

WittTweets Complete

Why should one tell the truth if it's to one's advantage to tell a lie? Just asking... (1897, aged 8)

Was woken at 3 by sound of a piano. It was my brother Hans, so absorbed and wild. He was the picture of genius. (1900, aged 11)

First day at new school. Saw the other pupils. I feel like I'm from another world. (1903, aged 14)

Muck! My relationship with a boy called Pepi. Love and pride. Knocking hat off. Break with Pepi. Suffering in class. (1904, aged 14)

Dad got a letter today. Hans, who I thought was living as a musician in America, is lost. Probably dead. Probably suicide. (1903, aged 14)

The great Weininger shot himself. Bit ashamed that I haven't even tried to kill myself yet. (1903, aged 14)

Can't get the song they sing about me at school out of my head: "Wittgenstein wends his woeful windy way towards Vienna". (1904, aged 14)

My brother Rudolf went to a bar, ordered one drink for himself and one for the piano player. Favourite song. Cyanide. Dead. (1904, aged 15)

I got an A in religious studies again, an E in chemistry, lots of Bs, Cs, Ds... (1905, aged 16)

Completely lost faith in religion. Did I even have it in the first place? Gretl (sis) thinks I should read Schopenhauer... (1906, aged 17)

Would recommend Schopenhauer to anyone. (1906, aged 17)

Keep thinking about suicide. Weininger: 'That the human race should persist is of no interest whatever to reason.' (1906, aged 17)

Found science interesting, for once. "What is force? Well, restate Newtonian physics without saying 'force'" – Hertz. Neat. (1906, aged 17)

Started at Technical Uni in Berlin. Going to give engineering a go. Father's happy. Am so indecisive though. Grrr. (1906, aged 17)

Settled on goal: design, create and FLY my own airplane! Just arrived in Manchester to study aeronautics for this purpose. (1908, aged 19)

Right, perhaps it isn't a plane, but I just began to build my first KITE and hope to finish it by the middle of next week... (1908, aged 19)

Am so cut off, I have an EXTRAORDINARILY STRONG desire for a friend. When new students arrive I think it will be one of them.(1908, aged 19)

I asked Horace Lamb to solve my – tremendously difficult – equations. He says he doesn't even know if they CAN be solved! (1908, aged 19)

Oh my. Book by a 'Bertrand Russell'. Focuses my thoughts in a completely different way, about mathematics, logic- everything.(1908, aged 19)

Had not realised before that Russell never solved the problems at the foundations of his logic. The challenge is still there!(1909, aged 19)

Dejected. Sent a solution to Russell's challenge to Jourdain. No good. Terrified I don't know what to do with my life. (1909, aged 19)

For what it's worth, I secured my patent on an improved propeller design. But I think I am now done with aeronautics. (1910, aged 21)

Have been in a constant, indescribable, almost pathological state of agitation. It is finished. New beginnings must be found.(1911, aged 22)

Went to see Frege to discuss philosophy. He wiped the floor with me. Humiliating. I threw all my work away. (1911, aged 22)

I have come to Cambridge. It was imperative to meet with Bertrand Russell. Too nervous! Bad impression. Must keep at it. (1911, aged 22)

Russell does not appreciate my persistence. I follow him. We go to talk in his room. We argue constantly. (1911, aged 22)

I annoyed Russell today. Refused to admit it was certain that there was not a rhinoceros in the room. NOT CERTAIN! (1911, aged 22)

Still have no idea if I have any ability whatsoever for philosophy. If so, this is a dead-end. The end of everything. (1911, aged 22)

A turning point. Russell does not think me a complete idiot. This shall be my salvation. Perhaps I belong, after all. (1912, aged 23)

I have been admitted to Cambridge. I was sent to Johnson for coaching in logic, but he had nothing to teach me. (1912, aged 23)

Russell says I approach arguments with a "boiling passion" but with no manners. I agreed very politely. (1912, aged 23)

Does philosophy have 'value'? People who like it pursue it. Those who don't, don't. That is the end of it. (1912, aged 23)

I should say that the happiest days of my life have been spent discussing philosophy with Russell this last term. (1912, aged 23)

Russell has begun work on some such to do with 'Matter'. It is trivial, I am afraid, and I told him as much. (1912, aged 23)

'The Apostles' (an elite club) grade me as an 'embryo'. I wonder if I have a choice if I'm to be BORN into their club. (1912, aged 23)

I met another 'embryo' (this one aborted) – David Pinsent. I think we will be friends. Perhaps we could travel to Iceland. (1912, aged 23)

Started to read religion (William James most hungrily). It does me good, but I don't mean to say I'll be a saint soon. (1912, aged 23)

WHY does Russell go on and on about morals as if there is some truth to be found, that cannot be found in one's self? (1912, aged 23)

Russell wants me to provide 'arguments' for my positions i.e. he wants me to spoil their beauty. (1912, aged 23)

They have placed me in the top of a tower! They expect much from me then, Russell especially. He sees me as a son. (1912 aged 23)

Went furniture shopping in Cambridge with Pinsent. It was all beastly. I will design my own. (1912, aged 23)

Russell says that I should write SOMETHING and not wait until I have solved 'all the problems of philosophy'. I was furious. (1912, aged 23)

In Reykjavik with Pinsent. Have been teaching him mathematical logic. Yet he is irritable and risks his life climbing rocks! (1912, aged 23)

Pinsent is off with some bounder. I couldn't eat at the same table as him. I refused! I am eating biscuits in my room. (1912, aged 23)

On return, with Pinsent. We have enjoyed this as much as it is possible for two people to do who are nothing to each other. (1912, aged 23)

HELL! Russell has produced a paper, full of detestable mystical junk. He is a traitor to exactness. And he KNOWS it! (1912, aged 23)

Everything is intolerable; I must be deficient. Russell worries about me and got me a doctor who says it is my nerves. (1912, aged 23)

Just went horse-riding with Pinsent, as some sort of 'cure'. Yet it is impossible not to see failure all around me. (1912, aged 23)

Went to see a rowing race with Russell. What a VILE thing for us to do, we ought not to live. I have accomplished NOTHING. (1912, aged 23)

Just met with The Apostles again. The undergraduates are not quite toilet trained. It is indecent. (1912, aged 23)

I have found a good Apostle in John Maynard Keynes. Russell, however, is always exhausted, almost tragic-looking. (1912, aged 23)

Argh! I have too much work to do! I have no time for The Apostles, I must leave them. I MUST find solutions! (1912, aged 23)

Definition of 'philosophy': all those primitive propositions which are assumed as true without proof by various sciences. So.(1912, aged 23)

Russell has turned his back on logic. He has some grand plan for science and is driving very fast into a dead-end. (1913, aged 23)

My dear father died yesterday. He had the most beautiful death I can imagine. A death worth a whole life. (1913, aged 23)

Pinsent enraged me with notions of women's suffrage. The only women I know are idiots who flirt with professors. (1913, aged 23)

Further enraged by Russell, who said I should read French prose. Does NOBODY ELSE do anything seriously? Mediocrity reigns. (1913, aged 23)

I finished my review of Coffrey's new book. In short: unclear, but clearly riddled with errors. Not worth the ink. (1913, aged 23)

Logic possesses me, but I am sterile. My thoughts so vague that nothing ever can crystallize out. Curse of half a talent. (1913, aged 23)

I have a horrible fear that logic is driving me mad. It is terrifying. (1913, aged 24)

Pinsent got me to play tennis. Another 'cure'. I was sick of it. I don't need to think on logic LESS, quite the OPPOSITE. (1913, aged 24)

Just tried hypnosis with Dr Rogers to help me concentrate more powerfully on my problems with logic. I am drowsy. (1913, aged 24)

Pinsent is a good friend: ideal in all respects. I am happy when we listen to music together. Or I whistle as he plays. (1913, aged 24)

Terrible fight with Russell. We annihilated each other. He could not be HONEST. (1913, aged 24)

At last! I feel I have solved some of my problems with logic! But not them all, so writing anything would be premature. (1913, aged 24)

Off to Norway with Pinsent. Nerves, again. I panicked and thought I'd lost all manuscripts. Nerves, nerves, NERVES! (1913, aged 24)

Pinsent thinks I behave like a protagonist of some tragedy. He cannot understand anything of the pressure I feel. (1913, aged 24)

I upset Pinsent frequently, am entirely to blame, and am DISGUSTED with myself. [NB: there is space to work, here in Norway] (1913, aged 24)

I very often now have the indescribable feeling as though my work was all sure to be lost entirely in some way or another. (1913, aged 24)

I am certain I will die within two months. (1913, aged 24)

My mind is made up: I will live as a hermit here in Norway, alone. Not in Cambridge, where I prostitute my mind. (1913, aged 24)

Back in Cambridge. Russell is trying to drag my thoughts out of me with pincers. Well, he's getting SOMETHING out. (1913, aged 24)

At last I am alone. I am near the Sogne fjord, north of Bergen. I hardly meet a soul in this place! (1913, aged 24)

The whole of logic follows from one primitive preposition only! But I am SO troubled with Identity still... (1913, aged 24)

Russell wants me to explain what I mean AGAIN. INTOLERABLE: even the first explanation was given with the UTMOST REPUGNANCE! (1913, aged 24)

Last day in Norway: logic, whistling, walking, being depressed. The fundamental question of the WHOLE of logic unsolved. (1913, aged 24)

In Vienna. I keep hoping that things will come to an eruption once and for all, so that I can turn into a different person (1913, aged 24)

How can I be a logician before I'm a human being? FAR the most important thing is to settle accounts with myself! (1914, aged 24)

Broke off relations with Russell. This was NOT MEANT AS A REPROACH. We quarrelled wildly. We are enormously different. (1914, aged 24)

I shall be grateful to Russell and devoted to him WITH ALL MY HEART for my whole life. But I will not write to him again. (1914, aged 24)

In Norway. Insisted that Moore come to discuss my work. Hope I shan't die before he comes – that would be a discussion ender. (1914, aged 24)

Logical propositions SHOW the logical properties of language and therefore of the Universe, but SAY nothing <-- the crux. (1914, aged 24)

They won't give me a BA degree! Cambridge: if I am not worth making exceptions for then I may as well go to HELL directly. (1914, aged 25)

I deeply regret a letter I sent to Moore, full of anger. Now my wrath has cooled, but I have damaged all those friendships. (1914, aged 25)

Can't work on logic. Exhausted. I am instead building a house by the fjord where I will live until my solutions are out. (1914, aged 25)

Planning holiday with Pinsent. I hope this fuss about the death of Franz Ferdinand doesn't scupper our plans. (1914, aged 25)

In Austria. Donated 100,000 crowns to fund Austrian artists who are without means. I'm not deserving of my ludicrous wealth. (1914, aged 25)

The artists write letters of thanks to me. They are highly distasteful, with their degrading, almost swindling tone. (1914, aged 25)

Hmm, perhaps in view of this European War business Pinsent and I had better not go to Andorra just now. (1914, aged 25)

Europe is at war. Everyone seems delighted. I have joined the Austrian Army. Many of my friends are, of course, in England. (1914, aged 25)

Serving in an artillery regiment in Krakow, against the Russians. On a ship. They are at our heels now. Much anxiety. (1914, aged 25)

I feel the terrible sadness of our – the German race's – situation. The English – the best race in the world – CANNOT lose. (1914, aged 25)

My crewmates are a bunch of delinquents. Unbelievably crude, stupid and malicious. Barely any humanity between them. (1914, aged 25)

So alone here. I think of Russell, Keynes... mainly of Pinsent – David. I am completely abandoned. I think of suicide. (1914, aged 25)

Tolstoy's 'Gospel in Brief' is a true work of genius. You MUST read it. The effect it has! It keeps me alive. (1914, aged 25)

Don't be dependent on the external world and then you have no fear of what happens in it. And it includes people. (1914, aged 25)

I man the searchlight at nights. It is an escape from the crew. Thinking clearly again. Am on path to a great discovery! (1914, aged 25)

I feel more sensual than before. Today I masturbated again. (1914, aged 25)

Inspired by page of a magazine! A model was used in a court, to make a PICTURE of a car accident. Is this all language is? (1914, aged 25)

Worked the whole day. Stormed the problem in vain! I'd rather pour my blood before this fortress, than leave empty-handed. (1914, aged 25)

Can see the enemy for first time. Now I have a chance to be a decent human being, for I am standing eye to eye with death. (1914, aged 25)

One of my Austrian artists, Trakl, killed himself. What unhappiness! And I am a wretched failure. I am beyond saving. (1914, aged 25)

Received a letter from my beloved David! Such relief, I kissed it! Wish I had him here to replace this mass of scoundrels. (1914, age 25)

New post doing clerical work. Am at the office all day, every day. So much harder to work than when I was on the ship! (1914, aged 25)

Strongly affected by reading Nietzsche. Yet Christianity is still, indeed, the only SURE way to happiness. (1914, aged 25)

Have had to come back to Vienna. Spent all of New Year's Day with family, so did absolutely NO work. (1915, aged 25)

ONLY through a miracle can my work succeed. A veil must lift. I have to surrender myself completely to fate. (1915, aged 25)

I am now the foreman of an army workshop. My subordinates will not listen to a word I say. One cannot go on like this. (1915, aged 25)

Situation unchanged. (1915, aged 25)

Desperately want to be at the Front, instead of here repairing cars. I cannot read new books. I feel completely burnt out. (1915, aged 25)

Lovely letter from David. Am back at philosophy with a vengeance! Is there an order in the world 'a priori', and what is it? (1915, aged 26)

Have written to Russell again, and told him he MUST publish my manuscripts if I die. My scope is widening. (1915, aged 26)

Explosion in the workshop. Now in hospital with light injuries. I have been recommending Tolstoy to all. (1915, aged 26)

Back in a workshop. FINALLY I am writing my treatise on logic in full. Have informed Frege and Russell, now must get it DONE.(1915, aged 26)

I have a friend here, Bieler. We discuss matters at much length, but NOT so much logic as Tolstoy, Dostoevsky etc. etc. (1915, aged 26)

Called to the Front. A heavy blow. I tried to give Bieler my new house but he refused. I gave him a fountain pen instead. (1916, aged 26)

How much strength should one need for oneself and how much for the others? God enlighten me. God enlighten my soul. (1916, aged 26)

I am stationed at an observation post. I am desperately happy to be in this dangerous position, risking my life. (1916, aged 26)

Was shot at. Thought of God. Thy will be done. God be with me. (1916, aged 27)

Perhaps the nearness of death will bring light into life. God enlighten me. I am a worm, but through God I become a man. (1916, aged 27)

Now, during the day, everything is quiet, but in the night it must be frightful. Will I endure it?? Tonight will show. (1916, aged 27)

Only death gives life its meaning. I am happier this close to death than being amongst my malicious, heartless comrades. (1916, aged 27)

The whole modern conception of the world rests on the illusion that the 'laws of nature', as inviolable as God, explain all. (1916, aged 27)

What do I know about God and the purpose of life? Believing in God means understanding the meaning of life. (1916, aged 27)

Colossal exertions this last month. Have thought a great deal on every possible subject. How will it link to my mathematics? (1916, aged 27)

The solution to the problem of life is to be seen in the disappearance of the problem. We must SHOW what we cannot SAY. (1916, aged 27)

Ethics must be a condition of the world, like logic. We must view the world 'sub specie aeternitatis'. (1916, aged 27)

Man IS the microcosm. What the solipsist MEANS is quite correct; only it cannot be SAID, but makes itself manifest. (1916, aged 27)

We have been forced back into the mountains. Icy cold, rain and fog – a life full of torment. And I am too weak a person. (1916, aged 27)

From time to time I become an ANIMAL. Then I can think of nothing but eating, drinking and sleeping. Terrible! (1916, aged 27)

Why can't I live happily and reasonably? Also, I have been recognised for bravery and am to be promoted to Korporal. (1916, aged 27)

Am ill. In Vienna. Staying with new friend, Engelmann. His mother cooks for me and we discuss religion, Molière, piano etc. (1916, aged 27)

If I can't manage to bring forth a proposition, along comes Engelmann with his forceps and pulls it out of me! (1916, aged 27)

Am back fighting Russia. Engelmann has sent me 'Count Eberhard's Hawthorn'. It is really magnificent. (1917, aged 27)

If only you do not try to utter what is unutterable then NOTHING gets lost. But the unutterable will be COINTAINED therein. (1917, aged 27)

When will it end? So many negotiations with Lenin and Trotsky, but we fight on. I am to be moved to the Italian Front. (1918, aged 28)

I love my letters with Engelmann. Have been discussing my faith and former lack thereof. I am a slightly more decent man. (1918, aged 28)

On faith: let's cut out the transcendental twaddle when the whole thing is as plain as a sock on the jaw! (1918, aged 28)

In a military hospital, Bolzano. Finishing off my book! I could not have done this without Frege and Engelmann- and Russell.(1918, aged 29)

Was recommended for the Gold Medal for Valour for the last great offensive. Nevertheless we are retreating! (1918, aged 29)

On leave. I have in my hands a letter from England, I hope it is from David! (1918, aged 29)

Thinking of suicide. David killed in aeroplane accident. Dead. My first and only friend. The best years of my life. (1918, aged 29)

It seems trivial, but have finished my book. It shows how little is achieved when the problems of philosophy are solved. (1918, aged 29)

What can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence <-- book in nutshell.(1918, aged 29)

Have had my work REJECTED by the publisher. 'For technical reasons'. And I'd waited for months just to get that rejection! (1918, aged 29)

The men are fleeing from the war. My brother, Kurt, was in charge of some. Could not control them. He shot himself. (1918, aged 29)

Am a prisoner of war now. We are the Italians' bargaining chips. I fancy becoming a Priest, to read the Bible to children. (1919, aged 29)

So glad to receive eager letters from Russell! Can't get him a copy of my book from this prisoner of war camp. Cannot wait! (1919, aged 29)

Thought: interesting how NOBODY will understand my Logico-Philosophical Treatise even though it is as clear as crystal. (1919, aged 29)

So GALLING to have to lug my completed work round in captivity and to see how nonsense has a clear field outside! (1919, aged 29)

Vile! Frege sees nothing in my book. And Russell has taken it COMPLETELY the wrong way, as expected. Vile! (1919, aged 30)

Russell wants endless explanations. He knows how difficult it is for me to write on logic! I must meet him in person. (1919, aged 30)

Released from the Campo Concentramento. Thank God! It would be a little awkward for a German to go to England now. (1919, aged 30)

It is difficult to live in the shadow city that is Vienna. I still wear the uniform of a world force that is now extinct. (1919, aged 30)

Told my family of new plan: becoming an elementary school teacher. The shock! They think I am mentally ill, of course. (1919, aged 30)

Hermine: "You becoming a teacher is like somebody using a precision instrument to open crates."
She cannot know my struggles. (1919, aged 30)

I have given over my entire estate to my brothers and sisters, INSISTING no provision for it to return to me. Finally. (1919, aged 30)

I am not well, mentally. David's death lingers. My dear David – that I did not see him after waiting for 5 long years! (1919, aged 30)

Started at teacher training college. I sit on the benches with 17-year-olds. Both funny and unpleasant. Humiliating. (1919, aged 30)

A publisher said they will print my book if I pay the costs. Indecent. It is MY writing, but THE WORLD must accept it. (1919, aged 30)

The problem is: Russell doesn't understand my book, nor Frege. To understand it, you have to already have thought it. (1919, aged 30)

My book is strictly philosophical and at the same time literary, but there is no babbling in it. Can't they see that? (1919, aged 30)

Russell was always pressing me to publish something. And now, when I should like to, it can't be managed. The devil take it! (1919, aged 30)

Latest publisher: "are the decimals absolutely necessary?"... YES, THE DECIMALS ARE ABSOLUTELY NECESSARY! (1919, aged 30)

Am living with a normal family. Normal human beings are a balm to me, and a torment at the same time. May take my own life. (1919, aged 30)

A week with Russell! Full of logic. He now understands – and likes! – PARTS of my book, though not the main contention. (1919, aged 30)

I will not settle for an inferior publisher or translation. Who asks if the Critique of Pure Reason was written in 17x or y? (1920, aged 30)

I have sunk to my lowest point. Suicide on mind. And the mother of this normal family here fell in love with me. Have fled. (1920, aged 30)

Feel so rotten. Afraid the devil will come take me. Engelmann trying to convince me suicide is a mistake. That I am not lost. (1920, aged 31)

Teacher training continues. Yet the best for me, perhaps, would be if I could lie down one evening and not wake up again. (1920, aged 31)

The one good thing in my life just now: reading fairy-tales (Brothers Grimm etc.) to children. (1920, aged 31)

Have graduated from teacher training. Am a gardener for the summer. I work until I am tired and then I do not feel unhappy. (1920, aged 31)

Every day I think of David. He took half my life away with him. The devil will take the other half. (1920, aged 31)

They placed me at a school in a village with a FOUNTAIN. That is not for me. I want an entirely rural affair. (1920, aged 31)

Now placed in tiny village called Trattenbach. It is beautiful and I am happy in my work at school. Much needed. (1920, aged 31)

Am trying to instil in the children a love of mathematics, their culture, and the Bible. NOT trying to CHANGE/IMPROVE them. (1920, aged 31)

The villagers take me to be some rich baron! Just because I meet with intellectuals they think me STRANGE! (1920, aged 31)

Believe I'm doing an adequate job in teaching. Many discussions, inventions (a steam engine yesterday!). Curiosity flowing! (1920, aged 31)

Some problems with the weaker pupils. They must be ill, their arithmetic is SO poor. Often have to punish. (1920, aged 31)

When they learn mathematics they must start right at the beginning and with no short cuts. I owe this to them. (1920, aged 31)

I repaired a steam engine for the locals today. They announced it a 'miracle'! Was rewarded with linen. (1920, aged 31)

I had task, did not do it. The failure is wrecking my life. Be glad of it, if you do not understand what I am writing here. (1921, aged 31)

The parents of the children do not understand me or my methods. They think me too strange and too strict. They disgust me. (1921, aged 31)

Perhaps the Trattenbachers are not uniquely worse than the rest of the human race. But AUSTRIA has sunk so dismally low. (1921, aged 31)

Have been putting a lot of energy into a boy called Gruber. He shows great potential. Extra tutoring, advice etc. (1921, aged 32)

Am enjoying summer holiday in Norway – in the house built for ME! Working long hours at carpentry, very satisfying. (1921, aged 32)

MY BOOK IS TO BE PUBLISHED! Russell has arranged it – it is seen as “a financial liability, but a tolerable one”. Ha! (1921, aged 32)

Oh my. I have seen what is basically a PIRATED EDITION of my work! - Grotesque typographical errors throughout. Horrid. (1921, aged 32)

My book's to be translated into English by a Frank Ramsey at Cambridge (18-years-old!). Am thinking a lot about a title... (1921, aged 32)

Russell suggested 'Philosophical Logic'. But I don't know what that means. There is no such thing as philosophical logic! (1921, aged 32)

Settled on a title: 'Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus'. Suggested by Moore. Bit of a mouthful but it does the job. (1922, aged 32)

My gifted Gruber brought some books back. He wants to end his studies. He does not know what a mistake this is. Sad! Sad! (1922, aged 32)

They want me to add NOTES to my book – does a carpenter add SAWDUST to his table?? This lemon has been squeezed dry. (1922, aged 32)

And now they want biographical details. WHY must readers know this? So they may find my HOROSCOPE? - L.W. 26th April 1889. (1922, aged 33)

I am not getting on well here in Trattenbach. I simply do not fit in. I don't think I can stand it. It's over. (1922, aged 33)

Had a much longed-for meeting with Russell. I was ashamed of Austria. Pained me he's not Christian, he lives very immorally.(1922, aged 33)

Have now started teaching at a secondary school. I expect it to be mostly awful. The people here are not human AT ALL. (1922, aged 33)

I only managed a month. 'Specialized learning' just means each subject teacher neglects nearly the entire world. (1922, aged 33)

Finally have a FINISHED copy of my Tractatus! I wish its content were half as good as their external appearance. (1922, aged 33)

Have moved to a primary school in Puchberg. Now the people here one-quarter animal and three-quarters human. (1922, aged 33)

A friend said he wished to improve the world. Just improve yourself; that is the only thing you CAN do to better the world. (1922, aged 33)

Russell does not reply to my letters. I must confess that the number of people to whom I can talk is constantly diminishing. (1923, aged 33)

According to Ramsey, TLP "deserves the attention of all philosophers"! Have invited him to visit me for a holiday in Vienna. (1923, aged 34)

Last two weeks spent with Ramsey. 5 hours a day on TLP, 1 page/hour. Exhilarating. But I feel my philosophy is SPENT. (1923, aged 34)

And it still irks me that I don't even have a BA degree in philosophy yet! Ramsey is making enquiries for me. (1923, aged 34)

Asked Ramsey to write to Keynes about a possible return to England. APPARENTLY my TLP "dominates" discussions at Cambridge! (1924, aged 34)

Keynes has not invited me to England. We are "different" now. Anyway, am happy exploring a skeleton of a cat with my pupils! (1924, aged 35)

At yet another new school. Too difficult, again. Not one but a dozen forces are against me, and what am I? (1924, aged 35)

If I live long enough, I will produce a small dictionary for elementary schools. It appears to me to be an urgent need. (1924, aged 35)

SO simple to publish a dictionary relative to a Tractatus! Am basing it on my pupils making dictionaries of their own. (1924, aged 35)

Teaching is as usual. They think me too strange, too strict, too physical. Am focusing on a small gifted group. (1925, aged 35)

Engelmann is going to settle in Palestine! Vienna is no longer a good home for Jews. And part of me would love to join him! (1925, aged 35)

Will visit England! To see my old friends in Manchester, to Cambridge and Keynes – it will be exactly like a dream. (1925, aged 36)

England was lovely – apart from a fight with Ramsey. One last go at teaching and if that fails I will move to England. (1925, aged 36)

My dictionary for school children will soon be published! I stand to get 10% of sales and 10 free copies. (1926, aged 36)

Teaching has failed. An incident. A young boy. I struck him. He collapsed. I have left teaching entirely. (1926, aged 36)

So horribly affected by this last incident. Immoral. I tried to become a monk but they suggested I become a gardener. (1926, aged 37)

I am now an Architect! There is to be no compromise in my designs (of course). I am really very happy in this line of work. (1926, aged 37)

Just made an engineer cry with the exactness of my designs for a door! Everybody will appreciate it once it is DONE. (1927, aged 37)

Hurt my foot on the site today. I'm resting and a woman was here: Marguerite. I read to her. Would like to see her again. (1927, aged 37)

Moritz Schlick – a philosopher and a Tractatus admirer – will come visit! To discuss logic etc. He must come ALONE though. (1927, aged 37)

Good talks with Schlick. He wants to introduce me to his 'Circle' of friends but I am not ready for THAT. (1927, aged 38)

Went to the cinema with Marguerite. Saw latest Western and enjoyed a simple meal. Perhaps I am not FASHIONABLE enough for her. (1927, aged 38)

Schlick is GRADUALLY introducing his 'Circle'. I have met Waismann, Feigl, Carnap... very demanding for me, but stimulating. (1927, aged 38)

But they are SO single-mindedly SCIENTIFIC. They fail to appreciate inspiration – INSIGHT. (1927, aged 38)

Ramsey is trying to use my Tractatus to show that mathematics is just a system of tautologies. He fails to see its ESSENCE. (1927, aged 38)

Ramsey works for Logicism. But what defines a philosopher is: not being a citizen of ANY community of ideas. (1927, aged 38)

Just saw Brouwer lecturing on Intuitionism. I'm tempted to say it's all bosh, but it really has made me THINK again! (1928, aged 38)

I mean, come on, is mathematics REALLY objective? Or rather, what does the claim even MEAN AT ALL? Am writing to Keynes... (1928, aged 38)

House finished! Hermine gets very dramatic, saying it is "more a dwelling for the gods" and "house embodied logic". (1928, aged 39)

She is right though. The house lacks PRIMORDIAL life: wild life striving to erupt into the open. It isn't healthy. (1928, aged 39)

Bags are packed! After much discussion with Keynes and Ramsey (and with myself!) have decided to return to Cambridge. (1929, aged 39)

15 years I have been gone, but Cambridge is the same as I left it. As though time has gone backwards! (1929, aged 39)

Bizarre how I am now some sort of LIVING LEGEND! The Apostles call me 'Angel'... The Bloomsbury Group seek me out... etc. (1929, aged 39)

The Apostles are almost too much to bear, but Ramsey makes it all bearable. We have delightful discussions - a great friend. (1929, aged 40)

Very happy that I'm able to talk to Ramsey's wife, Lettice, about my love for Marguerite. I write to M. almost daily now! (1929, aged 40)

Ramsey (17 years my junior) is my supervisor. But we work TOGETHER, now typically uncovering the errors in my Tractatus. (1929, aged 40)

Of course, he is disturbed by REAL philosophy, until he puts its result (if it had one) to one side and declared it trivial.(1929, aged 40)

Keynes just got me to meet Piero Sraffa. I know we will get on VERY well. Glad he is an economist, not a philosopher. (1929, aged 40)

Genius! There was I going on about logical form. And Sraffa just flicked his chin with his fingertips and said...

He said: "What is the logical form of THAT?" Ha! He makes me feel like a tree from which all branches have been cut. (1929, aged 40)

Talking with Moore again – NOT on philosophy. He shows how far a man can go who has absolutely no intelligence whatever. (1929, aged 40)

Am wonderfully unsettled. The mind gets stiff long before the body does, but I have been granted a sort of second youth. (1929, aged 40)

Met an undergraduate called Drury. I far prefer the company of undergraduates to all others in my current state. (1929, aged 40)

Is it just me, or does everyone have a deep-seated need for someone they can just talk bloody nonsense to? (1929, aged 40)

Have been very anxiously trying to articulate my problems with money to Keynes. He calls me a MANIAC, amiably of course. (1929, aged 40)

The Tutor here asks if I have wealthy relations. OF COURSE I have wealthy relations... BUT I WILL NOT ASK THEM FOR A PENNY!(1929, aged 40)

I am finally to be given a PhD for my Tractatus! Moore will be an examiner, as will Russell, who I haven't seen for years. (1929, aged 40)

The Viva was an absurd success. M and R raised issues. I told them: "Don't worry, I know you'll never understand it." (1929, aged 40)

Plus I got £100! (1929, aged 40)

Am exhausting myself again, and terrified yet again that I'll die before my work is out. Not sleeping. (1929, aged 40)

Finally I've gotten 'Some Remarks on Logical Form' published. But it's almost certainly sheer drivel. (1929, aged 40)

And all over one proposition! 'This is red'. How CAN this be logically independent of 'This is blue'? I am so troubled. (1929, aged 40)

Oh, how I hate gatherings of philosophers! At a conference. What I shall say will be all Chinese to them. (1929, aged 40)

Dreamt about an old, BROKEN water-wheel that everyone kept mindlessly tinkering with. My engineering work? My Tractatus? (1929, aged 40)

About to lecture on how Ethics can be no science, despite how much I respect it. The problem is expression within language. (1929, aged 40)

When writing on Ethics we run against the boundaries of language – against the walls of our cage. It is perfectly hopeless. (1929, aged 40)

What is good is also divine. Queer as it sounds, that sums up my ethics. So much else is just a misuse of language. (1929, aged 40)

Another dream. About a Jew who lies and says he enjoyed the upbringing of a rich Scottish Lord. It is me; I am a coward. (1929, aged 40)

Christmas Day in Vienna. Marguerite will not kiss me. So what? I am a beast, in danger of becoming still more superficial. (1929, aged 40)

Am thinking about an autobiography. Would like to spread out my life clearly, but it would risk making myself even dirtier. (1929, aged 40)

Have been writing to Waismann about how his Circle is misguided. The Tractatus must be abandoned. It ignored so much. (1930, aged 40)

'There is a circle. Its length is 3cm and its width is 2cm.' But of course not! Because of the INTERNAL CONNECTION. (1930, aged 40)

Schlick accuses me of turning into Kant! Well perhaps, in that I SHOW what Kant tried to SAY. (1930, aged 40)

If I can never verify the sense of a proposition completely, then I cannot have meant anything by it...

... BUT the very FACT I didn't mean anything is itself significant. I fear the Circle is making too much of my considerations! (1930, aged 40)

Back in Cambridge. They told me that Ramsey was ill. I came to the hospital. He had jaundice and he died. He was only 26. (1930, aged 40)

I have started lecturing, if you can call it that. Under the title: 'Philosophy'. Of course. I put my full spirit into it. (1930, aged 40)

We try to banish our PUZZLES of LANGUAGE. For grammar is a mirror of reality, it fixes our degrees of freedom. (1930, aged 40)

Russell is examining my work, even though his own popularisations are vomative. And then there's his defence of free love... (1930, aged 40)

The Apostles mock me. Bell's poem: 'For he talks nonsense, numerous statements makes, forever his own vow of silence breaks'.(1930, aged 40)

Easter Sunday with Marguerite. For three hours we kissed each other a great deal and it was very nice. (1930, aged 40)

Mathematical lectures in Königsberg. All was overshadowed by an Incompleteness Proof from Gödel. Honestly have no idea why. (1930, aged 41)

If one tried to advance THESESES in philosophy, it would never be possible to debate them, for everyone would agree to them! (1930, aged 41)

My father was a business man, and I want my philosophy to be businesslike, to get something done, to get something settled. (1930, aged 41)

The nimbus of philosophy has been lost. For we now have a method of doing philosophy, and can speak of skilful philosophers. (1930, aged 41)

Philosophy is the synopsis of trivialities. It does not teach new facts, like science. It is yet of immense importance. (1930, aged 41)

A scientist builds a house. A philosopher is merely tidying up a room. (1930, aged 41)

Saw some portraits today: Russell, Freud, Einstein. Then more: Beethoven, Schubert, Chopin. Such degeneration in 100 years! (1930, aged 41)

Telling someone a thing they do not understand is pointless, even if you add 'you will not understand'. Lovers do this often.(1930, aged 41)

Our civilization is characterised by PROGRESS. Building an ever more complicated structure. I am interested more in CLARITY. (1930, aged 41)

Between a musical score and its playing, do not look for some CAUSAL RULE. No rule relates them, except just what you SEE. (1930, aged 41)

Goethe was right. 'All the organs of plants are leaves transformed'. We are seeing a similar thing now with language. (1930, aged 41)

YES! Was given a 5-year fellowship. Let's hope that my brains will be fertile for sometime yet. God knows if they will! (1930, aged 41)

A THEORY gives me nothing. Can the value of a Beethoven sonata be captured by *any* THEORY, *any* EXPLANATION? (1930, aged 41)

Is talking essential to religion? No, for I can well imagine a religion in which there is no talking. (1930, aged 41)

Goethe: 'In the beginning was the deed'. A new motto for me! The deed, the ACTS, come first, and then later some THEORY (1930, aged 41)

Re: ethics, religion, mathematics – As long as I can play the GAME, I can play it, and everything is all right. (1930, aged 41)

If I say 'Today the sky is clear', do I have to wait for LOGICAL ANALYSIS to see what I mean? What a hellish idea! (1930, aged 41)

The 'problems' of Frege's logic are trivialities. If in a game two rules clash what do you do? Just introduce a new one. (1930, aged 41)

A rule of syntax corresponds to a configuration of a game. Syntax cannot be justified. Same for logic, mathematics etc. (1930, aged 41)

Waismann compares metamathematics to a 'theory of chess'. But a theory of chess is itself just a game! Meta = Games of games!(1931, aged 41)

Maybe I should start my new book with how metaphysic is a kind of magic... no this is BAD! So difficult to SHOW my thoughts! (1931, aged 41)

Frazer's 'The Golden Bough' describes tribes' primitive rituals and magic as if they were proto-SCIENCE! What narrowness! (1931, aged 41)

How much better just to SHOW such things, laid bare, than present them through some THEORY! Likewise for my autobiography. (1931, aged 41)

Recommending Weininger again. Roughly speaking, if you NEGATE the whole book it says an important truth. (1931, aged 42)

Anxious that Waismann will present my thoughts in a completely INCORRECT way. A rehash of the Tractatus is not justified! (1931, aged 42)

Even the greatest of Jewish thinkers is no more than talented (myself for instance). What I invent are just new similes. (1931, aged 42)

With Marguerite in Norway. But SEPARATE so that we will be spiritually ready for a life together. I gave her a Bible. (1931, aged 42)

Marguerite knows that I do not want children, not at all. I have no desire to bring someone else into a new life of misery. (1931, aged 42)

Working well here in Norway on 'Philosophical Grammar' (BAD title). Have met a man called Pattisson; he brings me much peace.(1931, aged 42)

My work involves an interminable editing, over and over, and I find I am NEVER happy with my formulations. Feel worn. (1931, aged 42)

Back in Cambridge. Reading undergraduate notes on how to present philosophical writing! I like Kant's style IF ANYTHING. (1932, aged 42)

Much of my time is now spent EXPOSING mistakes in our grammar; we must not STUDY them but be LIBERATED from them. (1932, aged 42)

Schopenhauer was right: philosophy is an organism, and a book on philosophy, with a beginning and end, is a contradiction. (1932, aged 43)

All that philosophy can do is destroy idols. And that means not making any new ones – say out of the "absence of idols". (1932, aged 43)

Am lecturing on mathematics. "What is mathematics ABOUT? What are its FOUNDATIONS?" Questions of this sort will be ridiculed.(1932, aged 43)

Confusion abounds. Look: mathematics is NOT a natural science! A broom is not part of the furnishing of a room...

... not that I think that a scientist or mathematician who listens to me will be seriously influenced by my way of working. (1932, aged 43)

Too early to tell yet, but I'm toying with primitive 'language games' in my straight Philosophy lectures. Fruitful thus far. (1932, aged 43)

A lot of the mess I'm clearing up is Russell's and mine, from when we were obsessed with only one type of proposition. (1932, aged 43)

There's a new (childlike) man in my lectures who reminds me of Pinsent. His presence gives me peace. Named Francis Skinner. (1932, aged 43)

Please tell me: why must everyone pester me to state my new views? Braithwaite is attributing all sorts of thoughts to me! (1933, aged 43)

Francis is thinking of becoming a philosopher; I am trying to save him from THAT. There is no oxygen in Cambridge. (1933, aged 44)

Thinking of Marguerite saddens me now. All those feelings have gone. I am still trying to encourage her to be a nurse. (1933, aged 44)

Maths lectures have proved TOO popular. Now I dictate notes to a select few to disseminate. The notes are bound in blue. (1933, aged 44)

These language games are so SIMPLE – just what a CHILD does – but they dispel so much MIST enshrouding how we use language. (1933, aged 44)

I run COUNTER to Socrates! Instead of looking for the ESSENCE of something, I just look for OVERLAPPING LIKENESSES. (1933, aged 44)

Merry Christmas. Francis writes to me often with much fondness and longing. And I THINK to reply with the same feelings. (1933, aged 44)

RIGHT. New plan. Francis and I should go to live in Russia and work as manual labourers. (1934, aged 44)

Now, I am a communist AT HEART. I am opposed to it in theory but I support it in practice. (1934, aged 44)

With Francis at Drury's in Ireland. The meals here are too lavish. When we go to Russia, we will not take the treacle with us! (1934, aged 45)

The word 'now' – what role does it play? We must not just look at SOME contexts of its use, but the WHOLE LANGUAGE GAME. (1935, aged 46)

Increasingly thinking of leaving philosophy, destroying all my notebooks, and settling in Russia. Well why not? (1935, aged 46)

Well that was the first time I've worn a tie for many years! Met with the Russian Ambassador – His Excellency. (1935, aged 46)

More meetings about Russia, ARGH! It is shameful, but I change my mind about this every two hours. I am a perfect ass. (1935, aged 46)

In Leningrad! Yet it is impossible to find a job that suits me (NOT Philosophy). Letters from Francis keep me going. (1935, aged 46)

Russia is doing WELL. The important thing for the people here is that they have work. Tyranny doesn't make me feel indignant. (1935, aged 46)

Returning to England tomorrow. I am staying in the room Napoleon had in 1812! Looking forward to seeing bloody England again. (1935, aged 46)

Is it THAT strange that I quote 'Detective Story Magazine' rather than 'Mind'? Both are ripe with silly confusions. (1935, aged 46)

If *I* see some queer problem with the rules of chess, does this mean X & Y don't UNDERSTAND chess? Well, they play it. (1935, aged 46)

Sigmund Freud: here AT LAST is a psychologist who has something to say. Thinking of becoming a psychiatrist. (1935, aged 46)

Freud is all excellent similes. And what *I* really invent are new SIMILES. But Ayer, I am NOT a 'therapeutic positivist'! (1935, aged 46)

Horrible news. Schlick was shot and killed by a deranged student (one of his) on the steps of Vienna University. (1936, aged 47)

I need to escape the distractions here: philosophers, Francis, it all. I am going to Norway to be myself, to write again. (1936, aged 47)

In Norway. It was right for me to come here, for the quiet seriousness. Moore tells me he can't write anything, but this is fine...

... One can't drink wine while it ferments, but that it's fermenting shows it isn't dishwater...

... You see, I still make beautiful similes. (1936, aged 47)

The clarity I aim at is indeed COMPLETE clarity. But this means that the philosophical problems should COMPLETELY disappear. (1936, aged 47)

What we are destroying is nothing but houses of cards and we are clearing up the ground of language on which they stand. (1936, aged 47)

If anyone is unwilling to descend into himself, because this is too painful, he will remain superficial in his writing. (1936, aged 47)

I am, in parallel to my philosophical confessions, writing PERSONAL confessions. All sorts of things are happening to me. (1936, aged 47)

It is decided: during Christmas in Vienna, I will deliver my full confession to my family and close friends. Everything. (1936, aged 47)

Just about to go and give my confession. I am going to tell them, loudly and clearly, of all my sins. (1936, aged 47)

It's over. In more settled waters now. I cannot, of course, give the details of my confession here, I am afraid. (1936, aged 47)

Am in Otterthal, where I once taught at a school. Am visiting the children who I physically hurt, to apologise personally. (1937, aged 47)

Most of the children (though not children now) were forgiving. One girl, Hermine, would not give me pardon. Humiliating. (1937, aged 47)

Back in Norway. Glad these troubles of mine have been excised. Just broke a rib, but so what? (1937, aged 47)

Thought of having the rib removed and of having a wife made of it, but they tell me that this art has been lost! (1937, aged 47)

Many letters from Francis. He is working in a factory making screws, as I suggested. He fears he is forgetting philosophy. (1937, aged 48)

Thoughtless, anxious. I wish I had a human face to see in the morning. But perhaps it is GOOD for me to have to live alone. (1937, aged 48)

Am irritable, think only of myself, that my life is wretched, and at the same time I have no idea how wretched it is. (1937, aged 48)

Have been physically and mentally unwell, but am recovering. Lovely letters and gifts from Francis; WISH he was here. (1937, aged 48)

The way to solve the problems you see in life is to live in a way that will make what is problematic disappear. (1937, aged 48)

All I want to say today is: there is NO way of keeping a CARPET clean. I REFUSE to ever live in a room which has one. (1937, aged 48)

Obsessing on DECAY. Was cutting up a half-rotten apple, then I wrote some sentences and realised they were half-rotten too. (1937, aged 48)

God, it is SUCH a bad sign that my feelings for Marguerite went so completely cold. Am I capable of being sincere and loving?(1937, aged 48)

My thoughts are short of breath and I am nervous, fearful of the lake here. I would like to flee but that would be wrong. (1937, aged 48)

I'm leaving Norway tomorrow. Don't think I'll ever return. Thinking of faith and of Christ. (1937, aged 48)

If Christ did not rise from the dead, HE IS DEAD AND DECOMPOSED. He can no longer HELP and we are orphaned and ALONE. (1937, aged 48)

It is my soul with its passions (with its flesh and blood) that must be saved, not my abstract mind. LOVE is what is needed. (1937, aged 48)

Have returned to Austria – now a German state, under partial control by Adolf Hitler. Atmosphere of uncertainty. (1937, aged 48)

More importantly, I am cold and wrapped up in myself. Had dark, wicked thoughts about Francis dying and me thinking it good. (1937, aged 48)

Have come to Dublin, needing to talk to Drury. Ill-tempered, irreligious, gloomy. My talent lies in half-slumber. (1938, aged 48)

Have visited psychiatric patients at Drury's hospital. To see the sane man in the maniac! And the mad man in yourself. (1938, aged 48)

Drury has his troubles too, but to have others' sufferings close at hand must be a good remedy. He can concentrate on others. (1938, aged 48)

Austria is in crisis. Thinking a great deal about changing my nationality. German troops are amassed at its borders. (1938, aged 48)

I tell Drury that Hitler doesn't want Austria; that Austria would be of no use to him at all. But in reality I am fearful. (1938, aged 48)

And that is it: Austria is a part of Nazi Germany. My siblings are no longer Austrian citizens but German Jews. (1938, aged 48)

Wrote in desperation to Sraffa asking for advice. I need to be back in Vienna. He says: 'YOU MUST NOT GO'. What am I to do? (1938, aged 48)

What a frightful, APPALLING circumstance! I am now a German citizen and I am subject to a power that I do not recognise. (1938, aged 48)

Sraffa and Keynes suggest I take up a job at Cambridge and apply for British citizenship. So I am to be a sham-English-man. (1938, aged 48)

So suspicious and worried that the authorities will take me for a REFUGEE. Yet of course my family are my chief concern. (1938, aged 48)

My siblings sent me good news (written for the censor). In truth they must have realised, with terror: they count as Jews. (1938, aged 48)

Paul has stormed out and gone to Switzerland. My sisters will not leave Vienna. They are in GREAT trouble. (1938, aged 49)

Chamberlain: "Peace in our time." The Pilgrim of Peace, Bravo! Bravo! In case you want an Emetic, there it is. (1938, aged 49)

Back in Cambridge, living with Francis as a couple. In lectures I'm making propaganda against the worship of science. (1938, aged 49)

I mean, is Aesthetics a science telling us what is beautiful? I suppose it should also say what sort of coffee tastes well. (1938, aged 49)

We can ONLY study family resemblances, not arrive at a theory. Think for yourself: what IS artistic appreciation?..

See, it is IMPOSSIBLE to describe what appreciation consists in. To do so we would have to describe the whole environment. (1938, aged 49)

If I boil you at 200 degrees C, and am left with only ashes and vapour, is that what you REALLY ARE? (1938, aged 49)

Let's say a dream makes a man religious. Taken as evidence, it is ridiculous, but it is ridiculous to take this AS EVIDENCE. (1938, aged 48)

"Do you know whether you will survive death?" Now, I can't say "I don't know" - what does "I don't cease to exist" even MEAN? (1938, aged 49)

Am – as ever – horrified with every edit and translation of the book on philosophical investigations which I am writing. (1938, aged 49)

I have been elected Professor of Philosophy here in Cambridge, taking over from Moore. Flattering and all that, BUT...

... it may have been very much better for me to have got a job opening and closing gates. I get no kicks out of this title. (1939, aged 49)

Oh, Mathematics seems to have such a CHARM from e.g. Cantor's Diagonal Proof. But it is just that: a CHARM. (1939, aged 49)

There is no religion in which the misuse of metaphysical expressions has been responsible for so much sin as in Mathematics. (1939, aged 49)

My lectures are now attended by an Alan Turing. He gives his own lectures on maths; they are slightly different to mine. (1939, aged 50)

The 'foundations' of maths? They are no more foundations of maths than the painted rock is the support of the painted tower. (1939, aged 50)

Turing is not convinced. But I think that, at heart, he agrees with every word. For I am not trying to UNDERMINE maths. (1939, aged 50)

The confusion with maths lies in obsessions with hidden contradictions. E.g. The Liar Paradox – SO WHAT? It does not matter. (1939, aged 50)

Turing is "explaining" to me the problem with contradictions – why they matter. If they're ignored, a bridge may fall down etc. BUT...

... either there is a physical problem with the bridge, or I go wrong in e.g. multiplying – it's not that the CALCULUS is wrong!..

... How can you be led astray by a contradiction? You can't 'go wrong' with a contradiction; you CAN'T GO ANYWHERE! (1939, aged 50)

Turing is no longer attending my lectures. (1939, aged 50)

Have made friends with a Norman Malcolm. He says he can import 'Detective Story Magazine', which is wonderful. (1939, aged 50)

So I have lost a great portion of our wealth, but Berlin now considers my family 'of mixed Jewish blood' rather than 'Jews'. (1939, aged 50)

Went to a Western. The newsreels are getting so jingoistic. Their makers are surely the master pupils of Goebbels himself. (1939, aged 50)

What is the use of studying philosophy if it does not improve your thinking about questions of everyday life? (1939, aged 50)

If war breaks out, England and France will surely need the help of Russia. In Wales with Francis and Drury. (1939, aged 50)

War was declared yesterday. This morning (because I am so GERMAN) I had to report to the local police station. Wretched. (1939, aged 50)

Back in Cambridge. Have split with Francis. (1939, aged 50)

Of course it is INTOLERABLE that I am here teaching PHILOSOPHY when we are AT WAR. Curse my German name! (1939, aged 50)

Have spent a great deal of time recently with one of Skinner's colleagues, Keith Kirk. Am full of indecent thoughts. (1940, aged 50)

Feel I will die slowly if I stay here. I would rather take a chance of dying quickly. I MUST get out of academia. (1941, aged 52)

Have been writing to Ryle's brother, John, who works at Guy's Hospital. I want a manual job, in a blitzed area. (1941, aged 52)

Right, please don't tell anyone, but I'm currently working as a hospital porter at Guy's. Trying to keep a low profile. (1941, aged 52)

Francis has died. He had one of the happiest lives I've known anyone to have. Am desperately lonely, frightened and wild. (1941, aged 52)

Currently earning 28 shillings a week as a porter. My soul is VERY tired and I hope my body'll be able to stick it. (1941, aged 52)

Think a lot about Francis, but always only with remorse over my lovelessness. In my heart I was so unfaithful. (1941, aged 52)

Perhaps the time will come (soon?) when nobody will want to see me. If that is the case, I think I'll see nobody. (1941, aged 52)

When I finish work at 5 I can hardly move. I wish others happiness, and that they appreciate whatever they have more than I. (1941, aged 52)

Had a gall-stone operation. I refused general anaesthetic and had mirrors so I could see everything. Painful. (1942, aged 52)

Freud's explanations give people something that they accept and which makes it easier to go certain ways. Am a disciple. (1942, aged 52)

'Mathematical logic' is a cancerous growth, seeming to have grown out of the normal body aimlessly and senselessly. (1942, aged 52)

I mean mathematics is NOT logic. It's almost as if one tried to say that cabinet-making consisted in glueing! (1942, aged 52)

Draw a rectangle of 4 x 5 little dots. Why is THAT not a PROOF of the commutativity of multiplication (that $a \times b = b \times a$)? (1942, aged 52)

The POINT of any such 'proof', surely, is to produce just that understanding which consists in SEEING CONNECTIONS. (1942, aged 52)

I no longer feel any hope for the future of my life. Every day I fear the evenings which bring me only dull sadness. (1942, aged 52)

Have to keep myself busy. Like a cyclist I have to keep pedalling, to keep moving, in order to not fall down – to collapse. (1942, aged 52)

Oh I have lots of advice. But I am apparently incapable of LEARNING from my life. I suffer still JUST as always. (1942, aged 53)

Have heard nothing from Kirk, I fear he has broken with me – a TRAGIC thought. Feel so friendless, joyless. (1942, aged 53)

Ha! Was frowned at while at work (dispensing medicines) because I corrected another porter's whistling. Do love whistling. (1942, aged 53)

Was just introduced to Doctors Reeve and Grant who are doing medical research. Would desperately like to help out! (1942, aged 53)

Grant's point is that the term 'wound shock' is SO WIDELY USED as to be UNUSABLE. Just like concepts in philosophy & physics!..

... I suggested that they print the word 'shock' upside-down in their report to demonstrate just how unusable it is! (1942, aged 53)

Am joining their Clinical Research Unit, going to Newcastle to investigate the wounded. Am THINKING again. (1943, aged 53)

Thought: why does Freud not give a single example of a straightforward sexual dream? These are as common as rain! (1943, aged 53)

In Newcastle with The Unit. I go to the cinema almost every night but barely remember anything. I just go to relax. (1943, aged 53)

They try to get me talking about philosophy. But they do DECENT work in medicine, and they should be content with that! (1943, aged 53)

But really: surely it is the case that we are DOING philosophy already in our work, as we clarify the concepts being used. (1943, aged 53)

Bishop Butler: 'Everything is what it is, and not another thing.' (1943, aged 53)

I don't *just* TALK here. Spend hours cutting frozen sections of tissue and staining them to detect e.g. fat. (1943, aged 54)

Have invented a new piece of apparatus for recording the pulse pressure of patients with very bad injuries. (1943, aged 54)

The Egyptians displayed erect phalluses, semen etc. Why not? Not every religion has to have St Augustine's attitude to sex. (1943, aged 54)

Sad I can't do philosophy - no other work really bucks me up. To be back in Norway in 1913, when my mind was on fire! (1943, aged 54)

Grant and Reeve are going to be replaced. They're happy to leave me as a lab assistant, but I'm so terribly lonely here. (1944, aged 54)

Benefits of Swansea over Cambridge: the coast, and the fact the people here make you to SMILE. But the weather is FOUL. (1944, aged 54)

My friend Hutt is depressed. My advice to him is to avoid psychologists and to apply to be sent to a unit near the Front. (1944, aged 54)

Drury is embarking tomorrow for some attack on Normandy. If you are also a part of this effort, I will give you the same advice:..

If it ever happens that you get mixed up in hand-to-hand fighting you must just stand aside and let yourself be massacred. (1944, aged 55)

This war WILL end. The most important thing is what sort of people we'll all be when it's over (1944, aged 55)

Have started lodging with a Methodist minister. I DO believe in God, but the difference between our beliefs may be infinite.(1944, aged 55)

Great line from minister: His wife asked me if I should like some tea. He shouted out from another room: 'Do not ask, GIVE.' (1944, aged 55)

An honest religious thinker is like a tightrope walker, appearing almost to walk on nothing but air. But walk he does. (1944, aged 55)

I am not a religious man but I cannot help seeing every problem from a religious point of view. (1944, aged 55)

Made friends with the Clements next door. So impressed with them I'm moving in with them instead! (1944, aged 55)

The Clement daughters here find my name difficult so they call me 'Vicky'. NOBODY else is allowed to do this. (1944, aged 55)

I help tutor the girls, but more important we play magnificent games of 'Ludo' and 'Snakes and Ladders'...

Last night a game of S&L went on for over two hours, and I refused to leave it unresolved, but they convinced me in the end.(1944, aged 55)

One of the daughters was told she failed the grammar school exam. I confronted the teacher and told her: you made a MISTAKE...

And she had done, of course, the incompetent fool. (1944, aged 55)

Lot of writing. No longer so interested in mathematics, but e.g. whether it is possible for me to have a private language (1944, aged 55)

It's all still essentially about rule-following... about the grammar of our propositions, confusions etc etc. (1944, aged 55)

I only really feel active when CHANGING my philosophical position and working on something NEW. Is that odd? (1944, aged 55)

Does the certainty of ' $2 + 2 = 4$ ' really derive from anything other than that we use it as a RULE, that we have a CUSTOM? (1944, aged 55)

It would be nonsense to say: just once in the world someone followed a rule (or uttered or understood a sentence etc.). (1944, aged 55)

So can I give a new rule today, which has never been applied, and yet is understood? Isn't an imaginary application enough?..

... The answer is: No. (1944, aged 55)

The war will surely end soon. Yet I'm pretty sure that the peace after this war will be more horrible than the war itself. (1944, aged 55)

Have HAD to return to Cambridge. Russell is back, writing books on ethics and politics that nobody should be allowed to read.(1944, aged 55)

Saw Russell. He give me a BAD impression. I hear from others that he now feels antiquated - no longer in fashion. (1944, aged 55)

Nice to talk to Moore again. His wife limits my visits to 1.5 hours, saying he is too old and unwell, which is BALONEY. (1944, aged 55)

Of COURSE Moore should be ALLOWED a proper discussion. If he gets excited and has a stroke then he'll die with his boots on. (1944, aged 55)

Thinking is often easy, but when it's most important it threatens to rob one of one's PET NOTIONS and leave one BEWILDERED. (1944, aged 55)

The same goes not just for thinking about 'certainty' etc but about YOUR LIFE AND OTHERS'. Downright nasty, but IMPORTANT. (1944, aged 55)

You can't think decently if you don't want to hurt yourself. I know all about it because I am a shirker. (1944, aged 55)

My advice to Rhees on tutoring in logic: Go the bloody rough way! Complain, swear, but go on. (1944, aged 55)

We talk of mental processes as if we shall know more about them. But we have a definite concept of what it means to learn a process better-

... The decisive movement in the conjuring trick has been made, and it was the very one that we thought quite innocent. (1944, aged 55)

What makes William James a good philosopher was that he was a real human being. Yet we must still unravel his confusions. (1944, aged 55)

Have finally written the preface for my new book, after 16 years of hard slog! Which is NOT to say the book is finished. (1945, aged 55)

It is not impossible my writing will, in the darkness of this time, bring light into one brain or another – but not likely. (1945, aged 55)

Have been working relentlessly on editing and extending my book. It still goes damn slow, I'm a bloody bad worker! (1945, aged 56)

Have in front of me pictures of piled rotting corpses at Belsen concentration camp. Am terribly affected, wish to be alone. (1945, aged 56)

The pretence that a future war could only be started by 'the aggressors' stinks to high heaven & promises a horrid future. (1945, aged 56)

The beastliness of the Allies in Germany & Japan makes me feel sick. Appalled by calls to PUNISH the German people. (1945, aged 56)

Read a good polemical against the Allies' self-righteousness. Polemic, or the art of throwing eggs, is a highly skilled job. (1945, aged 56)

Enjoying Summer in Swansea (enjoying my absence from Cambridge). Book nearing completion, but the truth is it's pretty lousy.(1945, aged 56)

Have nearly made up my mind to resign the absurd job of prof. of philosophy. It is a kind of living death. (1945, aged 56)

I fear my book will be misunderstood by most academic philosophers. I want to preserve it for a better sort of reader. (1945, aged 56)

Perhaps the atomic bomb offers a prospect of the end of an evil – our disgusting soapy water science. A bitter medicine. (1946, aged 56)

Perhaps there is nothing good or desirable about scientific knowledge, and mankind, in seeking it, is falling into a trap. (1946, aged 56)

Drury wants to join the Communist Party. But a philosopher must be willing to attack ALL ideas and have allegiance to none.(1946, aged 57)

Sraffa has cut his ties with me, saying he can no longer give time and attention to matters I want to discuss. A great blow. (1946, aged 57)

Nothing I hate more than annual jamborees of philosophers. When these plagues descend on Cambridge I leave for London.(1946, aged 57)

Our civilization is now cheaply wrapped in cellophane, and isolated from everything great, from God, as it were. (1946, aged 57)

Sound doctrines are useless. A sound doctrine need not TAKE HOLD of you; you need something to MOVE YOU to a new direction. (1946, aged 57)

Have fallen in love with a Ben Richards. This has (only) driven my worries associated with my work into the background. (1946, aged 57)

Ben is very young and I feel he will grow out of me. Just as a boy no longer remembers what he felt as a young child. (1946, aged 57)

I am so highly inflammable! (1946, aged 57)

What I miss most is someone I can talk nonsense to by the yard. The self-satisfaction of the people of Cambridge repels me. (1946, aged 57)

My doctor has got me so tanked up with Vitamin B that I get so witty and jammed up with jokes that they can't come out! (1946, aged 57)

Every day I think of retiring and taking up something else. But what I'll do God Knows! For I'm already a pretty old codger. (1946, aged 57)

Karl Popper came to give a talk, KNOWING he'd provoke me. It turned nasty. A poker was involved. Don't want to talk about it. (1946, aged 57)

I fear I have a bad influence on my students – my "following". The only seed I am likely to sow is a certain jargon. (1946, aged 57)

The puzzle of the science of mental phenomena: I can't observe them in others and I can't even observe my own. A fog results. (1946, aged 57)

The only thing we CAN do is try to clear these fogs, by seeing how these words gain their meaning in forms of life. (1946, aged 57)

What I give is the morphology of the use of an expression – which is richer than the impoverished diet of stock examples. (1946, aged 57)

Teaching philosophy, I'm like a guide showing people around London. But I take too many side streets; I'm a rather bad guide.(1946, aged 57)

Am going through my new book meticulously with Malcolm, so that there will be at least one person who will understand it. (1946, aged 57)

All is happiness, thanks to Ben. Yet in love I have too little FAITH and too little COURAGE. Get very scared. (1946, aged 57)

Ask yourself: when you die who will mourn for you, and HOW DEEP will their mourning be? (1946, aged 57)

Can things last with Ben? The pretty walking-stick that bends as soon as you rest your weight upon it is worth nothing. (1947, aged 57)

Going to Oxford (if you don't know what this is: it's a philosophical desert) to talk on Descartes' 'cogito ergo sum'. (1947, aged 58)

I don't CARE if the 'cogito' is VALID! If X said to me: 'I think it will rain, therefore I exist', I DO NOT UNDERSTAND HIM. (1947, aged 58)

I'm going to give up lecturing. My lectures have never gone better, but am I really helping anyone? What am I leaving behind?(1947, aged 58)

Suppose I show this: <http://bit.ly/iikiPT> to a child. What would they see, and what is involved in a change of aspect? (1947, aged 58)

And can similar changes of aspect be achieved for e.g. a mathematical proof; a musical score; psychological states? (1947, aged 58)

So what HAS changed? Well it makes no sense to ask 'what has changed'. What IS involved in seeing something AS something?..

We must not ask: 'WHAT changes?' but 'What DIFFERENCE does the change make'? And talk of a 'private object' does not help.(1947, aged 58)

An 'inner process' stands in need of outward criteria. (1947, aged 58)

Cambridge grows more and more hateful to me, and England has such a damp, cold SPIRITUAL climate. Need to leave. (1947, aged 58)

In Vienna. The Russian army use MY house as a stables. The soldiers are brutal to the Austrians. Cannot stay here either. (1947, aged 58)

Have resigned from Cambridge. Very relieved. Going to live in Ireland, to philosophise for all I am worth. (1947, aged 58)

Drury is helping me find somewhere to live here in Ireland. He suggested a farmhouse, am off to case the joint... (1947, aged 58)

The colours in Ireland are so wonderful. It must be the atmosphere. Even the BROWNS are magnificent! (1947, aged 58)

Was on a walk today, was suddenly struck by thoughts. Sat in a ditch writing furiously, oblivious to all for a long time! (1947, aged 58)

Yet I'm not sure of these 'poetic moods' (Schiller) - not sure if what I produce when in these moods is worth anything. (1947, aged 58)

My nerves, I'm afraid, often misbehave. I often believe that I am on the straight road to insanity. (1948, aged 58)

The people under my room sit up late talking and the continual murmur of voices is driving me crazy. Depressed. (1948, aged 58)

Am moving to a cottage called Rosro in Connemara. It's many miles from any shops etc. and this isolation is necessary for me. (1948, aged 59)

My neighbours think I am entirely mad and they forbid me from walking on their land in case I frighten their sheep! (1948, aged 59)

Nearly all my writings are private conversations with myself, things I say to myself, tete-a-tete, which I often speak aloud. (1948, aged 59)

I go rowing with my helper here, Tommy, to look out for sea birds or just sit and think. Once again able to work. (1948, aged 59)

Found my favourite detective novel, 'Rendezvous with Fear' at the village shop! Want to write to the author to thank him. (1948, aged 59)

Humour is not a mood but a way of looking at the world. If it is true that the Nazis stamped out humour, then what did they destroy?..

... You must imagine someone who is BLIND to some aspect (e.g. humour) and ask what they must be lacking... whole systems of customs?..

... It is not JUST that in Nazi Germany people were not in good spirits, but that the Nazis destroyed a whole way of life. (1948, aged 59)

Imagine suddenly seeing X as a joke. What is incomprehensible is that NOTHING and yet EVERYTHING has changed. (1948, aged 59)

What we see things AS is determined by our culture/tradition. So what can one man do alone? You cannot TEACH culture! (1948, aged 59)

Let grief into your heart. Don't lock the door on it. In the mind it is frightening but in the HEART it is not. (1948, aged 59)

Have been feeling so ill, Drury thinks I shouldn't spend the winter here, so far from help. Moving into a hotel in Dublin. (1948, aged 59)

Am now a member of the Royal Zoological Society and enjoy going to the Gardens with Drury. An omelette and coffee every day! (1948, aged 59)

Anxious to make hay during the very short period when the sun shines in my brain. (1948, aged 59)

What does it really MEAN to say 'thinking is hard'? It's like saying 'looking is hard' – because looking intently is hard. (1948, aged 59)

Understanding a sentence is much more akin to understanding a theme in music than one may think. (1948, aged 59)

Have been ill with something intestinal. Have seen many doctors, had X-rays etc, but they don't know what it is. (1949, aged 59)

Drury sent me a new radio. It is so characteristic that, just when the mechanics of musical recording are so vastly improved...

... there are fewer and fewer people who know how the music should be played. (1949, aged 59)

Bach wrote on a title page: 'To the glory of the most high God, and that my neighbour may be benefited thereby'. Like. (1949, aged 59)

Spending just a few weeks in Cambridge dictating my manuscript. Not sure if I will ever try to edit this again. (1949, aged 59)

Moore's paradox: 'There is a fire in this room and I don't believe there is'. Logic is not as simple as the logicians think! (1949, aged 59)

And consider the square root of minus one. This SEEMS similar to the square root of one, but the difference is profound. (1949, aged 59)

How are you to gain sensitivity to the DIFFERENCES of utterances of e.g. 'I'm afraid'? By experience – by being attentive. (1949, aged 59)

Look attentively at the EXPRESSIONS on people's faces. You cannot take enough notice of these. (1949, aged 59)

If I see someone writhing in pain with evident cause I do not think: all the same, his feelings are hidden from me. (1949, aged 59)

Of course, someone may feel, concerning certain people, that their inner life will always be a mystery to them. (1949, aged 59)

If a lion could talk, we could not understand him. (1949, aged 59)

Can one LEARN how to tell a 'genuine expression'? Well not from taking a course in it but through EXPERIENCE. (1949, aged 59)

The barrenness of psychology is not to be explained by calling it a 'young science'. It rests on conceptual confusion. (1949, aged 59)

In psychology, the 'experimental method' only makes us THINK we have the means of solving problems. (1949, aged 59)

I have no income and no home, and no longer any desire to live by myself. Taking the 'Queen Mary' to Ithaca in the USA. (1949, aged 60)

Staying with Malcolm, trying to help out with philosophy as much as possible. Eating bread and cheese for all meals. (1949, aged 60)

When a person has only one thing in the world – namely a certain talent – what's he to do when he begins to lose that talent?(1949, aged 60)

Hold discussions with Malcolm's philosophy friends. They are amazed I can get to sleep after such exhausting discussions! (1949, aged 60)

I fear that 'professional philosophers' get DRUNK on my philosophy. People similarly can't control their intake of Freud. (1949, aged 60)

If I had planned it, I should never have made the sun at all. Moonlight is so beautiful, the sun is too bright and hot. (1949, aged 60)

An expression has meaning only in the stream of life. (1949, aged 60)

Moore thinks that by saying "here is one hand" etc. he refutes scepticism. But the issue is NOT whether Moore has doubts. (1949, aged 60)

This is one area where I feel I got it right with my Tractatus. Scepticism isn't IRREFUTABLE, it's NONSENSICAL. (1949, aged 60)

Certain propositions (Moore's) belong to my 'frame of reference'. If I give THEM up, I can no longer judge ANYTHING. (1949, aged 60)

Ha! Just attended a lecture at Cornell. When it was noted that WITTGENSTEIN was in the room they gasped as if it were PLATO! (1949, aged 60)

Have fallen ill. I don't want to die in America. I am a European – I want to die in Europe. What a fool I was to come. (1949, aged 60)

Back in England. Have been diagnosed with cancer of the prostate, which is no surprise. Now they try to PROLONG my life... (1949, aged 60)

About to catch plain to Vienna for Christmas. I cannot let my family know I have cancer. Hermine is already on her deathbed. (1949, aged 60)

Colours spur us to philosophise. Reading Goethe's remarks on colour is partly boring, but very instructive and stimulating. (1950, aged 60)

Hermine has died. We had expected her end hourly for the last 3 days. (1950, aged 60)

Anscombe down to visit. Went for discussions Feyerabend etc. LOVED how disrespectful they were of my ideas. Have missed that!(1950, aged 60)

'Physical objects exist'. Does the contrary of this make sense? No. So it is not empirical. It is a part of our logic. (1950, aged 60)

'Physical objects exist'. Does the contrary of this make sense? No. So it is not empirical. It is a part of our logic. (1950, aged 60)

Back in England. Have been offered £200 to give a lecture at Oxford. Over 200 students & no discussions... NOT LIKELY! (1950, aged 60)

It is of no use whatsoever for the understanding of painting to speak of the characteristics of individual colours. (1950, aged 60)

Have moved into Anscombe's house here in Oxford. Very nice lodgers. (1950, aged 60)

One of the lodgers here asked me if I thought my philosophy had anything to do with my homosexuality. Certainly not! (1950, aged 60)

Still struggling to see the greatness in Shakespeare. Surely people don't JUST praise him because it's the thing to do..? (1950, aged 60)

People stare at Shakespeare in wonderment, but they stare at him as a great natural phenomenon, not as a great HUMAN BEING. (1950, aged 60)

NOW, Dickens – here is good universal art. ‘A Christmas Carol’ is, like Tolstoy, art flowing from the love of God. (1950, aged 60)

The river-bed of thoughts may shift. Is there a sharp division between the movements of the waters and the shift of the bed itself?..

I could not bring myself to believe what Catholics believe e.g. this is blood, not wine. But this serves as THEIR background.(1950, aged 61)

How do I know that two people mean the same when each says he believes in God? As ever, PRACTICE gives the words their sense.(1950, aged 61)

In Norway with Ben. Enormously enjoyable. PERHAPS I will be able to live alone here once again and work on philosophy! (1950, aged 61)

Back in England, forced back to stay in Cambridge to stay close to doctor. It’s all X-rays, hormone prescriptions etc. (1951, aged 61)

My doctor’s home – where I now stay – has a wonderful name: ‘Storeys End’. (1951, aged 61)

Go to the pub every evening with the doctor’s wife. I order two ports and pour mine into a plant pot! Very dishonest! (1951, aged 61)

I now do philosophy like an old woman who is always mislaying something and having to look for it again: now her spectacles, now her keys...

... BUT I am able to work now as I have never worked before! Writing an immense amount. (1951, aged 61)

Even if I have hit the mark only rarely, philosophers will at least recognize what target I have been ceaselessly aiming at. (1951, aged 61)

I sit with a philosopher in the garden; he says again and again ‘I know that that’s a tree’. Someone else overhears this and I tell them...

... ‘This fellow isn’t insane. We are only doing philosophy.’ (1951, aged 61)

Am I not getting closer to saying that in the end logic cannot be described? You will see it in the practice of language. (1951, aged 61)

Am not at all well...

... The doctor's wife gave me an electric blanket today and said 'Many happy returns.' I replied: 'There will be no returns.' (1951, aged 61)

Lots of my friends are coming to see me tomorrow...

... Tell them I've had a wonderful life. (Ludwig Wittgenstein, 1889-1951)