Tributes to and Impressions of Friedrich Waismann

Waismann's Big Book

Brian McGuinness

As late as 1948, when he was making his report to the Literae Humaniores Faculty Board on the work he had done as University Lecturer since 1945, Friedrich Waismann listed three text books that he had ready for publication (one of them being the essays on causality printed in the present volume) and one book—as it might be "real book"—which he referred to as "Philosophy and Grammar". That was his final title for a work he had been preparing since 1929 and which was originally to be called "Logik Sprache Philosophie". In 1948 that work will have consisted physically in a heavily corrected set of galley proofs, printed for Routledge and Kegan Paul (the publishers of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*). The print was set up in the unhappy year of 1939, the copy reaching the publisher on 25 July of that year. At that time (precisely in December 1938) he gave the work what he called the new title "Philosophy and Language". A German typescript of the whole had been sent to Holland and was meant to be published there under the title "Sprache und Philosophie". The English version was set up in metal type, as the galleys show and one set of galleys seems to have been returned to the publisher for corrections to be made, but the project was abandoned at that point, presumably because the author thought better of it. To be sure the difficulty of obtaining paper and the uncertainty of sales in wartime may also have played a role. The relevant correspondence has still to be found in the publisher's records. Once the metal was broken up the work would of course have to be re-set anew if it was to appear.

The two versions did eventually reach publication after Waismann's death, the English one as *The Principles of Linguistic Philosophy* edited by Rom Harrré in 1965 (2nd edition by Gordon Baker in 1997), the German typescript was reconstructed from Waismann's *Nachlass* and published under the old title *Logik Sprache Philosophie* by Gordon Baker and the present writer in 1976. That German title can now be seen to be a mistake: Waismann in 1938 (and later) wished the reference to logic to be dropped. It was from the study of ordinary language, not formalized languages, that enlightenment was to be sought. Here he diverged from former colleagues such as Carnap, whom indeed he criticized fiercely during his Oxford teaching. The English title is also open to criticism. The book is not systematic enough to give principles, but, more important, it does not concern itself with one form of philosophy, namely linguistic philosophy. Its message is

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precisely that a correct study of language will give us the clue to all philosophy, not just to one part or interpretation of it.

The descriptive note that Waismann sent to Routledge and Kegan Paul to appear in their catalogue, and no doubt in some form in the book itself was as follows:

Philosophy and Language
By Friedrich Waismann

The subject of this book is the connection between philosophy and language. Starting from certain problems of classical philosophy we come to recognize that these puzzles arise out of a confusion as to the use of language, and disappear as soon as we get clear about the meaning of the words in which they are expressed. This, however, is a merely negative result. In the positive part of the book an attempt is mad to give a rough draft of the logical grammar of our ordinary language. This problem involves difficulties which do not occur in formalized languages. The method adopted in this book is to illuminate the use of everyday language by the help of artificially constructed models which are clear-cut, transparent and free from the confusing mental mist which enshrouds out ordinary language. As a result of the construction of such models and their systematic variation our ordinary language is set off against a background of languages of different structures; and some light is thrown upon the circumstances which incline our grammar to follow certain paths.

Among the subjects dealt with are: Problems of Communication. "Public" and "private" languages. Is only structure communicable? ~~Meaning and Verification~~. Incorrigible knowledge. The problem of non-Aristotelian logic. An inquiry into the logical structure of problems and discoveries. ~~The position of metaphysics.~~

The author was allowed to use unpublished ideas of Dr. L. Wittgenstein and the whole of this book is deeply influenced by these ideas.

Waismann later deleted in pencil two of the items, as if he meant to abandon the verification principle and the attack on metaphysics as central points. This would be of a piece with his avowed reluctance, from 1946 on, to be identified as a logical positivist. Probably nothing in the text we have was in fact changed.

Otto Neurath, to whom this notice or *Anzeige* was also sent, did not conceal his surprise at the respect and gratitude shown to Wittgenstein. Had not Waismann complained bitterly about the *Eigendünkel*—self-satisfiedness—and the hostility to science that had marred his stay in Cambridge? But the notice is enough to acquit Waismann from the charge of intended plagiarism, which some of Wittgenstein's fiercer friends brought against him. At the same time there was bound to be an awkwardness inherent in thanking for assistance once willingly given but now to all appearance begrudged. This unresolved problem may be what perpetually delayed publication.

The Exile and His Family

Max and Hedi Lieberman of Orinda, California, kindly answered a letter of mine (BMcG) when this book was being planned. Max writes on behalf of them both. Hedi, as will appear was a niece of Waismann's wife.

Since we received your letter in September of this year, a number of developments occurred which caused us to be side-tracked and defer our reply until now … My wife and I are most anxious to do what we can to facilitate your publication of any additional material about the life and work of Friedrich Waismann (FW).

In preparation for this reply, we recently attempted to re-read, after so many years, the personal letters which FW. over the years. had addressed to my wife. Because the letters were so heartrending, we stopped after reading part of the correspondence, with the intention, however, of completing, as soon as possible, the remaining correspondence. In what we have reread so far, there does not appear to be too much biographical material which would be helpful to your inquiry. For example, in the correspondence that we have re-read—and, according to our recollection, this is also true of the remaining correspondence—FW makes no mention of his relationship to LW. Nevertheless, we thought it might be useful if we responded to your questions as numbered by you.

1. We know that FW was born in Vienna, but that his father came from Odessa. I do not know whether the term "nationality," as you use it, means or includes citizenship. I presume that the Soviet Union did not extend Russian citizenship to émigrés. I also question whether the Waismann family ever acquired Austrian citizenship. If my assumptions are correct, the Waismann family was "stateless" in post-war Austria, but that should not have prevented FW from completing his studies at the gymnasium and taking his Matura. My own conclusion is therefore that his lack of Austrian citizenship was not the reason for his leaving the gymnasium. It is, however, possible that, since tuition fees for foreign citizens (or non-citizens) were higher, the continued study at the gymnasium was too costly for the Waismann family. Also, as you pointed out, FW, inherently, resisted the "bureaucratic aspect" of the public education system and may well have preferred the "externist" route to the Matura. We do not know what sort of home tuition, if any, was available for him.

2. *Waismann's university career*. Again, we cannot throw any light on the questions you raised in this paragraph. Incidentally, I did not enter the University until the 1932 Fall semester and did not start attending the MS lectures, seminars and proseminars, until the summer semester of 1933.

After MS's assassination, Professor Reininger accommodated a colleague of mine and me in accepting our respective dissertations and guiding us through the final examinations. We always respected Professor Reininger who, though operat-

ing in a very conventional frame, took on the students of MS after MS's death. I was even more impressed when I learned from your letter how generous Reininger was to FW).

3. *Waismann's position in the faculty* You are, no doubt, aware that, during the 1935–6 period, Austria was under a so-called "authoritarian government" with Schuschnigg, instead of Dollfuss, being then in office. That regime was hostile to the thinking which MS and FW represented. I believe that *both* this ideological hostility and bureaucratic fury at FW's conduct in ignoring academic procedures accounted for the action of the Ministry of Education. The ideological hostility of the regime was also manifested, among other things, by the Government's action in closing down the Ernst Mach Verein. If my assumption that FW lacked Austrian citizenship is correct, it would be surprising that the Government permitted FW's employment—and a fictitious employment at that—as a University librarian.

4. *Waismann after Schlick's death.* FW was married long before MS's assassination. You are, however, correct in your observation that, after MS's assassination, FW had a hard struggle in earning a living for his family. His wife had the benefit of a small pension from a bank which was granted to her by way of compensation for severance when she retired from the bank several years earlier. There was also Dr. Steinhart, the wife of a wealthy businessman, who arranged for FW to conduct a private seminar for a fee which was raised by set fees payable by those attending the seminar. The first seminar—which my colleague and I attended for a while—was devoted to a discussion of LW's Tractatus. I do not recall how long these seminars continued.

5. *Waismann and Wittgenstein* My wife, who was Mrs. Waismann's niece, recalls that FW's life virtually revolved around his meetings with LW. Whenever LW visited Vienna, FW, she recalls, was lost to his family during LW's stay in Vienna. being fully absorbed in his meetings with LW. While in Vienna, neither I nor my wife was aware of the break between FW and LW, but there is no question in our minds that the break must have been a devastating blow to FW. It was only after she arrived at the Waismann household in February of 1939 that my wife learned of the break in the relationship between FW and LW.

My wife and I, not yet married, emigrated independently, and on different dates, to England and, thereafter, to the United States. As you may know, FW and his wife had arranged for my wife to obtain a temporary entry visa to England on the ground that she would stay there only a short time to await the issuance of her immigration visa to the U. S. This temporary visa enabled my wife to emigrate to England in February 1939 and join the FW household where she assisted her aunt in taking care of the Braithwaite child and her own child (incidentally, I was able to emigrate to England a month earlier on the same type of temporary visa).

On the several occasions when I saw my wife in London—as indicated above, we were not then married—she mentioned some of the conversations that took place in the FW household. Based upon my impressions from these reported conversations, Professor Braithwaite's observation that FW was not taking a realistic

view of things may have been quite correct. Granted that, in those years, life for a refugee in England was very difficult, especially in view of the tight restrictions on employment and the lack of employment opportunities, I was nevertheless struck by the fact that, after having experienced the deterioration of the political and intellectual environment in Austria under the authoritarian Government, FW did not appreciate the British scene, including its intellectual freedom and vibrancy or the British political system, including the debates in Parliament.

Unfortunately, we cannot provide any factual input on what lay behind the break between FW and LW. We believe that LW was rather petty in his sensitivity on the point as to whether FW had given LW adequate recognition of his authorship of certain ideas. We also believe that your hypothesis, according to which LW opposed FW's plan to act in opposition to LW, must be correct. My wife recalls, however, that even after her arrival in Cambridge, FW actively worked with two graduate students on the English translation of his book. One of these students was well versed in translating German publications into English while the other was very knowledgeable in the field of logic and philosophy. My wife also recalls that the three men had considerable difficulty in attempting to translate the book, especially in areas where FW used an example from German literature in illustrating a point and it became necessary to match the point illustrated by the use of a comparable example in English. In any event, the break between the two men is, in itself, a tragedy which, in the long run, probably hurt LW as well—although not to the extent of the devastating blow suffered by FW

The atmosphere between the FW household and the Braithwaite household was rather uncomfortable. Mrs. Waismann also resented Mrs. Braithwaite's nonchalant attitude toward her child to which she devoted scant or, at best, the most superficial attention.

6. *Waismann in Oxford* As regards the Oxford years, FW, in his 1943 letters to my wife, described, in stark terms, the tragedy which ended in his wife's death in 1943 and the pain he endured during the years preceding. In the meantime, we have re-read the remaining correspondence including the 1945 and 1947 letters. In a letter, which FW wrote in April, 1945, he reported, with some satisfaction, his achievements in attracting and developing a following of devoted students, in charting a new course of studies, described as "multi-layered language structures" —a field both interesting to him and recognized as very important by others— and attaining, at last, a position of respect and prestige in university circles. This favourable situation was marred, however, by FW's feeling that the University treated him rather shabbily in setting his salary at a much lower level than that paid to native Englishmen. In addition, he complained that it was very difficult for him to form deeper contacts with the people among whom he moved. He attributed the lack of more intimate personal relationships to the English scene and the character of the English people. In a letter written in June, 1945, he is, again, complaining bitterly about the difficulty of forming meaningful human relationships in England, a difficulty which was experienced with the same intensity by

his son Tommy, who had no friends among his fellow pupils. As a result of this, both he and his son were condemned to lead isolated lives; indeed FW questioned whether he and his son could ever be "happy" and have meaningful relations with other people in England. Another source of constant irritation was the climate and the "air" in Oxford, both of which, he claimed, were poor and made it difficult for his son and him—who was especially sensitive to climatic influences—to lead healthy lives in Oxford. Finally, he deplored the extremely bleak economic conditions prevailing in England at the end of the war when food rations were extremely short, with virtually no provision for certain essential foods which were necessary for children growing up, such as Tommy; when everything was run down in the country and the future looked equally bleak. In short, this was not, in his opinion, a country or an environment suitable for raising children. Based upon all of these negative factors affecting life in Oxford and in England, generally, FW seriously considered leaving England altogether and seeking a position at a University in the United States. As a basis for decision, he listed all the pros and cons of a move to the United States: The principal factor in favour of staying in Oxford was that his teaching obligation there was very low (just one two-hour seminar per week); in addition, he was rather independent and the whole arrangement in Oxford gave him plenty of free time for thinking—which is exactly what he needed to carry on his work and which he, therefore, considered to be a vital factor; by contrast, the teaching load at American Universities was considerably higher—closer to ten hours per week—and he was afraid that professors and lecturers in the United States might not be accorded the same type of independence and freedom that he was privileged to enjoy in Oxford. Perhaps the negative factors which appeared to have weighed most against a continued stay in Oxford were the bleak economic situation in England and the lack of meaningful interaction with other people. Clearly, it was an agonizing decision which he faced, but psychologically and emotionally he seemed to be inclined to leave England. After rereading his 1945 letters and his bitter experience during the war years, I can better understand why he turned "against England" and never saw or appreciated the positive side of the country and its people. It was easier for me to see and appreciate the positive side as I never intended to stay there permanently and, therefore, was never exposed to the hardships and frustrations of finding employment which refugees encountered in attempting to find employment or otherwise adjust to British society.

In view of the bitterness expressed in his 1945 letters, it is somewhat surprising that he was able to inspire and develop a following of devoted students and friends during the Oxford years. We were touched by this and we were also touched, as you were, by his magnanimity in relinquishing his post to the Chinese American logician.

7. *Waismann and America* We had no knowledge of FW's visits to the U.S. as he never contacted us at any time during his visits. The reason may well have been that we, unfortunately, did not correspond with him after 1947. In fact, the 1947 letters were the last ones we received from him. Bear in mind please, that FW

never wrote to us about the death of his son. We found out about Tommy's death through a friend of my wife's who lived in Leeds and sent us newspaper clippings which reported about the severe conflict between FW and his son and about his suicide.

Most likely FW visited the United States—if he did so—in order to explore the possibility of finding an academic position and settling there. FW had asked us to give him our opinion as to what the scene was like in American Universities and what his prospects might be if he attempted to pursue a teaching career in the United States. He also asked us to contact a married couple in Berkeley, both of whom came from Vienna and held teaching positions in the psychology department of the University of California at Berkeley. I had been discharged from the Army in 1946 and was in law school in 1947. Unfortunately, we did not have any experience or contacts which would have enabled us to give FW a meaningful opinion.

A Waismann Memoir

J. R. Lucas

I owe a great debt to Waismann. He was a philosopher. In the sterile atmosphere of Linguistic Analysis in mid-century Oxford he exhaled an air of philosophical interest, sensitive to but not confined to the niceties of linguistic usage, and taking account of real philosophical issues. I started going to his lectures as an undergraduate, and was able to have one or two tutorials with him in his house down the Abingdon Road. As a graduate I went also to his seminars, usually given on Tuesdays (if I remember right) from 5 to 7 in Room 303 in the New Bodleian. He would read from a closely worked manuscript, obviously written for the occasion, bringing out points with great subtlety but also with literary sensitivity. He once told me that he had originally intended to read classics at the university, but the first lecture on Horace was all about textual cruces and not, as he had expected, about Horace's poetry at all; and so he switched to mathematics. For me that was a great bonus. He was able to communicate the insights from mathematical logic that underlay the Logical Positivism of the Vienna Circle. In one tutorial he said that the Axiom of Reducibility could not do as an axiom because … and started to sketch out a proof he had devised. To my shame I never tried to master it. I think it gave an interpretation that was clearly not analytic. But even to not understand was an extraordinary breath of fresh air in an Oxford philosophical world that was resolutely non-numerate. Many of Waismann's lectures expounded bits of mathematical logic of great value to me, and not otherwise accessible—a lot of

set theory, Cantor's transfinite arithmetic, relations—all of which were very relevant to philosophical issues, and often provided a firm basis on which to assess ordinary linguistic usage. But Waismann did not confine himself to logic. Again and again he would convey a sense of there being more to it than what he had so far said. The would-have-been student of Latin poetry was enlarging our vision. Waismann gave the impression of being a lonely man. After a tutorial he told me how he and his wife used to drift, I think on a raft of logs, down the Danube from Vienna in the summer, with a sense of that being a life long lost. The Oxford environment did not suit him. I once had him to dinner at Merton, but High Table food and Common Room port were no joy for a diabetic. Far better to be in Vienna and go each morning to a coffee shop, read the newspapers, and discuss philosophy with friends. Not that all philosophers were friends. He never discussed relations with other members of the Vienna Circle with me, but in seminars any mention of Carnap would trigger a diatribe against him—chiefly for being like a dogmatic Lutheran preacher, laying down a rigid law with no feeling for any finer points. I ought to have tried harder to befriend him. When I read in the papers that his son had committed suicide, I hesitated to write and express sympathy, as showing undue familiarity from an undergraduate to a don. But my father said it would be all right to write, and I did. Waismann showed me a picture of his son, but I never got close to him, although I was a would-be philosopher, and he, as one contemporary remarked, had more philosophy in his little finger than the whole of the rest of Oxford. And, in spite of his reserve, he was not only a philosopher, but an infectious one. We caught it.

Oxford Memories of Friedrich Waismann

Frank Cioffi

My acquaintance with Friedrich Waismann came about through his being my tutor for two terms and through his membership of the Voltaire society of which he became an honorary fellow (and to which he read his paper on the rival roles of vision and proof in philosophy). I also had some informal discussions with him on solipsism and on religion.

For my tutorials I presented myself to his home in Abingdon road where a boy in his early teens opened the door to me. This was his son who was later to die by his own hand thus producing another of the many tragedies with which Waismann's life was peppered.

On one occasion my assignment was to read some chapters of Infeld and Einstein's *The Evolution of Physics* and comment. Due to the manifold distrac-

tions of undergraduate life I had not gotten round to it and came with no essay and completely unprepared. What to do? Our fallen nature took this opportunity to manifest itself. I explained that having little mathematical background I could not construe the equations in the text and so had made no headway. Waismann gave me a look of disappointment and told me that he was aware of my lack of mathematics and so had assigned me a text in continuous prose without a single equation. I did not have the option of pretending that I had consulted the wrong text ('Oh was that the book you meant?') since he had lent me his own copy.

It is characteristic of the perverse asymmetry of reminiscence that though I have no recollection of which particular varieties of whoopee lured me away from my task and my obligation to him. I still wince at my recollection of his reproach and exposure of my deviousness.

In any case I was able to overcome this inauspicious beginning and found my discussions with Waismann the most profitable of my undergraduate years.

Two other occasions occur to me. In one essay I used the expression 'structure of a fact'. Waismann rose from his chair and began making stabbing movements with one hand. 'I am Brutus stabbing Cesar. What is the structure of this fact? Are the angles at which my blade entered his body part of it?' I never used the expression again.

He once challenged me to provide a definition of 'game'. He demolished all my attempts in ways, which have become familiar to us. But I am glad to have had it from the horse's mouth as it were.

Waismann's connection with the Voltaire Society came about in a roundabout way. Harold Solomon who was president of the society and a great admirer of Waismann related sadly one day that he had been to a matinée at the Scala—a Bob Hope film—and was dismayed to see Dr. Waismann filing out after the film. I understood his feelings. There was something incongruous in a mind of such distinction finding distraction in the antics of Bob Hope. We felt he must be starved of genial social contacts.

It then occurred to us that were he to attend Voltaire Society meetings this might provide the distraction he sought at the cinema. And so we created the post of honorary fellow and offered him it. The Voltaire society had been recently founded but already had a membership, which we felt drew on the brightest, and the best. Among our members were Anthony Kenny, John Searle, Nigel Lawson, Robin Farquharson, Charles Taylor, John Gross, Patrick Seale, Jim Griffin and Father Colombo.

The reasoning, which led us to feel that the opportunity for intellectual exchanges with our members would wean Waismann from Bob Hope films, can't have been very strict. Nevertheless his appointment was a success. He came regularly and seemed to enjoy himself though he did not intervene often in the discussion.

One occasion which comes to mind is that in which we were addressed by Hans Eysenck on the topic of political leadership. Eysenck argued that politicians

should have academic backgrounds in the social sciences and required to demonstrate their selective proficiencies in science, economics, sociology, political science and other fields of knowledge relevant to intelligent legislation. I thought this idea a prime specimen of scientism and am sure that Waismann thought so to. But when during the interval I introduced them their exchange was disappointingly cordial. It was left to the junior members of the society to point out the drawbacks in Eysenck's proposal.

One memorable informal discussion I had with him was at a dinner given in celebration of Bertrand Russell's birthday at Bertorelli's in June 1954. (Russell was the patron of the society) The topic addressed by the speakers was religious faith. Father Colombo, who translated Wittgenstein's Tractatus into Italian and who held the position of *advocatus Dei* in the society had responded to some remarks of Ayer.

Father Colombo referred to Voltaire's reply to Pascal's question apropos of his famous wager. Given that we are mistaken in crediting our post mortem survival since we will not discover our error what do we lose by believing?

Voltaire's reply was that we lose the truth. Father Colombo said that he agreed with Voltaire. I saw Waismann nodding vigorous agreement. At some point I approached Waismann and quoted some verse on the topic which took Pascal's view rather than Voltaire's:

'This immortality the horse I'll put my dough on please,
Some think his chest is weak of course
And some don't like his knees
But there's pots to gain
As you're aware
If he wins according to plan
And there is nought to lose
For we shan't be there
If he proves an also ran.'

Waismann smiled his disagreement and went on to make some observations about the evolution of religious beliefs. He thought this development was characterised by what he called 'etherealisation'. Sacred events initially conceived as determinate and picturable become less determinate, less locatable in space and time. I was left unsure what his own view was. Whether he felt that this was a face-saving device or an inevitable and natural progression.

What most struck and gratified me about that occasion was how much Waismann seemed to be incongruously enjoying himself in the midst of moderately raucous undergraduates. Harold Solomon's intuition proved correct. Waismann had been lonely and his reclusiveness was not unbreachable and would respond to friendly overtures.

The most absorbing and influential exchange that I had with Waismann oc-

curred in my last undergraduate year. He was no longer formally my tutor but I would drop him a note from time to time soliciting his view of questions which were troubling me. He would respond by inviting me to tea at the Eastgate. This was particularly welcome since my G I Bill financing had expired and tea may have been my only meal that day. (My compulsory fasting was short-lived as Alan Bullock learned of my predicament and arranged a college sinecure for me.)

My talks with Waismann incited, at an interval of several decades, my paper 'Congenital transcendentalism and the loneliness which is the truth about things' and the sections on solipsism in my 'Wittgenstein and the riddle of life'.

The issue I asked Waismann to address was what we were to make of those utterances, which claim a special place for the speaker or find the place he occupies problematic and mysterious. One of the examples I produced was that made famous by Sartre, which he found in a novel that says of its heroine: 'It suddenly flashed into her mind that she was she' on which Sartre comments, 'She feels sure that she is someone different from the others but each of the others has the same feeling of being different from everyone else'. Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* pronouncement 'What solipsism means is true but it cannot be said.' falls in the same class.

Cyril Connolly writes 'in a flash it came to me that my name and myself were something apart, something that none of the other boys were or could be, Cyril Vernon Connolly, a kind of divine 'I Am that I Am.' This could be just playfulness. It reminded Waismann of something said by Jean-Paul Richter. What Waismann had in mind may have been this: 'I can never forget … the birth of my self-consciousness; … 'I am I' flashed like lightning from the skies.' From *Truths from My Own Life* by Jean Paul Richter. Often the egological utterances fall short of an explicit claim as to the absolute singularity of the self but merely insist on its mysteriousness and problematicallity. Wittgenstein's friend 'Con' Drury writes: the more psychology we read the more we feel that this essential 'I' eludes us. We cannot put into words the mystery which we feel in the notion of the self.''

What concerned me in particular was the sense of revelation, which accompanies this genre of experience, where it is nevertheless impossible to say what it is that has been revealed. E.g. 'She was she'. It is not as if Sally Beauchamp I discovered what Sally Beauchamp II had been up to. It is a matter purely of aspect change. But what is remarkable is the sense of epiphany, which accompanies it. What problem do utterances like this raise and how should they be dealt with
Were they due to misunderstanding of the role of the first person in communication?

It seemed to me that there were three views we could take of these epiphanies.

1– That they were manifestations of what Peter Hacker called 'a thoroughgoing muddle' and that only attention to the proper function of the indexicality of the first person singular, which is a degenerate referring expression, could extricate us from that muddle.

2– That their appearance of momentousness, of seeming to be saying something,

was not illusory but that they set us the task of fathoming their ontological significance. Consider Powell's revelation "I was me". Why should we not treat it as a metaphysical apercu and say that Powell had become aware of himself as a transcendental ego "constituting in the sphere of his ownness … everything that was objective for him, …"

3– That though they appeared to be saying something with ontological import, we are to treat this appearance as illusory. Nevertheless however illusory their penultimacy is acknowledged to be, the sense of being on the brink of an ultimate revelation—perhaps only to be revealed post mortem—will recur throughout our lives.

Isn't this the way it is with utterances like Wittgenstein's 'Mine is the one and only world'? We acknowledge the cogency of the demonstration of the illegitimacy of a purely inner and subject-referring use for 'I ' but the intermittent sense that there is something anomalous and eventually to be revealed about personal existence, persists.

I wondered what Waismann would say of those utterances, which treat selfhood as a mystery or a revelation or a matter of ineffable singularity rather than as a logico-linguistic puzzle?

In his very first remark Waismann showed that he had recognized my problem perfectly. He said that in his own case such selfhood epiphanies took the form 'I HAVE BEEN CHOSEN'. This must be understood as empty of content. It is not like claiming to have won the lottery. It is rather like Wittgenstein's 'I am safe whatever happens' which he gave as an example of nonsense and 'a misuse of language'. How could misunderstanding the role of the distinctive role of the first person pronoun produce phenomena like these?

John Updike's response to the 'unthinkable truth' that each if us feels themselves to be the center of the universe—one among many and yet the hub around which everything revolves—was to 'scream or call on God,' As a diagnosis of this state, 'You can stop screaming Updike. The first person pronoun is a degenerate referring expression' seems inadequate.

Ryle thought he could explain the non-parallelism between the notion of 'I' and that of 'you' without 'construing the elusive residuum as any kind of ultimate mystery' (*The Concept of Mind,* p. 196). Such an account bypasses the sense of revelation, which accompanies the illusion that one has glimpsed a referent for 'I'. It leaves no scope for what Wittgenstein called the 'deep mysteriousness of the 'I''. Is this a fault?

Isn't the most philosophically astute response that one can make to utterances such as 'When anything is seen it is always I who see it'? (*Blue Book*, p. 61) Or 'I have been chosen'. (Waismann), 'I know what you mean'.

How close are the views expressed in my dealings with egological epiphanies to the views I imputed to Waismann many years ago? I am not sure. Though I am certain that he would have derided the view that expressions of absolute singularity and the like arose through semantic confusions I am not sure whether he would

have gone so far as to see them as primal phenomena which it was a mistake to treat as explainable.

I have not been able find in his published work pronouncements that would permit me to settle the question so that I have nothing to go on but an impression of accord which is half a century old and may have been no more than his desire to be amenable.

Graveside Address by Gilbert Ryle

Gilbert Ryle was one of Waismann's chief supporters at Oxford. In the Grabrede *here printed, which is very characteristic of its author as well as true to its subject, he speaks of Waismann's love of truth, a rarer trait than one might think. This was what Waismann missed in some of his colleagues, which made him inwardly critical of them. Perhaps it also lay behind the severity with which he would speak of other thinkers whose views diverged from what he now thought was correct: the very names of Wittgenstein and Carnap, for example, were not pronounced without obvious disapproval. The positive side of this is that all his pupils learnt that philosophy was not a game. (There is much relativism nowadays that he would have deplored.)*

We are here to say "goodbye" to Friedrich Waismann. He was our colleague and friend. But above all we learned from him. We think through him and he thinks through us. He was exiled from his own homeland; he lost his wife; he lost his son. He was buoyed up by no personal hopes; he was drawn on by no personal ambitions. But he kept his courage and he continued to search.

He cut himself loose from the comfortable half-truths in which our minds love to repose. He cut himself loose from those harsher half-truths to which our minds swing in the impatience of mere revolt. For Waismann a half-truth, whether conservative or revolutionary, was a distorting mirror. Vision begins when distortions repel and no longer attract the eye.

I quote his own words: —"A philosophy is there to be lived out. What goes into the word dies: what goes into the work lives." Friedrich Waismann is dead; his work is alive.

The quotation from Waismann's own work is from the close of "How I See Philosophy" printed in the volume with the same title (Macmillan 1968).