

# Introduction

(with brief  
acknowledgements)

This book began in 1976, when the old Nottingham College of Education, now absorbed into Trent University, gave me six months' sabbatical leave. I used them to devour the so-called Cornell microfilms, much despised these days for their nannyish censorings of private passages but then invaluable as a source for Wittgenstein manuscript and typescript texts.

In 1980 I worked my notes up into a detailed text covering the years 1929–1930, with a sketch of the whole 1929–1951 corpus, still known at the time, very inaccurately, as 'late Wittgenstein', as if that were one homogenous thing. In 1991 I began a revision, which I called *Climbing out of the Swamp*, using a phrase of Wittgenstein's that he used to characterise a philosophical episode which he grew out of very rapidly but which stayed in his memory as a constant itch of self-reproof. This revision was completed in 1994, and a photocopy of its typescript was given to the Wren Library, Trinity College, Cambridge, where anybody wishing to check its differences from the present volume can do so. I am retaining its title as a chapter title, and portions of its contents, but the changes I have made are substantial.

I am also retaining a rather waspish preface which Brian Waltham, now dead and my benefactor in a legacy, was always wanting me to suppress. In it I vowed to use no sources that were not available to the academic world at large. Now, thanks to the Waltham legacy, I have at last been able to obtain the full Oxford-Bergen electronic edition, which must surely be familiar now to the academic world. Although it lacks two important texts, one of which I have traced and another I am still trying to, it is enormously welcome and will surely revivify Wittgenstein scholarship. If any scholars draw my attention to texts in it that I ought to have mentioned, I shall be very grateful, and I shall acknowledge their help on my website, [www.wittgenstein.co.uk](http://www.wittgenstein.co.uk). As to that, one thing I must indubitably acknowledge here is the trustees' never objecting to my choosing a name for it that made it appear official when it was nothing of the kind. In view of

the unkind things I say in my preface about the three original trustees (the inheritors) that is most magnanimous of them. Two of those have now died. My belief is that, contrary to the Latin tag, one should speak nothing but the truth of the dead, and I hope the surviving inheritor will agree with me. (But before I could give him an opportunity to, he died himself, on the 16<sup>th</sup> of June, 2003.)

To Elizabeth Anscombe I owe especial gratitude for her agreeing, towards the end of 1951, to my helping her with her translation of the two parts of *Philosophische Untersuchungen*, now known universally in English as *Philosophical Investigations*. I wish she had accepted more of my suggestions, but, even more, I wish I had been more thorough and more accurate in my criticisms. If it is any kind of excuse, she was in a frightful rush to get the job finished, especially with Part II. However, more than owing to her an early familiarity with *Investigations*, in the form of two slightly differing typescripts, both of which are safely in the electronic edition, I also owe her giving me the run of the manuscripts that Wittgenstein had left in her house in Oxford, and, with supererogatory generosity, leaving me in charge of them for the best part of a month while she went to Austria to find what had been left there.

A most important person to acknowledge not only for my debt to him but for that of Wittgenstein scholarship in general is Dr. Michael Nedo. His editing of the *Wiener Ausgabe* (Springer Verlag), which I have used for the first ten large manuscript books that Wittgenstein termed *Bände* (strictly, nine and a half, because the second half of *Band X* was written after a gap and Nedo omits it in his fifth printed volume) is exemplary. Over and above his textual editing he had a remarkable eye for typefaces, and he went to extreme lengths to track down a reproduction of the Baskerville face that was more accurate than the rough and ready reproduction used by most modern printers. It would be an enormous pity if the availability of the Bergen edition led scholars to neglect the *Wiener Ausgabe*. The first nine and a half *Bände* form an important unit in Wittgenstein's philosophical development, and the Vienna edition is not only convenient and kind to scholarly eyesight but comparatively cheap. (Of later Vienna volumes I know only the eleventh, devoted to the Big Typescript, discussed in chapters 5 and 8.)

Elizabeth gave me further help when, in 1964, she lent me, for the sake of completing my translation of *Über Gewissheit*, a larger set of her uncensored trustees' photographs of late notebooks than I strictly needed. The memory of these has been helpful in writing comments on the last Wittgenstein volume to be printed, on the subject that he called "das Innere". The English title of this is *Last*

*Writings on the Philosophy of Psychology, Volume II*, and my comments on it form the penultimate section of the last chapter of the present book.

Yorick Smythies, who shares my dedication with my elder son, must be mentioned for his gift to me of an important typescript, now in the Wren. It is a pleasure to be able to record that he left a son, Danny, who turned up in my village some years ago, and that he now has, as his third grandchild, a new granddaughter, Minka Stear.

The Wren, of course, deserves a paragraph of its own, and with it its Librarians, Drs. Gaskell and McKitterick, whom I took advantage of from 1976 until I was too old to make the journey but still pestered by post.

My debt to Dr. Josef Rothhaupt of Munich is so great that I shall have to detail it in a full acknowledgements section, and the same is true of Professor Timothy Smiley of Clare College Cambridge, whose most significant contribution to this book is mentioned in the preface, which preceded this introduction in time by twelve years, but now follows it in print.

And talking of villages there is Aberarth, which keeps me active in what ought to be retirement. Indeed, this introduction and its companion preface might be called a tale of two villages, the other being in Scotland. Of course, as anyone who knows the two will understand, my heart is still in the Highlands, collecting driftwood on the banks of Loch Duich, where I wrote my preface when another war was beginning in the Middle East.

And while it is, alas, still continuing there, I must add another debt of gratitude and an embarrassing confession about it. For thirteen years I deprived myself of using the Monk *Ludwig Wittgenstein* because of a textual error I thought I had found in it, which turned out to be my own misreading. The multitudinous changes I am now having to make in my own text in order to incorporate Monk's biographical discoveries have been a substantial delay in preparing my book for publication. So is a final debt that I must mention: the help given me by Dr. Alois Pichler of Bergen and, through him, Dr. Brigitte Parakenings of Konstanz. It is gratifying to discover how closely my own efforts over more than fifty years coincide with the results of the Bergen team, and I shall be happy if my attempt to combine detail with perspective in respect of the Wittgenstein texts leads a wider public to them in their Bergen publications, electronic and otherwise.

Aberarth, 2005.

## Preface from 1991

Forty years have passed since Isaiah Berlin asked me to ‘keep an eye’ on the Wittgenstein manuscripts, which he feared the trustees might “tamper with” (single quotation marks giving his gist, double his actual words). As things have turned out, tampering is a misnomer for what has actually happened. The trustees’ editing has mainly been meticulously accurate, but their decisions as to what to publish and in what order have been insensitive to the wishes of scholars, their publication for libraries of microfilms has been tardy and quite unnecessarily censored, and scholars, for their part, have failed to make good use of these defective offerings, the combination of these combined failings leading to a result so appalling that one finds it difficult to think of a name for it.

Wittgenstein originally thought he had settled the problems of philosophy in the *Tractatus*. It is possible that a visit to Ramsey in England in 1925 helped him decide otherwise. In the spring of 1928 a paper by Brouwer on the foundations of mathematics is often said to have been the trigger, and meetings with Schlick in 1927 and 1928 will also have played a part. At all events, in drafts for the preface to *Philosophical Investigations* he gives the impression that he began to *think* again in 1928 and to write in 1929. Any notes that might have been made of any 1928 conversations with Schlick have been lost – the published conversations begin at the end of 1929. The written start, however, is not lost. It has a precise date – the 2<sup>nd</sup> of February 1929, when Wittgenstein began work in Cambridge in a series of large manuscript books (mainly foolscap or quarto books made for offices) and smaller notebooks. He had been given a place at Trinity College as a research student but not a fellowship, and the notes he made eventually provided his fellowship submission, finally presented in November 1930 via Russell and Moore, two of his examiners.

Halfway through the fourth of his manuscript volumes Wittgenstein went to Austria for his Easter vacation. There he dictated a typescript of what he thought the most important passages that he had so far written. This he used to obtain a

small grant to enable him to continue his research (he had obtained a similar grant the year before), but in November he applied for the fellowship. Meanwhile he had completed Volume IV and nearly completed Volume V, but he did not use any of this new material for his submission. Instead, he took an empty office 'minute book' and pasted onto its pages selected paragraphs which he cut from a carbon copy of the very typescript that he had already submitted for his grant, putting them in an order which quite disguised the processes of thought that had occupied him in writing the original three and a half manuscript volumes. Rather as in the original manuscript draft for the *Tractatus*, he began with paragraphs which were summaries of the various themes that made up the final book, and only thereafter proceeded to long sections dealing with those themes individually.

Because of its conciseness and its perplexing order the submission must have been extremely difficult for the examiners to judge, even though they had already seen the typescript from which its paragraphs had been cut, but they recommended a fellowship, granted on the 5<sup>th</sup> of December 1930. This had a term of five years, unlike modern Trinity prize fellowships, which last only for four. Wittgenstein, in gratitude, gave the minute book with its pasted paragraphs to Moore, who gave it to the trustees after Wittgenstein's death in 1951. They came to know it as the Moore Volume and one of them, Rush Rhees, left it in a telephone box and it has never been seen since, but fortunately, in addition to its having first been photographed, he had also made a typed copy. From this it was due to come out in 1964 under the title of *Philosophische Bemerkungen*, and in anticipation Elizabeth Anscombe asked me to translate it, lending me Rhees's typescript. I found the German difficult and said I would rather complete my 'Certainty' translation. While returning Rhees's typescript I compared it with the by then printed volume and noticed that the latter had some half dozen omissions. (In the following study I mention one of these that I have meanwhile found again).

Wittgenstein's gift of his fellowship submission to Moore indicates that he did not consider it a source of further writing. In contrast, he did keep the top copy that it had been cut from, and used it as material, in particular for what he called the Big Typescript, a kind of anthology redrafted as a book, made in 1933 and embracing his work from 1929 to 1932. This exemplifies and even explains the progress of his ideas in these first four years of his return to philosophy, whereas the Moore Volume had disguised the progress that led to it. It gives the impression that ideas he had grown out of belonged to the past, perhaps to 1928 Vienna before he started writing again. The second paragraph begins (TS 209, page 1):

The phenomenological language or ‘primary language’ as I called it does not appear to me as an aim now; I do not consider it necessary any more.

Yet many later paragraphs in the book are taken from manuscript passages written while he still *did* consider it a proper aim, without any indication that they had been written before a radical change of view took place.

Whatever he may have felt about his Trinity examiners I do not believe that Wittgenstein had any intention of concealing this change of view from posterity. On the contrary, he went to as much trouble preserving the large manuscript books in which he had expressed it as he did with his later ones, which continued, in all sorts of different sizes, until his last entry, made on the 27<sup>th</sup> of April 1951, two days before his death. He had done preliminary work for the *Tractatus* in similar diary form, by writing philosophy on right hand pages and personal entries (in a simple code) mainly on the left. In 1929 he began with this right-hand left-hand system; but this time his personal remarks were not in code and he kept them up for only a few days, leaving the rest of his left hand pages blank. At the end of his philosophical right hand pages of the first volume he proceeded to the right hand pages of the second. Then he filled the left hand pages of the second and finally the left hand pages of the first. The third volume was written normally, and so were all the remainder. In these, when he wanted to make a personal remark he simply wrote it down wherever he happened to have reached, sometimes using his code and sometimes not, and then continued with philosophy.

The first three volumes are in Vienna, but most of the rest are in Trinity College, Cambridge. Their merely being in a different place, however, is not the most significant reason why the first three are so little known. In 1952 the Rockefeller Foundation, who had been subsidising the work of the trustees, and in particular paying Elizabeth Anscombe’s stipend as a fellow of Somerville so that instead of teaching she could concentrate on translating and editing, insisted that all Wittgenstein’s manuscripts and typescripts should be photographed and prints made in order for the academic world to have access to them. The resulting photographic record was made in two stages: the first immediately, uncensored and for the benefit of the trustees, so that each could have copies at home, and the second, much delayed, in the form of microfilms, censored for the benefit of the academic world by having pieces of paper placed over most of the passages that were in code and quite a few that were not. These are mostly dated 1968, with a penultimate reel dated 1970 and a last one dated 1978, the delay for that one being no fault of the trustees. They were published (in so far as that word is

appropriate, since they could only be purchased by universities and libraries) by Cornell University, and are known as the Cornell microfilms.

The academic world did not take kindly to being told what it was allowed to read. Nor was it very persistent in unravelling the right and left hand passages in the first two manuscript books. And while the third was reasonably well photographed, the fourth, equally important to this story, was photographed and reproduced with exceptional obscurity.

In one case the censorship was even more radical. I was present when Elizabeth Anscombe burnt a section of a few lines from a late manuscript book after obtaining a photograph of the other side of the leaf so that it would not suffer similarly. She said that this burnt passage referred to someone who was still alive and so felt herself entitled to destroy it. At the time I could not decipher Wittgenstein's code and had only read un-coded private passages (in the final notebooks, on the subject of knowledge and certainty). These passages were mainly much redrafted and somewhat paranoid remarks about Ayer, Wisdom and some third philosopher, and how dishonourably and ineffectively they had misrepresented his ideas. I assumed the destroyed sentences to be of the same kind, but in 1980, when I was able to see uncensored microfilms in Trinity and had cracked the code, I found this cut, with some uncut code above it that made it clear that it was one of a series of extremely sentimental and inhibited remarks about Wittgenstein's friendship with Ben Richards (in code Y), whom everybody knows about now because of a picture of them taken in front of a Liverpool bus. The gap and its surround are still to be seen in these Trinity microfilms with, nearby, the silhouette of a dry, pressed pansy.

One would think that the interest in how Wittgenstein came to develop his later philosophy was so gripping that difficulties like shabby microfilms, censored private passages and notebooks written topsy turvy would be scorned by philosophers who wanted the truth. Quite the contrary. Wittgenstein's manner of first emerging from his old ideas, embodied in three and a half manuscript books and impenetrably encapsulated in the Moore Volume, is almost unknown [or was as I wrote this preface – it is now well known but still dismissed as a mere wrong turning]. While the misjudgement of the trustees in their choice of what and when to publish and their refusal to distribute uncensored microfilms was culpable beyond delinquency, the feebleness of the academic world in failing to read what has been available for more than twenty years is just as deplorable. The two together constitute the state of affairs which I termed appalling but could find no name for.

Sir Isaiah has been able, at least, to find some quite telling phrases for it (in a letter to me of the 2<sup>nd</sup> of July 1987):

I am sure you are right: looking at the actual manuscript, at diaries, at fragments, at notes, gives a far more intimate understanding of the philosophical process – I don't know what else to call it – than the finished article – there is something direct and inescapable about such jottings, which can literally produce a kind of precipitate in one which is as near to the truth of particularly such a philosopher as Wittgenstein, who did not believe in finished articles but in the painful process itself, than anything else could do.

And later in this letter:

... from the point of view of achieving your aim, as I take it to be, which is to penetrate the complacent shell of writers on Wittgenstein, who argue about or interpret the texts as if written by a man long dead, of whom nothing but the printed work survives.

In my own search for the workings of Wittgenstein's mind I have no more been restricted to the Cornell microfilms than I have restricted myself to the printed works. Nor could I have made anything like as good a study if I had been. Elizabeth Anscombe was extremely generous to me in my earliest research. Unfortunately I was too busy earning a living to take the advantage I might have done of her generosity. When I was given a sabbatical half-year by my teachers' training college in 1976 I started work at last (and could have kicked myself for not making time earlier) on the Cornell microfilms, but over and above that I was given permission by Rhees to read originals in the Wren Library, Trinity, which continued into 1978 and 1980. In 1980 I also had access to the new uncensored (and excellently photographed) microfilms being made for Trinity by Dr. Michael Nedo. Now, however, that I have an opportunity to return to my study and revise it, I am determined to use only the access that any other academic can obtain. An anecdote may help explain my scruples. In 1957, when a friend had typed my first 'Certainty' translation, I asked Sir Isaiah if he would like to see it, and he replied that he would only do so if I did not ask Miss Anscombe for her permission. Since she, for her part, had extracted from me a promise that I would not show anything to anybody *without* her permission, I kept it to myself. Now, after these long years, I can see the matter from Sir Isaiah's viewpoint.

In my 1980 preface I assumed that the notebooks analysed in my study would all soon be published in the complete edition that Dr. Nedo was planning. Now, in



the spring of 1991, that seems to have been delayed, but I can at least assume that complete and uncensored microfilms will eventually be distributed to the world's universities and libraries in the manner of the Cornell microfilms. In 1980 I had written "Knowing that the *Gesamtausgabe* will appear whether I complete my book or not, I am able to proceed with less inhibition than if I thought my own work was to be the last word. I can afford to put my book together with a rapidity which I might otherwise feel was risky. This could well be to its advantage. A piece of furniture or a musical instrument can also benefit from being made swiftly: its various parts, all at the same degree of seasoning and assembled in the same humidity, will fit better and last longer, and this, I hope, will be the case with my book." Eleven years later there have been changes in seasoning and humidity. I must explain these briefly and hope that when I have joined everything together again they do not make my cabinet warp.

Early in 1980 I faced (as I quite often do) bankruptcy, after the failure of a somewhat improbable wood business. I decamped from Wales to Cambridge, where Professor Smiley and his wife put me up while I made last notes in the Wren Library. Returning to Wales to complete my study and have it typed I found, belatedly, that my tenants had been bust for dope and I threw them all out. It was not the dope I objected to so much as their trying to keep the news of the bust from me. Then, with summer ending and in an old farmhouse above the 1000 foot contour line, I wrote my study. It came together with far more rapidity than even the remarks above might suggest. My elder son had been given a half-fee scholarship at a prep school where he was to be coached for a scholarship to Eton. To pay his fees I needed a job. In complete isolation, with not even my cow to keep me company, I focused on subtleties of meaning in a way which I could not possibly repeat. I left for Cambridge where, with Professor Smiley's help, I made last changes. Term, meantime, in my son's and other prep schools, had begun. Simultaneously, it seemed, I handed my study to the binders to be forwarded to Nottingham University as a Ph D thesis and obtained a science post at a school in Cadogan Square where the previous science man had just been sacked.

My external examiner, whose name quite slips my mind, denied my claim that *Philosophische Bemerkungen* could only be understood by comparing it with its manuscript origins, with the simple argument that he had understood it perfectly well himself. He was also of the opinion that Wittgenstein's carefully preserved manuscript books were nothing more than the equivalent of preliminary drafts discarded in a wastepaper basket and rescued, perhaps, by his bedder. On these two grounds he rejected my thesis. I therefore assumed that my study would stay

in oblivion, because I could not possibly rework it in time to anticipate the *Gesamtausgabe*, with the help of which even scholars who could not work from microfilms would be able to reconstruct my conclusions.

There is, however, no sign of its being published. As I write, the trustees (one dead and two co-opted, making four) still refuse to distribute either their own photographs or Dr. Nedo's Trinity microfilms uncensored. Of course, if matters change before my study is printed I shall be happy to eat my words. Meanwhile I shall improve my 1980 text by completing gaps and correcting errors and generally mending faults which *I* would have turned it down for if it had been submitted to *me*; but having made a clean breast of all that, I shall feel entitled to disguise from my readers exactly where the joins come.

There is one apparently trivial technicality which I must mention finally. Wittgenstein drew a scrupulous distinction between new paragraphs which were separated by a line space ("Absatz") and sub-paragraphs which merely started on the next line ("neue Zeile"). The former were his real units, and he called them "Bemerkungen" or "remarks". I prefer to call a spade a spade and a paragraph a paragraph, but whatever term one uses the distinction was extremely important to him and it has to be preserved. Unfortunately it is very difficult to get either typists or typesetters to observe it with Wittgenstein's absoluteness. My 1980 text cannot be trusted in this respect. Before my revision appears in print I or my editors (or no doubt my trustees) will have to see that it is always clear to the eye and corresponds exactly to the manuscripts. What has taken me fifteen years to complete will consequently take a little longer still to publish – and while this one detail is being checked, the time taken to put others in order will not be noticed at all.

Ault a Chruinn, 1991.