Toward a Critical Edition of the
Philosophical Investigations

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My intention was that some day
all this should be one book.
to make a book (out) of the
My intention was one day
to make a book out of all this these thoughts
to make a book out of all of them all
to make out of all of them a book

The copy-edited typescripts that were used in the publication of the Philosophical Investigations are not to be found in the surviving Wittgenstein papers. In the case of Part II, no copy of the typescript that was used to print it has survived. However, the catalogue of the Wittgenstein papers does include a typescript of Part I, under the name of typescript 227. A second copy of typescript 227 came to light in 1993, and was given to the Wren Library, in Cambridge, where most of the Wittgenstein papers are kept. In the summer of 1993 I compared the two typescripts with each other and the published text of Part I. Both typescripts are carbon copies of the same typed text; both typescripts contain extensive manuscript additions, variants, and deletions in several different hands; neither had been copy-edited. There are significant differences between all three texts.

This paper aims to clarify the relationship between the two copies of typescript 227 and the published text of the Investigations, to explain how the second typescript casts light on Wittgenstein's role in the production of the published book, and to consider the prospects for a critical edition and new translation of the Investigations. However, before we can appreciate the significance of the rediscovery of the second copy of typescript of 227, we must first consider what was already known about the relationship between Part I and typescript 227. To the best of my knowledge, there has been very

1 An earlier version of the first part of this paper, on the relationship between the two copies of typescript 227 and the text of the Investigations, was read at the 1995 Kirchberg Wittgenstein Symposium, and published as Stern 1995a. At the conference, I added a brief impromptu coda on some of the outstanding problems with the English translation of the Investigations, and the editors of this volume invited me to incorporate that coda into a revised version of the earlier paper, for publication in these proceedings. Part of the discussion of the translation is based on remarks in Stern, 1996.

2 Wittgenstein Nachlaß, MS 160, final page.

K.S. Johannessen, T. Nordenstam (eds.) Wittgenstein and the Philosophy of Culture 298 - 309
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little published discussion of the question of the relationship between
typescript 227 and the published text of Part I. The principal sources of
information on this topic are to be found in the work of von Wright.
However, within von Wright's publications on the Wittgenstein papers, one
can discern two very different answers to this question. His catalogue of the
Wittgenstein papers and his paper on the origin and composition of the
Investigations suggest that typescript 227 is the text of Part I, or that any
differences are negligible. While the catalogue does not explicitly discuss the
relationship between typescript 227 and the published text of Part I, the
entries it contains for the typescripts of each part of the Investigations imply
that only Part II has been lost:

234. Typescript of Part II of the final version of the Investigations. Probably dictated in 1949. (Missing.)

Similarly, in von Wright's invaluable paper on "The Origin and Composition
of the Investigations," typescript 227 is summarily described as "essentially the
final version of Part I of the printed work" and the paper does not further
discuss the relationship between typescript 227 and the published text.

However, von Wright's research on the sources of the Investigations, much
of it unpublished, has led him to very different conclusions. In a footnote that
was added to the most recent version of his catalogue, he briefly describes his
editorial work with Heikki Nyman on "a rather more critical edition of the
Investigations"; the reader seeking further information is referred to the
introduction to his Wittgenstein for further information. The meticulously
edited "Helsinki edition" of the principal sources of the Philosophical
Investigations reconstructs the five successive stages in the construction of the
Philosophical Investigations. Although the Helsinki edition, completed fourteen
years ago, offers an invaluable overview of some of the principal stages in the
composition of the Investigations, it remains unpublished. However, it has
been deposited in research libraries in Bergen, Cambridge, Cornell, Helsinki,
and Oxford, and has thus been made available to a number of researchers
working on the Wittgenstein papers.

The texts Wittgenstein's literary executors have published do not usually
show variant readings, changes in wording, deletions and the like. By
contrast, the Helsinki edition aimed to show every significant difference

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is part of the microfilm of the Wittgenstein papers, and so is available to
interested researchers; much of the most interesting information can also be
found in Baker and Hacker 1985; subsequent volumes of their Investigations
commentary also contain valuable observations about specific deficiencies in
the translation. Some of Wittgenstein’s corrections of Rhees suggest better
translations of the published text; others amplify or expand Wittgenstein’s
intentions in ways that go beyond the letter of what one would consider a
translation; many of these deserve a place in a new translation, either as part
of the text, or in an editorial apparatus. For instance, Rhees, like Anscombe,
translated the beginning of the last sentence of § 1 as "No such thing was in
question here"; Wittgenstein changed this to "There was no question of such
an entity “meaning” here.” Similarly, in § 95, Wittgenstein replaced "Thought
can be of what is not the case” by “It is possible to think what is not the case.”

While the publication of the Bergen electronic edition of the Wittgenstein
papers on CD-ROM in 1997 will make the text of the source typescripts and
manuscripts of the Investigations accessible to the next generation of
Wittgenstein scholars, the availability of this material will not make the case
for a critical edition and a new translation of the Investigations any less
compelling. The present edition, rushed into print shortly after Wittgenstein’s
death, has become a philosophical classic, and deserves to be updated in the
light of our current knowledge of the state of the text.

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