

Wittgenstein's Philosophical Conversations with Rush Rhees (1939–50): From the Notes of Rush Rhees

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

RUSH RHEES

GABRIEL CITRON (ED.)

Yale University

gabriel.citron@yale.edu

Between 1937 and 1951 Wittgenstein had numerous philosophical conversations with his student and close friend, Rush Rhees. This article is composed of Rhees's notes of twenty such conversations — namely, all those which have not yet been published — as well as some supplements from Rhees's correspondence and miscellaneous notes. The principal value of the notes collected here is that they fill some interesting and important gaps in Wittgenstein's corpus. Thus, firstly, the notes touch on a wide range of subjects, a number of which are only briefly addressed by Wittgenstein elsewhere, if at all. The subjects discussed include: explanation, ethics, anarchism, contradiction, psychoanalysis, colour, religion, concepts, classification, seeing-as, evolution, the relation between science and philosophy, and free will, amongst others. Secondly, the notes contain references to, and brief remarks about, philosophers of whom Wittgenstein otherwise says very little, if anything — such as Brentano, Heidegger, Aquinas, and Marx, amongst others. And thirdly, the notes provide us with valuable examples of Wittgenstein's use of some key 'Wittgensteinian' terms of art which are surprisingly rare in his written works, such as 'surface-' and 'depth-grammar', and 'centres of variation'.

Wittgenstein and Rhees came to know one another when Rhees began to attend Wittgenstein's lectures in Cambridge, in February 1936.¹ Wittgenstein came to think highly of Rhees both personally and philosophically. He wrote to Norman Malcolm that 'Rhees ... is an excellent man & has a real talent for philosophy, too' (Wittgenstein 2011, 7 December 1943). Over the next few years in Cambridge, Wittgenstein and Rhees began to meet for philosophical conversations. The first of these conversations of which we know Rhees to have made

¹ See Monk 1990, p. 357.

notes took place in 1937, and was about numbers.² When Rhees was looking for a job, in 1939, Wittgenstein wrote him a testimonial in which their philosophical discussions played an important role:

I have known Mr. R. Rhees for 4 years; he has attended my lectures on philosophy and we have had a great many discussions both on philosophical and general subjects. I have always been strongly impressed by the great seriousness and intelligence with which he tackles any problem. (Wittgenstein 2011, 19 September 1939)

In 1940 Rhees was appointed to be a lecturer in philosophy at Swansea University. Thereafter, Wittgenstein often went to visit Rhees in Wales. He was attracted both by the friendly atmosphere that he felt in Swansea,³ and by the Welsh countryside.⁴ But perhaps most of all, he was attracted by the prospect of Rhees's companionship and conversation.⁵ In 1943 Wittgenstein wrote to Rhees: 'There is a possibility of my coming to Swansea on April 13th or 14th ... Could I stay somewhere near you, & would you like to have discussions with me??' (Wittgenstein 2011, 1 April 1943). When, in 1946, Rhees was considering turning down a re-appointment at the university, and leaving Swansea, Wittgenstein wrote to him: 'I was glad to hear that they had the sense to offer you an appointment again at Swansea. I wish to God you'd take it!! ... I should, for personal reasons, hate you to leave Swansea. Our talks & discussions have done me good' (Wittgenstein 2011, 21 May 1946). Wittgenstein continued to visit Rhees throughout his life. At the beginning of 1950, when Wittgenstein was already quite ill, he wrote to Rhees from Vienna with plans of a visit and philosophical conversation: 'I hope to see you soon after coming back to England. If I'm as well then as I'm now I could even come to Swansea & we might talk a little philosophy, though I'm pretty stupid' (Wittgenstein 2011, 22 January 1950).

² See Rhees 2002, pp. 1–5.

³ In 1945 he wrote to Norman Malcolm: 'I'm in Swansea again ... The weather's foul, but I enjoy not being in Cambridge. I know quite a number of people here whom I like. I seem to find it more easy to get along with them here than in England. I feel much more often like smiling, e.g. when I walk in the street, or when I see children, etc.' (Wittgenstein 2011, 15 December 1945).

⁴ In 1949 he wrote to Rhees, from Ithaca, New York, where he was staying with the Malcolms: 'There are some nice walks here though nothing compared with the Gower coast. Nature here doesn't look as natural as in Wales' (Wittgenstein 2011, 31 August 1949).

⁵ In 1943 he wrote to Malcolm from Newcastle: 'I am feeling rather lonely here & may try to get to some place where I have someone to talk to. E.g. to Swansea where Rhees is a lecturer in philosophy' (Wittgenstein 2011, 7 December 1943).

The last philosophical conversation between Wittgenstein and Rhees of which we know Rhees to have taken notes took place on 13 April 1951, just sixteen days before Wittgenstein's death, and was about the differences between knowing, believing, and being sure.⁶

The principal value of these conversation-notes is that they fill a number of interesting and important gaps in Wittgenstein's corpus. Thus, firstly, the notes touch on a wide range of subjects, a number of which are only briefly addressed by Wittgenstein elsewhere, if at all. The subjects discussed include: explanation, ethics, anarchism, contradiction, psychoanalysis, colour, religion, concepts, classification, seeing-as, evolution, the relation between science and philosophy, and free will, amongst others. Secondly, the notes contain references to, and brief remarks about, philosophers of whom Wittgenstein otherwise says very little, if anything—such as Brentano, Heidegger, Aquinas, and Marx, amongst others. And thirdly, the notes provide us with valuable examples of Wittgenstein's use of some key 'Wittgensteinian' terms of art which are surprisingly rare in his written works, such as 'surface-' and 'depth-grammar'⁷, and 'centres of variation'.

Many of Wittgenstein's and Rhees's philosophical conversations seem to have taken place while they were walking along the Gower Peninsula⁸ or sitting in a local park in Swansea.⁹ Some of the notes which Rhees made of these conversations are marked with a header along the lines of 'Notes written soon after the conversation', or 'Note written by Rush Rhees a few hours later'¹⁰, presumably because Rhees would wait until he got home, or until Wittgenstein had left, before he wrote anything down. He would first hastily jot down handwritten notes—recasting the conversations as monologues by Wittgenstein—often in incomplete sentences, or with single words or phrases acting as reminders for later expansion. Sometimes Rhees did not even indicate on these handwritten pages that they were notes

⁶ See Rhees 2005b.

⁷ According to Peter Hacker these two terms—so often taken to be central to Wittgenstein's later thought—appear only once in his entire written corpus, namely in Wittgenstein 2009, §664 (see Hacker 1996, p. 708). It is thus very significant that they appear here, in Conversation 8. For an additional example of a similar—though not identical—locution, see also Wittgenstein 2015 (8:29; 3 March 1933).

⁸ See, for example, Phillips 1989 and Monk 1990, p. 465.

⁹ See, for example, Rhees 1981b, pp. 207–8, and Rhees 1966.

¹⁰ See, for example, Conversations 11, 18, and 7 (n. 42) below.

of conversations with Wittgenstein, nor even put a date on them — they were just a few pages of unattributed notes on small sheets of notebook paper. Often, however, he would later type up these handwritten notes, at which point he would usually fill out his original sketches more completely. On these typewritten copies he would make sure to indicate that they were indeed records of conversations with Wittgenstein. In this edition of Rhees's notes I have used the fuller typescript versions of conversations wherever these have been available, and I have used the handwritten versions only if I could not find a typescript. The difference between the typescript (TS) and manuscript (MS) versions accounts for the difference in style between some of the texts which follow — some being terse and sketchy, others being fuller and more flowing.

Because Rhees did not always indicate on his original handwritten notes that they were notes of conversations with Wittgenstein, and because he did not always type up fuller versions of these handwritten originals, one sometimes comes across handwritten pages in the Rhees Archive which seem very likely to be Rhees's notes of conversations with Wittgenstein, but which cannot be identified as such with complete certainty. Unattributed notes which I thought very likely to be notes of conversations with Wittgenstein have been included in this collection. However, so as to allow the reader to make his or her own judgement regarding authenticity, in each case of unattributed notes I indicate — in a footnote — that they were unattributed, and I set out my reasons for taking them to be notes of a conversation with Wittgenstein.¹¹ My reasons for identifying these notes as notes of conversations with Wittgenstein tended to be various combinations of such factors as: that they are set out just like Rhees's attributed conversation-notes; that they were found alongside other notes which are known to be of conversations with Wittgenstein; that they have dates on them which match dates when Wittgenstein is known to have been in Swansea; and that they are Wittgensteinian in both content and style.

In editing the following notes my aim has been to reproduce Rhees's texts as accurately as possible, while ensuring readability. To ensure accuracy I have reproduced the texts, in all major respects, exactly as Rhees wrote them: retaining his incomplete sentences and note-form, his sometimes idiosyncratic orthography, his suggestions of alternative

¹¹ This applies to seven of the twenty conversations which follow, namely Conversations: 6, 8, 13, 14, 15, 19, and 20.

phrasings between slashes, and the like.¹² And to ensure readability, I have made editorial interventions in the more minor details: silently correcting typos and spelling errors, expanding abbreviations, ignoring unimportant crossings-out, incorporating additions from above and below the line into the flow of the text, replacing words for which Rhees indicated replacements, italicizing non-English words and phrases, and the like. I have also incorporated additions from the margins into the flow of the text, but I have enclosed such additions in curly brackets—‘{}’—because it is often unclear where, if anywhere, they were intended to fit. Issues of any textual or editorial significance have been indicated in the footnotes.

The footnotes also include references to possible texts to which Wittgenstein was referring in the conversations, though I was not always able to identify plausible candidates. For the most part I have limited myself to supplying references only when Wittgenstein explicitly quotes from or refers to a writer or a text. I have therefore usually refrained both from speculating about allusions or implicit references, and from adding cross-references to parallel remarks elsewhere in Wittgenstein's corpus—fearing that each of these projects would probably be both contentious and unending.¹³ I have left non-English words and phrases in their original languages in the main text of the notes—it is interesting to note which words Wittgenstein specifically chose not to translate into English, despite that being the language in which he conversed with Rhees—but I have included translations in the footnotes.¹⁴ Finally, all the section titles are my own, though they are sometimes based on the titles that Rhees gave. If Rhees did give his own title, these are included within the notes.

Sections 1–20 are arranged in chronological order. Section 1, however, is unlike the others, in that it is a reproduction of Rhees's notes of comments made by Wittgenstein during the discussion part of a meeting of the Cambridge University Moral Science Club. It therefore begins with an excerpt from the minutes which summarise the talk

¹² So—unless stated otherwise in a footnote—all slashes, square brackets, and ellipses in the main text of Rhees's notes are Rhees's own, rather than signs of my editorial tampering. One exception to this rule, however, is slashes included within quotations appearing in the footnotes—these have been added by me to represent line-breaks.

¹³ Though I have made exceptions on a few occasions, if I thought they would be particularly illuminating or helpful.

¹⁴ Most of these are based on translations made by Peter Hacker.

to which Wittgenstein was responding (Sect 1.1), and is then followed by Rhees's notes of Wittgenstein's remarks (Sect. 1.2). All the other texts in the chronological series — namely, sections 2–20 — are Rhees's notes of his private philosophical conversations with Wittgenstein. The notes comprising sections 1–20 are—to the best of my knowledge—all the sets of Wittgenstein conversation-notes that Rhees wrote which have not yet been published. To supplement this collection I have added an appendix, at the end of this edition, listing—to the best of my knowledge—all of Rhees's previously published Wittgenstein conversation-notes. Therefore, the notes which appear in sections 1–20 of this edition, along with the notes which are listed in the appendix, should together make a complete collection of all the known sets of stand-alone notes of Rhees's philosophical conversations with Wittgenstein.

In addition to the chronological series of conversation-notes which make up sections 1–20, I have also included—in section 21—a selection of short passages collected from Rhees's correspondence and miscellaneous notes, in which he recalls philosophical remarks made to him by Wittgenstein over the years.¹⁵ The difference between the notes in sections 1–20 and those in section 21 is that each of the former were written as stand-alone reports of a complete philosophical conversation or discussion with Wittgenstein, whereas the latter are short snippets of remembered remarks, usually mentioned by Rhees to illustrate a point he was making in the course of writing something else, such as a letter or an essay.

Together, I hope that these conversation-notes and shorter fragments will make for a valuable and illuminating—even if small—addition to Wittgenstein's philosophical corpus.

1. Implicit and explicit belief (2 March 1939)

1.1 *An excerpt from Theodore Redpath's minutes of the 2 March 1939 meeting of the Cambridge Moral Science Club*

Mr Boys Smith ...¹⁶ read a paper called 'Some Problems about Belief'. He said that belief was a form of a more general attitude of mind, which

¹⁵ These are just a small selection from what is available. I picked the passages I considered to be of broadest philosophical interest, and I hope to publish a more complete collection of these remarks in a future paper.

¹⁶ This and the following few ellipses in Redpath's notes have been added by me to indicate where I have skipped text.

might be called the cognitive attitude. ... He then distinguished two senses of 'explicit' & 'implicit' belief. Most of our belief was implicit in one or other of these two senses. ... He believed each cognitive attitude had its own distinctive character. If this was true then each attitude would differ from the rest not merely as referring to or being directed upon, an object of a distinctive sort, but in its own character. ... Mr Boys Smith thought that explicit belief, in either or both of the senses he had previously distinguished, could not be my only cognitive attitude, even for a moment. This ... was not merely an empirical observation, but lay in the nature of the case. If one only believed one would be merely taking for granted. ... In discussion ... Prof Broad thought Mr Boys Smith's contention that the content determines what my attitude is, was doubtful. He didn't think Mr Boys Smith had produced any argument for it. Dr Ewing thought Mr Boys Smith might say that the change of emotion would change what I think of. Mr Boys Smith agreed. Dr Wittgenstein asked how we were to decide whether that was so. Dr Ewing said that if I believe something & the question is put as to whether my belief is determined by the objective evidence, then that either my belief will change or I shall answer the question in the affirmative seemed to him to be almost necessary. Dr Wittgenstein asked whether if Mr Boys Smith was wondering whether so & so was coming, he would be believing something. Mr Boys Smith Yes, that he exists, & so forth. Dr Wittgenstein: Are you believing also that he has a head, etc? Mr Boys Smith: No, otherwise, there would be no reason to stop short of saying I was believing everything. Dr Wittgenstein: That's the point. Later Dr Wittgenstein suggested the parallel between 'expecting' 'recognising', 'costing', 'being able to', & 'believing'. He suggested that Mr Boys Smith was led by the word 'to believe' into thinking there must be an attitude which persists. This could be corrected by seeing the above parallels. Mr Boys Smith later asked Dr Wittgenstein why one used the same word about hosts of different cases. Dr Wittgenstein: Because of the way the cases pass into one another. (Redpath 1939)

1.2 *Rush Rhees's notes of Wittgenstein's comments in response to Boys Smith*¹⁷

Wittgenstein. Moral Science Club. March 2nd 1939

Belief. What is the distinction between "implicit belief" and "explicit belief"? If by saying I believed so & so implicitly at that time all that is meant is that if anyone had asked me I should have said yes, then there seems to be almost no limit to what I was believing implicitly at that

¹⁷ MS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2.

time (and why “at that time”). (Example: I may say yes if someone asks me “Isn’t Chicago greater than Granchester” — might have said this then — although this is something I had simply never thought of.)

(“Implicitly believing” & perception; analogy with “costing”¹⁸ — “always at it”. Wondering whether he’ll come back — do I also believe he has a head? Sure that I’d have said there are coals there, but also sure I’d have yelled if you’d trodden on my toe.

Whether believing — or wondering — something smooth, like a continuous note, running through whole time I was believing. Not “I am believing”; not generally used like long for. Recognise — mantle piece etc. Expect, be puzzled, wonder.

“If I take your hand and pull you towards the fire — now you introspect: is there any believing that the fire will burn you? You shout — and that’s about all there is to it.”

Various characteristic attitudes. “I believe it’s on the mantle piece” — not much except just saying it. “I believe there’ll be a war” — bend head, etc, speak slowly.

Describing what we call belief by giving limited number of “centres of variation”.¹⁹ Compare giving typical English faces. “Why use the same word?” — connection between them; but need there be anything in common throughout? Cases in which would call patch of carpet “mainly red” or “mainly green”, & cases in which couldn’t use these expressions at all.

2. Possible and impossible colours²⁰ (1942²¹)

Conversation with Wittgenstein

1942.

[Rush Rhees]

Colours. The Fact that psychologists discuss whether there is a reddish green. “*Nicht vorkommt*.”²²

¹⁸ Uncertain word: it could perhaps be ‘certain’ or ‘contain’, but ‘costing’ is most likely, both because this is what seems to appear in Redpath’s minutes (see Sect. 1.1.), and also because of Wittgenstein 2009 (§693). The latter indicates that the intended analogy is with, say, a slab of butter’s *costing* £1.

¹⁹ Regarding centres of variation, see Wittgenstein 2000, MS 115, p. 221; MS 152, pp. 16–17; MS 157b, pp. 12v–13r; Wittgenstein 1988, p. 25; and Conversation 20, below.

²⁰ TS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2.

²¹ The TS of this conversation dates it as 1942, whereas the MS has ‘1942 (or 43?’).

²² German: ‘No such thing’.

It is queer that there should be uncertainty whether there is such a colour. — “Professor X says that yellow is greenish red.” Not that somewhere or other such a colour has been found. — We might say that if there is such a colour, then it is queer that other people didn't know it. (Probably wouldn't say “Professor X says there is a greenish blue”.)

The ways we speak of colours are much more complicated than at first appears. Small surfaces and large surfaces. Variation of reflections and lighting in large surfaces. — You might be inclined to say a small patch of olive green was greenish red; and you might still never be inclined to say this of a large surface painted olive green.

Saturated colours and non-saturated colours.

When we say “*es kommt nich vor*”²³, we think of something like the colour circle, where we are concerned with saturated colours. — Where we are or might be inclined to speak of reddish green would be in colours having a considerable amount of black.

(Our ideas about colours, what we regard as possible or impossible and so on, are influenced by the fact that we see ordinarily a large number of purish /fairly pure/ colours. If we saw only very impure colours always, our way of speaking of colours — what it was natural to say and what not — might in various respects be very different.)

The fact that colours have certain appearances in given surroundings, or against a given background, which they never have by themselves.

(Reference to Brentano's example of reddish green in a painting.²⁴ We might ask why, if Titian can use this colour in a painting, he can't give a sample by itself of the colour he has used there.)

The question of what psychologists are disagreeing about, when they argue whether there is a reddish green or not. They don't seem to be arguing simply about how the words are used.

Such psychologists are trying to describe a system of colours. We seem to have something like a conflict of one system with another.

Linguistic reactions. Other reactions as well.

Take the example of a transition from blue to yellow. We say there is one transition that goes via green, another via red. And then: red is a

²³ German: ‘there's no such thing’.

²⁴ See, perhaps, Brentano 1907b, p. 47 (Anmerkungen §2).

greater barrier than green: the transition via green is smoother than the transition via red. “We found a barrier there.” What is this? It may not be simply that “we are inclined to say ...”. We might also use this transition to illustrate something—say to portray some sort of distribution on a map. “Coordinated” with some other sort of “barrier”.

3. Henry Watt on the ‘acceptance’ of dreams²⁵ (1942/1943?)²⁶

Dreams. The idea that what is dreamed is “accepted”, unless there is some explicit feeling of aversion or rejection in the dream. (Watt)²⁷ This seems to be connected with an idea that when you dream you, so to speak, “do it of your own accord”. This might appear from a comparison with imagining, in contrast with suffering from hallucinations. You may imagine something unpleasant, but in a sense it seems to be your doing. (Watt’s whole discussion centres around the coordination of dreaming, imagining and thinking.)

A lot of this seems to be confused. “The dream is acceptable”. When should we say that something was acceptable? Supposing Jones is telling something,—say some story,—to Smith. I might then from Smith’s behaviour conclude that what Jones was telling him was acceptable to him; if he nodded his head occasionally, perhaps smiled, made no effort to walk away, and so on. But this again would be very vague. And what opinion I formed from the fact that Smith continued listening in that way might depend on what the subject matter of the discussion was. What is acceptable to Smith under these special conditions. We should hardly say just if he listens to anything that it is acceptable to him,—so to speak in general. “Acceptable” and “not acceptable” have more restricted uses.

So it is hardly clear that there is any definite meaning in saying that every dream that is not objected to is acceptable.

As we remember any given dream, should we be inclined to say that it was voluntary or that it was involuntary? Certainly hardly that it was

²⁵ TS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2. The typescript page on which this conversation is written is a part of a stapled batch of ten pages which make up a draft of Rhees’s notes of his conversations with Wittgenstein on Freud and dreams, which was eventually published as Wittgenstein 1966b (pp. 41–52). This conversation was presumably left out of the published version of the conversations because it is not specifically about Freud.

²⁶ The TS is not dated. However, in the draft of Rhees’s notes of his conversations with Wittgenstein on Freud and dreams in which it appears, it comes between the conversation dated Summer 1942 and the conversation dated 1943.

²⁷ See, for example, Watt 1929, pp. 8–9 (Ch. 1).

voluntary. I speak of the dream more as though it were something that had happened to me, or in which I was involved.

(In the majority of cases where we speak of doing something voluntarily we do so not because of anything or any mark which we find in the action itself. While I am speaking I pronounce words voluntarily. But this is not to say that there is anything that goes along with the speaking. Any more than I decide to pronounce the word before I do so. The point is rather that the speaking of the word is put into a class of action which I call voluntary for all sorts of reasons; about which I and other people make a number of hypotheses regarding what would have happened if I had been asked so and so, if I had been interrupted, and so on. The connections of these actions with others, and hypotheses concerning their connections with other possible actions.

It could hardly be said that we regard dreams — when we remember them — in the way in which we generally regard voluntary actions.)

4. Whether a dream is a thought²⁸ (1943)

Dreams. Whether a dream is a thought. The sense of the question “What made you hallucinate such a picture at all?”. The idea of a dream as a kind of game: not everything in this game need have an allegorical significance, or call for an interpretation. Opposed to the idea that a hallucination requires a tremendous mental force, and that therefore only the most deep and fundamental and hidden wishes could be responsible for it.

This compatible with regarding dreams in practice as a convenient means of discovering hidden wishes in a patient, and thus as important in curing neurosis. Viewing dreams in this way for a particular end.

Report of a dream: “I was sitting in a railway carriage. I looked out of the window and saw along side the track a row of covered wagons, like American prairie schooners. Standing on these latter were a lot of girls, dressed in the costume of the prairie schooner period. These girls were singing a song extolling the way in which modern methods had enabled us to overcome the evils of diseases. They went, in their song, through a list of diseases which had been conquered, but at the end

²⁸ TS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2. This is the beginning of a draft of Rhees's notes of one of his conversations with Wittgenstein about Freud and dreams from 1943. This version of the beginning of the conversation was presumably left out of the published version (Wittgenstein 1966b, pp. 48–50) because Rhees considered it too personal.

they sang a kind of refrain, ‘Neujuxia, na ja; Neujuxia, na ja.’ I remarked to myself on how strange it was that even at that time people were stupid enough to congratulate themselves on their prowess in overcoming diseases. And I woke.

“I was interested by the dream; I wrote it down; and, as one influenced by Freud, I looked for an interpretation of it in its connections with events in my experience. The covered wagons and the costumes were probably suggested by some film I had seen recently. The comments on the song about the curing of diseases may have been connected with the fact that I was working in a hospital, and had often been annoyed by the conversations of the doctors there. Thinking about the dream in this way also made me think about my sister in America.²⁹ The word ‘Neujuxia’, which is meaningless, may be connected with New York. And again it may be connected with the German ‘Jux’, meaning joke or meaning spree or lark.³⁰

One of my sister’s characteristics is that whenever she hears of something awful that has happened, her impulse is to ask what one can do about it, what she can do to help or remedy. This is a tendency in her of which I disapprove.³¹ She has recently been trying to get a post in some sort of war relief organisation — which shows something at her age, for she is over sixty — and she has been trying to get some post which will take her to England.

The question is whether one can reasonably speak of the dream as a thought about my sister, a ridiculing of her attempts to help save people.”³²

²⁹ Margaret Stonborough.

³⁰ It is interesting that Wittgenstein did not make the connection between his dream and the part of Johann Nestroy’s play — *The Protégé* — from which he had taken the motto for the *Philosophical Investigations* (Wittgenstein 2009, p. 2), as both the content and images in the relevant scene of the play are strikingly similar to those in Wittgenstein’s dream: see Nestroy 1847, pp. 90–6 (Act IV, Sc. 10), partially translated in Stern 2004, pp. 64–5.

³¹ In a letter to Elizabeth Anscombe (18 May 1966), Rhees quoted the following line from one of Wittgenstein’s notebooks: ‘You cannot lead people to the good; you can only lead them to some place or other; the good lies outside the space of facts’ (Wittgenstein 1998, p. 5). Rhees then commented: ‘The first sentence would be relevant to attempts to bring men to a better life through political and economic reforms. But also to an individual person’s feeling that when he learns of something deplorable he must do something about it. You will remember that Wittgenstein disliked this tendency to the end of his life. He said it was very strong in his sister, Mrs. Stonborough, for instance. And he said, “I do not feel that way.” Of course he was not more indifferent to the evils than she was. / ((And by the way, he was not free of such tendencies himself. I guess he knew this.))’ (Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/13/10).

³² At this point the TS continues with more-or-less exactly what appears in Wittgenstein 1966b, pp. 48–50.

5. The idea that dreams can tell us about ourselves³³ (1943?³⁴)

Dreams. The question whether the only thing that is true in a dream is the emotion. Certain emotions as what is “seen through” the dream. Discussion of the idea that a dream can give one *Aufschlüsse*³⁵ concerning one's mental life; that in a dream one sees one's mental life objectively. Suggestion that this is bringing something external to the dream itself. Compare the idea that by looking at coffee grounds or at tea leaves you can learn whether you are going to get married or not.

This idea that a dream can furnish *Aufschlüsse* concerning one's mental life often strengthens the tendency to theorize about dreams. A tendency which may interfere with the observation of what dreams are really like.

The examination of a dream may show you something about yourself, in a way similar to that in which asking yourself certain questions may show you something about yourself. Story by Paul Ernst³⁶: German living in Turkish family, in love with the daughter. She says “You despise my father”; he indignantly denies. But worried by question, and begins asking himself such things as “Now would I be willing to invite him to so and so”, etc. And he comes to the conclusion that the girl was right. Thus one can find out things about oneself, — about one's attitude to other people, for instance, — which one was previously unaware of.

It may be similar with dreams. If I conclude “I would be willing to behave so and so”, or “I would be unwilling to do so and so”, “I would behave in such a way to him”, — this may give one a different view of one's self and of one's life.

This may be connected with the remembering of dreamed emotions.

The truth of certain emotions is connected with the idea of emotions as seen through the dream.

³³ TS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2. The typescript page on which this conversation is written is a part of a stapled batch of ten pages which make up a draft of Rhees's notes of his conversations with Wittgenstein on Freud and dreams (Wittgenstein 1966b, pp. 41–52); it is unclear why Rhees omitted it from publication along with those notes.

³⁴ The TS is not dated. However, it is the last conversation in the batch that makes up the draft of Rhees's notes of his conversations with Wittgenstein on Freud and dreams, it comes after the conversation dated ‘1943’, so I have tentatively dated it to 1943.

³⁵ German: ‘information’ (or, in the context of Freud's usage, perhaps ‘significant information’).

³⁶ A similar — though not identical — turn of events takes place in Ernst 1931, pp. 216–17 (‘Don Pedro und Halilah’).

6. Drawing logical conclusions³⁷ (April 16th 1943)

16/4/1943

Drawing logical conclusions.

Notion of conclusion as contained in premises. Special cases — e.g. $p \cdot q \supset p$ — where this would be clear.

Drawing conclusions in cases where would not say it was drawing just a logical conclusion. (Perhaps where predict weather from signs.)

Notion of conclusion as a “decoding”. (Might be tempted to say that’s what you said already. Though you hadn’t said that already.)

Lines of continuity by which could make it appear natural to say the conclusion was just another way of saying the same thing: other lines & other ways of presenting it — which would make it natural to say conclusion is something different.

E.g. when I give you a stick. Suppose you break it. Then might say of course I gave you that bit when I³⁸ gave you the whole stick; or again that that was nothing I gave you. You got that — made it — by breaking the stick.

“It suddenly strikes me that so & so.” When I find out something new, I don’t say it suddenly struck me. Do this mainly when find a new way of looking at the matter. (Teaching of maths as pointing-out to pupil of things that had not struck him before.)

Convincing someone of the necessity of a conclusion. (Objection that this is different from pointing out a confusion in grammar, or that something makes nonsense.)

In one case might convince someone of the necessity of a conclusion by pointing out something — some fact — which he had not noticed. (Again might point out confusion?)

(This different from showing the logical necessity with which this follows from that.)

³⁷ MS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/1. Though these handwritten notes are not explicitly marked as notes of a conversation with Wittgenstein, I think it very likely that this is what they are, because: (a) they are set out just like Rhees’s attributed conversation-notes; (b) they were found alongside a series of three handwritten sets of notes which (though also unattributed) are known to be notes of conversations with Wittgenstein; (c) the date of the notes tallies with when Wittgenstein is known to have been in Swansea (see Monk 1990, pp. 447–8), and Rhees took notes of a conversation with Wittgenstein, which he explicitly marked as such, just the day before (see Rhees 2002, pp. 13–15); and (d) they are Wittgensteinian in content and style.

³⁸ These last three words are very uncertain.

$p \supset p \vee q$.

Cases where this would not be trivial. If you wanted to note all cases in series of colours which were either red or blue. Or which contained either red or blue.

Red — orange — yellow : — there you are³⁹
 green purple blue⁴⁰ — : again
 etc.

Way of looking at it. Where your interests lie.

Some thing may appear to one person to be “contained in” a proposition which would not so appear to others. What to look out for.

7. Contradiction⁴¹ (April 20th 1943)

Wittgenstein⁴²

April 20th, 1943

Contradiction The idea of contradiction in logic.

Conflict. “Conflict of meanings.” “How can two meanings conflict?” “They can’t”⁴³

To say that two statements conflict is to say what you have decided; to express your decision.

{It is not that you see that they are jamming and say therefore that one of them will have to be removed.}

{It is not as though the natures of the propositions left you no choice but to rule them out.}

One queer thing about speaking of a conflict here is that it does not take place in time. — How is it to be described? — Normally when we speak of a conflict we speak of something going on, something which will have an outcome. Whereas there is nothing of this sort in the case

³⁹ What I have represented on this line and the next as the conjunction of a colon and a dash, may — in one or both cases — actually be intended to be the symbol for ‘therefore’: ‘∴’.

⁴⁰ Uncertain word: it looks more like ‘ple’, but ‘blue’ is the most probable reading.

⁴¹ TS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/11/14.

⁴² In a draft TS of this conversation, UNI/SU/PC/1/11/14, Rhees has added here ‘[note written by Rush Rhees a few hours later.]’.

⁴³ In a draft TS of this conversation Rhees has here ‘Remark about the formulae in an axiom system.’.

of a contradiction in logic. {[⁴⁴Here the point is that the contradiction does not have an outcome]}

In what way does the use of one sentence conflict with the use of another? Except that for you who have learned these uses this (conjunction) makes no sense.

{“They cancel one another out.” Connected with other operation, e.g. with + and – in arithmetic.}

How do we learn contradictions, and what do we learn with respect to them?

(The idea of what is highly unnatural.)

Compare learning the use or meaning of negation.

Or of conjunction. (“They have all disappeared and one is left.” This is just something highly unnatural. Something you would not say if you knew how to use conjunction.)

What we later call a logical contradiction has had its beginning in a real conflict. A conflict of emotions, disputes between people, etc. Here there is a real struggle — opposition in that sense. — The relation of this to logical contradiction is similar to that of calculation to the experiment of which it is now the “picture”. When it becomes a logical contradiction it does not play that role⁴⁵ at all, though it has connexions with it.

/ And so it becomes something like the picture of a dispute — something that has to be decided: only it is not taking place in time, any more than the picture of the angel leading Peter out of prison is. vide infra. /

{It shows what it is like for empirical propositions — in their application — to conflict. A picture of a conflict: and this goes with the application of logic.}

The bearing of this on “You can’t say that — it’s self contradictory.” Or: “That can’t be.”

⁴⁴ Rhees does not close this bracket.

⁴⁵ In a draft TS of this conversation Rhees has here ‘((opposition and struggle))’.

We feel here the same sort of difficulty as we feel about saying that you learn to draw logical conclusions when you learn the language: you learn to exclude contradiction when you learn the language. (cf.: "This can't be" = That makes no sense in our grammar.) The difficulty is that one takes 'learning the language' in a too sophisticated sense. What we have to consider is a child learning to make assertions, denials, ask questions etc. What we often think of as learning the language, or learning the rules of language, or learning grammar, is something which can only take place with someone who has the other more elementary technique in some form.

This is why "All was present" seems such a different sort of affair from a contradiction, and why it seems unnatural to refer to both as "bad grammar". "They was all present" presents no particular difficulty to understanding, and more often than not we don't bother about it. But contradictions strike at—as it seems—the possibility of language (of asking questions and making assertions) altogether. If someone did not observe this rule, we could neither understand nor converse with him.

Yet for all this important difference there are important similarities between the two sorts of "bad grammar", and for certain purposes it is important to emphasize the continuity between them.

And we cannot truthfully say that failure to observe the rules of non contradiction etc. would demolish the possibility of language altogether, though the language might look very different from anything we do. There could be a language in which there were questions even though there were no equivalents to our "yes" and "no". Perhaps even where there were nothing like our denial. So that when someone asked "Is it red?" the reply would be "It is blue" and never "It is not red". And so on.

But certainly learning the technique of asking questions, of denying and so on, is much more fundamental and more difficult to describe than learning to put a plural verb with a plural subject.

And the feelings which go to motivate our statement that "That's absurd, so it can't be" are rooted in this technique. And the same holds of "It must be" in connexion with a logical conclusion.

(These same rules which we have learned in this way might be put to quite other uses. We learn to play chess, and this might be used quite differently, say for a dance.)

To study language apart from the sort of importance it has in the circumstances in which it is learned, the sort of importance it has in

living, is to take a false view of it. (The same is true of mathematics. This is what is wrong about speaking of mathematics as a game.)

8. Concepts⁴⁶ (9 April 1944)

April 9, 1944. Concepts.

Idea of a concept as a “*mögliches Prädikat*”⁴⁷ (Frege)⁴⁸, propositional function; something which appears in a sentence, “x is a bottle” etc.

I wish to show that this account is wrong (though it is connected with notion of a concept as a universal, as something which has instances). This partly because there can be language games employing generic terms—concept terms—which do not appear in subject predicate propositions at all. (As the terms “tile”⁴⁹ and “beam” in the game of the builders.).

Also difficulty in notion of what it is a possible predicate of. Compare Russell’s account of generality.⁵⁰ In Russellian language it must always make sense to say—or to ask whether—everything is a tree, e.g. If it makes sense to say $(x).\phi x \supset \Psi x$ —“For all α , α is a metal implies α is heavy”—then it must make sense to say $(x).\phi x$ (“For all x , x is a metal” or “everything is a metal”). But in fact in many cases we should not know what to do with such a statement: “Everything is a plant”, —“Everything is a song” etc.

[The point is that there can be no general analysis of general propositions, no general account of the use of “all”. As though if you have given an account of the use of “all” in one connection, you will know what to do with it forever after.

This is connected with the point that the rules of transformation laid down in logic do not give you what is fundamental in any way in the calculation of mathematics.]

⁴⁶ MS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2. Though these handwritten notes are not explicitly marked as notes of a conversation with Wittgenstein, I think it very likely that this is what they are, because: (a) they are set out just like Rhees’s attributed conversation-notes; (b) they were found in the main folder of Rhees’s notes of conversations with Wittgenstein; (c) the date of the notes tallies with when Wittgenstein is known to have been in Swansea (see Monk 1990, pp. 459 and 470–1); and (d) they are Wittgensteinian in content and style.

⁴⁷ German: ‘possible predicate’.

⁴⁸ See, for example, Frege 1903, §56 (translated in Frege 1952b, p. 139); and Frege 2007, p. 101, n. 87 (§66).

⁴⁹ Uncertain word.

⁵⁰ See, for example, Whitehead and Russell 1962, pp. 45–6 (II:iii).

It was important when Frege pointed out that numbers are always used of generic names or of concepts.⁵¹

(But to know that something is a generic name tells you little or nothing about how it is used. Just as to know the “*oberflächen Grammatik*”⁵² of an expression—e.g. that it is a subject predicate sentence—tells little or nothing of the use that is made of it, its “*tieffen Grammatik*”⁵³.)

When e.g. Littlewood⁵⁴ begins his discussion of classes by introducing examples of classes of trees, etc. this is really superfluous, irrelevant to his purpose.

Examples of classes: See raindrops falling, and someone asks “How many raindrops did you see?”—not in the sense of how many rain drops really fell, but how many were in your sense datum. You could not answer. You might be able to say there were more than 2 or more than 4, and perhaps that there were less than 5000. But further than this you could not say the raindrops in your sense datum have a number. Similar example when look at a field of daisies.

Take example of a white surface. Can say all points in that surface are white. But no sense in saying that one point on that surface is white (Or even that 4 points or 100 points on that surface are white.)

The point is that the raindrops & the daisies in the sense data are classes.

There are a great many sorts of sentences in which “is a bottle” might occur. (You can say “Here is a bottle”, though would hardly say that “bottle” is a predicate of the place.) Can say what I am looking at

⁵¹ See, for example, Frege 2007, p. 56 (§46).

⁵² German: ‘surface grammar’. For the sole reference to surface- and depth-grammar in Wittgenstein’s written corpus, see Wittgenstein 2009 (§664).

⁵³ German: ‘depth grammar’.

⁵⁴ I cannot find reference to any such discussion in J. E. Littlewood’s published works; perhaps Wittgenstein was thinking of lectures Littlewood gave at Cambridge (though not, it seems, the lectures published as Littlewood 1954 (see p. 4 (1:2)), in which he introduces classes in a very abstract fashion). It is possible that Wittgenstein was really thinking of Littlewood’s close colleague, G. H. Hardy, as Hardy 1908 (pp. 112–13 (IV:52))—a book with which Wittgenstein was intimately familiar—begins its discussion of classes by introducing everyday examples, such as various classes of people.

is a bottle, what is over there is a bottle, the physical object I am giving you is a bottle, and so on. (In these there is a different “*tiefengrammatik*”. If we say “bottle” is a class concept, are we saying anything definite about its use?)

Compare “the class of trees in the garden” and “the class of numbers under 16”, say.

Notion of a calculus of classes. Such a calculus might have its uses. Might, say, have a means of correlating the trees in the garden with the violets in the garden (if every violet grows by a tree) and then can say the number of trees is the same as the number of violets or that the classes are similar (without having counted them).

But this notion of correlation is differently applied in different connections.

9. Voluntary and involuntary action⁵⁵ (15 April 1945)

Please return

Wittgenstein, April 15th 1945.

Volition.

The idea of linking volition with a distinction between what we experience and what we do: that in what we do we are passive, etc.. (*Wille und Vorstellung*)⁵⁶.

Prefer to begin by distinguishing various sorts of actions. Certain actions we can be taught to perform in response to orders (or not to perform them in response to orders); other actions, like the action of the heart in beating, sneezing etc., are not of this sort.

This may affect the sort of prediction that is made in regard to such actions. If I say ‘I will now drink this and in 5 minutes I will vomit’, I am in each case making a prediction, but predictions of entirely different sorts.

⁵⁵ TS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2.

⁵⁶ German: ‘will and representation’; an allusion to the title of, and to some of the issues raised in, Arthur Schopenhauer’s *Die Welt als Wille und Vorstellung* (translated as Schopenhauer 1958).

In regard to the first of these, you would not say that it was a prediction based on evidence or experience, as the second might be. (You would hardly speak of such a prediction's being mistaken either, or of its being confirmed or born out by subsequent events.)

This distinction is not so clear as one might think, because we say 'That stick will fall if the thread breaks' and similar things, without basing our statements on any evidence. It may be that innumerable experiences in the past are what have caused us to be thus certain. But this is a different thing from saying that 'they make us certain' in the sense of furnishing reasons for our certainty, or being what our certainty is logically based on. For it is not based on anything; or need not be. We just are certain — that is foreknowledge, if you like. It would make no sense to ask 'Are you justified in being so certain?' in this case. That question has a place in connexion with such propositions, for example, as that cancer is not contagious. But the proposition that bodies fall if you drop them is not of this sort.

Effort. The feeling of effort; making an effort. 'Tension' I should not be able to tell you what the feeling was or what the particular tension was, without making mention of the action which it led to. (This is against the view that it is the feeling which leads you to recognize the effort.) 'It is the tension you get in your arm when trying to lift a heavy weight', etc.. How do you know when a man is trying to lift it? How do you know when you are trying to lift it? You may see him grasping the weight, grunting, his muscles taut. etc..

In normal cases it is not because you recognize any special feelings in your limbs etc. that you say you did something voluntarily or deliberately, or that you were trying. Trying to lift your arm, say. Nor is it by looking to any special feelings that you know you are relaxed. The feelings in the arm when the arm is relaxed might be, for instance, the feeling of blood swelling the tips of the fingers. And this seems irrelevant. It is not by reference to such feelings that you learn to say you are relaxed: that you have been taught to carry out the instruction 'Let your arm hang perfectly limp' etc.. The fact is that now you say 'My arm is relaxed'.

This has a certain connexion with what it comes to to say 'My arm just rose without my doing anything about it'.

You do not distinguish between actions which are voluntary and actions which are involuntary by noticing that there is some special

feeling or experience connected with the former; rather, we have come to learn that certain actions (they may be otherwise pretty heterogeneous) we can resolve to do, or not to do. We can learn to carry them out in response to orders, or not to carry them out.

Resolve to do: ‘Well, I will go now’—you get up and go out. You are not surprised to see that your body does move in this case; nor even slightly bucked to see that it went as you said. I might be prevented by force majeure. But the whole point of making the remark is that it regularly does lead to action. (The remark has its point in this game of actions and so on.)

Suppose I close my eyes and move my fingers. I can tell you what I am doing. Now how do I know I am moving my fingers? I can say that I had certain feelings ‘here’—pointing to the knuckles—though ‘certain feelings’ tells you nothing unless you know them to be feelings associated with this sort of movement; you do not first learn to know the movement by the feelings. And I should also have feelings here in the knuckles if someone else were moving my fingers and ‘I were not doing anything about it.’

Suppose someone challenged my statement that I am moving my fingers? ‘Well, but surely I am: look, this is moving the fingers isn’t it? Or what do you call it?’

What if he said ‘Oh your fingers are just moving, but you are not moving them?’

10. The proposition that every colour is extended⁵⁷ **(14 August 1945)**

Wittgenstein, August 14, 1945.

The proposition that every colour is extended and that every extension is coloured.

“Every colour is extended”. This proposition might have a use; though it isn’t easy to find one. (Compare “Every stick has a length”. Might even try to establish this by illustration: “Here is a stick. See? Every stick must have a length, mustn’t it?” Similarly “Just look at this colour here, for instance, etc.”.) “Red is a colour” might have a use too, although the sentence certainly does not cry its use very loud.

⁵⁷ MS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2.

The law of excluded middle has a use, often as statement of a plan of exposition, as it were. Begin by "Either it is so, or it is not." Then "If it is, then so & so follows. If it is not, then, etc." The whole argument or exposition could of course have been stated without the previous statement of the law of excluded middle at all.

{Cf. "Let l be the length of the stick".}⁵⁸

"Every colour is extended" is not a sentence that would be uttered or used in any ordinary circumstances at all. No more is "Every stick is extended"; might be said to contrast with pleasures, of which say they are not extended, for instance.

Might put it by saying "Every colour goes from here to there" (Where "here" & "there" are variables.)

Take "This colour extended" or "Green is extended here." (Perhaps "There is green from here to there.") This seems to be hardly different from saying "There is green here" or "Green exists here" Might saying you are giving the mode of existence of green when you say it is extended; and similarly in general when you say all colours are extended.

But instead of saying "extended" or "spread out", might use special gesture—say spreading the hands—when point to green there. Perhaps almost like painting a peculiar picture of green (the "way it exists".)

And green might be "pictured" differently.

Under circumstances one might be most familiar with a concept of "green" or "colour" such that we'd say "green is not extended" & "colour is not extended". Could say the green patch is extended or coloured surfaces are, but green is not extended. Green is a quality. This quality may be in many different places at once, for instance. Or, if the surface is green, then every point on the surface is green. Every point has this same colour, and of course at no point is the colour extended.

God keeps universals. And so God keeps the universal green. But of course this universal which God keeps is not extended. Might think of it as a point—and preferably as a point of light. Imagine a circle which at circumference is white, then shading inwards to pale pink, inwards to red, and so finally to pure red at the centre—which

⁵⁸ Rhees added this line vertically up the margin, beginning from the place that I have inserted it.

however is only a point. Such a point might then be the colour red which God has.

It is most natural to say “Every colour is extended” or “Every colour goes from here to there” when one thinks of painted colours, or the equivalent. It would be nothing like as natural if think of a green light; especially of a point of light. No obvious sense in saying that every light goes from here to there.

(Even in connection with “Every stick has a length” — or “is extended” — could imagine cases in which this would not be natural. Suppose these were cylinders which were constantly changing length. Then would not be inclined to say that such an object — perhaps would not call it a stick — must have a length. Or even that every such object goes from here to there.)

“Although it is possible to imagine rather different concept of colour to be familiar, etc., still it is remarkable that if you say to most people that every colour must be extended, this at once gains acceptance.”

This is true, but one would have to add that it gains acceptance among people for whom a special way of speaking or of talking about colours is the predominantly familiar one. “*Einseitige Ernährung.*”⁵⁹ If another way of talking about them — and one not even wholly foreign, thinking of coloured lights, for instance — were commoner, the situation would be different.

That is why say it is a matter of “pictures”, and that it is the picture commonly used which determines one to that ready acceptance — “of course”, etc. Might illustrate this matter of “picturing” by reference to different expressions in poets.

With regard to “whatever is extended must be coloured” the case is even plainer. What about a glass cube, for instance, or the air?

Has been said that you can’t think of a surface without thinking of it as coloured. But what about surfaces that are merely felt and not seen? Or consider the surface of a mirror. When you see objects in a mirror you don’t see the surface of the mirror coloured, because the objects seen in it are not seen on the surface.

⁵⁹ German: ‘one-sided diet’. See Wittgenstein 2009 (§593).

11. We have to refrain from asking 'Why?'⁶⁰ (8 September 1945)

Wittgenstein, September 8th, 1945. (Notes written after conversation.
Rush Rhees)

We have to refrain from asking 'why?', if we want to see what is really there; otherwise we leave out the most interesting things.

"Association". (Explaining by reference to "association of ideas". Freud's use of "*freier Einfall*"⁶¹ to arrive at the interpretation of the dream, and thus also to explain why the dream occurred.⁶²) — The vagueness of the term "ideas". But the same applies to "association".

Describing what is there. "I don't know why I say that." This is important; avoid disregarding it and looking beyond.

People are intrigued by dreams. That is that. It is wrong to assume without more ado that there must be an interpretation. Maybe it stops just there.

"Everything must have a function." This is not plain at all. (For instance, if it were said that every construction in our grammar — having this form or shape rather than some other — must have some function. Or something which, in our time, perhaps, we always expect in architecture; perhaps some arrangement of windows and doors. Even if it had a function once, for an earlier generation, it may not have any such function now; perhaps it could not have that function now. And architects observe it all the same.) One can in fact show that not everything can have a function. We may talk about blood and the composition of blood. As a result from that composition, blood has a certain colour and smell. But then that colour does not have a function; we can't explain it in the same direction. — Iron has a certain use or function, but then there are certain features of iron which do not have a function there. These we may tend to neglect.

⁶⁰ TS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2.

⁶¹ German: 'free association' is the standard translation of this phrase in Freud. However, perhaps the reason that Wittgenstein specifically used the German in this case is because of the inadequacy of this translation (after all, '*der Einfall*' and '*die Assoziation*' are not quite synonyms, though Freud sometimes seems to treat them as though they are). On the difficulty of translating this phrase see the translator's remark in Freud 1963, p. 47, n. 1.

⁶² See, perhaps, Freud 1953a, pp. 103–4 and 280–1 (Ch. II & Ch. VI(A)); and Freud 1953c, pp. 635–41 (Ch. II).

Haze. Describing a rectangle with a multitude of holes.

Mathematics: an ideal of strict proof. But this has not always been so — and yet we still call the more primitive stages ‘mathematics’, and they are just as interesting for understanding what mathematics is.

Knowing where to stop. Not assuming that it must go further.

Different sorts of explanation. ‘Explanation’ is not just one sort of thing, but an enormous variety. We are inclined to concentrate on one small region of strict or formal explanation. For a philosopher, the other sorts — which are overlooked in this way, or which the scientist may feel ashamed to admit as explanation at all — may be just as important.

12. Ethics⁶³ (12 September 1945)

September 12, 1945

{Rush Rhees
(after discussion with Wittgenstein)}

Ethics.

The notion of an ethical theory. The idea of finding the essential nature of goodness or of duty.

This idea in Plato. Setting ethical inquiry in the direction of finding the true nature of goodness.⁶⁴

Objectivity and relativity. The idea that relativity must be avoided at all costs, since this would destroy the imperative.

The idea that if we find that the Chinese have one sort of practice and the Europeans have another sort of practice, then these are really two

⁶³ TS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2. Rhees quoted from his notes of this conversation in Rhees 1965, pp. 23–6. These notes, however, contain significantly more than is quoted in that article.

⁶⁴ See, perhaps, Plato 1961d, p. 766 (VII:534b–d), and Plato 1961b, pp. 48 and 58 (65d and 75c–d). In a letter to Godfrey Vesey (3 February 1980), Rhees wrote (Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/ 1/4/4/1): ‘I never read or heard any remark in which Wittgenstein referred to Plato’s Theory of Forms, except in one conversation — and in this case I had introduced it. I had been asking about the notions of “truth” and “falsity” in connexion with ethical judgements of value.’ I imagine that Rhees was referring to this conversation.

different ways of fulfilling the same imperative or of realising the same good. (Cf. “the real reasons” which justify an action.)

Ethics and psychology and sociology. Supposing you simply describe the *Sitten und Gebräuche*⁶⁵ of various tribes, this would not be ethics.

Describing the *Sitten und Gebräuche* would not be the same as studying rules or laws. A rule is neither a command or order—because there is no one that gives the order—nor is it an empirical statement of how the majority of people behave. Either of those interpretations would ignore the different grammar, the different ways in which rules are used; they are not used as commands are nor are they used as sociological descriptions are. If I buy a game in Woolworths I may find on the inside of the cover a set of rules, beginning “First set out the pieces in such and such a way”. Is this an order? (Is it ever used or understood as one?) Is it a description—is it an assertion that anybody ever has or ever will act that way?⁶⁶

A law may of course be studied with a view to finding out what the general practice is,—that here people found guilty of murder are regularly hanged, and so on. But this is not how it is used in legal practice; even the reference to precedent in law is not of this kind. If I know simply that in the past the practice has been so and so, I do not thereby know what I am to do, do not know what the law is now.

*L’homme est bon. La femme est bonne.*⁶⁷ Consider the temptation to think that this must really mean that the man has a masculine goodness and that the woman has a feminine goodness. (*Der Man ist ein*

⁶⁵ German: ‘morals and customs’; a phrase commonly used in German anthropological discussions of other cultures’ habits and mores.

⁶⁶ In a letter to Brian McGuinness (20 August 1963), Rhees wrote: ‘At the time when I knew him I do not think he would have said “*Ein Soll hat also nur Sinn, wenn hinter dem Soll etwas steht . . . eine Macht, die straft oder belohnt.*” He thought the “imperative” character of morality was important—or often, anyway. But he said that we cannot call moral rules commands—any more than the rules of a game (which are printed on the cover of the box it came in) are commands. But it may be that if both statements were worked out more fully the difference would not be so great. And in any case it may well have been that his view was as Waismann gives it here at that time.’ (Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/3/3/5; the line quoted by Rhees is from Friedrich Waismann’s notes of conversations with Wittgenstein: “‘Ought’ makes sense only if there is something lending support and force to it—a power that punishes and rewards’ (Wittgenstein 1979b, p. 118).

⁶⁷ French: ‘The man is good. The woman is good’, where, in the French, the adjectives are gendered to match the respective genders of the nouns which they qualify.

guter and *Die Frau ist eine gute*.⁶⁸) There may be a very strong temptation to think this. And yet this is not what the French say. What they really mean is what they really say: *L'homme est bon* and *La femme est bonne*.

So in considering different systems of ethics there may be a temptation to interpret what adherents of a different ethics are doing and saying in terms of some conception of good that we ourselves hold, and to say that this interpretation is what they really mean.

(⁶⁹One consequence of this procedure might be that we then assume that what are reasons justifying an action in our ethics must be reasons which would justify an action in their ethics as well. This may be connected with the idea of the reasons which really justify an action. Whereas the real reasons are the reasons that are given. Those are the reasons for or against the action.

This does not mean that I must be indifferent, or that I must therefore think that there is no decisive reason for or against the action. I needn't cease to adhere to one system of ethics — and in this sense be indifferent — and if I do adhere then like as not I will recognise reasons which are decisive.

This may raise questions as to whether the adoption or recognition of a particular ethical system is arbitrary. And presumably this would have to be treated on lines analogous to those on which one would treat the question whether mathematics or whether logic is arbitrary.

{Whether grammar is arbitrary. ('Only in French do people speak as they think'⁷⁰)}

There are special features in regard to ethics, because in ethics there isn't generally proof. There is argument, and in the course of the argument there are reasons for and against. And here one has to see how the argument actually proceeds, and what giving reasons is like here. "Reason" doesn't always mean the same thing. Compare reasons

⁶⁸ German: 'The man is a good one' and 'The woman is a good one'. The German translations of '*L'homme est bon*' and '*La femme est bonne*' would be such that the adjectives are not gendered, that is: '*Der Mann ist gut*' and '*Die Frau ist gut*', respectively. Whereas if the phrases are changed from 'The man/woman is good' to 'The man/woman is a good one', then even in German the adjectives are gendered to match the respective genders of the nouns which they qualify.

⁶⁹ Rhees does not close this bracket.

⁷⁰ Wittgenstein wrote in his 1930 notebook that he once saw this sentiment attributed to a French politician, and that he thought that it was an 'M. Brian', by which it seems plausible that he meant Aristide Briand (Wittgenstein 2000, MS 109, p. 177; and see Biesenbach 2014, pp. 69–70).

establishing a conclusion in science and reasons establishing a conclusion in mathematics. In ethics one has to avoid the assumption that reasons must really be of a different sort from what they are actually seen to be, — that they must really be of a different sort from what are actually offered.

Obviously different ethical systems must have points in common. There must be grounds for saying that the followers of a particular system are making ethical judgements, that they regard so and so as good, and so forth. This would not imply that what they say must be an expression of something more ultimate.

“One of the ethical systems must be the right one.” (Alternatively: nearer to the right one.) Objectivity. “There is still the difference between truth and falsity.” “Any ethical judgement in any system may be true or it may be false.” Here have to remember that “P is true” means simply “p”. “Although I believe so and so is good, I may be wrong.” This says no more than that what I assert may be denied.

If anyone says that something is good, he is making a judgement of value. If I decide that a certain ethical judgement is true—or that a certain system of ethics is the right one—then I am also making a judgement of value. In other words, I should be adopting that system of ethics, or making the same ethical judgement. {It does not mean that I have looked to see if it fits ‘what is really there’ & what really happens!} (Would there be any meaning in proving that this system of ethics was the right one? What sort of reasons would be or could be offered here?)

So what does it come to to say that “one of them must be the right one”? One for which conclusive reasons can be given? They would be conclusive reasons for those who recognised a certain system of ethics, no doubt. You seem to be adopting certain ethical criteria if you can talk about the right one or the wrong one at all.

(Idea of logical criticism, or ruling out certain ethical systems on the ground that they are incoherent. This would need further examination.)

What sort of things are grounds for ethical judgement? Limited fields within which argument is possible. Ambush assassination. “Stabbing in the back, never letting him have a chance.” Reasons which might be given to show that this form of assassination was almost saintly: The man has got to die anyway; this form of death was painless, it was unexpected and so without preliminary terrors and worry, and so on. Unless a man has strong feelings of revulsion against killing a man without giving him a chance—and if he has such

feelings he probably can offer no reasons for them—the case in favour of the assassination appears unanswerable. Take case of one who says that all war is wrong, and the Catholic who says that there are just wars. Here, or very soon, there is an end of argument.

If one says that there are various systems of ethics, one is not saying that they are all equally right. That would have no meaning. Just as it would have no meaning to say each was right from its own standpoint. That could only mean that each judges as he does.

Idea of reasons in favour of an ethical theory, — such as hedonism, for instance. (“Pleasure alone is good”.) This is a theory in some ways analogous to behaviourism.

If you simply take the expression of the judgement—say “ah”, together with a facial expression,—this might be the same for an excellent salad, a great painting or a noble action. Seeming to support the view that “finding it agreeable” is what is essential in each case.

13. Seeing-as, reference, and word meaning⁷¹ (6 April 1946)

April 6th, 1946

Seeing something as something.

Rows of dots which see as groups of three or a group or otherwise: Gestalt psychologists speak of this as seeing them differently “organised”.⁷²

Might suggest this difference can be accounted for by different movements of the eye.⁷³

{That the image on the retina may be the same even though it is “seen different” is true, but not relevant}⁷⁴

⁷¹ MS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2. Though these handwritten notes are not explicitly marked as notes of a conversation with Wittgenstein, I think it very likely that this is what they are, because: (a) they are set out just like Rhees’s attributed conversation-notes; (b) they were found in the main folder of Rhees’s notes of conversations with Wittgenstein; (c) the date of the notes tallies with when Wittgenstein is known to have been in Swansea (see Nedo 1993, pp. 44 and 144; and Rhees’s conversation with Wittgenstein on Freud, which appears in Wittgenstein 1966b (pp. 50–2), took place on 5 April 1946); and (d) they are Wittgensteinian in content and style.

⁷² See, for example, Wertheimer 1938, pp. 72–8 (304–16); and Köhler’s discussion of Wertheimer’s seminal experiments in Köhler 1929, pp. 157–8 (Ch. V).

⁷³ See, for example, Köhler 1929, pp. 166–9 (Ch. V), in which Köhler is critical of this suggested explanation.

⁷⁴ Sentence added, at the top of the page, diagonally, in the margin.

Question whether since in this “organisation” we seem to have something which varies, this may be called a quality, like shape or colour.

But then seems to be at best a quality which refer to indirectly.

May have languages in which, say, colours are referred to indirectly: instead of “red” say “blood-coloured”; green — “grass coloured”, blue — “sky coloured”, etc. But then these expressions might come to be used exactly as our colour words are, so that one does not actually think of colour of blood etc., and there is nothing indirect about it.

In such cases may then refer indirectly to qualities to which however may also refer directly.

The question is whether the “organisation” is something of this sort; or whether it is something of which can speak only indirectly. (Would appear as though latter.)

When say “I see it as groups of 3 dots each”, here we are using an expression which we have learned in connection with groups which really are separate. Probably could not teach use of expression — or any substitute for it — in another way.

Someone says, “Now I see it as groups of two; now as groups of three etc.” Could not explain what he sees by pointing to different arrangements of discrete groups.

And although Köhler speaks of “a genuinely different experience”⁷⁵, it does not help to try to explain this, e.g. by reference to different movements of the eye in looking along the row of points. Because this would not explain the difference between the different experiences of looking at the series of points at⁷⁶ regular intervals, on the one hand, and the looking at discrete groups — where there also the eye movements — on the other.

It appears that there is something queer about this reference to “genuinely different experiences” (why insist upon it in this language anyway, as you would not in talking about the different experiences in seeing different separate groups).

And there may be something queer in saying that you are “describing your experience”⁷⁷ in such a case. Question of how a

⁷⁵ For somewhat similar phrases see, perhaps, Köhler 1929, pp. 91–2 (Ch. III): ‘change the experience’; and p. 200 (Ch. VI): ‘transformation of visual reality’. See also, for example, Wittgenstein 2009, p. 209 (XI:153).

⁷⁶ Uncertain word, perhaps ‘of’.

⁷⁷ See, perhaps, Köhler 1929, p. 73 (Ch. III). See also, for example, Koffka 1955, p. 73 (Ch. III, Sect. ‘On the Phenomenological Method’).

child⁷⁸ would learn such a description. Perhaps of what one could point to or examine to see whether the description were correct or not.

Suppose someone spoke the word “board” (bored) — or “bill” — and then asked what word you thought of (“what meaning you attached to it”).

I say I thought of the participle. Might ask what did this consist in. Say I had the image of the written word “bored” before me. Perhaps also of certain feelings.

But this seems inadequate. (Might even ask how I knew the image “bored” was the participle and not a misspelling of “board”)

Could distinguish the case in which you think of the one sense and that in which you think of the other simply by reference to the technique which you go on to use, the sentences you employ and so on.

Then again there is the psychological phenomenon which we call “attaching such and such a meaning to the word”. And this seems at first to be something different from mastering the technique or knowing how to use it. Some one might be able to go on to use it in the one way or the other although nothing had ever happened which you would call the experience of attaching the meaning to it.

Might ask then whether this psychological phenomenon is not something superfluous as far as knowing the language is concerned; whether there might not be languages learned & used although nothing of this sort ever happened in anyone.

The difficulty is in taking it as the description of an experience, or perhaps of a feeling. Partly because, e.g. the image of the word or the feeling etc ... is certainly not what “attaching that meaning to it” consists in. (The question “what does the experience consist in?” is what gives the trouble here.) You could have given other explanations (descriptions?) which would have done just as well. You could have given sentences in which it was used, — as children are asked to do in school to show that they know the meaning of the word.

In fact it seems that the image, the feelings etc get their point only by referring to such a use or technique. A reference which you could expand and explain if asked; with explanations which however were not in your mind in anything like images at the time when you said you attached such a meaning to the word you heard.

⁷⁸ Rhees originally had ‘how you would’, which he then changed to ‘how a child would’, by writing ‘a child’ above the ‘you’.

14. Describing psychological phenomena⁷⁹ (7 April 1946)

April 7th, 1946.

Seeing something as something

Sense data. James Lange Theory.⁸⁰ Describing one's experience.

Whether can give a description of psychological⁸¹ phenomenon as can give description of a landscape.

Feelings and emotions.

Suggestion that the difficulty in describing certain feelings is that "we haven't the words for it". (James)⁸². So the feeling which I get when I rub my finger against my thumb.

James seems almost to be trying to give the ultimate components or constituents of the emotion, and to imagine that if he could do that he would have given a description of it.

"Knowing what grief feels like".⁸³

Here the reference to glandular activity doesn't help, because cannot point to anything and say that is the feeling of glandular activity. Don't know what feeling this would be.

How can an actor portray grief? Certainly not by recognising the feelings in his muscles. He simply stands in that way, with that facial expression etc. There is nothing which he goes by in the way of feelings to tell him it is right. So it is more in line with drawing a man in grief, etc. — simply draw these lines.

⁷⁹ MS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2. Though these handwritten notes are not explicitly marked as notes of a conversation with Wittgenstein, I think it very likely that this is what they are, because: (a) they are set out just like Rhees's attributed conversation-notes; (b) they were found in the main folder of Rhees's notes of conversations with Wittgenstein; (c) the date of the notes tallies with when Wittgenstein is known to have been in Swansea (see the previous conversation); (d) these notes seem to follow on from those of the previous day; and (e) they are Wittgensteinian in content and style.

⁸⁰ See, for example, James 1890b, pp. 1058–97 (Ch. XXV).

⁸¹ Rhees originally had 'of every phenomenon', which he then changed to 'of psychological phenomenon', by writing 'psychological' above the 'every'.

⁸² See, for example, James 1890a, pp. 193–4 (Ch. VII, Sect. 'The Sources of Error in Psychology').

⁸³ See, for example, James 1890b, pp. 1059–62 (Ch. XXV).

Mistake of assuming that can give descriptions of emotions, even to the extent to which might give a description of a sense datum when mention its shape and colour.

“What happened when you felt grief?”

Any answer is likely to be irrelevant, or at any rate inadequate. “Could you not have that cold & shrunken feeling without feeling grief?” An actor may have that posture without feeling grief.

“I thought of the participle”.

Question whether this is just a bit of “automatic talking”, then.

What would one call “automatic talking”? Perhaps someone had been talking in his sleep, says “I suddenly found myself saying so & so.”

This is certainly not the sort of thing that happens when you say what meaning you attached to it.

15. Different sorts of psychological experience⁸⁴ (8 April 1946⁸⁵)

April 8th.

Suggest that in psychology one observes the utterances of other people. And that in oneself one does not observe utterances.

But it does not follow that there is some experience which one does observe.

“Observation” would be something like “looking more closely”. And one cannot do this with respect to our own experience, — because whatever you do alters the experience.

(In yourself you do not observe utterances, but you make utterances, and these are then on the same level as utterances of other people which you do observe.)

⁸⁴ MS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2. Though these handwritten notes are not explicitly marked as notes of a conversation with Wittgenstein, I think it very likely that this is what they are, because: (a) they are set out just like Rhees’s attributed conversation-notes; (b) they were found in the main folder of Rhees’s notes of conversations with Wittgenstein; (c) assuming that the 8 April referred to is the one that followed 6 and 7 April 1946, which it seems to be, then the date of the notes tallies with when Wittgenstein is known to have been in Swansea (see the previous two conversations); (d) these notes seem to follow on from those of the previous two days; and (e) they are Wittgensteinian in content and style.

⁸⁵ I am assuming 1946 to be the correct year; see previous note.

Different sorts of "experience". Difference between having an after image and imagining my brother. In the former case I can draw what I image, and this is a quite adequate account. But it is not the same thing at all in the case of imagining my brother. (Could get the same sort of distinction between imagining my brother and having an after image of my brother.)

If I say I am imagining my brother, there are all sorts of things I might say if I were asked to explain or give an account of "what this consisted in", though this would not be giving something which was in my mind at the time or "justified" my statement "I am imagining my brother".

In most such cases there is no "justification".

This does not mean that I merely said the words as I might do if I were lying.

The words are not "empty". But that also does not mean that in uttering them you are having any sort of experience of which you are then giving a description.

(Could describe my pain: "throbbing etc", or giving times when it is growing in intensity when diminishing, and so on. This would still be different from describing an after image.)

If I asked you what we did this afternoon, you would answer without any hesitation "We had tea at Langlands." This would not mean there was any memory which you appealed to or connected in making your statement. You first say that, and it is not based on anything. You may have certain images, but they are not what make you sure we had tea at Langlands.

There is not the mere utterance of the words, because the words play a particular rôle. This appears, e.g., in equivalent things you might say, or in the way in which you would be prepared to explain or expand your utterance.

And of course it could not be words at all. It may be gestures, facial expressions and so on.

16. The relations of science and philosophy⁸⁶ (8 April 1947)

Wittgenstein,

April 8th, 1947

Question of relations of science and philosophy.

⁸⁶ MS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2.

In a sense philosophy is necessarily anti-scientific; because it is contemplative.

At the present time science is mainly dominated by engineering. And in this connection—in so far as it is dominated by engineering—it will have no use for philosophy. (Science can get along quite well without philosophy. May speak of certain puzzles: but these won't really interfere much. And while science is directed towards technology, philosophy will appear rather as a counter weight to science.)

But science is what scientists do. And they are not always concerned with advances in engineering. They write systematic treatises on a subject, for instance. Say a treatise on Wave Mechanics.

And where the work of the scientist is concerned with what we may call clarification, philosophy may be of help to him. Though this help may not be direct,—simply the fact that a certain form of philosophical investigation is going on.

Philosophy is contemplative; and so not scientific. It is concerned with pointing out other possibilities; other ways in which it might be done. '*Vielgestalt*'.⁸⁷

This may indeed be important for an understanding of what sort of thing, what sort of activity science is. But this is not anything that the scientist wants to be bothered with while he is doing science.

Compare someone running a bus company in a city. How bus companies look in the universe—that does not interest him. He is interested in the way this bus company should be run here and now. That on the other side of the earth there are—or that at other times there have been—societies in which there were no buses at all, where they lived quite differently, conducted their lives in a different way (that there are other and different ways of social existence)—this is not something that he wants to know.

Nor does the scientist want to know what the philosopher may point out about science.

{Misconception about “being scientific”. Not only in social affairs; but also, for example, in medicine.}

(The contemplative character of philosophy is one reason why Ayer's suggestion that what is needed is that more scientists should

⁸⁷ German: 'Multifaceted'.

study philosophy⁸⁸—is beside the point. Their scientific interests don't naturally lead them to this type of enquiry.⁸⁹)

A scientist doesn't contemplate science (compare it with other sorts of activity, other ways of doing things, and so on.).

Spengler's suggestion that philosophy now is on the threshold of something like Goethe's *Methoden der Naturforschung*.⁹⁰

Goethe was certainly terribly muddled in most of what he said in his *Farbenlehre*⁹¹. And at the same time it is plain that there was a strong protest behind what he was saying (which is not the same as saying that he was protesting strongly).

What he was bringing out in his *Farbenlehre* was the clash between science as he met it and an entirely different *Weise der Naturbetrachtung*⁹²,—a method of *Naturbetrachtung*⁹³ which was his whole life.

For a scientist it is ridiculous when Goethe protests against going into a laboratory and letting light come through a slit in paper in order to study colours. "If you want to see what colours are, go out into the open air, where you can see the sky and the fields and flowers."⁹⁴

Goethe's interest in finding the precise word to describe that colour.⁹⁵

This is a different sort of precision than the precision of measurement, which is what the scientists are concerned with.

⁸⁸ See, perhaps, the conclusion of Ayer 1936, pp. 151–3 (Ch. 8).

⁸⁹ Though Rhees also reported (Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/11/14): 'Science has influenced our ways of thinking, in almost every direction, and Wittgenstein used to say that a philosopher ought to have studied science. But not because it shows us the right way of asking about things (which means nothing), nor because it helps us to understand reality'.

⁹⁰ German: 'method of scientific research'. See, perhaps—with regard to the sciences—Spengler 1926, p. 422 (XI:XIV).

⁹¹ German: '*Science of Colours*', Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's book on chromatics, some parts of which have been translated as Goethe 1840, and some parts of which as Goethe 1995b.

⁹² German: 'way of investigating nature'.

⁹³ German: 'investigating nature'.

⁹⁴ See, for example, Goethe's poem 'Freunde, flieht die dunkle Kammer' (Goethe 1827, pp. 677–8 (Bk. VI)); and also, for example, Goethe 1998, pp. 55, 77, and 164 (§431, §575, and §1288).

⁹⁵ See, for example, Goethe 1995b, pp. 279–83 (Pt. Six, §§765–802); and Goethe 1998, p. 95 (§§706–8).

Goethe would have done better had he not tried to bother about causality at all.⁹⁶

The recognition that there is another form of *Naturbetrachtung* than that in which causality and measurement are predominant.

And there is a clash because neither party will admit that there can be other ways than that on which he is engaged.

For the scientist any suggestion of a *Betrachtung*⁹⁷ which abandons measurement & causality is a backsliding to something more primitive: perhaps to medicine men, and so something to be ashamed of. Or at any rate that science is the fruition of which any other view is an inadequate anticipation (*Vorstufe*⁹⁸).

When a scientist is doing science, he isn't contemplating science; and he is never in a position to do so.

Compare the bus company again. Or a racing motorist like Sir Malcolm Campbell.⁹⁹ If you are to make speed records like that, it's a life's work. Constant¹⁰⁰ preoccupation with questions of how the car and the motor may be improved, and so on. Such a man cannot take the point of view: "Oh yes, you can go on trying to make speed records. This is something that may be held to be important. But perhaps it doesn't make so very much difference. We might have no attempts at speed records, etc." That sort of consideration must be foreign to the racing motorist. And to the scientist in the same way.

(The scientist would regard it as reactionary. So the Marxists would regard it too. For the Marxists are racing motorists.)

"Filing¹⁰¹". Polishing, concern for just the right statement or presentation of the work.

⁹⁶ This is probably a reaction to Goethe's general approach to colours, rather than to a particular remark of his. See also, for example, Wittgenstein 1977, I:70–2, II:16, and III:206.

⁹⁷ German: 'investigation'.

⁹⁸ German: 'preliminary stage'.

⁹⁹ Sir Malcolm Campbell (1885–1948) was an English racing motorist who gained the world speed records on both land and water, several times, during the 1920s and 1930s.

¹⁰⁰ Uncertain word; it could either be 'Const' or 'Can't', and I have taken it to be the former, intended as an abbreviation for 'Constant', which makes the most sense in this context.

¹⁰¹ Uncertain word; it looks like 'filing', and this seems plausible given Wittgenstein's talk of polishing; see also Wittgenstein 1998, p. 68.

Mathematician's statement that he cannot be greatly concerned with that. Important to set down what has found out, and to get it published. The details of precise statement must be left.

For the artist, on the other hand, just the apparently trivial details of statement may seem as important as anything else, and perhaps the most important thing.

(In the making of matches and match boxes, for instance, there is precision in size of box & matches. All exactly alike and uniform. But the sign and the way the wrapper is put on is slovenly; in fact everything that can be left slovenly is so.

In former times the matches may have been less uniform. And yet the product would have had more style; would not have been slovenly.)

So in ethics, too. Problems of morality are not like problems of engineering. And the 'precision' is not of that sort.

A different sort of *Betrachtung*process^{102, 103}.

¹⁰² German: 'process of investigation'.

¹⁰³ In a letter to [Maurice O']Con[ner Drury] (19 November 1967), Rhees wrote (Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/13/1): 'Wittgenstein used to say (or said to me, anyway) that philosophy is contemplative, and that this is what distinguishes it from a science like physics. Especially so at the present time, when physics is largely dominated by engineering. The interest then is often to discover what we must know in order to achieve something, or in order to avoid this or that. — When he spoke of philosophy as contemplative he meant that in philosophy we are constantly interested in seeing or thinking out other possibilities. Seeing that there are other ways in which people might do things (such as carrying on scientific research), other ways in which things might go, other ways in which things might be related to one another. You will remember that Wittgenstein used to come back again and again to viewing scientific inquiry as it would appear in other surroundings: if it did not have the importance in the lives of a society which engineering gives to it in ours; if it had something like the importance which ritual has in ours. Or imagining a society in which there was nothing like our science—especially, in which there was nothing like science as an institution—and so on. In writing on mathematics, he would invent different number systems, different ways of counting, and point to circumstances in which it would be more natural to use some such system of counting rather than our system of natural numbers. When you see the cardinal numbers in the setting of—or surrounded by—these other possibilities, then you may cease to feel that our system of cardinal numbers is fundamental in some way. And similarly with investigation into causes showing circumstances in which people might give up "looking for the cause" because it was pointless. And Wittgenstein was trying to combat the view that all investigation "tries to become" causal investigation or is a fumbling attempt in that direction. / "Providing a different way of looking at it"—this is constantly the work of philosophy. For this reason we may speak of philosophy as contemplative. And this is nothing like the work of science. / "No, it does not have to be like this. But this is how it is." / Considering different possibilities may help you to see how it is; whereas the search for explanations and causes may keep you from looking.'

17. States of consciousness and states of soul¹⁰⁴ (10 April 1947)

Wittgenstein, April 10, 1947

Psychology. “Contents¹⁰⁵ of consciousness”.

Distinction between “states of consciousness” (such as impressions, feelings) and states of soul (such as knowing, believing, intending).

Might write a book on psychology using as chapter headings certain verbs — hearing, seeing, willing, fearing and so on — ; and these would not come just anyhow, but in a certain order and connexion.

All these expressions have in common the difference between the first person and the third person — that the use in the third person is based on observation while use in the first is not. That the criterion for correct use in the third person is the circumstances under which it is used, which in the first it is not.

The difference between “states of consciousness” and states of soul is not quite the same as that between “mental acts” and “mental disposition”. Because to say one has a disposition — a good memory, or a certain skill — is an empirical statement — depending on experience. Whereas with “I believe” or “I intend” this is not so.

There might be a psychology in which there were paintings for certain moods — wrath might be black, love might be blue like the sky; perhaps with shadings in order to show variation, and so on.

But you could never paint believing or intending. Nor¹⁰⁶ wishing.

(“I wanted to go to Cardiff”. Were you wishing this during the whole time or the journey? This might be asked about, say, the feeling of longing. And this could be interrupted by other distractions. But given these distractions, would not say no longer wished to go to Cardiff.)

¹⁰⁴ MS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2.

¹⁰⁵ Uncertain word; it seems as though Rhees has repeated the last syllable, and written ‘contentents’.

¹⁰⁶ Uncertain word; it looks as though, perhaps, after writing ‘Nor’, Rhees then also wrote ‘or’, perhaps being unsure which to choose. I have opted for the former.

What is there in common to all these “contents of consciousness” that leads me to group them together? Or¹⁰⁷

Why include both feelings and impressions? For you can't “paint” impressions as spoke of painting feelings; not sensual impressions, at any rate. Pain is a connecting link here. But might perhaps “paint” also the impression of smoothness.

Various impressions no doubt have something in common. But first of all they have connexions—connexions in space and time; what is blue and moving is also noisy, and so on.

One thing they have in common is “*echte Dauer*”¹⁰⁸: they may begin and end, may increase and diminish, or perhaps cease suddenly altogether. {This seems to be something in common between impressions and feelings: one of the connexions which rank them all as contents of consciousness.} This would be true of a sweet taste which—say—one was experiencing at the same time as looking at the blue sky. Could draw the curve of increase and decrease of the impression of colour, and similarly—comparably—of the sweet taste. But in the case of belief there would be nothing similar.

“Feeling in my bones that the solution is the right one.”

“Feel quite sure that so & so.”

The “feeling in one's bones” is something that may be more or less intense and may increase as feelings do.

“Feeling sure that” may be somewhat different, since although “considerations” may influence this, don't expect it to cease suddenly, or suddenly much more intense.

Pain is a connecting link between impressions and other contents. Connects with hot and cold, e.g.¹⁰⁹

When consider moods— one important fact is that use expressions for these to describe impressions: talk about a gloomy day, about a sad tune, about cheerful colours and so on.

This is connected closely with describing facial expressions. “Draw me a sad face” is just as definite as “draw me a lean face”.

¹⁰⁷ Rhees leaves this word hanging. It is either the beginning of an unfinished sentence, or it is meant to introduce the question that follows in the next line.

¹⁰⁸ German: ‘genuine duration’.

¹⁰⁹ This sentence is incomplete in the MS.

(James had tried to explain the connection between emotions and impressions by saying that emotions are sets of impressions simply.)¹¹⁰

There is a connecting link also in “organic sensations” — since these include sensations or impressions. But are not identical.

If one were to give a cross section of “contents of consciousness” at a moment would not include “feeling tired”. Part of what “feeling tired” consists in may be that disinclined to get up. And this is not one of the contents there at a moment.

The same would apply to “feeling thirsty.”

So with feeling bored.

Important to consider cases which find also in animals. A dog is angry, intends to bite me, is overjoyed and so on. Say this with no hesitation. And yet what do I know of what the dog feels?

(Is this like recognising a facial expression?)

A “thought” would also hardly be included among the “contents of consciousness at a moment”

“I thought ‘it’s getting late’ ”.

I need not have said these words. Perhaps I said “Good Lord”. (Note that this is “relevant” to my thought. Though I might have blown my nose at the moment, and this would not be.)

18. The logic of colour¹¹¹ (14 April 1950)

Wittgenstein August 14th, 1950 (Notes written soon after the conversation Rush Rhees)

The logic of colour.

Complicated circumstances that may have led Goethe to say the things he did. Denying that white is a mixture.¹¹²

Goethe failed to distinguish between ‘*Zwischen-farben*’ (intermediate colours) and ‘*Misch-farben*’ (mixed colours).¹¹³ Orange is

¹¹⁰ See, perhaps, James 1890b, p. 1065 (Ch. XXV, Sect. ‘Emotion Follows Upon the Bodily Expression in the Coarser Emotions at Least’).

¹¹¹ TS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2.

¹¹² See, for example, Goethe 1995b, pp. 194–5 (Pt. Two, X §§175–7); and Goethe 1998, pp. 163 and 165 (§1285 and §§1295–6); and Goethe 1850, p. 8 (conversation of 6 May 1823).

¹¹³ See, for example, Goethe 1995b, pp. 249–51 (Pt. Three, XLIV–XLV, §§551–71).

*Zwischenfarbe*¹¹⁴, between yellow and red. It is also *Mischfarbe*¹¹⁵, in that it can be made by combining those other colours. Blue and red, I suppose, are neither *Zwischenfarben* nor *Mischfarben*. Green is a *Mischfarbe*—it can be got by combining blue and yellow; but it is not a *Zwischenfarbe*. For if there is a shade of green with a great deal of yellow in it, this does not mean that this is a shade between yellow and blue; rather between yellow and green. Similarly the other way: if there is a green with a lot of blue in it, this does not say something of its position between blue and yellow, but between blue and green.

Goethe recognized only three primary colours ((green not a primary colour)).¹¹⁶ And this was probably a result of his not making that distinction.

Someone has said we never see pure white.¹¹⁷ That is clearly wrong. This handkerchief is white, that sheet of paper is white. Nobody would say that it is really a grey sheet of paper, or that daisies have grey petals.

On the other hand, what (colour) we call such and such a shade—a gentian blue, say,—or what we call white, is different in different surroundings. If you take blue paint, then how it looks in the paint pot is different from how it looks when we spread it on the wall—evenly over the whole wall. And that again looks different from a blue square in a yellow surrounding. And yet you would say the paint was all the same colour—in the pot and on the wall and in the single square. The colour is homogeneous and evenly spread—and yet it looks different.—If you take a glass of wine that you look through—it is the same colour all through. And yet if you were to paint a picture of this—show how it looks when something is the same colour all through—you would use different colours, different paints, to do this. Yet you really see the same colour.

The bucket in this room is white. And evenly white all over. And yet it does not look the same in all parts: As it curves round, there are darker shades—but that part is all white just as much as the rest of it is.

¹¹⁴ German: 'an intermediate colour'.

¹¹⁵ German: 'a mixed colour'.

¹¹⁶ See, for example, Goethe 1995b, p. 249 (Pt. Three, XLIV, §552), and p. 283 (Pt. Six, §801).

¹¹⁷ Probably a reference to Georg Christoph Lichtenberg; see, for example, Lichtenberg 1806, pp. 263–4 (translated in Stern 1959, p. 96).

So also with a handkerchief in which there are creases or ‘valleys’: no one would say that in those parts it is grey, or even that it looked grey.

Yet if you shut out the rest of the object (bucket or handkerchief) so that you see only that part and not the rest, then it does look grey.

If you take a pillow-case in a dark corner of the room, then it appears white there. But if it appeared in that shade in the bright part of the room, then it would appear grey.

Consider objects that are said to glow or be luminous. Red-hot iron, for instance. Inclined almost to say it looks hot. (Or perhaps that in glowing it is emitting something special.) But this again depends on its surroundings. (Presumably the iron would not glow in bright sunlight.)

It is interesting that you would never talk of a glowing or luminous grey. Or of a glowing or luminous brown.

Once more: how a colour — the same colour — looks, depends on its surroundings.¹¹⁸ The idea that an artist, in finding the right colour for the sky, may take pigment on his brush and hold it up to the sky. Yet how it looks on the brush is no index of how it looks on the surface of the picture. How a pigment on the brush would look if you were to say it is the same colour as the sky?

19. The justification of scientific conclusions¹¹⁹ (no date)

Logic

Standard apparatus (say premises).

Standard materials — say chemical substances.

About these materials and this apparatus we have so to speak a whole theory already.

¹¹⁸ The MS draft to this conversation (Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/2) adds here: ‘(Variety that is present when you say the wall is the same colour all over.)’.

¹¹⁹ MS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/1. Though these handwritten notes are not explicitly marked as notes of a conversation with Wittgenstein, I think it very likely that this is what they are, because: (a) they were found alongside a series of three handwritten sets of notes which (though also unattributed) are known to be notes of conversations with Wittgenstein; and (b) they are Wittgensteinian in content and style.

{You seem never to have this when your conclusion is a statistical generalisation from samples. The method of sampling is intended to bring something near¹²⁰ to it.}

Experiments have often been criticized. (Could imagine even that Newton's experiment with colours—what he called the "*experimentum crucis*"¹²¹—should be.)

This would be a scientific criticism of the conclusion which Newton drew from this experiment. This is the only scientific way of asking whether one is justified in asserting that general proposition (say about the composition of light) on the strength of that experiment and that evidence.

This would not mean that the confidence in the conclusion is dependent on any assumptions about "nature".

The same sorts of considerations apply to "probability"—to the question whether the evidence so far recorded or attained is conclusive or not.

¹²²What is important is the method by which the conclusion has been obtained: the conclusions of accurate experiment and accurate observations. It is this rather than repeated verifications that gives it force.

Might say that if Galileo's experiments with balls on inclined planes had been performed against a layer background or tradition of experimental technique, he would not have felt the need to repeat them up to 100 times.¹²³ The matter of standard apparatus and materials is connected with this.

Question whether we are justified in looking for some "cause"—some difference which explains it—when similar seeds give rise to different plants.

At the present time we are. But what justifies us is the¹²⁴ procedure and the results of science: not any principle which holds of nature—unless you are going to call that rule of method such a principle.

But that would not "justify" any conclusion which we found, either.

¹²⁰ Uncertain word; perhaps 'nearly'.

¹²¹ Latin: 'decisive experiment'. See Newton 1671, p. 3078.

¹²² Rhees does not close these quotation marks.

¹²³ See, for example, Galilei 1974, p. 170.

¹²⁴ The preceding three words are uncertain.

Much of the discussion of the uniformity of nature seems to be of how we are justified in looking for a cause or a law.

This question does not normally arise in science. And in any case, it does not affect the question of the validity — i.e. the conclusiveness — of any conclusion that is derived from experiment or observation.

The suggestion is that unless you are justified in looking for a cause, or for any general law, then no conclusion will have any “probability”. But this is meaningless.

It is almost like asking whether we can (n.b.) trust science. Perhaps amounting to asking whether perhaps the results of science are just a fluke.

“Why does induction — hypothesis or experimental methods — lead to true results?”

“This is something that calls for an explanation.” Perhaps adding “because there does not seem to be any reason why it should.”

Or, “How can experiments justify me in asserting something about matters which I have not observed?”

It does not, always; and not just about any & every matter. Nor about matters which “have no connexion with” what I have observed. (This is the question about extrapolation. ‘Criteria of relevance.’)

It may be that further investigation — about gases say — will show the conclusion to be false. That would not mean that the conclusion had been reached by an invalid method.

We may have more accurate measuring instruments (for pressure or volume; or for the velocity of light).

20. C. D. Broad and methods of classification¹²⁵ (no date)¹²⁶

Classification. Broad’s methods.¹²⁷

¹²⁵ MS, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/1. Though these handwritten notes are not explicitly marked as notes of a conversation with Wittgenstein, I think it very likely that this is what they are, because: (a) they were found alongside a series of three handwritten sets of notes which (though also unattributed) are known to be notes of conversations with Wittgenstein; and (b) they are Wittgensteinian in content and style.

¹²⁶ The MS is not dated. However, in 1938 Wittgenstein said to Drury: ‘Broad is a very just man. I have been reading *Five Types of Ethical Theory*. I thought he wrote that very well’ (Drury 1981, p. 142), so it is possible that this conversation should be dated to around then. This dating is perhaps also made plausible by the fact that Wittgenstein mentions the notion of ‘centres of variation’ more frequently in and around the late 1930s than at any other time (for references see n. 19 to Conversation 1, above).

¹²⁷ See, for example, Broad 1930.

What is fundamental.

Morphology. Broad like botany.

Classification counter to the more familiar ones — one which those we are familiar with in our language cut¹²⁸ across.

Contrast to classifying apples. In this case you do not have kinds of things before you. Question of describing a structure.

Classifying propositions by how they look (might also be by how long it takes to see whether they are true.) But also by how they are used. In this latter case you do not have the material before you.

Need for a dynamics: "If you were to do that, then it would be of this sort."

Construction of artificial cases.

Classification by centres of reference: simple cases & others grouped round this.

Different kinds of arguments. But may imagine forms of argument which we hardly ever use but which might in other circumstances come to be very important.

Classification of propositions. Certain things about proposition which very easy to see — now, anyway. So whether subject predicate form, relational and so on. And you might say there are three types of propositions.

Could say also there are many more. (This is the point that the classification by centres of reference is supposed to cover)

Broad seems to think that where there is difficulty what is needed is more fine or more elaborate classification. But that is not generally the difficulty at all.

Classification by use. Law of excluded middle & law of identity. These have been classed together because they look alike. Whereas their use is very different. (Not easy to see this, and not easy to say what the use is and what the difference is.)

Application of mathematics — different things this may mean.

Application of logic — in some ways wholly unlike mathematics (you might apply mathematics say for prediction) in some ways similar.

¹²⁸ Uncertain word; perhaps 'act'.

Classification by degrees. Construct a case intermediate between etc. But then consider something like degrees of self evidence. Not at all clear what is meant by intermediate cases here.

¹²⁹“Centres of variation”

Difference between classification of curves by means of coordinate geometry—when this method or structure already exists; and first working out the method of describing things by coordinates.

Broad confines himself to existing methods of classification and to refining them.

21. Reports of philosophical remarks of Wittgenstein’s, from Rhees’s correspondence and notes¹³⁰

21.1 *Heidegger*¹³¹

When I mentioned Heidegger to him once—I forget in what connexion—Wittgenstein remarked that a man might be obscure and still have something important to say; but he added: ‘But I don’t trust Heidegger’.

21.2 *Lessing and deep philosophical puzzlement*¹³²

Sometimes his¹³³ discussion suggests that philosophical perplexity is just an unfortunate effect which our language has on some people (rather as rheumatism is a common result of the damp British climate), and that it were better if people never suffered it. On the other hand, Wittgenstein certainly did not think that the unreflecting philistine—the ‘healthy minded’ man—was in a better state of mind than Socrates was. He used to express deep admiration for Lessing because of the expression which Lessing gave to deep philosophical (and religious) puzzlement.

¹²⁹ The second half of the previous page was left blank, and this was started on a new page.

¹³⁰ These passages are arranged chronologically, according to the dates of the letters and notes from which they are taken. When identifying the name of the recipients of the letters, I have completed the name that Rhees used, by adding the missing elements—where known—in square brackets.

¹³¹ Rhees to [Brian] McGuinness (6 May 1963), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/3/3/5.

¹³² Rhees to [Maurice O’]Con[ner Drury] (1 September 1963), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/15/10.

¹³³ Wittgenstein’s.

21.3 *The truth of great sayings*¹³⁴

Consider the use of metaphors. And consider the point that there is not always a sharp line dividing what is metaphor from what is not.

How often would you say that, or ask whether a great saying were true or false?

*“Gehe, verschmähe
die Treue; die Reue
kommt nach.”*¹³⁵

I asked: “Do you think that is true?” He¹³⁶ laughed and said, “Why in so far as it has any sense to say that a great saying is true, I suppose I would say it is true.” Or again with: “*Weh spricht: Vergeh.*”¹³⁷

*“Tun können auch die Ochsen und die Esel, aber versichern kann bis jetzt nur Mensch allein.”*¹³⁸

Remarks which you might call illuminating; from which you can learn; or which crystallise something which you had only half realized, etc.. You would not say that the question of whether you can learn from them depends on their being true. Certainly not that remark of Lichtenberg's.

21.4 *Immortality and the last judgement*¹³⁹

Wittgenstein's remark, “If immortality is something that can be proved, then I don't want it.”¹⁴⁰ I am constantly uncertain of the

¹³⁴ From Rhees's notes entitled 'Contradiction' (2 May 1965), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/11/14.

¹³⁵ German: 'Go, scorn / faithfulness; regret / will follow'; a verse (with slightly misremembered line-breaks and punctuation) originally from Goethe 1988c, p. 255. Wittgenstein may, however, have known the lines from Kierkegaard's quotation of them in Kierkegaard 1987, p. 321 ('The Seducer's Diary'; I have adapted this translation).

¹³⁶ Wittgenstein.

¹³⁷ German: 'Woe says: Let it go' (or perhaps, 'Woe says: Refrain'); a line which appears three times in Nietzsche 1909 (though with an exclamation mark at the end); see Nietzsche 1909, pp. 272, 359, and 361 (Pt. III, 'The Second Dance Song', Sect. 3; and Pt. IV, 'The Drunken Song', Sects 9 and 12).

¹³⁸ German: 'The ox and the ass can do things too, but up to now only a human being can give you an assurance'; a (slightly misremembered) quotation from Lichtenberg 1773, p. 10. See also Wittgenstein's quotation of this line in Wittgenstein 1998, p. 75 (I have adapted the translation from there, p. 103, n. 46).

¹³⁹ Rhees to Elizabeth [Anscombe] (18 May 1966), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/13/10.

¹⁴⁰ Later in the letter Rhees indicates that this conversation took place around 1943 to 1945.

sense of this. Sometimes I have thought I saw the point in a way that I forget later. This evening I forget what I did think I saw.

He said it with strong feeling and with a tone of protest. (I cannot remember what we had been saying about immortality, or what I had been asking, just before.) ...¹⁴¹

(I think it was in the same conversation that Wittgenstein said he could understand how anyone should believe that he would have to stand “with a queer sort of body (*einem verklärten Körper*)”¹⁴² before a judgement when his life was done. He thought, I gathered, that anyone who takes life and its difficulties seriously would be inclined to think that way.)

21.5 *Realism, idealism, and very early Wittgenstein*¹⁴³

Wittgenstein told me that while he was still studying at the Manchester Technical College he used to meet regularly with Dr Bieler and one other whose name I forget. And they discussed “what we should call the foundations of mathematics”. In the course of one of these discussions Wittgenstein remarks that it was a pity there was no book which went into these questions. Dr Bieler told him that there was: one that had fairly recently come out — The Principles of Mathematics by Bertrand Russell.¹⁴⁴ (I imagine this must have been 1910 or 1911, and if so “recently” was not quite accurate.) This was the first time that Wittgenstein had heard of Russell. And it was from this that he eventually went to see Russell in Cambridge.

When he did go to see Russell (he had made an appointment) in Russell’s rooms, he found Russell finishing tea together with some one else (I forget if Wittgenstein mentioned the other man’s name). The conversation got round to philosophy, and Russell made some remark against idealism. Wittgenstein replied that he did not think either realism or idealism was satisfactory: one would have to take some third position between them. Russell’s answer to this was that it would not help: you would have to have an intermediate position between this new one and each of the others, and so on ad infinitum.

¹⁴¹ I am here omitting the bulk of Rhees’s letter, until he returns to reporting this conversation with Wittgenstein, toward the letter’s end.

¹⁴² See, perhaps, Philippians 3:20–1.

¹⁴³ Rhees to Mary Elwyn (2 December 1966), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/1/3/1.

¹⁴⁴ Russell 1903.

21.6 *Free will and anxiety*¹⁴⁵

He said to me once that there was not much that could be written down about free will. What could be written down, was fairly short. But what lies behind the question — and in this sense the source of the perplexity — is anxiety. (He meant this in Kierkegaard's sense, I think: what is translated in the English work as "dread".¹⁴⁶) "And you can't write down anxiety." — This was in 1937, and he might not have spoken quite in this way later: he might have said later that there was more to be discussed: but maybe not.

21.7 *Reality and methods of investigation*¹⁴⁷

I said to him once that I found the Marxist (or dialectical materialist) notion of 'a developing reality'¹⁴⁸ weird and incomprehensible although of course one speaks of developments, e.g., in the structure of the earth's crust. Wittgenstein said¹⁴⁹ at once that he thought a good sense could be given to that expression — or to what Marxists were talking about when they used it. If we want to see what we mean by reality, we may consider how sciences come to establish certain results, or come to recognize that other results are mistaken. If we say that scientists are inquiring into what is so, then the meaning of this expression — "what is so" — will be given in the methods of showing that something is so, or that something is not so. — Now at different periods in the history of science there have been different methods of investigation. (In the past 50 years especially there have been enormous and very rapid changes in methods of experimenting; in what is called establishing something — positive or negative — by experiment. In what is called "evidence that shows that . . .". Etc., etc. Or think of the different conceptions that have come with the developments of statistical mechanics) So we can say that "reality" has meant something different at different stages in the development of science. — Perhaps I shall only mislead or bewilder you as to Wittgenstein's meaning by trying to hint at it in so short a space. Of course he did

¹⁴⁵ Rhees to [Maurice O']Con[ner Drury] (3 June 1968), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/13/1.

¹⁴⁶ The book to which Rhees is referring has been translated both as *The Concept of Dread* (Kierkegaard 1944) and as *The Concept of Anxiety* (Kierkegaard 1980).

¹⁴⁷ Rhees to John H. Moran (15 June 1968), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/13/1.

¹⁴⁸ See Rhees 1947, pp. 383 and 385; and see, for example, Cornforth 1946, pp. 137, 207, 209, and 217.

¹⁴⁹ I have inserted this word, which was missing in the original letter.

not mean that Marx would have accepted anything like this formulation. But he thought that this was the sound idea in Marx's thinking on this.

21.8 Hegel and the transition from quantity to quality¹⁵⁰

You will probably have noticed the reference in *Investigations* Part I, §284, where Wittgenstein says "... *hier will ich ihm bedeuten, hier liege ein Fall des Übergangs 'von der Quantität zur Qualität' vor.*"¹⁵¹ Marx got the phrase from Hegel,¹⁵² but I think Wittgenstein had Marxist ideas in mind here. I am speaking from memories of conversations I had with him at the time when he was preparing this text of the *Investigations*.

Wittgenstein said that numbers of quotations he had heard from Hegel made him think Hegel might be worth reading. But he tried it (this was in the 1940's) and he was disappointed. I do not think he tried again.

21.9 Conflicting moralities¹⁵³

When I was speaking to Wittgenstein about conflicting moralities,¹⁵⁴ and the question whether one could try to find some way of settling the issue between them, I mentioned Christian morality (as understood by Nietzsche), and Nietzsche's criticism or opposition to it. Wittgenstein said something like, "Well, if you want to try to find a way of deciding between such a conflict, — go ahead and good luck to you. It is nothing I could do or dream of doing. I might say that one of these moralities was deeper than the other."¹⁵⁵ But (and I think this was his point) this is not like trying to see whether the one is "more free from objections" than the other.

¹⁵⁰ Rhees to John H. Moran (15 June 1968), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/1/3/1.

¹⁵¹ German: '... here I want to suggest to him that this is a case of the transition "from quantity to quality"'; a quotation from Wittgenstein 2009 (§284), though Rhees mistakenly begins the quotation '*hier ich*' rather than '*so ich*'.

¹⁵² See, for example, Marx 1976, p. 423 (Bk. I, Pt. Three, Ch. 11); and, for example, Hegel 2010, pp. 320–3 (Bk. One, Sect. III, Ch. 2, Sub-Sect. B, 'Remark').

¹⁵³ Rhees to [Maurice O']Con[ner Drury] (30 June 1968), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/13/1.

¹⁵⁴ For Rhees's full notes of this conversation see Rhees 2001b, pp. 410–11.

¹⁵⁵ In Rhees 2001b (pp. 410–11), Rhees records Wittgenstein's point about *depth* in a slightly different way: 'If someone whom I think to be deeper than I am says, "Surely it must be possible to decide which is right", I would say, "Well, all right, go ahead; good luck to you. I have no idea at all what sort of thing this will be, but good luck"'.

21.10 Moore's 'A Defence of Common Sense'¹⁵⁶

Wittgenstein used to speak of Moore's 'Defence of Common Sense'¹⁵⁷ again and again, years before that visit to Malcolm.¹⁵⁸ In one of his discussions in which he spoke of it, he said he had told Moore he thought this was his best article, and Moore had replied that he also thought it was. — Wittgenstein said this to me before 1946, at any rate. And he used to speak of the queer character of Moore's "obviously true" propositions at the beginning of it.

21.11 *Profound stupidity*¹⁵⁹

"Truly this is the Son of God." What enables one to make this statement? — We might be stupid and say: "Since he has emptied himself of his divinity in becoming a man, there cannot be any divinity about the man he has become: we cannot say 'In this man we find true divinity'."

If we said, "It is only by divine Grace that anyone has been able, as Peter was, to recognize Jesus as the Son of God" — this would bring in much the same difficulties again with regard to Grace: how it may be known, how it operates (if that word is applicable), and so on.

Stupidities of this kind show that in some way our thinking has got twisted. But when I say "stupid" I think also of Wittgenstein's phrase "profoundly stupid" — i.e. — anything but 'silly'. For the twist has roots that go deep. (Wittgenstein said to me he thought Julian the Apostate was probably 'profoundly stupid'. And he added, "I think that you and I, Rhees, when we talk about these things are being profoundly stupid." By 'profoundly' he did not mean 'extremely'. It is akin to his remark that the mistakes of magic are profound mistakes¹⁶⁰; and that they are akin to the mistakes of metaphysics, not like the mistakes of an ignorant person trying to do science. Compare the stupidity of Julian the Apostate and the stupidity of Frazer.)

¹⁵⁶ Rhees to an unnamed recipient — probably G. H. von Wright or Elizabeth Anscombe — (18 June 1969), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/2/7/2.

¹⁵⁷ Moore 1925.

¹⁵⁸ Wittgenstein visited America in 1949 and stayed with the Malcolms.

¹⁵⁹ Rhees to [Maurice O']Con[ner Drury] (19 July 1970), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/13/1.

¹⁶⁰ See, for example, Wittgenstein 1979a, pp. 116–17.

21.12 Aquinas¹⁶¹

The only remark of Wittgenstein's about Aquinas that I can remember was that he found him extremely good in his formulation of questions, but less satisfactory in his discussion of them.¹⁶²

21.13 *The goal of philosophy*¹⁶³

I wish I could remember more exactly Wittgenstein's words when he referred to that passage in the *Untersuchungen*,¹⁶⁴ §133: "*Die eigentliche Entdeckung ist die . . . kann man abbrechen.*"¹⁶⁵ He did not write anything in the margin of the typescript (the book was not printed until after his death, of course). I cannot even remember what it was that he had been talking about, but I have an idea that it was mathematical proof. It was some topic on which he has spoken and written often before, and he had found some feature of what he had been saying unsatisfactory. This was typical: he would come back to the same questions again and again, often trying to see if they could not be done in another way. As he was leaving, this time, he said to me roughly this: "In my book I say that I am able to leave off with a problem in philosophy when I want to. But that's a lie; I can't." (In one of his lectures, when he had been speaking in this way about the work of doing philosophy, he had said something like: "I can stop philosophizing about a question when I want to"—suggesting that this was the goal to which he was trying to bring his pupils. But my memory of his words here is too vague to bear quoting.)

21.14 *Word meaning and application*¹⁶⁶

Wittgenstein said often that Ramsey used to say, in discussion, "I seem to mean something by it" (perhaps some proposition having to do

¹⁶¹ Rhees to Father [Garth] Hallett (22 November 1970), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/1/3/1.

¹⁶² In a draft of Drury 1976 and Drury 1981, Maurice Drury wrote that Wittgenstein had said to him that Aquinas is really wonderful when he starts drawing distinctions (see Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/1/3/4).

¹⁶³ Rhees to Father [Garth] Hallett (22 November 1970), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/1/3/1.

¹⁶⁴ German: '*Investigations*', namely, Wittgenstein 2009.

¹⁶⁵ German: 'The real discovery is the one . . . can be broken off'; a truncated quotation from Wittgenstein 2009 (§133), which—in full—reads: 'The real discovery is the one that enables me to break off philosophizing when I want to.—The one that gives philosophy peace, so that it is no longer tormented by questions which bring *itself* in question.—Instead, a method is now demonstrated by examples, and the series of examples can be broken off'.

¹⁶⁶ Rhees to Miss Graves (19 April 1972), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/1/3/1.

with infinity in mathematics); or perhaps: “it does mean something to me”. This was almost like speaking of how it looked to him. At any rate, it is not a way of deciding whether the expression you contemplate does mean anything or not. And Wittgenstein's move was always to ask, “Well, what do you do with it?” To find what it means, consider its application.

21.15 *Kant*¹⁶⁷

You ask if Wittgenstein ever studied Kant. A friend of Wittgenstein's Ludwig Hänsel, who was together with him in a prisoner of war camp from 1918 to 1919, has said that he and Wittgenstein read through the *Kritik of Pure Reason*¹⁶⁸ during this time. (Probably Hänsel happened to have a copy of it in his kit when they were taken prisoner.) — I have never heard Wittgenstein himself refer to anything he had read in Kant, or to reading Kant at all.

In 1938 he was talking to me about a German refugee philosopher in Cambridge. G.E. Moore had told Wittgenstein he thought this man had ability; and had said that “he has ideas about Kant” (suggesting, I think, that he might produce an interesting book on Kant). Wittgenstein respected Moore's opinion, but he said he would never be able to judge on that particular issue. He said: “Certainly I have never had ideas about Kant. I don't know what it would be like to have ideas about Kant.”¹⁶⁹

21.16 *Anarchism and the passion to destroy*¹⁷⁰

I do not think Wittgenstein had read any of the anarchist writers; and I am fairly certain that he never knew Herbert Read. Whenever I spoke to him about anarchism, he understood it not as a movement or programme to replace one ‘social order’ by another — even when anarchists used such phrases to express what they were saying — but rather as a determination on the part of the individual anarchists to “live in that way” (protesting, refusing to recognize this or that authority, and so on).

¹⁶⁷ Rhees to H[oward] O. Mounce (7 October 1972), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/1/3/1.

¹⁶⁸ German: ‘*Critique of Pure Reason*’, namely, Kant 1998.

¹⁶⁹ See also Drury 1981, pp. 157–8 (Autumn 1948).

¹⁷⁰ Rhees to Dr [Hans Peter] Duerr (15 May 1973), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/1/3/1.

I do not think he had ever looked at writings by Bakunin or Kropotkin. I once mentioned Bakunin's remark (or slogan) to him: "The passion to destroy is also a creative passion".¹⁷¹ And Wittgenstein became quite serious and said: "Yes; what that comes to is: 'Don't be ashamed simply to destroy.'" ¹⁷² On another occasion I mentioned Bakunin's remark: "If God really existed, it would be necessary to abolish him".¹⁷³ And Wittgenstein said that at any rate this made more sense than did Voltaire's "If there were not a God, it would be necessary to invent one".¹⁷⁴ The idea of 'inventing God' makes no sense at all.

21.17 *The irrational springs of science*¹⁷⁵

In later years¹⁷⁶ Wittgenstein would sometimes speak of Russell's way of speaking of a scientist's work as being guided by //springing from//¹⁷⁷ "the disinterested pursuit of truth".¹⁷⁸ He¹⁷⁹ thought the interest (or the motive) of scientists in their various investigations was generally something more "irrational". This is not a disparagement of the scientific work of scientists, although it may disparage Russell's way of speaking of it. And it did mean that in coming to a judgement on the value of a work Wittgenstein would think also of the 'spirit' of it.

21.18 *Character and intellect in philosophy*¹⁸⁰

My teacher Ludwig Wittgenstein had the most remarkable intellect of anyone I've ever known or read. He said to me once that in

¹⁷¹ See Bakunin 1972b, p. 57.

¹⁷² See also, for example, Wittgenstein 1998, p. 19, and Wittgenstein 2005, p. 305 (§88). However, in notes from 17 January 1979—in the context of similar recollections—Rhees notes 'Wittgenstein's irritation with people who complained he was "entirely negative" in philosophy' (Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/3/1).

¹⁷³ See Bakunin 1890, p. 28.

¹⁷⁴ See Voltaire's 'Epistle to the Author of the Book *The Three Imposters*', in Voltaire 1877, p. 403; or, for example, his letter of 28 November 1770 to Frederick William, in Voltaire 1975, p. 105 (Letter No. D16792).

¹⁷⁵ From Rhees's notes on Bartley III 1973 (13 December 1973), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/3/1/13.

¹⁷⁶ Rhees has just quoted a letter of Wittgenstein's from 1914.

¹⁷⁷ Rhees's slashes usually indicate an alternative possible wording that he is considering.

¹⁷⁸ See, for example, Russell 1915, pp. 179–80.

¹⁷⁹ Wittgenstein.

¹⁸⁰ Rhees to The Principal, Trinity College (26 November 1977), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/7/1.

philosophy character will often make up for a lesser degree of intellect and talent—whereas it doesn't hold the other way: a more powerful intellect but want of character. "God give a man character: it will carry him over all sorts of gaps and difficulties." (Wittgenstein added that another professor in Cambridge¹⁸¹ did not agree with him.) And obviously intelligence and talent are needed as well: there are wonderful people who would not be good philosophers.

21.19 *Socrates, Plato, and 'the Cambridge Philosophy'*¹⁸²

At another time there was a conference in Cambridge¹⁸³, in which a number of people—mostly university philosophers—talked about the true branch¹⁸⁴ of philosophy, and some attacked "the Cambridge Philosophy" for having taken philosophy away from what it was for Plato. One of the speakers was Joad. And Wittgenstein told me that he made "a long reply", to what Joad had said especially.

Wittgenstein had said the speakers might be saying: a) that "the Cambridge philosophy" concerned itself with the wrong problems. But then they were wrong: for the Cambridge philosophers were concerned with (interested in) the same problems as Plato was, or they meant b) that the Cambridge philosophers were handling these problems badly or in the wrong way. And this may very well have been true.

But Wittgenstein was not impressed when Joad made this charge (of incompetence in discussing these problems); for Joad's own methods and equipment were borrowed from those very Cambridge Philosophers. He said that Joad's attacks were like the sentences of a slum landlord denouncing the terrible living conditions of people in the slums.

¹⁸¹ Rhees elsewhere mentions that this was G. E. Moore (see Rhees 2001a, p. 161).

¹⁸² From Rhees's notes (30 May 1978), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/3/1.

¹⁸³ A meeting of the Aristotelian Society, held at Trinity College, Cambridge, on 23 January 1940. C. E. M. Joad read a paper entitled 'Appeal to Philosophers' (Joad 1939–40), to which Wittgenstein took strong objection (see Wittgenstein 2011, letter to J. Wisdom, 12 February 1940). For a shorter and slightly divergent account of Wittgenstein's remarks at that meeting—based on Robert Thouless's diaries—see McGuinness 1995 (p. 314, n. 'Joad's paper').

¹⁸⁴ These last two words are uncertain.

He said to me once “I am interested in whatever it was that held Socrates in thought standing in the same place for 24 hours”¹⁸⁵.¹⁸⁶

When Wittgenstein had finished Mr Hannay¹⁸⁷ said he was sure Professor Wittgenstein did not mean to imply that Professor Joad was like a slum landlord deploring the slums. “And I said, ‘Why yes, of course.’”¹⁸⁸

21.20 *Combatting irrationality*¹⁸⁹

Wittgenstein’s remarks on Professor Susan Stebbing’s writings, especially public lectures, in the years 1937–1940.¹⁹⁰ She seemed to think that by writing against and combatting loose thinking, perhaps especially the ways in which certain writers spoke of “Ideals”, she was ‘combatting Fascism.’ Wittgenstein called this a primitive misunderstanding/misconception of what fascists were doing with their “irrationalism” and how it gained them followers. As though the people had been misled by logical fallacies and would turn away from Fascism when the fallacies were clear to them.

[? Wittgenstein’s remark on the refutation of Cantor’s arguments and demonstrations]¹⁹¹

A misunderstanding /ignorance of/ the ‘soil’ and the way of living in which “highly irrational” is taken as a rebuke.

As though you could persuade people to be logical in their thinking. ...¹⁹²

The same would hold of trying to combat anti-semitism by cogent argument and clear thinking.

¹⁸⁵ See Plato 1961c, p. 571 (220c–d).

¹⁸⁶ Rhees indicates that this line should be inserted here even though the story of Wittgenstein’s comments at the meeting of the Aristotelian Society continues in the next paragraph.

¹⁸⁷ The meeting’s chairman.

¹⁸⁸ McGuinness 1995 (p. 314, n. ‘Joad’s paper’) reports that Wittgenstein’s response was ‘That is exactly what I was suggesting’.

¹⁸⁹ From Rhees’s notes (3 April 1980), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/3/1.

¹⁹⁰ See, for example, Stebbing 1939.

¹⁹¹ See below, Sect. 21.24.

¹⁹² Rhees here inserts a quotation from Wittgenstein 1998, p. 71, which I have omitted.

Wittgenstein's frequent mentions of the way anti semitism had disappeared in Russia by a change in the form of society.

I think he believed that the central place of manual labour and the vanishing of the prestige which money gives with us¹⁹³, was one main factor in this. I remember that when I told him there was considerable or growing anti-semitism among the blacks in New York and some other cities, he was astonished and did not really believe it; it was just the sort of thing that was unnatural and couldn't happen.

21.21 Philosophy and courage¹⁹⁴

Wittgenstein often said in conversation that a philosopher must be prepared, in view of what his thinking has shown him or made him realize, to retrace the steps he has been making — steps which seemed important and illuminating when he made them — to “give up all his pet notions” and start again from nothing. In this situation, he said, philosophy can be just plain unpleasant. And to go on with it called for a courage, Mut, which he often wished he had but wanted.

21.22 Darwinian evolution¹⁹⁵

In 1937, when Wittgenstein quoted “*im Anfang war die Tat*”¹⁹⁶ in speaking of ‘*unser Ursache-Wirkung-Spiel*’¹⁹⁷ he wrote as though the only reasonable thing were to regard the simpler and more primitive as the earlier. I think he would have spoken differently ten years later. — I remember certain things he said in conversation about the Darwinian theory of the descent of these forms of organism from earlier forms. I said that although I could not go along with Darwin's explanation of changes in species through ‘natural selection’, I supposed there was evidence that species were not always the species to be found today, and that various species that once existed are extinct. “On the other hand”, I said, “I don't see why we need think that the simplest organism, say the amoeba, was earlier than any of the

¹⁹³ These last two words are uncertain.

¹⁹⁴ Rhees to Dr J. C. [Kristóf] Nyíri (19 June 1980), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/1/3/1.

¹⁹⁵ Rhees to Peter [Winch] (19 October 1980), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/1/3/1.

¹⁹⁶ German: ‘In the beginning was the deed’; a quotation from Goethe 1987, p. 39 (6: ‘Faust's Study (I)'). For Wittgenstein's quotation of this line, see Wittgenstein 1976b, p. 395.

¹⁹⁷ German: ‘our cause-effect game’.

others.”¹⁹⁸ Wittgenstein agreed emphatically. And he added: “Neither do we need to suppose, as Darwin did, that any big change from one species to another (which superseded it) must have been very gradual.” (A sudden big change need not be harder to imagine than a very gradual one.)

21.23 *Marx, science, and religion*¹⁹⁹

He would not have said Marx was a scientist, in the sense of someone working in physics or biology. Marx knew little of ‘scientific thinking’ as we find it in the work of Faraday or Maxwell or Joule or Darwin. And yet Wittgenstein said that Marx’s attitude towards economic developments and towards changes in culture or in way of living was always that of a 19th century scientist. He said this partly in comment on the view we often heard, that Marx’s work put forward something like a religion. “There is nothing religious in Marx’s writing; not a trace. He thinks of the world as one great system, in which everything — past present and future — can be known. Something we don’t know is something still to be known, or still to be discovered. It is all determined by laws of the system; and whatever unanswered question we take, it is only a matter of time before the scientific answer is given and demonstrated.”²⁰⁰ So Marx sees it.—I (Wittgenstein) keep wanting to ask, ‘Aren’t you ever in a position in which [you feel]²⁰¹ you must say, “We just don’t know what will happen.”?’ The most primitive level of religious belief could be expressed in something like Job’s ‘The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.’”²⁰² But Marx saw in the 19th century progress of production the permanent law of human history.

21.24 *Philosophy and changing one’s way of thinking*²⁰³

From 1929 onwards Wittgenstein wrote or said, from time to time, something like: For me to write or teach philosophy is futile unless it

¹⁹⁸ See, for example, Darwin 1876, pp. 103–6 (Ch. 4, Sect. ‘On the Degree to Which Organization Tends to Advance’).

¹⁹⁹ From Rhees’s drafts to Rhees 1981b, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/3/2.

²⁰⁰ See also, for example, Wittgenstein 1998, p. 46.

²⁰¹ Square brackets later added by Rhees, in pen, to the TS.

²⁰² Job 1:21. See also, for example, Wittgenstein 1998, p. 54.

²⁰³ From Rhees’s notes (undated), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/2/1.

brings in those who read or hear and discuss with me a deep change in their way of thinking. It would have to change their attitudes to thinking, and to the difficulties that seem to make thinking impossible. If I try to do this, it is not like trying to convince them of something that's hard to understand as a physical theory or a development in mathematics might be. It is hard to change one's way of thinking where this goes deep — one's whole way of thinking about 'intelligibility', for instance: it is hard to adopt a new way of thinking; not because it's hard to understand, but because you don't want to give up the way you've always gone. What has to be overcome is not a limitation of your understanding but a resistance of your will.²⁰⁴ You may follow his examples when he gives them. But to go on thinking in that way yourself would need attention and effort and would go against the grain. And, apart from the times when you're attending Wittgenstein's discussions, you may begin to wonder whether the change really matters so much. — In a notebook in which he was writing in 1931 in German, on questions in the philosophy of mathematics, there are a very few English sentences which don't belong in the philosophical writing and seem to be reminders of something he wanted to say in his next lecture. E.g.: "What I want to teach you isn't opinions but a method. In fact the method to treat as irrelevant every question of opinions."²⁰⁵ "If I'm wrong then you are right, which is just as good. As long as you look for the same thing."²⁰⁶ "I don't try to make you believe something you don't believe, but to make you do something you won't do. It is an activity which I ask of you and you refuse to do."²⁰⁷

I was walking with him in Swansea once when he was feeling the hopelessness and futility of his lectures. Students came because they thought it was interesting: they wanted to know what was being said. It was only rarely that anyone came because he was troubled by the sorts of difficulties Wittgenstein was discussing. They might follow his method of investigating questions in the sense that they could tell someone more or less the things that Wittgenstein had said and the order in which he had said them. This did not mean that they had

²⁰⁴ See also, for example, Wittgenstein 2005, p. 300 (§86).

²⁰⁵ Wittgenstein 2000, MS 155, p. 40r; Rhees has mistakenly pluralized the final word of the quotation.

²⁰⁶ Wittgenstein 2000, MS 155, p. 41r.

²⁰⁷ Wittgenstein 2000, MS 155, p. 42r; Rhees has omitted some commas, and added the final emphasis.

made the method their own; nor that they were better able to find their way about in philosophical difficulties; on the contrary, it would be a barrier. (Cf. the last sentence in Wittgenstein's Lectures on the Foundations of Mathematics, 1939, edited by Cora Diamond: "The seed I'm most likely to sow is a certain jargon."²⁰⁸) This was not because the students were stupid, even though some of them were. [He told me that Frank Ramsey, when they discussed in 1929, could never understand why Wittgenstein kept coming back again to the same point, although from a different angle. Ramsey called this "messaging about".] The trouble came from something in the way they were living; in what 'by second nature' they took to be worth noticing and the kind of attention one would give to it.²⁰⁹ — It was a mood in which he wondered if he ought not to stop lecturing; and even stop writing on philosophy. What made his teaching fruitless also made it harmful.

I said, "Even if you can't bring your students to see what philosophical problems are and find their way about in them — I'd have thought there would still be reason enough for you to do philosophy. I'm thinking of what Plato and others have said, that a philosopher's business is both to give his own discussion of philosophical problems and also to expose sophistry." I admired especially Wittgenstein's criticism of Cantor's theses and proofs in his theory of 'transfinite cardinal numbers'²¹⁰, and I said, "For instance, you could still achieve something important by exposing the Cantor business." Wittgenstein's tone of voice didn't change: "You can certainly expose and refute the Cantor business. You can knock the Cantor business sky high. But that won't prevent people from believing it and going on repeating it. Because it isn't for such reasons that they hold to it."²¹¹

21.25 *Philosophy, poetry, and science*²¹²

I remember one time when Wittgenstein was mentioning Nietzsche's remark: "*Wir wollen auswendig gelernt werden*" ("We — i.e. philosophers — want to be learned by heart")²¹³. Wittgenstein was

²⁰⁸ Wittgenstein 1976a, p. 293 (Lecture XXXI).

²⁰⁹ Wittgenstein 1978, II:23.

²¹⁰ See, for example, Wittgenstein 1978, Pt. II.

²¹¹ In other notes Rhees dates these Cantor remarks to around 1943 (see his notes of 22 June 1982, Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/4/4/4).

²¹² Rhees to [Maurice O']Con[ner Drury] (undated), Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/1/3/1.

emphasizing the difference between a book on philosophy and a theoretical or scientific work. He was completing the Part I of the *Investigations*. In connexion with this “We want to be learned by heart”, he said that he could understand why certain ancient philosophers had tried to write what they had to say as poems. (Once or twice later he referred to his manuscript of the *Investigations* as “my poems”.²¹⁴) I made some silly bantering remark such as: “Well, why don’t you do that?”. “Yes”, said Wittgenstein. “Now let’s imagine what that would be like. Suppose I wrote it all in a poem. And then people would write about this, in *Mind* ... !”²¹⁵

Appendix: Bibliography of previously published notes of Rhees’s philosophical conversations with Wittgenstein²¹⁶

- ‘Numbers’ (1937). Published in Rhees 2002 (pp. 1–5)
 ‘Language and Reality’ (July 1942). Published in Rhees 2004 (p. 167)
 ‘Conversation One’ [on ethics] (4 July 1942). Published in Rhees 2001b (pp. 410–11); and also quoted from in Rhees 1965 (pp. 21–3)
 [The status of Freud’s claims about dreams] (Summer 1942). Published in Wittgenstein 1966b (pp. 42–5)
 ‘*Begriffsbildung*’ [four conversations] (1942 or 1943). Published in Rhees 2002 (pp. 5–12)
 ‘Induction’ [three conversations] (1943). Published in Rhees 2002 (pp. 13–18)
 [Freud and the notion of dream interpretation I] (1943). Published in Wittgenstein 1966b (pp. 45–8)
 [Freud and the notion of dream interpretation II] (1943). Published in Wittgenstein 1966b (pp. 48–50)

²¹³ A similar — though not identical — remark appears in Nietzsche 1909, p. 96 (Pt. I, ‘Reading and Writing’).

²¹⁴ See also Wittgenstein 1998, p. 28.

²¹⁵ *Mind* was always Wittgenstein’s example of the quintessential philosophy journal; see, for example, McGuinness 1995, p. 424.

²¹⁶ These are arranged chronologically, according to the dates of the conversations. Whenever there is a published title for a given conversation, I have provided it (though these titles are not necessarily Rhees’s own); and in cases in which the published title gives no indication of the conversation’s subject matter, I have added a brief indication of the conversation’s topic, in square brackets. In cases with no published titles, I have simply provided a title in square brackets. If a single title covers a chain of multiple conversations, I have indicated this in square brackets as well.

- ‘Discussion Three’ [on misunderstandings in theology] (1943 or 1944).
 Published in Rhees 2001b (p. 412)
- ‘Time reaction’ (1944). Published in Rhees 2002 (pp. 12–13)
- ‘Causality’ (16 March 1944). Published in Rhees 2002 (pp. 18–19)
- ‘Discussion Two’ [on religion and morality] (25 December 1944).
 Published in Rhees 2001b (pp. 411–12)
- ‘Discussion Four’ [on the grammar of statements about God] (8 April 1945). Published in Rhees 2001b (pp. 412–14)
- [Freudianism as mythology] (1946). Published in Wittgenstein 1966b (pp. 50–2)
- ‘Two Conversations with Wittgenstein on Moore’ (14 August 1950 and 13 April 1951).²¹⁷ Published in Rhees 2005b (pp. 55–60)²¹⁸

²¹⁷ D. Z. Phillips—who edited these conversation-notes—mistakenly suggests that these were the dates on which Rhees merely wrote the notes, but that the conversations in question had likely taken place much earlier, prior to 1946. In fact, however, the date that Rhees would put on his notes was always the date on which the conversations took place rather than the date on which he wrote up the notes (though in any case these were usually the same day). Rhees himself testifies to this fact in the case of this final conversation, for in a letter to Malcolm (7 April 1982) he says explicitly that the conversation was held on 13 April 1951 (Rush Rhees Collection, UNI/SU/PC/1/1/3/1). This is, however, a remarkable fact, given how close this was to Wittgenstein’s death.

²¹⁸ The manuscripts and typescripts of Rhees’s conversation-notes, correspondence, and other notes, can be found in the Rush Rhees Collection, at the Richard Burton Archive of Swansea University. They are published here with the kind permission of Swansea University. The minutes of meetings of the Cambridge Moral Science Club can be found in the Cambridge University Library Archives. Theodore Redpath’s minutes are published here with the kind permission of the Secretaries of the Cambridge Moral Science Club. Most of the translations of the non-English words and phrases—which are provided in the footnotes—are based on translations provided by Peter Hacker, to whom I am very grateful. I am also very happy to express my gratitude to Mario von der Ruhr, for originally introducing me to the Rush Rhees Collection, and for his continued help thereafter. My sincere thanks also go to the staff of the Richard Burton Archive—especially Elisabeth Bennett, Katrina Legg, and Susan Thomas—who have been so helpful on my many visits. For help—variously—with such things as tracking down obscure references, translating difficult words, deciphering Rhees’s handwriting, obtaining copyright permissions, and more, I would like to thank: Helen Baldwin, Rachel Bayefsky, John Benjafield, Hans Biesenbach, Martin Black, Andy Blunden, David Citron, Hywel Davies, George Duke, David Egan, Karin Eli, Lorna Finlayson, Juliet Floyd, John Forrester, Paul Franks, Arthur Gibson, Ralf Gnosa, Naftali Goldberg, Peter Hacker, Verity Harte, James Klagge, Wolfgang Künne, Samuel Lebens, Brian McGuinness, Howard Mounce, Stephen Mulhall, Volker Munz, Sebastian Nye, Josef Rothhaupt, Mark Rowe, John Shimmin, Sam Shpall, Roger Stephenson, David Stern, Mario von der Ruhr, Rachael Wiseman, Ynon Wygoda, and Ben Young. My sincere apologies—together with my thanks—to anyone whom I may inadvertently have left off this list. Finally I gratefully acknowledge the E. O. James Bequest of All Souls College (Oxford), The Old Members’ Trust of University College (Oxford), and the Philosophy Faculty of the University of Oxford, for their help in funding the various research trips involved in undertaking this project.

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