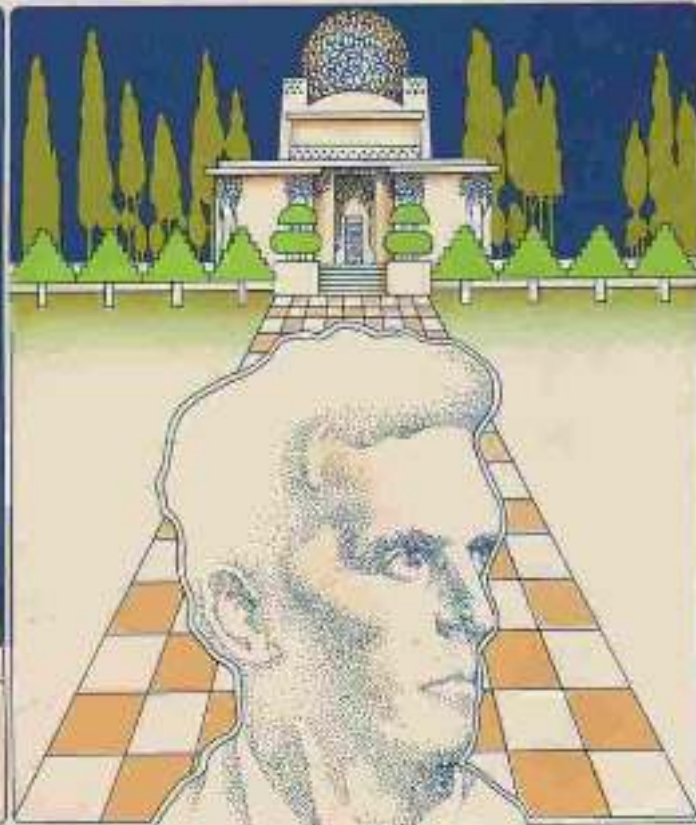


WITTGENSTEIN'S VIENNA

AN ACCOUNT OF THE LIFE, THE TIMES AND THE CULTURE OF HABSBURG VIENNA
BEFORE WORLD WAR ONE — THE VIENNA OF SEYMUND-FROUD, ARNOLD GOTTENBERG,
ARLPH-LEOS, OSKAR KOKOSCHKA, MODERNISM, MAYERLING — AND LUDWIG
WITTGENSTEIN, THE GREAT PHILOSOPHER WHOSE EPOCHAL WORK WAS FORMED
IN THE DECLINE AND FALL OF THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN EMPIRE.

BY ALAN JANIK & STEPHEN TOLMIN



TOUCHSTONE





Gustav Klimt, from *Ver Sacrum*

Wittgenstein's
VIENNA

Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin



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Preface

Ludwig Wittgenstein is best known for his two major philosophical books, the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, published just after World War I, and the *Philosophical Investigations*, on which he was still working at the time of his death in 1951.

Yet, quite apart from his published writings, Wittgenstein was also a remarkable man who grew up in a remarkable milieu. He spent his childhood and youth in a family and a house that formed one of the cultural foci of Viennese life in the years between 1895 and 1914, one of the most fertile, original and creative periods in art and architecture, music, literature and psychology, as well as in philosophy. And anyone who had the chance of knowing Wittgenstein personally soon found that he had first-hand interests and knowledge in all those fields and more. So, in this book we have tried to paint a picture of late Habsburg Vienna and its cultural life; we believe that in presenting this picture we shall have helped to make Wittgenstein's own intellectual preoccupations and achievements more intelligible.

At the same time, we must make it clear at the outset that this book is in no sense a biography of Wittgenstein, either personal or intellectual. Instead, we are concerned here with one specific problem, which is defined at the end of the first chapter, and with a hypothetical solution to that problem which, if well-founded, will serve to re-establish the significance of links between Wittgenstein and the Viennese, German-language thought and art of his time that have been obscured as a result of his later associations with the English-speaking philosophers of, for example, Cambridge and Cornell. In order to deal with this problem effectively, we were compelled—in the nature of the case—to assemble a substantial body of circumstantial evidence, especially about such comparatively unfamiliar figures as Karl Kraus and Fritz Mauthner. Rather than sacrifice too much of the resulting detail so as to keep the focus on Wittgenstein alone, we have decided

to present the whole of our picture, in all its richness and complexity, in a way that makes Wittgenstein a crucial figure, but not the only man on stage. Apart from anything else, it seemed to us, this had the makings of a good story!

A few explanatory remarks should be added about the structure of the book and the nature of the claims we would make for its argument. In the first place, then, Chapter 2 is not intended as a formal history of the late Habsburg scene. (For that, someone with the talents and experience of a Carl Schorske would be required.) Rather, it represents a collection of sample episodes and items chosen to set the scene for the analysis that follows. It is based, in part, on autobiographical reminiscences of such eyewitnesses as Bruno Walter and Stefan Zweig, and on the writings of such contemporary authors as Robert Musil; in part, on conversations with a great range of friends and acquaintances in Vienna and elsewhere; in part, on standard historical authorities. For anyone who knows his Musil or Schorske it will contain no surprises. On the contrary, one of the most striking things we found, in preparing this chapter, was the unanimity—often, down to the very adjectives—of the reports and descriptions of the different writers and speakers on whom we relied.

The chapter on Karl Kraus is another matter. Hitherto, scholarly studies of Kraus have been chiefly literary (e.g., those of Zohn and Iggers) or historical (e.g., that of Frank Field). Though our own discussion does not seriously contradict or supersede those studies, it does go beyond them, in placing a novel philosophical and ethical interpretation on Kraus's writings and opinions. The central importance we have given to Kraus as a representative ethical spokesman for his milieu is one point over which this book makes new claims and must be judged as such. To some extent, the same is true of the manner in which we have juxtaposed Ludwig Wittgenstein and Fritz Mauthner. Although Wittgenstein explicitly contrasts his own philosophical approach to that of Mauthner at one central point in the *Tractatus*, we have no further evidence that the *Tractatus* itself was actually intended as a reply to Mauthner's earlier "critique of language"; so our view of the relations between Mauthner and Wittgenstein is, in this respect, frankly conjectural.

A word about our division of labor: the main work involved in the preparation of Chapters 2, 3, 4 and 5 was undertaken by A.S.J., that for Chapters 1, 7, 8 and 9 by S.E.T., while that for

Chapter 6 was shared. Both of us, however, have worked over the entire book and have agreed on the final text. Given the unorthodoxy of the central view here presented, and the great differences in our respective backgrounds and directions of approach, it has been a surprise and a delight to discover how quickly and how easily we were in fact able to reach agreement on all substantial points. Specifically, S.E.T. knew Wittgenstein personally, and studied under him at Cambridge in 1941 and again in 1946–47, coming to his work primarily from the standpoints of physics, philosophy of science and philosophical psychology. A.S.J. came to Wittgenstein's work much later, with a previous preparation in ethics, general philosophy and intellectual history, writing an M.A. thesis at Villanova University on the parallels between Schopenhauer and Wittgenstein, and a doctoral dissertation at Brandeis University, much of which is incorporated in the present book. Despite these differences, we have had no difficulty in arriving at a common view of Wittgenstein's work and its significance, which diverges markedly from the "received interpretation"—as represented in the commentaries of, for example, Max Black and Elizabeth Anscombe—that is based almost exclusively on Wittgenstein's association with the logicians Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell. In this, we have had some encouragement from conversations with Professor G. H. von Wright and others, whose familiarity with the German-language physics, philosophy and literature of the period has made them aware how necessary it is to consider Wittgenstein not just as a logician and philosopher of language, but also as a Viennese and a student of theoretical physics and engineering.

Many friends and colleagues in the United States, Austria and elsewhere have helped us in our work. Michael Slattery, of Villanova, first introduced A.S.J. to the subject, and he has remained a valued onlooker and critic; Harry Zohn, of Brandeis, has unstintingly given advice and help from his vast knowledge of the late Habsburg period. Some of the preparatory work for the book was included in an article by S.E.T. for *Encounter* and in a paper given before the Boston Colloquium for Philosophy of Science in January 1969. In Vienna, A.S.J. had extensive conversations with many people; among those who went particularly out of their way to help were Marcel Faust, Raoul Kneucker, Rudolf Koder and Dr. and Mrs. Paul Schick. The same was true, in Innsbruck, of Walter Methlagl, of the *Brenner Archiv*. In ad-

dition, the reference staff of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek and the Wiener Universitätsbibliothek were most helpful at every stage.

Above all, we are happy to express our warmest thanks to all those members of Ludwig Wittgenstein's family who gave us so much information and so vivid a picture about Wittgenstein the man, his family background and the milieu into which he grew up, notably, to his nephew Thomas Stonborough, without whose willing and generous collaboration all our work would have been so much harder. The "all-pervading atmosphere of humanity and culture" which Bruno Walter found among the Wittgensteins at the turn of the century has not been diminished in the least with the passage of time.

1972

ALLAN S. JANIK
STEPHEN E. TOULMIN

1

Introduction:

PROBLEMS AND METHODS

Our subject is a fourfold one—a book and its meaning; a man and his ideas; a culture and its preoccupations; a society and its problems. The society is Kakania*—in other words, Habsburg Vienna during the last twenty-five or thirty years of the Austro-Hungarian Empire, as captured with such perceptive irony by Robert Musil in the first documentary volume of his novel *The Man Without Qualities*. The culture is, or appears at first sight to be, our own twentieth-century culture in its infancy; the “modernism” of the early 1900s, represented by such men as Sigmund Freud, Arnold Schönberg, Adolf Loos, Oskar Kokoschka and Ernst Mach. The man is Ludwig Wittgenstein; the youngest son of Vienna’s leading steel magnate and patron of the arts, who set aside his necktie and his family fortune in favor of a life of Tolstoyan simplicity and austerity. The book is Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, or *Logisch-philosophische Abhandlung*,¹ a highly condensed and aphoristic text on the philosophy of language which claimed to present, “on all essential points, the final solution of the problems of philosophy”² and was recognized from the outset as being one of the key works of its age,³ yet remains even today one of the least self-explanatory books ever published—an enigma, or *roman à clef*, to which the reader can bring any of a dozen different interpretations.

* This name was invented by Robert Musil, and combines two senses on different levels. On the surface, it is a coinage from the initials K.K. or K. u. K., standing for “Imperial-Royal” or “Imperial and Royal,” which distinguished all the major institutions of the Habsburg Empire. (For this, see the quotation from Musil below, in Chapter 2, page 36.) But to anyone familiar with German nursery language, it carries also the secondary sense of “Excrementia” or “Shitland.”

Our aim is, by academic standards, a radical one: to use each of our four topics as a mirror in which to reflect and to study all the others. If we are right, the central weaknesses manifested in the decline and fall of the Habsburg Empire struck deep into the lives and experiences of its citizens, shaping and conditioning the central and common preoccupations of artists and writers in all fields of thought and culture, even the most abstract: while, in return, the cultural products of the Kakanian milieu shared certain characteristic features, which speak of, and can throw light on, the social, political and ethical context of their production. These features, we shall argue, are epitomized most concisely in Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*.

In putting forward such a thesis, one must immediately be aware of the opposition it will provoke, merely on account of its *form*, and also of the serious problems of intellectual method and proof which are necessarily involved in making out a case in its defense.⁴ So let us begin here by indicating straightaway why, in our opinion, every one of our four chosen topics presents special problems and paradoxes to orthodox scholarly analysis and calls for hypotheses of a special, and specifically interdisciplinary, kind.

Our tentative solutions to these Kakanian paradoxes will have nothing particularly mystifying or high-flown about them. Far from producing some *Zeitgeist* or similar historical *virtus dormitiva* as the unenlightening key to our explanatory analysis, we shall simply draw attention to ("assemble reminders about") a large number of well-attested facts about the social and cultural situation in the last years of Habsburg Vienna. And we shall add, as the "missing premises" in our argument, a severely limited number of supplementary hypotheses, several of which are at once open to indirect support and confirmation.

The residual problems on which we shall be concentrating arise in the following way. Suppose we approach the last days of the Austro-Hungarian Empire—or, as Karl Kraus ironically called them, *Die Letzten Tage der Menschheit*⁵—with absolute respect for the accepted subdivision of the academic enterprise into separate "fields of study," each with its own independent set of "established" methods and questions. The result will be that, even before we begin our specific discussion of the four topics in turn, we shall have abstracted and separated both the

problems that we are allowed to pose and the considerations we are permitted to advance.

The political and constitutional history of the Habsburg regime is (on this assumption) a subject to be discussed entirely on its own. A narrative account of its fortunes and misfortunes in the years between 1890 and 1919 should presumably be constructed around the actions and motives of the Emperor Francis Joseph and the Archduke Francis Ferdinand, the conversations of Aehrenthal and Izvolski, the attitudes of all the varied parties and nationalities, the corrosive effects of the 1909 Zagreb treason trials and the associated Friedjung Affair, and the rising star of Thomas Masaryk. The origins of Schönberg's twelve-tone system of musical composition are something quite else. The historian of music must presumably focus his attention, in that case, on the technical problems posed by the apparent exhaustion of the older diatonic system in Wagner, Richard Strauss, and the earlier works of Schönberg himself. (It would not immediately occur to him that Schönberg's relations with a journalist like Kraus had any direct significance for an understanding of his musical theories.) Likewise with the artistic breakaway by which the painters of the Secession separated themselves from the established activities of orthodox academic art; likewise, again, with the beginnings of "legal positivism" in the jurisprudence of Hans Kelsen; with the literary ambitions and fortunes of Rilke and Hofmannsthal; with the analytical methods of Boltzmann's statistical thermodynamics, the parts played by Adolf Loos and Otto Wagner as precursors of the Bauhaus school of architecture, and the philosophical program of the *Wiener Kreis*. In each case, the orthodox first step is to treat the developments in question as episodes in a more or less self-contained history of, say, painting or legal theory, architectural design or epistemology. Any suggestion that their cross-interactions might have been as significant as their own internal evolutions will be considered only grudgingly, after all internal factors have been demonstrably exhausted.

As for the life and character of a man like Ludwig Wittgenstein, who became notorious—even legendary—for personal idiosyncrasies and quirks of temperament, it would seem at first glance quite indispensable to leave these on one side when assessing his direct intellectual contributions to the philosophical debate.⁶ Meanwhile, when considering the *Tractatus* from the

point of view of historians of logic or philosophers of language, it seems that we can hardly do anything else than begin from Gottlob Frege and Bertrand Russell, who were the explicit objects of Wittgenstein's admiration, and ask how far Wittgenstein's own formal and conceptual innovations enabled him to overcome the logical and philosophical obstacles left unsolved by Russell and Frege.

That, one must say, *would* in each case be the course to adopt, *on the assumption* that the Viennese situation truly lent itself to a complete understanding, in terms of the orthodox modes of academic inquiry. Our present account, by contrast, rests—methodologically speaking—on the contrary assumption: namely, that the distinctive features of the social and cultural situation in the Vienna of the early 1900s require us for once to question the initial abstractions involved in the orthodox separation of powers of, for example, constitutional history, musical composition, physical theory, political journalism and philosophical logic. For, so long as we treat the validity of those abstractions as absolute, some of the most striking things about Ludwig Wittgenstein the man and his first philosophical masterpiece, about Viennese modernism and its Habsburg background will remain not just unexplained but inexplicable. On the other hand, these very same features can become wholly intelligible and lose their paradox, on one condition: namely, that we look at the cross-interactions among (1) social and political development, (2) the general aims and preoccupations in different fields of contemporary art and science, (3) Wittgenstein's personal attitude toward questions of morality and value, and (4) the problems of philosophy, as these problems were understood in the Vienna of 1900 and as Wittgenstein himself presumably conceived them when he embarked on the inquiries of which the *Tractatus* was the end product.

For example, by the standards of the late nineteenth century, Austria-Hungary, or the Dual Monarchy, or the House of Habsburg—to refer to it by only three of its many alternative designations—was one of the acknowledged “superpowers,” having a vast territory, a well-established power structure, and a long record of apparent constitutional stability. In 1918, the political work of centuries collapsed like a card castle. Whereas in 1945 the imperial house of Japan retained enough mandate to bow before the consequences of military defeat without dynastic dis-

aster, and whereas after 1918 Wilhelmine Germany preserved the political unity imposed on it by Bismarck even though losing its royal head, in the Habsburg superpower military defeat was followed at once by the crumbling-away not just of the monarchy's authority, but of all the pre-existing political bonds holding the Empire together. For centuries the existence of the House of Habsburg was a dominant political fact—perhaps, even, *the* dominant political fact—throughout its ancestral territories. Yet, leaving aside the architectural style of castles and town halls, and the German-speaking communities of, say, Transylvania and the Banat, the Balkans today show scarcely any sign that the Habsburg Empire ever existed. It has vanished leaving little more trace than the Hitlerian occupation of 1938–44, or the Japanese Co-Prosperity Sphere of 1941–45. Even its great rival, the Ottoman Empire, has left a more enduring mark on Balkan life and customs, as one soon discovers in areas like Macedonia and South Serbia, where many towns and villages retain their mosques and the Turkish language is still an accepted medium of communication among Greek- and Vlach- and Slavic- and Albanian-speaking villages.⁷

After reading the standard political histories of the Dual Monarchy, however, one is left in some bewilderment that the First World War had quite so catastrophic an effect on Habsburg power and influence. After riding out the revolutionary storms of 1848, military defeat by Prussia, and a whole sequence of nationalist movements among Magyars and Czechs, Rumanians and South Slavs, why did it then collapse so finally and completely? Even as comprehensive and magisterial a work as C. A. Macartney's *The Habsburg Empire, 1790–1918*, leaves one much better informed about the trees, yet almost as much in the dark about the wood as before. But, after all, there is no reason for surprise in this. Given all the rules of the scholarly game, it is the prime task of such works to add to our detailed knowledge of all the political conversations, maneuvers, concordats, conferences and decrees through which the constitutional history of the chosen period and regime worked itself out; and this tends only to distract us from the larger framework of scientific, artistic and philosophical ideas, ethical and social attitudes, personal and communal aspirations, within which all those political moves took place, and on whose character they were necessarily dependent for their leverage and long-term effect. It is only rarely

that these ideas and attitudes have the direct relevance to the immediate course of social and political change that we shall find them having in turn-of-the-century Austria.

Similarly, if we look on early-twentieth-century Viennese architecture and art, journalism and jurisprudence, philosophy and poetry, music, drama and sculpture as so many parallel and independent activities which just happened to be going on in the same place at the same time, we shall once again end by accumulating vast amounts of detailed technical information in each separate field, while shutting our eyes to the most significant fact about all of them—namely, that they *were* all going on in this same place at this same time. In this respect, we can easily be misled by the profound differences between late Habsburg Vienna—where artistic and cultural life was the concern of a tightly knit group of artists, musicians and writers who were accustomed to meeting and arguing almost every day and had little sense of the need for professional specialization—and present-day Britain or America, say, where academic and artistic specialization is taken for granted and the various fields of creative activity are cultivated in substantial independence of one another. If Viennese culture in the 1900s did us the favor of mirroring our own current specializations, the separation of (for example) art-history and literature might indeed be legitimate and relevant. As it is, we overlook the interdependence of the different Viennese arts and sciences at our peril.

Was it an absolute coincidence that the beginnings of twelve-tone music, “modern” architecture, legal and logical positivism, nonrepresentational painting and psychoanalysis—not to mention the revival of interest in Schopenhauer and Kierkegaard—were all taking place simultaneously and were so largely concentrated in Vienna? Was it merely a curious biographical fact that the young conductor Bruno Walter should regularly have accompanied Gustav Mahler to the Wittgenstein family mansion in Vienna and should have discovered in conversation that shared interest in Kantian philosophy which led Mahler to present Walter at Christmas, 1894, with the collected works of Schopenhauer?⁸ And was it no more than a personal tribute to the individual versatility of Arnold Schönberg that he turned out a striking series of paintings and some highly distinguished essays, on top of his revolutionary activities as a composer and musical theorist? This may seem to be so, until we find Schönberg

presenting a copy of his great musical textbook on *Harmonielehre* to the journalist and writer Karl Kraus, with the inscription, "I have learned more from you, perhaps, than a man should learn, if he wants to remain independent."⁹

If, by contrast, we are prepared to take Schönberg's own practice and testimony at their face value, we shall have to change our methods of inquiry. Why does it seem paradoxical to us today that Schönberg, the musician, should have recognized a profound debt to a journalist such as Kraus? And why—more generally—did artistic and intellectual methods which, up to the late 1880s, had kept their place in so many fields almost without challenge come under critical attack and find themselves displaced by the modernism which was the wonder or horror of our grandfathers, all at the same moment? We shall never succeed in answering these questions, if we confine our attentions narrowly to, say, the novel principles of twelve-tone composition, the stylistic innovations of Klimt, or the extent of Freud's indebtedness to Meynert and Breuer. Still less, shall we then be able to broaden our social view and recognize how that same Vienna, which prided itself on its image as the City of Dreams, could at the same time be described by its own most penetrating social critic as the "Proving-Ground for World Destruction."¹⁰

Similar paradoxes and inconsistencies distort our view of Ludwig Wittgenstein, both as a man and as a philosopher. As has often been remarked, one of the gravest misfortunes that can affect a writer of great intellectual seriousness and strong ethical passions is to have his ideas "naturalized" by the English. All the moral indignation, political barbs and social vitriol of George Bernard Shaw were robbed of their power the moment the English public for which he wrote pigeonholed him securely as an Irish wag and a comic playwright. And something of this same fate has shaped the current reputation of Ludwig Wittgenstein—at any rate, as he is seen by most professional English-speaking philosophers in Britain and America.

When, at Frege's suggestion, Wittgenstein first made contact with Russell and was drawn into the charmed circle of Cambridge intellectuals who so influenced his life both before 1914 and again from 1929 on, he was entering into a cultural situation and a group of active, opinionated and self-willed men having well-marked preoccupations and a very definite history.¹¹ Russell,

in particular, was charmed, intrigued and impressed; it was gratifying and flattering to find this brilliant young foreigner paying so much attention to his work on logic and apparently ready to take up his own unsolved problems just at the point where Russell left off.¹² So it is understandable that Russell himself thought of Wittgenstein as a highly talented friend and pupil, and viewed his comments and writings entirely with an eye to his own problems in symbolic logic and epistemology; and it is pardonable, also, that Wittgenstein's later abandonment of formal, quasi-mathematical methods and problems in favor of a more discursive, "natural-history" approach to human language, should have struck Russell as a heresy, and even as a defection.¹³ Yet, the very fact that Wittgenstein was introduced to the other Cambridge philosophers—and so to the whole network of English-speaking academic philosophers—through Bertrand Russell has given the whole subsequent interpretation of Wittgenstein's ideas a Cambridge-orientated stamp. As a by-product of this fact, a gulf has opened up between our views of the academic Wittgenstein and Wittgenstein the man. Surely (his Cambridge colleagues agreed) he was a curious, touchy and eccentric figure, with un-English habits of dress and social opinions, and a quite unfamiliar moral earnestness and intensity. Yet they were ready to ignore these foreign oddities and idiosyncrasies on account of the unique contribution he was apparently making to the development of English philosophy.

When Wittgenstein submitted the *Tractatus* as his doctoral dissertation, G. E. Moore is reputed to have sent in an examiner's report including the words, "It is my personal opinion that Mr. Wittgenstein's thesis is a work of genius; but, be that as it may, it is certainly well up to the standard required for the Cambridge degree of Doctor of Philosophy."¹⁴ And a "genius" was what he remained to the end, in the eyes of his English-speaking colleagues and successors. By labeling Wittgenstein as a foreigner of odd personal habits, with an extraordinary, phenomenal, possibly unique, talent for philosophical invention, the English thus defused the impact of his personality and moral passion as completely as they had earlier neutralized Shaw's social and political teachings. It scarcely seems to have occurred to them that there might be more than a chance connection between the man who rejected all his traditional privileges as a fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, who was never seen around the town

except wearing an open-necked shirt and one or two zipper-fastened parkas, and who insisted passionately—as a point of ethics rather than aesthetics—that the only kind of movies worth seeing were Westerns, and (on the other hand) the philosopher whose brilliant variations on the theories of Frege, Russell and G. E. Moore were doing so much to carry forward the English philosophical argument. No doubt, something in his family background and upbringing would explain his personal peculiarities—“Viennese, you know; Freud and all that . . .”—but, meanwhile, we must concentrate our professional attentions on the propositions advanced by Wittgenstein the formal logician and philosopher of language.

This was the point of view from which Wittgenstein’s students at Cambridge still saw him during his final years in the Chair of Philosophy at Cambridge, to which he was appointed after Moore’s retirement.¹⁵ Those of us who attended his lectures during the Second World War or during his last two years of teaching there, in 1946 and 1947, still found ourselves looking upon his ideas, his methods of argument and his very topics of discussion as something totally original and his own. Viewed against the English background, indeed, his later teachings appeared unique and extraordinary, just as the *Tractatus* had earlier appeared to Moore. For our own part, we struck Wittgenstein as intolerably stupid. He would denounce us to our faces as unteachable, and at times he despaired of getting us to recognize what sort of point he was trying to get across to us. For we had come to his sparsely furnished eagle’s-nest of a room at the top of the Whewell’s Court tower with philosophical problems of our own; and we were happy enough to lap up the examples and fables which comprised so large a part of his lectures and bring them to bear on those preconceived, Anglo-American questions. His denunciations we ignored. At best we treated them as jokes; at worst they seemed to us at the time one more manifestation of the intellectual arrogance that had led him to speak of “the *truth* of the thoughts” set out in the *Tractatus* as “unassailable and definitive” and as “the final solution” to the problems of philosophy.¹⁶

Yet the question needs now to be raised, in retrospect, whether, after all, the mutual incomprehension between Wittgenstein and his Cambridge pupils was not *genuine*—indeed, whether it was not as complete and thoroughgoing as he himself evidently believed.

If the story we shall be telling in the present book has any validity, one of its implications will be that the preconceptions with which his English hearers approached him debarred them almost entirely from understanding the point of what he was saying. We saw him as a divided man, as an English-speaking philosopher with a uniquely original technical genius, who just happened also to adhere personally to an extreme moral individualism and egalitarianism. We would have done better to see him as an integral and authentically Viennese genius who exercised his talents and personality on philosophy among other things, and just happened to be living and working in England. At the time, Wittgenstein appeared to be spinning the whole substance of his later philosophy out of his own head, like some intellectually creative spider; in fact, much of his material had origins that his English audiences knew next-to-nothing about, and many of the problems he chose to concentrate on had been under discussion among German-speaking philosophers and psychologists since before the First World War. If there was an intellectual gulf between us and him, it was not because his philosophical methods, style of exposition and subject matter were (as we supposed) unique and unparalleled. It was a sign, rather, of a culture clash: the clash between a Viennese thinker whose intellectual problems and personal attitudes alike had been formed in the neo-Kantian environment of pre-1914, in which logic and ethics were essentially bound up with each other and with the critique of language (*Sprachkritik*), and an audience of students whose philosophical questions had been shaped by the neo-Humean (and so pre-Kantian) empiricism of Moore, Russell and their colleagues.

In our present argument, we shall not say anything to cast doubt on either the importance or the originality of Wittgenstein's actual contributions to philosophy; on the contrary, once his arguments are put back into context and the sources of his problems are identified, the true novelty and significance of his ideas becomes all the more apparent. But we shall be having to insist, in due course, that Wittgenstein the moral individualist and Wittgenstein the technical philosopher of "truth tables" and "language games" were quite as much alternative aspects of a single consistent personality as, say, Leonardo the anatomist and draftsman, or Arnold Schönberg the painter and essayist, musical theorist and admirer of Karl Kraus.

The need to look afresh at the relation between Wittgenstein

the man and Wittgenstein the philosopher is confirmed, when we turn to the fourth outstanding set of unresolved paradoxes and problems. These are the ones that arise directly in the interpretation of the *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* itself. As we have remarked, Wittgenstein's writings have commonly been viewed as contributions to the development of either twentieth-century mathematical logic or British analytical philosophy. His personal associations with Russell and Frege, G. E. Moore and John Wisdom, have overshadowed everything else in his cultural origins and intellectual concerns. He has been applauded or attacked as the coauthor of the "method of truth tables," as the dominant influence on the positivism of the interwar years, as the critic of "private languages," "ostensive definitions" and "sense data," as the analyst of "intellectual cramps," "language games" and "forms of life"—in short, as a man who took the ideas and methods of Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore, and refined them far beyond anything their first authors had imagined. Yet, if we see the publication of the *Tractatus* exclusively as an episode in the history of philosophical logic, one significant feature of the book remains totally mysterious. After some seventy pages apparently devoted to nothing but logic, theory of language and the philosophy of mathematics or natural science, we are suddenly faced by five concluding pages (propositions 6.4 on) in which our heads are seemingly wrenched around and we are faced with a string of dogmatic theses about solipsism, death and "the sense of the world" which "must lie outside the world." Given the sheer disproportion in the space allotted respectively to the logico-philosophical preliminaries and these last moral-theological aphorisms, the temptation has been to dismiss the final propositions as *obiter dicta*—like the casual afterthoughts which are put in for effect at the end of some legal judgment and have no subsequent binding force, since they have no juridical bearing on the case in hand.¹⁷

Yet is this reading of the *Tractatus* really justified? Were these last reflections about ethics, value and "the problems of life" mere claptraps, makeweights, or private afterthoughts? Or do they have some integral connection with the main text, which the familiar interpretation overlooks? So long as one remains in the professional technical world of English-language philosophy, this doubt is, perhaps, no more than academic. But it becomes an active one, when one makes the geographical shift from Cam-

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