Abstract: Virtually all commentors read paragraph 608 in *Zettel* to imply that there may, for all we know, turn out to be physical chaos at the neural center (hereafter called “the orthodox interpretation”). Some commentators take Z 608 to imply that there may indeterminism at the neural center, others that it is possible that the brains of normal human beings might turn out to be filled with sawdust (or even be empty), others that Z 608 supports a connectionist theory of the brain, etc. The orthodox interpretation is, prima facia, implausible, given that, among the most central tenants in Wittgenstein’s later philosophy, is that “one must not advance any kind of theory” and that “what is hidden is of no interest to us.” Nevertheless, the orthodox interpretation takes Wittgenstein to be making theories (including outrageous ones) about what may or may not go on at the neural center. The present paper argues that the orthodox interpretation is based on a fundamental misreading of Wittgenstein’s philosophy. Specifically, the orthodox interpretation assumes that the key terms in Z 608, “the center,” “chaos,” and “nothing,” are to be given a physical scientific meaning of the sort that would be natural and normal in cognitive science. But Wittgenstein is not a cognitive scientist. If these key terms are read in a way that is consistent with Wittgenstein’s own philosophy, it becomes clear that Z 608 is not asserting or suggesting any theory of the brain, let alone any outlandish one, but is alluding to a center, a chaos, and a nothingness, that is, in Wittgenstein’s own words, “already in plain view.” That is,
Wittgenstein is, in Z 608, not using these terms with a scientific meaning, but with a meaning associated with what is on display in human life. When Z 608 is read in Wittgenstein’s own terms, as opposed to the terms of his opponents, it has a quite different meaning from that ascribed to it by the orthodox interpretation, offering a profound insight into the interpretation of Wittgenstein’s later philosophy.

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