

# WITTGENSTEIN

A Guide for the Perplexed

Mark Addis



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## WITTGENSTEIN: A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED

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# WITTGENSTEIN: A GUIDE FOR THE PERPLEXED

MARK ADDIS



**Continuum International Publishing Group**

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First published 2006

Reprinted 2007

**British Library Cataloguing-in-Publication Data**

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN-10: 0826484956 (hardback) 0826484964 (paperback)

ISBN-13: 9780826484956 (hardback) 9780826484963 (paperback)

**Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data**

Addis, Mark.

Wittgenstein : a guide for the perplexed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references (p. ) and index.

ISBN 0-8264-8495-6 (hard back) – ISBN 0-8264-8496-4 (pbk.)

1. Wittgenstein, Ludwig, 1889–1951. I. Title.

B3376.W564A644 2006

192—dc22

2005024794

Typeset by Servis Filmsetting Limited, Manchester

Printed and bound in Great Britain by Biddles Ltd, King's Lynn, Norfolk

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## PREFACE

Wittgenstein is one of the most important twentieth-century philosophers. The *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and *Philosophical Investigations* have profoundly shaped the development of philosophy. Unlike some philosophers who are not well known outside the confines of the subject, Wittgenstein remains the focus of intense interest that extends far beyond philosophy. He occupies an influential place in contemporary thought but there is a lack of agreement about precisely what claims he made and the continuing weight which should be attributed to them. Any reasonably short introduction to Wittgenstein is inevitably selective. The objective of the guide is to equip readers with some of the requisite knowledge to better appreciate his approach and major ideas for themselves.



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## INTRODUCTION

### OVERVIEW

Wittgenstein is one of the most significant philosophers of the twentieth century. He radically challenged widely accepted views with powerful critiques that exposed the fundamental assumptions which underpinned them. Wittgenstein made notable original and controversial contributions to issues about the appropriate methodology for philosophy, and to the particular fields of language, logic, mathematics and mind, and epistemology. His writings<sup>1</sup> are divided into the phases of the early and later work. The later writings are usually classified further into the middle period, late period and (what is often termed) the Third Wittgenstein. Both his early and later work played a crucial role in the development of twentieth-century analytic philosophy.

Gottlob Frege (1848–1925) and Bertrand Russell (1872–1970) profoundly influenced Wittgenstein's early philosophy. The *Treatatus Logico-Philosophicus*<sup>2</sup> appeared in 1921 and was the only book that he published during his lifetime. It is presented in numbered sections which are hierarchically organized. The *Treatatus* emerged from Wittgenstein's *Notebooks 1914–1916* as a development of and reaction against the ideas about language and logic that Frege and Russell advocated. The work is founded upon the notion that problems in philosophy stem from a failure to understand language and it aimed to illuminate its essential character. Wittgenstein's employment of and philosophical attitudes to the newly invented logic of Frege and Russell was central to the *Treatatus*. The logical analysis presented in the book sought to resolve philosophical problems by reducing complex notions to their

simple constituents. Wittgenstein provided a complex picture of the relations between language, logic and metaphysics. He claimed to have solved all the major problems of philosophy in the *Tractatus* and thereafter gave up philosophy until his return to the subject in 1929. Wittgenstein's renewal of interest in philosophy marks the start of the middle period which lasted until about 1935. He subjected the doctrines of the *Tractatus* to systematic criticism and began to develop many of the notions which are present in the *Philosophical Investigations*. Wittgenstein's concern with central themes of the *Tractatus* remained but he developed a radically new conception of language and rejected what he regarded as its dogmatic approach to philosophy. His conception of philosophy altered very significantly and he no longer thought that philosophical problems could be definitively and finally solved. Wittgenstein's approach to issues in philosophy eschewed logical analysis in favour of the description of linguistic usage. He claimed that philosophy should be viewed as a kind of therapy and that it should employ diverse methods which are akin to various therapies. The distinct stylistic changes between the *Tractatus* and middle period reflect these altered perspectives about language and the nature of philosophy. Between the start of the middle and the end of the late period around half of Wittgenstein's work dealt with the philosophy of mathematics. The first signs of what was to become a major interest in philosophy of mind clearly emerge towards the end of the middle period. Published works from this time include 'Some Remarks on Logical Form', *Ludwig Wittgenstein und der Wiener Kreis*, *Philosophical Remarks*, *Wittgenstein's Lectures: Cambridge 1930-2*, *Philosophical Grammar*, *Wittgenstein's Lectures: Cambridge 1932-5*, *Blue and Brown Books* and 'Wittgenstein's Notes for Lectures on "Private Experience" and "Sense Data"'.<sup>1</sup>

The late period was from about 1936-45. Wittgenstein's most significant later work was the *Philosophical Investigations* and during the late period he devoted major attention to its preparation.<sup>2</sup> In 1943 part one of the *Investigations* was in its final manuscript form but Wittgenstein decided against publication. He only authorized its posthumous publication and the book appeared in 1953. In stylistic terms the *Investigations* resembles the middle period but the remarks in it are highly polished and condensed. The book moves from the discussion of one theme to another and lacks any easily identifiable structure. Such transition between topics is a consequence

of Wittgenstein's view that an essential part of dissolving philosophical confusion is to approach errors from a variety of perspectives. Each time further sources of puzzlement are uncovered. Part one of the *Investigations* is concerned with a range of central philosophical problems, such as the nature of meaning and understanding, the character of propositions and of logic plus questions about states of consciousness and intentionality. Published works from this period include *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, *Lectures and Conversations on Aesthetics, Psychology and Religious Beliefs*, and *Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics, Cambridge 1939*. There is a growing consensus that the period from 1946–51 comprised a distinct phase in Wittgenstein's thought (often termed the 'Third Wittgenstein'). Part two of the *Investigations* dates from this time and deals with issues in the philosophy of mind with a particular concentration upon aspect seeing. The best-known work of this period is *On Certainty* which contained Wittgenstein's most extensive and sustained discussions of epistemological questions. There is controversy over whether the writings in this period should be regarded as attempting to move in new directions from that of the *Investigations* or as a continuation of it. Published works from this period include *Zettel*, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, *Last Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology, Culture and Value* and *Remarks on Colour*.

Sometimes introductions to Wittgenstein tend to present his ideas in a way which may encourage readers to think that he is much clearer and simpler than he actually is. An encounter with his writings soon dispels illusions of this kind and may leave readers wondering how to proceed when undertaking exegetical work of their own. It is useful to consider difficulties which typically arise when attempting to interpret Wittgenstein. The fact that interest in him extends beyond philosophy can promote the impression that no or very little prior background in the subject is required to understand him. Indeed the opposite is true and as with some other major figures, such as Kant, a sizeable amount of philosophical knowledge is demanded before he can be comprehended. In order to grasp the point of Wittgenstein's comments the targets of his criticism require identification. Since he did not specify them in a straightforward way, background knowledge is needed to ascertain what they actually are. A good grounding in the fields of the philosophies of language, logic, mathematics, mind and epistemology is valuable.

There is disagreement about the extent to which the details of Wittgenstein's life can be used to inform the comprehension of his philosophy. These divergences are especially evident when his philosophical influences are considered. One general position is that Wittgenstein was affected by another thinker if parallels between their ideas can be adduced. However, it might be objected that this standard for influence discards serious inquiry into the history of ideas by favouring the comparison of philosophical beliefs instead. What underlies this criticism is that if parallels are sufficiently broadly construed then it is difficult to conclude that the ascription of a particular thinker's influence is the most persuasive explanation of the origin of particular philosophical themes in Wittgenstein. It is important to exclude parallels which turn out to be simply coincidental when subjected to closer scrutiny. The position taken on the standard for philosophical influences upon him is likely to have a significant bearing on how exegesis is approached.

Serious exegesis requires appreciation of some issues raised by Wittgenstein's published works. He wrote copiously during his lifetime and since the 1960s his writings have steadily been published. Wittgenstein's manuscripts and typescripts, referred to as the *Nachlass*, have appeared as *Wittgenstein's Nachlass: The Bergen Electronic Edition* (2000). A complete edition of his correspondence, *Wittgensteins Gesamtausgabe* (2004), came out recently. All his work is now in published form. Wittgenstein's texts with the exception of the *Tractatus* were compiled posthumously from *Nachlass* material. Arguably, some of the editing practices which were adopted have contributed to the difficulties of undertaking rigorous exegetical analysis. For example, Rhees compiled the *Philosophical Grammar* from sections of the original 'Big Typescript' and Wittgenstein's first two revisions of it.<sup>6</sup> Another instance is that Wittgenstein wrote the remarks which form part two of the *Investigations* between 1946–9 after he had completed the final manuscript form which he intended to submit for publication. He did not intend to include them in the book but the editors decided to. A general problem is that in many of Wittgenstein's published works passages from the part of the *Nachlass* from which the text has been drawn have been omitted. A difficulty these omissions create is that it is very hard to know whether the full context of a remark is being supplied without examining the *Nachlass*. For example, the 1968 version of 'Wittgenstein's Notes for Lectures on "Private

"Experience" and "Sense Data", edited by Rhees, omits passages<sup>5</sup> about mathematics which have been restored in the complete text of the 1993 edition. The omissions also have the consequence that it can be hard to make useful claims about the relationship between the texts from the middle period onwards, such as that between the *Philosophical Grammar* and *Investigations*. Improved editions of some of Wittgenstein's works have appeared and should be used whenever possible. The translations of Wittgenstein's writings have implications for exegesis. There are instances where the rendering of a passage is not entirely satisfactory and these tend to occur where a translator has imposed a particular interpretation on an especially difficult or obscure remark. In occasional cases, the same text may have more than one translation. The best-known case is that of the two translations of the *Tractatus*, firstly by C.K. Ogden (assisted by Frank Ramsey) and later by David Pears and Brian McGuinness.

Wittgenstein's writing has a literary quality rarely matched in German philosophical texts. He made use of metaphors, rhetorical questions, unexpected illustrations and other devices in order to make readers think. In his later work, Wittgenstein had a noticeable dislike of philosophical jargon because he thought that it obscured rather than clarified the nature of philosophical problems. However, he brought in his own terminology, such as 'language games' and 'family resemblance'. Wittgenstein was (almost) never satisfied with his own work and was constantly undertaking revisions which were quite often of a substantial kind. Part of his usual way of working was to reject some (or all) of his earlier thoughts upon a topic. Wittgenstein frequently rewrote remarks until they appeared in a form he was (more) satisfied with but what tended to happen in the process was that the context for understanding the remark (gradually) disappeared. The polished versions of the remarks are sometimes impenetrable and the arguments in favour of his insights fragmentary. Indeed, the styles of both the *Tractatus* and *Investigations* contribute to the major interpretative problems which they pose. Wittgenstein's inability or unwillingness to work his views into systematic and sustained lines of reasoning is a further source of difficulties. These problems about clarity and sustained argumentation coupled with the lack of straightforward identification of the targets of criticism quite frequently make it difficult to see the point of a remark or strategy. For example, consider the *Brown Book* where the purpose of imagining various linguistic situations is very infrequently elucidated

and in its first 30 pages philosophy is mentioned just once. A related difficulty with the same causes is that of finding organizational and argumentative structure in his writings.

Having reflected on problems which typically arise when attempting to interpret Wittgenstein, it is now appropriate to see what the elements of a reliable exegetical methodology might well be. It is important when undertaking exegetical work to consider the relative authority of the texts. The *Tractatus* and *Investigations* have the highest standing (published and intended to be) followed by works which were compiled posthumously from *Nachlass* material. Those with the lowest authority are individuals' records of Wittgenstein's lectures and conversations. It is impossible to be sure that he said the precise words attributed to him. Knowledge of the circumstances of composition of Wittgenstein's work is valuable. Sometimes his letters provide useful information about this. An understanding of German is useful for reading any material which has not been translated and for checking published translations. Given Wittgenstein's style and the presentation of his ideas, it is perhaps not surprising that some of the (early) secondary literature has succumbed to the temptation to take individual remarks out of context to create a set of views which are attributed to him. This temptation must be resisted as experience shows that it leads to unsatisfactory readings of the texts. It is useful to check for variants of remarks through following references in published works to similar passages in other texts (and the *Nachlass* if being very thorough) as this helps to develop insight into the context of a remark. Examining the context of a remark can make producing an interpretation of it easier and if an interpretation fits the context this can be evidence in its favour. Compiling a list of occurrences of particular term(s) in Wittgenstein's writings is often useful when investigating a specific concept(s). Every mention of a term in the *Nachlass* can be found by using the electronic edition (2000). A key element of accurate exegesis is finding the structure and identifying the patterns which are present in Wittgenstein's work. Locating the order underlying particular arrangements of remarks helps to reveal argumentative contexts, strategies and moves. For example, although the *Investigations* seems to be haphazard and fragmentary in its composition, it is possible to divide it into distinct sections of text concerned with particular sets of issues. Recognizing patterns within Wittgenstein's writings could include those relating to the use of a specific term or notion, such as regularly being found

in conjunction with another concept, and to his use of particular typographical devices. For instance, Baker's articles 'Italics in Wittgenstein' (1999) and 'Quotation-marks in the *Philosophical Investigations* Part I' (2002) provide guidance about how to approach typographical pattern identification. In the former he was concerned to investigate the standard view that italics are always used for emphasis. Patterns which were identified include italics to indicate purpose specific explanations or back references or to register a particular sense of a concept. Baker suggested that in many cases italics are equivalent to the use of single quotation marks.

There is a huge and steadily growing secondary literature about Wittgenstein. An efficient way to search this is to use the database *Philosopher's Index*. The interpretative difficulties about Wittgenstein's writings already discussed manifest themselves in the controversy over and the wide variations in the understanding of his work. Claims by scholars that other commentators have misrepresented what a particular philosopher thought may indeed arise from identifications of exegetical errors but they may also be expressions of an alternative perspective. Distinguishing between these reasons for alleged misinterpretation is a particularly significant task when appraising the literature on Wittgenstein. Commentaries on the *Tractatus* and *Investigations* are particularly useful for facilitating deeper study. They provide systematic analysis of the texts including discussion of the development of his ideas and the original context of compressed remarks.

#### BIOGRAPHY

Ludwig Josef Johann Wittgenstein was born in Vienna on 26 April 1889.<sup>2</sup> For several generations both sides of his family had been wealthy and cultured. Wittgenstein's paternal grandfather was a successful wool merchant. He was Jewish but converted to Protestantism and married the daughter of a banker. They became established supporters of the arts and provided their son Karl with a classical education. However, this kind of education did not suit him and aged 17 he went to America where he supported himself for two years. Upon his return to Vienna he was granted his wish to study engineering which was where his real interests and talent lay. In less than 30 years he had become the leading figure in the iron and steel industry of the Austro-Hungarian Empire and one of



its wealthiest citizens. Wittgenstein's maternal grandfather was descended from a prominent Jewish family but had been raised as a Catholic, and had married one. In 1873, Karl married their daughter, Leopoldine Kalmus, and they had eight children with Wittgenstein being the youngest. All were baptized as Catholics. Leopoldine strongly encouraged cultural and especially musical activities and the family was important in Viennese cultural circles. Wittgenstein's brother Paul was a concert pianist. Wittgenstein himself had fine musical sensitivity but did not appreciate pieces later than Brahms. By the standards of his gifted family, Wittgenstein displayed no particular aptitudes as a boy. However, he did show considerable manual dexterity when he created a working model of a sewing machine.

Karl had somewhat eccentric ideas about education, which may have been shaped by his experiences. He was determined that his elder sons should contribute to the running of his business empire and they were given a private education designed to enable them to cope with the demands of commerce. From 1903-6 Wittgenstein went to the *Realschule* in Linz. The school was more technical and less academic than a grammar school. Part of the motivation for the choice was the concern that he would fail a demanding entrance examination for a grammar school. However, the main consideration was that his interests would be better served by a technically orientated education but he was not happy there. Wittgenstein had been interested in studying with Boltzmann who was Professor of Physics at the University of Vienna but he committed suicide in 1906. Instead Wittgenstein studied mechanical engineering at the Technische Hochschule at Charlottenburg in Berlin as it had been decided that his technical knowledge should be improved. Wittgenstein attended for three terms and was awarded his diploma in 1908. Photographs of the time indicate that he was impeccably dressed and much concerned about his appearance.

Although Wittgenstein had developed an interest in aeronautical engineering he was increasingly fascinated by philosophical problems. In 1908 he left for England and during the summer of that year he flew experimental kites at the Kite Flying Upper Atmosphere Station near Glossop in Derbyshire. From that autumn until 1911 he was registered as research student in aeronautical engineering at Manchester University. Wittgenstein was working on the design and construction of an aircraft engine. The concept was to rotate the

propeller of the engine using high-speed gases from a combustion chamber. Wittgenstein became interested in the mathematical features of the design, then by mathematics itself and ultimately by philosophical problems concerning the foundations of mathematics. He was introduced to Russell's *The Principles of Mathematics*. This work covered recent advances in logic and the foundations of mathematics made by Russell himself and Frege. It had a significant impact upon him. Wittgenstein had found a field which absorbed him and to which he sought to make a major contribution.

Wittgenstein met Frege at Jena in 1911 for advice about pursuing his interests. Frege recommended that he should study with Russell at Cambridge University. From 1912–13 he registered as a student. Russell was his supervisor and they discussed logic and philosophy with Wittgenstein's ability soon becoming apparent. By this time the preoccupations with the pursuit of perfection in philosophy and personal morality which fundamentally shaped his life had begun to manifest themselves. For example, in 1912 Wittgenstein's conversations with Russell featured his doubts about his personal moral worth and the need for change as much as logical and philosophical issues. The relationship between Wittgenstein and Russell rapidly transformed into one between colleagues. The latter remarked '... he will solve the problems I am too old to solve – all kinds of problems that are raised by my work, but want a fresh mind and the vigour of youth. He is *the* young man one hopes for' (letter to Ottoline Morrell 22.03.1912). In 1912 Wittgenstein went to Iceland with David Pinsent and the following year they visited Norway. He received a substantial inheritance when his father died in January 1913. Wittgenstein felt that his philosophical work required solitude and later in 1913 he returned to Norway where he lodged in the village of Skjolden where he undertook research in logic. Wittgenstein briefly visited Vienna at Christmas 1913. In April 1914 Moore (1873–1958) came to see him and took a series of dictations about logic.

Wittgenstein returned to Austria around the end of June 1914 and once war was declared he volunteered for the Austro-Hungarian army straightaway. During the war his efforts were directed towards the problems in the *Tractatus*. Religion was an important concern for Wittgenstein although he was not religious in a conventional kind of way. In September 1914 Wittgenstein encountered Tolstoy's *Gospel in Brief* and was profoundly affected by it. From 1914–16 he was a technician in an artillery workshop stationed firstly in Krakow and then

Sokal. In 1916 Wittgenstein was sent to Olmütz for officer training. He met Paul Engelmann and they talked about religious matters.<sup>1</sup> In January 1917 Wittgenstein was posted back to the Eastern front as an artillery officer and in February 1918 he joined a mountain artillery regiment on the Italian front. During these two years he was awarded two medals for valour. In August 1918 the *Tractatus* manuscript was completed. In November the Austro-Hungarian war effort fell apart and the Italians took about half a million prisoners of war – including Wittgenstein. During his imprisonment in a camp in Cassino he decided to train as an elementary school teacher. In a letter of March 1919 Wittgenstein informed Russell that he had a finished *Tractatus* manuscript. John Maynard Keynes used his political influence to allow Wittgenstein to send a copy of it to Russell. Wittgenstein claimed to have solved all the major problems of philosophy in the *Tractatus* and thereafter gave up philosophy until his return to the subject in 1929. In August 1919 he was released from the camp.

Wittgenstein's war service had a significant effect on his attitudes to life, especially with regard to wealth and lifestyle. He decided to make a radical break with his past and live in a fundamentally different way. Wittgenstein insisted upon donating his entire inheritance to his siblings in September 1919. From then onwards he lived completely simply and without ornament. In the same month he enrolled on a one-year course in primary school teaching. He and Russell discussed the *Tractatus* line by line at a meeting in Holland in December 1919. Russell agreed to contribute an introduction to it. He claimed that it 'certainly deserves, by its breadth and scope and profundity, to be considered an important event in the philosophical world' (*TLP*, p. 7). When Wittgenstein saw Russell's introduction he complained that Russell had misunderstood his views and misrepresented them (*LWCL*, p. 152). Wittgenstein made several attempts to publish the book but none of them succeeded. He graduated from the teaching course in July 1920 and in despair left the matter of publication to Russell. The *Tractatus* was first published in German in 1921 and in English in 1922.

In autumn 1920 Wittgenstein began as schoolmaster in the village of Trattenbach which lay in the hills south of Vienna but became increasingly unhappy there. In November 1922 he transferred to Puchberg in the Schneeberg mountains. Ramsey was a young mathematician of outstanding promise who had assisted with the

English translation of the *Tractatus* and reviewed it for the journal *Mind*. He took up Wittgenstein's invitation to visit in September 1923, when the *Tractatus* was discussed in detail, and in May 1924. However, Ramsey could not persuade Wittgenstein to resume his philosophical work. Difficulties arose at Puchberg and he transferred again to the village of Otterthal in September 1924. Whilst there he wrote and published a spelling dictionary for use in elementary schools. In all his teaching positions, Wittgenstein's high expectations and stern measures for enforcing them had upset the majority of his pupils and invoked the hostility of their parents. After a complaint about his treatment of a pupil Wittgenstein decided to resign his post in April 1926. (At the subsequent hearing about the incident he was cleared of misconduct.) He was deeply dejected at the failure of his teaching venture.

Wittgenstein worked as a gardener at a monastery in Hittfeldorf outside Vienna and at the end of the summer in 1926 he returned to the city. His sister Gretl and her architect Engelmann asked him to become a partner in the design and construction of her new house. Although the early plans were drawn up collaboratively, once Wittgenstein was a partner he assumed control of the interior design. He admired the work of Adolf Loos and that influence is evident in the stark modern style of the house. Wittgenstein paid tremendous attention to every detail of the building. For example, the seemingly simple radiators took a year to deliver because the sort of thing Wittgenstein envisaged could not be constructed in Austria. Gretl moved into the house at the end of 1928. Through work on the building Wittgenstein returned to Viennese social life and thereby eventually philosophy. Moritz Schlick was Professor of the History and Philosophy of the Inductive Sciences at Vienna University. He was the founder of a circle (which evolved into the Vienna Circle) of philosophers and mathematicians who were united in their positivist approach to philosophical problems and scientific world view. Schlick sought out Wittgenstein because he admired him: and they first met early in 1927. Schlick did not succeed in drawing Wittgenstein into the circle itself. However, by summer 1927 he was meeting regularly with a group which included Schlick and carefully selected members of his circle including Friedrich Waismann, Rudolf Carnap and Herbert Feigl. As Wittgenstein regained interest in philosophy he realized that the *Tractatus* had not solved all its major problems. The recognition of this was the stimulus for his later philosophy.

The revival of Wittgenstein's philosophical concerns led to a return to Cambridge University in January 1929. By now the *Tractatus* was internationally regarded as a philosophical classic and he found out that it could be submitted for a doctoral degree. Wittgenstein registered with Ramsey as a supervisor. Russell and Moore were the examiners and he received the degree in June of that year. He required funding to be able to carry on with his philosophical work and set about securing a position at Cambridge. At the end of Michaelmas term 1930 he was awarded a five-year Fellowship at Trinity College with the typescript which was posthumously published as the *Philosophical Remarks* being accepted as a fellowship dissertation. Wittgenstein began delivering lectures which were not all academic in style. He usually held them in his rooms. Wittgenstein did not use notes but instead thought before the class and gave an impression of tremendous concentration. Whether the discussion became productive greatly depended upon the audience. Wittgenstein considered rejecting academic life entirely and going, with Francis Skinner, to reside in the Soviet Union where they would seek manual labouring work. His motives for wishing to go there primarily stemmed from his belief about the simple ascetic kind of life being led there and to a lesser extent from his passionate admiration of Tolstoy's moral teachings and Dostoevsky's spiritual insights. He and Skinner had been taking Russian lessons since the start of 1934 in preparation for their visit to the Soviet Union.<sup>1</sup> Wittgenstein travelled there in September 1935 but eventually decided against emigration because it became clear to him that he would not be permitted to settle there as a manual worker.

Wittgenstein went to Skjolden in Norway in August 1936. He aimed to use the *Brown Book* as the basis for the preparation of a final formulation of his intended book. This was part of one of his attempts to mould his work into a suitable shape but by November he had abandoned this attempt at revision. Immediately afterwards Wittgenstein started those manuscripts which eventually led to the *Investigations*. His concern with perfection in personal morality was particularly strong at this time. When Wittgenstein visited Vienna and England around New Year in 1937 he confessed to several of his friends about times in his life when he had been weak and dishonest in order to dismantle the pride which had produced his weakness. He was in Norway between August and December 1937. Through correspondence with Sraffa, Wittgenstein became aware of his position

following the *Anschluss* between Germany and Austria in March 1938. He travelled to Cambridge in that month with the intention of seeking a post at the university. Wittgenstein resumed teaching activities more regularly and received some payment for the academic year 1938–9. In February 1939 he succeeded Moore as Professor of Philosophy and in June became a British citizen. Wittgenstein's lectures on the foundations of mathematics in 1939 were partly notable for having Alan Turing, a distinguished twentieth-century mathematician, in the audience. In 1941 he volunteered to work as a porter and laboratory technician in Guy's Hospital in London and in 1943 he joined a team working on the physiology of shock at the Royal Victoria Infirmary in Newcastle as a research technician.

In February 1944 Wittgenstein left for an extended stay in Swansea and in the October he returned to Cambridge. His hostility towards professional philosophy and his dislike of Cambridge remained constant throughout his academic career. Wittgenstein continued his duties until August 1947 when he resigned his Chair to concentrate on his writing. The university awarded him Michaelmas term as a period of sabbatical leave so he formally ceased to be a professor at the end of the year. In 1948 Wittgenstein went to Ireland, living for part of the time in a cottage in Connemara and spent the winter of that year in Ross's Hotel in Dublin. He suffered from ill health and after returning from a visit to the United States in October 1949 he was diagnosed with prostate cancer. From then onwards Wittgenstein lived with various friends in Oxford and Cambridge. Health permitting he continued work actively at philosophy until virtually the end of his life. He died in Cambridge on 29 April 1951. His last words were 'tell them I've had a wonderful life'.

#### WITTGENSTEIN'S PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCE

Questions about Wittgenstein's place in twentieth-century analytic and continental philosophy and selected aspects of the significance of his writings for some other disciplines are very briefly considered. The aim is to draw some of the broad contours of his influence so that the reader can profitably approach specialist works about this, such as Hacker's *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth Century Analytical Philosophy* (1996b). The fields to which his work has been applied include the philosophies of language, logic, mind, cognitive science, mathematics, religion, aesthetics, ethics, political and

social philosophy, and jurisprudence. The precise nature and scope of Wittgenstein's importance remains a subject of controversy. Disagreements over this continue to have an impact on contemporary philosophical practice. Wittgenstein's work is an integral part of mainstream twentieth-century analytic philosophy and he was central to its development between the 1930s and 1970s. Russell expressed Wittgenstein's significance when he remarked (1959, p. 216) that 'during the period since 1914 three philosophies have successively dominated the British philosophical world, first that of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, second that of the Logical Positivists, and third that of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*'. This appraisal is largely accurate but its scope is rather too narrow as Wittgenstein shaped analytic philosophy internationally.

The Vienna Circle was greatly influenced by the *Tractatus* but their adoption of its major concepts was selective. The Circle rejected the picture theory of meaning, the distinction between saying and showing, plus most of the metaphysics of logical atomism. However, they accepted the ideas of the *Tractatus* about the character and limits of philosophy (as an activity of clarification), the conception of logic (as analytic) and logical necessity as well as the notion of the logical analysis of language. The subsequent use and indeed misuse of these ideas had a profound effect upon the views of the Circle. The *Tractatus* significantly shaped the direction of the philosophy of language, especially with regard to the objective of creating a theory of meaning for natural language. The goal of producing such a theory shares a number of fundamental presuppositions with that work. One of these is that in all natural languages the conjunction of a system of rules with assignments of meaning together fix the meaning of every grammatical (that is, well-formed) sentence in the language. Taken together with appropriate facts, this calculus of meaning unequivocally determines the truth value of each sentence. Another is that the grammar of natural language hides the complex system of rules which underpins it and that these rules can be exposed by analysis.

From the 1930s onwards Wittgenstein's middle period and later work were of pivotal importance to the course of analytic philosophy. He initially affected its development through his series of lectures. Members of the audience included philosophers, such as Malcolm, who would later elucidate and apply Wittgenstein's views to a substantial range of issues. The posthumous publication of the *Investigations* and a steady stream of other writings augmented his

influence. Prior to this Wittgenstein's major works of the later period had not been directly available to philosophers and they had relied upon, for example, lecture notes from his students. He systematically criticized the presuppositions about language and logic which underpinned the *Tractatus* and in doing so also repudiated basic suppositions of the project of creating a theory of meaning for natural language. A prominent criticism was that of the idea that words are the names of objects and the meaning of each one is the object which it stands for. Wittgenstein's criticism was coupled with the introduction of new conceptions of language, many of which gained widespread currency. One of these is the idea that the use of language is an important part of meaning. His thinking about language particularly influenced what is termed ordinary language philosophy (of which Ryle was an exemplary representative). Ordinary language philosophy directed its attention towards the ordinary use of linguistic expressions and the discovery of the informal logic which governed the rules for their employment. This approach to philosophy gradually declined in influence. Another aspect of Wittgenstein's work which had an extremely significant impact was that in the philosophy of mind. He developed a deep and comprehensive criticism of the picture of the relationship between the physical and the mental which has been dominant since Descartes. Essentially the picture is that an individual has privileged access to the contents of his mind whilst others can only ever indirectly access his mental phenomena through bodily and behavioural manifestations. The most significant critique of this conception was the private language argument which aimed to demonstrate that a language of this kind is not possible.

Interest in Wittgenstein and scholarship about his writings has flourished since the 1960s. However, from then onwards he became less influential in analytic philosophy generally as his critical stance towards the use of theory and science in philosophy gradually fell out of favour. A major reason for this was the dominance of a scientific conception of philosophy in the United States (which had emerged as the centre of Anglophone analytic philosophy by the mid-1970s). Another significant factor was that the perspective on language espoused by the *Investigations* was supplanted by theories of meaning which had affinities with the *Tractatus*, and that were complemented by developments in (Chomskian) theoretical linguistics. Wittgenstein's philosophy of mind lost ground to materialist



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