate important documents of “world significance” for creating a registry of our common documentary heritage. The nomination is officially accepted or rejected after an evaluation by the International Advisory Committee. At present, the register contains 427 documents or collections from all over the world. The aim of the UNESCO World Register is to highlight outstanding documents in the cultural history of mankind and to point out the importance of their preservation. The preservation of these documents is also intended as a reminder for millions of other outstanding documents that are not on the list.

The vision of the Memory of the World Programme is that the world's documentary heritage belongs to all, should be fully preserved and protected for all and, with due recognition of cultural resources and practicalities, should be accessible to all without hindrance. (<https://en.unesco.org/programme/mow>; accessed on 31.10.2018)

Thanks to the initiatives of the Wittgenstein Archives at the

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<sup>1</sup> See <https://en.unesco.org/programme/mow>

available without hindrance,<sup>2</sup> and in October 2017 the philosophical *Nachlass* was officially added to the UNESCO World Heritage List “Memory of the World”.<sup>3</sup> The initiative for the nomination came from the Austrian National Library. However, the joint-nomination was made in collaboration with the other four institutions that own parts of Wittgenstein’s estate, i.e.

- Trinity College, Cambridge (UK), owning by far the largest share
- Austrian National Library (Vienna)
- Bodleian Library, Oxford (UK)
- Noord Hollands Archief, Haarlem (NL)
- Bertrand Russell Archives, McMaster University Library, Hamilton, Canada

Wittgenstein’s *Nachlass* was nominated according to Georg Henrik von Wright well known systematic list (see von Wright 1969).<sup>4</sup>

Being part of the UNESCO Memory of the World register is a great honor and recognition bestowed on Wittgenstein’s philosophy. It places Wittgenstein’s manuscripts alongside documents such as the Golden Bull (Bulla Aurea), the closing documents of the Congress of Vienna, Goethe’s estate in Weimar and the autograph

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<sup>2</sup> See especially the following sites: *Wittgenstein Source* (<http://www.wittgensteinsource.org/>, Wittgenstein 2009–, incl. Wittgenstein 2015–), *Open access to transcriptions of the Wittgenstein Nachlass* (<http://wab.uib.no/transform/wab.php?modus=opsjoner>, Wittgenstein 2016–) and *WITFind* (<http://wittfind.cis.uni-muenchen.de/>, developed in cooperation with the Center for Information and Language Processing (CIS) at the Ludwig-Maximilians-University in Munich).

<sup>3</sup> See <http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/memory-of-the-world/register/full-list-of-registered-heritage/registered-heritage-page-7/philosophical-nachlass-of-ludwig-wittgenstein/>.

<sup>4</sup> In the context of this nomination, it was not useful to include a discussion about missing items or items added to Georg Henrik von Wright’s catalogue list. The UNESCO-nomination is a highly *symbolic* action, referring to the *Nachlass* as a whole. Moreover, the correspondence of Wittgenstein was not included due to the many different owners of the letters, which would have made the nomination unmanageable.

of Ludwig van Beethoven's 9<sup>th</sup> Symphony – which last Wittgenstein would certainly have appreciated a lot.

So far, the following works by philosophers have been included in the UNESCO Memory of the World register:

- 1997: Søren Kierkegaard Archives, Danish Royal Library Manuscript Department (submitted by Denmark)
- 2007: Letters from and to Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz within the collection of manuscript papers of Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz, Lower Saxony State Library (submitted by Germany)
- 2011: Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Geneva and Neuchâtel Collections (submitted by Switzerland)
- 2013: *Manifest der Kommunistischen Partei*, draft manuscript page and *Das Kapital. Erster Band*, Karl Marx's personal annotated copy (submitted by The Netherlands and Germany)
- 2018: Philosophical Nachlass of Ludwig Wittgenstein (submitted by Austria, Canada, The Netherlands and the United Kingdom).

## References

- Wittgenstein, L., 2009–. *Wittgenstein Source*, curated by the Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Bergen under the direction of A. Pichler. Bergen 2009–. [wittgensteinsource.org]
- Wittgenstein, L., 2015–. *Wittgenstein Source Bergen Nachlass Edition*, ed. by the Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Bergen under the direction of A. Pichler. In: Wittgenstein 2009–. Bergen. [wittgensteinsource.org]
- Wittgenstein, L., 2016–. Interactive Dynamic Presentation (IDP) of Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophical Nachlass, ed. by the Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Bergen under the direction of A. Pichler. Bergen. [http://wab.uib.no/transform/wab.php?modus=opsjoner]
- Wright, G. H. von, 1969. "The Wittgenstein papers". *The Philosophical Review* 78/4, pp. 483–503.

## ***Biographical Note***

Alfred Schmidt studied philosophy, psychology and art history at the University of Vienna and completed his studies with a thesis on the phenomenology of Edmund Husserl. Since 1986 he is working at the Austrian National Library (ANL) as scientific assistant to the Director General. He is the curator of the Wittgenstein collection in the ANL. He publishes on the philosophy and works of Ludwig Wittgenstein and is the editor of the Wittgenstein Source *Facsimile Edition of Tractatus Publication Materials* (2016).



UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL, SCIENTIFIC  
AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION

Certifies the inscription of

*Philosophical Nachlass of Ludwig Wittgenstein*

*Austrian National Library*

*(Institution)*

*Vienna*

*(Town)*

*Austria*

*(Country)*

ON THE MEMORY OF THE WORLD INTERNATIONAL REGISTER

*30 October 2017*

*(Date)*

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Irina Bokova'.

*Irina Bokova*  
*Director-General, UNESCO*