

Preface

When we met in Luster county, Sogn, some months ago, the idea was not to have just another seminar on Wittgenstein. Rather, we wanted to confront his philosophy with a specific theme; the situation within contemporary theories of language. Those theories – be it in philosophy, linguistics, computer sciences or textual studies – occupy an important and problematic place in modern thought. The question is perhaps not so much to accept them or reject them, but more how we should discuss them and how we should understand them. For such a purpose Wittgenstein's philosophy might be particularly apt in order to stimulate our thinking. On the other hand, we can in this way measure his philosophy with respect to its power or its absence of power in dealing with questions that contemporary theories of language cannot but make us ask.

We tried to do this in 1992. Our discussions, the good atmosphere, and most of all the place that made up the indispensable framework of our words and sayings, cannot – of course – be reproduced in written form. Nevertheless, what follows are the papers presented at the seminar and some of the comments that were given after each paper. The papers have kept their original colloquial form and they have not been significantly revised by their authors.

Some words must be added about the background of the seminar: In 1914 Wittgenstein had a cottage built in Skjolden, a small village in the county of Luster in western Norway. Not only was this the place where he wrote much of what was later to become his two most famous works of philosophy, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* and the *Philosophical Investigations*, it was also a place he loved, both for the beauty of its landscape and for the many close friends he made

there. In recognition of what Wittgenstein has meant to Skjolden and of what he still means to Norwegian philosophy, the Wittgenstein Seminars in Skjolden were founded in 1990.

French philosophy is not well known in Norway and Norwegian philosophy is not well known in France. The bridge spontaneously gave itself: Many Norwegian philosophers are interested in Wittgenstein. And in France there is a growing interest in Wittgenstein. So Collège International de Philosophie, the Wittgenstein Seminars in Skjolden, and The Wittgenstein Archives at the University of Bergen decided to organize the 1992 seminar in Skjolden as a French-Norwegian Wittgenstein seminar.

We wish to express our gratitude to the *County of Luster*, both for their economical support and for their hospitality, giving us some unforgettable impressions of the Norwegian landscape of Wittgenstein.

We thank Professor *Heinz von Foerster* for sharing with us his recollections of Wittgenstein during an evening address sponsored by *Norsk Hydro*, whom we also thank for their contribution to and interest in the seminar.

Last, but not least, we wish to thank the *Norwegian Research Council (NAVF)* and *Collège International de Philosophie (CIPh)*, for their economical support.

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