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# Wittgenstein

By Derek Jarman

If people did not sometimes...  
...do silly things,  
nothing...  
...intelligent would ever get done.  
If people did not sometimes do silly things,  
nothing intelligent would ever get done.  
Hello.  
My name is Ludwig Wittgenstein.  
I'm a prodigy.  
I'm going to tell you my story.  
I was born in 1889  
to a filthy-rich family in Vienna.  
I would like to introduce them to you.  
(Fanfare)  
- This is my mother, Leopoldine.  
She was crazy about music.  
In fact, she was so busy  
entertaining Brahms and Mahler  
that we were left with the 26 tutors  
and seven grand pianos.  
Hermine, my oldest sister,  
was an amateur painter.  
Gretyl married an American  
and was psychoanalysed by Freud.  
Of Helene, we will remain silent.  
Three of my brothers died young.  
Hans ran away to America to escape dad,  
and disappeared off a boat in Chesapeake Bay.  
Kurt's troops rebelled in the First World War  
and the shame drove him to suicide.  
Rudolf, who was bent,  
spent most of his time in Berlin.  
When he wasn't being theatrical, he hung out  
at the Scientific Humanitarian Committee.  
He topped himself drinking a glass of cyanide  
in his favourite bar.  
That leaves Paul. He was a concert pianist,  
but lost an arm in the war.  
Ravel composed the  
Concerto for the Left Hand especially for him.  
And as for Dad, he was always in the office  
investing in American bonds.  
That's how we escaped inflation  
and stayed rich -

mega-rich - like the Rockefellers.

(Gentle music)

In art, it is hard to say anything  
as good as saying nothing.

Even to have expressed false thought boldly  
and clearly is to have gained a great deal.

Of time.

The horrors of hell  
can be experienced in a single day.

That's plenty of time.

(Murmurs)

(Babble of muttering)

I was to spend a lifetime  
disentangling myself from my education.

"Quite the best to be had in Vienna," Mum said.

I shared a history teacher with Adolf Hitler.

What a scream.

(Babble of voices intensifies)

(Cacophony of voices)

(Faint muttering)

(Gunshot reverberates)

(Mimics gunshots)

(Faint ticking)

If someone is merely ahead of time,  
it will catch him up one day.

I am in England.

Everything around me tells me so.

**MALE VOICE:**

and I'll tell you what you're searching for.

Who's that?

Hail, earthling.

Earthling?

I'm a philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein.

Who are you?

You could call me Mr Green.

May I ask you a question?

How many toes do philosophers have?

Ten.

Fascinating.

That's how many humans have.

Mr Green, philosophers are humans  
and know how many toes they have.

Oh dear.

Does that mean

Martians can't be philosophers?

- Oh, God.

- (Xylophone)

LUDWIG AS AN ADULT: I escaped the family  
by going to Manchester University.

Manchester,

an industrial town in the English north.

(Laughs) I remember my father saying,

"Where there's muck, there's brass."

Well, my aim was to be  
a pioneer in aeronautics.

But my experiments

ended in a teenage failure and I gave up.

I abandoned my unsuccessful attempt

to design an engine,

and, like the English hero, Dick Whittington,

went south to Cambridge

to study philosophy with Bertrand Russell.

Why won't you just admit

there's no rhinoceros in this room?

Because, Professor Russell,

the world is made up of facts, not things.

Look for yourself.

I tell you for a fact,

there is no rhinoceros in this room!

The issue is metaphysical, not empirical.

I thought the next big step in philosophy

would be yours.

Now I am not so sure.

(Grunting)

Professor Russell.

Professor Russell.

(Crickets chirping)

Shh!

"Dear Ottoline,

Herr Schwinckel-Winkel,

hard at it on universals and particulars.

He has the pure intellectual passion in the

highest degree, and it makes me love him.

He says every morning

he begins his work with hope,

and every evening he ends in despair."

"We both have the same feeling

that one must understand or die.  
He is the young man one hopes for.  
His disposition is that of the artist,  
intuitive and moody.  
He affects me, just as I affect you.  
I get to know every turn and twist of the ways  
in which I irritate and depress you  
- from watching how..."

**RUSSELL:**

And at the same time I love and admire him.  
His boiling passion may drive him anywhere. "

**GILBERT & SULLIVAN:**

I Am Alone And Unobserved  
In short, my medievalism's affectation  
Born of a morbid love of admiration  
God, the English are a queer bunch.  
Lady Ottoline Morrell was the queerest.  
She was fucking the gardener and Russell.  
All the fun was in the country houses.  
Everyone else was miserable.  
Cambridge was miserable.  
There was no oxygen there.  
(Breathes hoarsely)  
Can you imagine spending your evenings  
with those pretentious apostles?  
I was no fun at parties.  
The drunken chit-chat of British intellectuals  
bored me.  
So, in desperation, I fled to Norway and built  
a small house on a fjord at the end of the world.  
I started to write Notes On Logic.  
How can I be a logician  
before I'm a human being?  
The most important thing  
is to settle accounts with myself.  
It's much easier here in Norway.  
The solitude is bliss.  
I can do more work here in a day  
than I can in a month around people.  
Cambridge was absolutely unbearable!  
A brothel.  
Impossible to concentrate.  
Here at last,

I feel... I'm solving things.  
I've heard Herr Wittgenstein  
has gone to Norway.  
I told him it would be dark.  
He said he hated daylight.  
I told him it would be Lonely.  
He said he prostituted his mind  
talking to intelligent people.  
I said he was mad.  
He said God preserve him from sanity.  
God certainly will.  
Its shocking that he's never read Aristotle.  
(Ticking)

**LUDWIG:**

the visual impression of a pillar box.  
I know this is a pillar box.  
I know this is a hand.  
And what is a hand?  
This, for example.  
It's a certain certainty.  
I'm familiar with certainty.  
I know this film studio is in Waterloo.  
But how do I know  
that you are Ludwig Wittgenstein?  
(Gentle piano music)  
Ludwig, Ludwig!  
I've just heard from Mother  
that you're going to join up.  
Now, look, I understand wanting to do your bit  
in this terrible war,  
but why do you want to die in the trenches?  
Why not get a clerical job in Vienna?  
Because I want to go to the front.  
Why put yourself at risk like this, Ludwig?  
You've been exempted, for Christ's sake.  
Standing eye to eye with death will give me  
the chance to be a decent human being.  
I'll be doing something.  
(Stab of piano chords)  
I'm going as well.  
We've got to do our duty.  
(Dramatic piano music)  
(Gunfire and artillery fire)

Where two principles meet  
which cannot be reconciled with one another,  
then each calls the other a fool or a heretic.  
(Gunfire and artillery fire)  
I'm hated because I'm a volunteer!  
I'm surrounded by people who hate me.  
The nearness of death  
will bring me the light of life.  
God, enlighten me.  
God, enlighten me!  
I am a worm.  
Pray God that I become a man.  
God be with me.  
God be with me!  
Amen!  
I know this world exists.  
But its meaning is problematic.  
Am I good or am I evil?  
When my conscience upsets my equilibrium,  
then I am not in agreement with something.  
What is it?  
Is it the world?  
Or is it God?  
Wittgenstein has been taken prisoner.  
Oh, how fascinating!  
"I am a prisoner of war  
in Monte Cassino under the Italians.  
I hope we shall see each other after the war.  
Being shot at many times  
has altered the way I think about philosophy.  
So has Tolstoy's Gospel In Brief.  
I have written a book called  
Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus.  
It combines logical symbolism  
with religious mysticism.  
It's better with no shoes, no shoes at all.  
Love, Ludwig."  
I must send him some more cocoa tablets.  
Sounds like he's rather depressed.  
Does he know you've been in prison, Bertie?  
I doubt it.  
Such nice manners always, Ludwig.  
Good stock.  
What is logical symbolism?

Oh, it's too difficult to explain.  
That's the trouble with you, Bertie.  
You can never answer a straight question.

(Church bells ring)

I was released from prison camp  
on the 21st of August, 1919.

I wanted to get my Tractatus published,  
so I went back to Vienna.

(Dramatic piano music)

Ludwig!

Ludwig, what do you mean  
you want to teach in a rural school?  
It would be like a precision instrument  
opening crates.

Look, you were decorated in the war.

Bertrand Russell

says you're the great philosophical hope.  
You can't go and teach in the provinces.  
Hermine, you remind me of someone  
looking out through a closed window  
who cannot explain the strange movements  
of someone outside.

You can't tell what sort of storm is raging,  
or that this person might only be managing  
to stay on his feet with difficulty.

Well, I still think it's a waste of your talents.

If you hadn't been so daft  
and given all your money to us,  
you could publish your book yourself,  
without having to bow and scrape to publishers.

I don't want to force my philosophy  
on the world, if a publisher won't publish it.

Can't you understand that?

Well, I would rather have a happy person  
for a brother than an unhappy saint.

I am going to teach.

**CHILDREN:**

"Those truth possibilities of its truth-argument  
which verify... and propositions...

I shall call its truth grounds..."

Yes, good.

Proposition. So what is this here?

What do you call this here?



Logic.  
What's this here?  
What do you call this here?  
Teaching you  
is a... thoroughly... unrewarding experience.  
Do you understand what I'm saying?  
Do you understand what I'm saying?  
It's a waste of time.  
It's a waste of my time,  
your time, everybody's time.  
Do you understand...  
Do you understand what I'm saying?  
Oh, my God!  
Oh, my dear, dear God!  
Teaching proved to be a sham.  
I had to "do a runner"...  
...and lie about my brutality towards the children.  
They just weren't any good at logic or maths,  
and they drove me crazy.  
I kidded myself that my background and class  
weren't important,  
but I stood out like a sore thumb  
at these provincial schools.  
The parents hated me and called me strange.  
I felt guilty for years.  
Somehow I had failed.  
Morally.  
This is a red pillar box.  
How do you know that?  
I've done my homework.  
Green is green.  
Children learn by believing adults.  
Doubt comes after belief.  
I know what I believe.  
Where I come from there are no adults,  
and so no doubts.  
If I post this letter to New York, does that  
strengthen my conviction that the earth exists?  
The earth does exist.  
And so do Martians.  
(Xylophone)  
(Ticking)  
Well, you end the book with the line,  
"Whereof one cannot speak,

thereof one must remain silent."  
Why didn't you?  
I don't understand a word, Ludwig.  
It's gobbledygook.  
How much were you paid for this?  
I was paid nothing for the rights,  
and will receive no royalties.  
Typical. You won't be able  
to buy a pair of socks soon.  
But I have published a book.  
I heard that the book was only published  
because Bertrand Russell  
wrote an introduction.

**LUDWIG:**

He can't understand a word either.

**HERMINE:**

Hermine, we must improve ourselves.  
That's all we can do to better the world.  
Is it true you're designing Gretyl  
a brand-new house?  
That's right. The whole thing.  
Right down to the window latches  
and the door handles.  
Well, I hope it's more comprehensible  
than your book.  
(Phone rings)  
Maynard?  
- Maynard?  
- Waistcoat!  
Ah.  
His book is obscure and too short.  
But good.  
My introduction got it published.  
Yes, but I still think  
we should get him back to Cambridge.  
Maynard, we're going to be late.  
You're going to have to sort out his grants.  
In a moment of amnesia, he gave away  
all his money to his brothers and sisters.  
An absolute fortune, I'm told.  
If I can sort out the economies of the world,  
I ought to be able to sort out a stipend

for Wittgenstein.

- That is, if Cambridge will still have him.

- Oh, I'm sure they'll have him.

His Tractatus is all the rage,  
whatever we may think of it.

Well, leave it to me, I know how to get him back.

Oh, er, Maynard, hold on a moment, I just...

Johnny, do you feel like a trip to Vienna?

Vienna?

(Choir chants)

Dr Wittgenstein.

Dr Wittgenstein.

I've come to take you home.

Home?

- Where's that?

- Cambridge.

Cambridge.

God help me.

I have letters from Mr Keynes and Mr Russell.

I should introduce myself.

Johnny.

Mr Russell asked me to tell you  
that you're the greatest philosopher of our time.

Well...

Tell me, Johnny, are you a philosopher?

Yes.

Are you happy?

You know, you really should give it up.

Get out while you still can.

(Graceful piano music)

Lydia!

Ah, Maynard.

God has arrived. He was on the 5:15 train.

Are you sure it's a good idea bringing him here,  
Maynard?

I've heard he's difficult and peculiar.

A philosopher is a citizen of no community.

Does he make fit with Bloomsbury friends?

He seems so heavy-handed and Germanic.

Yes, he is.

Why are you all so interesting in him?

Because he's a genius, Lydoushka.

Yes, but what is he doing?

He's trying to define for us

the limits of language.  
And what it is to have communication,  
one with another.  
Don't be so pompous.  
Dearest darling, I am going to be pompous.  
The country needs  
more than one decent philosopher.  
Bertie needs some competition.  
Our Viennese import might just do the trick.  
Maynardoushka, your head  
is infinitely more flexible than my legs.  
What are you doing?  
Everyone's waiting for you.  
Go away, please!  
They're torturing me!  
For God's sake, just open your mouth  
and say the first thing  
that comes into your head.  
Don't be so ridiculous.  
Listen, just get through this seminar  
and we can go to the cinema.  
A dog... cannot lie.  
Neither can he be sincere.  
A dog may be expecting his master to come.  
Why can't he be expecting him  
to come next Wednesday?  
Is it because he doesn't have language?  
If a lion could speak, we would not  
be able to understand what he said.  
Why do I say such a thing?  
If we could understand him, I shouldn't think  
we'd have too much trouble with a lion.  
We could get an interpreter.  
Do you mean for me or for the lion?  
Yes, yes, we...we could get an interpreter.  
But what possible use would that be?  
To imagine a language  
is to imagine a form of life.  
It's what we do and who we are  
that gives meaning to our words.  
I can't understand the lion's language,  
because I don't know what his world is like.  
How can I know the world a lion inhabits?  
Do I fail to understand him

because I can't peer into his mind?

(Whispering)

What's going on behind my words,

when I say, "This is a very pleasant pineapple"?

No, please, take your time.

**STUDENT:**

I see.

And what is the thought that lies behind

the words, "This is a very pleasant pineapple"?

This is a very pleasant pineapple.

Listen to me.

We imagine the meaning of what we say as

something queer, mysterious, hidden from view.

But nothing is hidden!

Everything is open to view!

It's just...

it's just philosophers who muddy the waters.

**STUDENT:**

You can't know this pain.

Only I can.

Are you sure you know it?

You don't doubt you had a pain just then?

How could I?

If we can't speak of doubt here,

we can't speak of knowledge either.

I don't follow.

It makes no sense

to speak of knowing something

in a context where

we could not possibly doubt it.

Therefore to say, "I know I am in pain,"

is entirely senseless.

When you want to know the meaning of a word,

don't look inside yourself,

look at the uses of the word in our way of life.

Look at how we behave.

Are you saying

there are no philosophical problems?

There are...

linguistic,

mathematical, ethical,

logistic and... religious problems,

but there are  
no genuine philosophical problems!  
You're trivialising philosophy.  
Philosophy is just  
a by-product of misunderstanding language!  
Why don't you realise that?  
Oh, dear. He can't bear disagreement, can he?  
What are you doing?  
Making notes on your class before I forget it.  
Are you mad? You'll ruin the plot.  
Shh.  
There is no plot.  
There might be.  
Put it away.  
Put it away this instant.  
What did you say about Fortnum & Mason?  
Don't be ridiculous.  
LUDWIG AS AN ADULT: There was no  
competition between the cinema and seminar.  
I loved films.  
Especially westerns and musicals.  
Carmen Miranda and Betty Hutton  
were my favourite actresses.  
I always sat in the front row.  
Film felt like a shower bath,  
washing away the lecture.  
I hated the newsreels.  
Far too patriotic.  
I felt the makers  
must have been master pupils of Goebbels.  
As for playing the national anthem at the end,  
I'd sneak out.  
(Graceful piano music)  
Come on, Maynard!  
Speed it up.  
Can't go any faster, it's making me giddy.  
Should I go any faster, Ludwig?  
No, no, you keep going as you are. Come on  
Maynard, keep it up, keep it up, keep it up!  
You're slowing the whole thing down.  
I'm done for.  
You've ruined the whole thing!  
We were just getting into rhythm.  
Go away and play with someone else!

All right.  
You can be the sun this time. It's easier.  
I'll be the earth,  
and Lydia can be the moon.  
We take rest.  
Take tea.  
Come along, Maynard.  
Oh, dear.  
I wonder where I went wrong?  
Oh, Bertie, do listen to this.  
It's Julian Bell's satirical poem of Ludwig.  
"For he talks nonsense,  
numerous statements makes  
Forever his own vow of silence breaks  
Ethics, aesthetics, talks of day and night  
and calls things good or bad and wrong or right  
Who on any issue ever saw  
Ludwig refrain from laying down the law?  
In every company he shouts us down  
and stops our sentence stuttering his own  
Unceasing argues, harsh, irate and loud,  
sure that he's right and of his rightness proud  
Such faults are common, shared by all in part,  
but Wittgenstein pontificates on art"  
WittersGitters, WittersGitters, WittersGitters!  
Fairy, fairy, fairy!  
Idiot!  
What does this mean?  
It's a gesture of contempt.  
A cyclist did this to me  
as I was crossing the road.  
I decided then and there to kill myself.  
Are you coming to the Palladium with us  
this evening?  
What's the logical structure of this gesture?  
It doesn't have one!  
That means I've spent most of my life  
groping down a blind alley.  
Isn't it rather an over-reaction to kill yourself,  
because somebody gives you a V-sign?  
Philosophy hunts for the essence of meaning.  
There's no such thing.  
There's no such thing!  
Just the way we do things in everyday life

and things like that.

The college porter knows that.

Is that what you're planning to do  
for the rest of your life?

L-I shall start by committing suicide.

Champagne before you go?

Um, do you know...

l-I'd love a cup of tea.

How like a philosopher to hate philosophy.

He thinks ordinary working people  
have the answers.

He wants me to give up philosophy.

Perhaps I should.

Philosophy just states what everyone admits.

How does philosophy take the measure of this?

It's not supposed to.

It'd be like complaining  
that you can't play a tune on a carrot.

Precisely.

Do you think philosophy is useless?

Oh, no.

It serves Ludwig as a therapy.

Are you going to take his advice?

I was destined for the pit.

My parents gave up everything to get me here.

I'd be quite happy to go back,  
but it would break their hearts.

Well, what about Aristotle?

What about Aristotle?

L-I've never read Aristotle.

What can he tell us, anyway?

The answers are in Tolstoy,  
Dostoevsky and Saint Matthew.

How marvellous!

I didn't know you were a Christian, Ludwig!

I'm not.

It's just that I look at everything  
from a religious point of view.

Why is there anything at all  
rather than just nothing?

Well, how the bloody blue blazes  
should I know?

I'm the woman. You are the philosopher.

The most important part of my philosophy



hasn't been written.

I can't write it. It can never be written.

Oh, bunkum! A full English breakfast  
and a spot of application.

It doubt it'll be understood in the future.

People, culture, the air,  
everything will be different in the future.

We're mutating.

You know, your obsession with perfection  
is quite, quite ludicrous.

I want to be perfect, don't you?

Christ, no.

- Then I don't see how we can be friends.

- Neither do I.

I used to believe

that language gave us a picture of the world.

But it can't give us a picture of how it does that.

That would be like trying to see yourself  
seeing something.

How language does that is beyond expression.

That is the mystery.

That was all wrong.

Language isn't a picture at all.

What is it, then?

It's...

...a tool.

An instrument.

There isn't just one picture of the world,  
there are lots of different language games,  
different forms of life,  
different ways of doing things with words.

They don't all hang together!

What do you mean?

All I mean is the limits of my language  
are the limits of my world.

We keep running up  
against the walls of our cage.

I'm terribly sorry.

You have a worthless teacher today.

I...

I'm all cleaned out.

Please forgive me.

That was quite masterly.

- It was frightful.

- I don't know.  
Made me feel like a vegetable.  
How could it possibly?  
It doesn't feel like anything to be a vegetable.

**STUDENT:**

It somehow just seems natural to me to say,  
"I know I'm in pain."  
Oh... natural.  
Tell me,  
why does it seem more natural  
for people to believe that the sun goes round  
the earth, rather than the other way round?  
Well, obviously, because it looks that way.  
I see.  
Then how would it look  
if the earth went round the sun?  
Erm...  
well, I suppose...  
Yes, I see what you mean.

**LUDWIG AS A BOY:**

(Gunfire and Native Americans whooping)  
Seminar.  
(Cavalry trumpet)  
Seminar.  
Flick.  
Seminar.  
Flick.

LUDWIG AS AN ADULT: On and on it went.  
Cambridge, Cambridge, Cambridge.  
No wonder everyone dreamed of Moscow.  
Keynes and Russell had both been there.  
Bertie, always the opportunist,  
wrote a shilling shocker called  
The Practice and Theory of Bolshevism.  
He condemned it out of hand.  
But, as everyone knows,  
the best of the Cambridge lot became spies.  
My dream was to go to the Soviet Union  
and work as a manual labourer.  
I've fixed you up a job  
with a local engineering firm.  
Why?

I thought you'd be pleased.  
You'd be working with your hands.  
You should do something useful.  
But Ludwig,  
my training's academic.  
That's the challenge.  
I'm going to Russia.  
I shall try to find us both manual jobs there.  
Why do you want to go to Russia?  
Oh, by the way, you'll have to lend me a tie.  
Professor Wittgenstein, on behalf of the Institute  
for Foreign Relations, I can offer you two things.  
The chair in philosophy at Kazan University  
or a teaching post in philosophy  
at Moscow University.  
Er, comrade, please.  
I don't want to teach.  
I want to work as a manual labourer,  
either in a factory or on a collective farm.  
But, Professor, eto nyevozmozhno.  
O chem vy govoritye?  
Nyeuzheli vy nye ponimayetye?  
Nu, kakoy iz vas kolkhoznik? Eto absurd.  
Chto?  
I'm terribly sorry, Professor Wittgenstein,  
but this is absolutely out of the question.  
The one thing that is not in short supply  
in the Soviet Union is unskilled labour.  
Da.  
Da, da, Professor.  
We must teach the frozen circumstances  
to sing by playing them their own melody.  
Professor Wittgenstein,  
I do recommend you to read more Hegel.  
Eto shutka.  
I couldn't possibly read Hegel.  
I'd go stark raving mad.  
Tell me, have you read Trotsky on art?  
That's much more interesting.  
Nyet, Professor, ya nye chitala Trotskogo.  
Trotskiy - eto opasno.  
Professor, ya nye ponimayu vas.  
Vy priyechayetye v Moskvu, vy khotitye rabotat'  
v kolkhozye, vy khotitye, chtoby ya chitala

Trotskogo. No Trotskiy - eto opasno.  
Trotsky - eto Sibir'.  
Vy ponimayetye? Trotsky - eto Sibir'.  
(Bell)  
- Sleduyushchiy.  
Next one.  
How was Russia?  
Well, at least Lenin's state  
has ensured that there's no unemployment.  
It is an ordered society.  
Are you enjoying yourself?  
Yes, I am.  
You were right.  
- Did you find yourself a job in Russia?  
- Sadly, no.  
It looks like I'm stuck with Cambridge  
and philosophy.  
Ludwig, give it up.  
What the hell are you playing at, Ludwig?  
I've just been talking to Johnny.  
What do you mean?  
I mean all this poppycock  
about engineering and him getting a job.  
What do you think his parents will think?  
I haven't the foggiest.  
Johnny's parents are working people.  
His father's a miner.  
They sacrificed everything they have  
to get him to Cambridge.  
What's Johnny's parents got to do with it?  
Listen, Wittgenstein,  
Johnny's parents are workers.  
That's what you admire,  
when it's confined to the pages of Tolstoy.  
I've never met Johnny's parents.  
I strongly advise you not to.  
You're foisting your own self-hatred  
onto their son.  
You've been reading Sigmund Freud.  
What of it?  
It's dangerous stuff!  
Believe me!  
It takes one Viennese to know another.  
Freud's nothing to do with Johnny

sweating it out in some god-awful factory.  
You can't do this, Wittgenstein.  
You can't use Johnny  
as fodder for your own fantasies.  
What I do is none of your business.  
It's my business to stop you from...  
oh, what's your word,  
"infecting" too many young men.  
You have a terrible power over them,  
can't you see that?  
Half of Cambridge goes around  
imitating your mannerisms.  
You know I've never encouraged disciples.  
I'm talking about you, not your ideas.  
You lord it over others  
and you don't even know it.  
All aristocrats idealise the common folk,  
as long as they keep stoking the boilers.  
I should know, I was brought up like that, too.  
If you're talking about my upbringing,  
that was a long time ago!  
In another country!  
How can I possibly speak to a man  
who believes I corrupt others?  
I'm simply quoting your own words.  
Russell,  
I would like you to know  
that our friendship is now over.  
I had a fearful row with Russell yesterday.  
He said I was an evil influence.  
What is worrying you, Ludwig?  
Is it your logic or your sins?  
Both.  
My sins mostly.  
Sins, sinners, sinning.  
What nonsense you do talk.  
Well, you mustn't expect  
any sympathy from me. I'm not a virtuous man.  
I never imagined you were.  
Do you know, Maynard, every hour, every day,  
I keep my feet with the greatest difficulty,  
and the slightest gust of dishonesty  
would be enough to bowl me over forever.  
That's why people think I'm so strange.

I don't know what to say to you.  
You're suffering from  
a terminal case of moral integrity.  
If you'd just allow yourself to be a little  
more sinful, you'd stand a chance of salvation.  
Salvation is the only thing that concerns me.  
And I know we're not here to have a good time.  
Spoken like a true Protestant.  
Ludwig, my dear, there's nothing in the world  
like the warmth of a sated body.  
For me, it's as if I'm being burnt  
by a freezing wind.  
Pull yourself together.  
Philosophy is a sickness of the mind.  
I mustn't infect too many young men.  
How unique and irreplaceable Johnny is.  
And yet, how little I realise this  
when I am with him.  
That's always been a problem.  
But living in a world where such a love is illegal,  
and trying to live open and honest  
is a complete contradiction.  
I have...known...Johnny three times.  
And each time I began with feeling  
that there was nothing wrong.  
But after,  
I felt shamed.

**JOHNNY:**

Oh, just some...  
...idea.  
What idea?  
Well, for many years at the centre of philosophy  
was a picture of the lonely human soul  
brooding over its private experiences.  
Yeah, everyone knows that.  
This soul is a prisoner of his own body,  
and he's locked out from contact with others  
by the walls of their bodies.  
I wanted to get rid of this picture.  
There is no private meaning.  
We are what we are... only because...  
...we share a common language  
and common forms of life.

Do you understand what I'm saying?  
Do you understand what I'm saying?  
(Like a toff) Yes.  
Yes, I'd like that very much. Yes, Wednesday.  
Oh, does that suit you?  
It suits me fine, yes.  
Yes. I thought so, yes.  
Yes, he was. Really?  
Oh, Bertie? Yes, I know, yes, yes.  
For many years, yes.  
(Normal voice) Christ!  
Professor, you once said the Tractatus  
had solved all the problems of philosophy.  
Yes.  
So I thought at the time.  
What I meant was that I tried to show  
the sort of things that philosophy could say,  
and these aren't really important.  
What's much more important  
is all the things it can't articulate.  
Doesn't cut the mustard, philosophy?  
- You think.  
- That's right.  
So I thought at the time.  
In fact, I still think so, but for different reasons.  
Now, talking about your more recent work,  
the Philosophical Investigations and so on.  
That's right. In this later work I abandoned  
the idea that language is a sort of picture.  
That's just a misleading metaphor.  
I mean, you might say that the word "handbag"  
is a picture of a handbag.  
But what about words like "hello",  
"perhaps", "oh, hell",  
what do they give us a picture of?  
So how would you now define the relationship  
between language and the world?  
Oh, in lots of different ways.  
My mistake had been to think that  
there was only one way of talking at stake here.  
I came to see that there are  
lots of different things we do with language.  
Different language games, as I call them.  
And the meaning of the word is just the way

it's used in a particular language game.  
And what do you now believe  
the task of philosophy to be?  
Philosophical puzzles arise because we tend  
to mix up one language game with another.  
For example, people puzzle over  
the nature of something they call the "soul".  
But this may just be because they're thinking  
of the soul along the lines of a physical object.  
They're confusing  
one way of talking with another.  
The job of philosophy  
is to sort out these language games?  
Exactly.  
They're all perfectly in order as they are.  
Philosophy in no sense can question them.  
Philosophy leaves everything exactly as it is.  
Professor Wittgenstein,  
you've been associated with the argument  
that there can't be a private language.  
Could you explain this a little?  
What I mean is this,  
we learn to use words,  
because we belong to a culture.  
A form of life.  
A practical way of doing things.  
In the end, we speak as we do,  
because of what we do.  
And all this is a properly public affair.  
Philosophers in the tradition of Descartes  
start from the lonely self,  
brooding over its private sensations.  
I want to overturn this centuries-old model.  
I want to start from our culture,  
our shared practical life together,  
and look at what we think and feel,  
and say it in these public terms.  
Professor, thank you very much.  
I'm thinking of going away.  
Not again, Ludwig.  
You've spent your entire life running away.  
I'm serious, Maynard.  
Where to this time?  
Norway? Vienna?



Swansea?

Not the Soviet Union again?

What's wrong with the Soviet Union?

The place is one enormous labour camp.

There's nothing wrong with labour.

There is if they shoot you for not doing it.

I want to give up teaching philosophy  
and concentrate on my book.

Why not do it in Cambridge, and be paid?

I'm going to Ireland to live by the sea.

In Ireland they shoot you if you work.

Oh, Ludwig.

I know,

I'm a complete bloody disaster.

We love you.

(Waves lap gently)

Dr Wittgenstein.

Oh, you're here. Good.

At last.

You couldn't have chosen a more remote place.

Well, how's the work on your book?

Creeping along.

That means you've penned a masterpiece.

What's the news from the doctor?

- It's not good, I'm afraid.

- I hope it's not anything serious.

Last week I saw a specialist in Dublin.

I have cancer of the prostate.

Oh, I'm sorry.

It responds well to hormone treatment  
at early stages.

Is there anything I can do?

Don't think I'm afraid of dying.

It's death that gives life its meaning and shape.

You can take me back to Cambridge.

I don't want to die here.

Any time you like.

You know,

I'd quite like to have composed a philosophical  
work which consisted entirely of jokes.

Why didn't you?

Sadly, I didn't have a sense of humour.

Let me tell you a little story.

There was once a young man who dreamed

of reducing the world to pure logic.  
Because he was a very clever young man,  
he actually managed to do it.  
When he'd finished his work,  
he stood back and admired it.  
It was beautiful.  
A world purged  
of imperfection and indeterminacy.  
Countless acres of gleaming ice  
stretching to the horizon.  
So the clever young man looked around the  
world he'd created and decided to explore it.  
He took one step forward  
and fell flat on his back.  
You see, he'd forgotten about friction.  
The ice was smooth and level and stainless.  
But you couldn't walk there.  
So the clever young man sat down  
and wept bitter tears.  
But as he grew into a wise old man,  
he came to understand that  
roughness and ambiguity aren't imperfections,  
they're what make the world turn.  
He wanted to run and dance.  
And the words  
and things scattered upon the ground  
were all battered  
and tarnished and ambiguous.  
The wise old man  
saw that that was the way things were.  
But something in him  
was still homesick for the ice,  
where everything was radiant and absolute  
and relentless.  
Though he had come to like  
the idea of the rough ground,  
he couldn't bring himself to live there.  
So now he was marooned  
between earth and ice, at home in neither.  
And this was the cause of all his grief.

**MOZART:**

Hail Chromodynamics, Lord of Quantum.  
This is Quark, Charm and Strangeness

reporting.

Concerning the philosopher

Ludwig Wittgenstein deceased.

The solution to the riddle of life  
in space and time

lies outside space and time.

But as you know and I know,

there are no riddles.

If a question can be put at all,

it can also be answered.

**CSAR FRANCK:**

Sonata for violin and piano in A Major