

# ***Wittgenstein's Book of Facts by Ladislav Čumba***

*Translated by Ian Willoughby*

*Motto: "The world is everything that is the case."*

(...)

## **0.1**

It's well-known that in the beginning was the word. The word occupied a philosopher and his name was Ludwig. His parents, whose name he bore, were named Wittgenstein. His father was Karl and his mother Leopoldine, known at home as Poldi.

It's also well-known that not far from Prague airport lies an industrial town by the name of Kladno where stainless steel named Poldi was produced, and may still be.

It's less well-known that this Poldi – whose face is familiar to all Czech ice hockey fans at least, from the chest of the godlike Jaromír Jágr – is the same Poldi whose son became the most famous professor of philosophy at Cambridge University in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It's even less well-known that her husband, Ludwig's father, was the most successful capitalist in the Austro-Hungarian Empire as he was the first to grasp the difference between monopoly and competition and, at the right time and in the right field, became incredibly wealthy on the back of this difference.

What is virtually unknown, and to this day not fully resolved, is what became of the capital in question and what the relationship was between that money and the history of 20<sup>th</sup> century philosophy.

In the beginning then was the word and our story begins with the statement that Ludwig, son of Karl and Poldi, was born in a suburb of Vienna at their home at Neuwaldegg, Hauptstrasse 40. It was on 26 April 1889 at 8:30 in the evening.

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## **1.4.5**

It's well-known that the lovely Poldi came from a musical family. Her mother, maiden name Marie Stallner, was born at the southernmost tip of Steiermark, in a small town in the foothills, halfway between Zagreb and Ljubljana on the river Saze and today known as Sevnica. However, none of our book's protagonists knew it as that. In those days it went by a German name: Lichtenwald. Incidentally, Poldi and her sisters used to, quite often for that era, visit their grandmother and later a cousin there.

Marie Stallner – whose Catholic name betrays her faith – married into a German-speaking family of entrepreneurs then based in Prague. The ancestors on the Kalmus side of the family included the chairman of the Prague Jewish community, Ernst Wehli. However, the Kalmus family had by then converted to Christianity and the children Marie and Jakob Kalmus were Catholics. The Kalmus family had gotten rich via business conducted in the vicinity of the spa town of Teplitz. In the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century – when the railways were being built – the landscape underwent radical transformation. This was because of coal.

Lignite. The Kalmuses later moved to the centre of the monarchy on the banks of the Danube. However, Poldi was born in the capital of the kingdom of Bohemia, Prague. It's also well-known that to have a wedding it's good if he and she say yes in front of the altar. It needn't be love every time and may perhaps be a union of assets. How did they meet? Poldi was the sister-in-law of an officer staying at the family estate in Laxenburg. Karl's mother and sister got to know her first. She played piano and he accompanied her on guitar. Love is stronger than all the weapons in the world. Karl's father was cool on the marriage. Poldi's parents converted to Catholicism and Hermann Wittgenstein had expressly told his sons and daughters that no child of his would marry into a family of converted Jews. His wishes were respected by all but one: Karl. What was the outcome? Karl had to make his own way at the start of his career. Karl's brothers were named Paul and Ludwig. Who was the future philosopher named after? His uncle. Karl and Poldi's wedding therefore took place despite the opposition of Karl's father. The author of this book isn't suggesting an American motive for the introduction of new traditions onto the old continent, or perhaps that the wedding was sparked by pure love, or more due to a desire on Karl's part to settle down. Nevertheless, I would like to inform the reader that the wedding took place on 14 February, St. Valentine's Day.

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#### **1.5.4**

The author of this publication knows the Czech Philharmonic's piano tuner. He has a grand piano at home for concert rehearsals as well as a small pianino on the second floor. Likewise some music teachers and composers keep two pianos at home: one exclusively for their own use and a second for teaching students and such like, in view of wear and the need for constant tuning.

Imagine, however, that you have four pianos at home...

If you can imagine that, and are familiar with four-handed playing, then you've got an accurate image of the Wittgenstein's musical salon at Alleegasse 19. Because they had four pianos at home.

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#### **1.8.1.2**

It's very well-known that the industrialist Karl Wittgenstein died on 20 January 1913 of cancer of the larynx. Less well-known are the responses to his death. Ludwig sped home to the funeral in Vienna. The Times in the UK published an obituary announcing the death of the Austrian Carnegie.

For its part, the radical Kladno newspaper Svoboda, run by future Czechoslovak president Antonín Zápotocký, published an unsigned obituary which ended by stating that a *Jewish profiteer* who "*accumulated 60 million from the blood of Kladno's workers. Nothing but working class blood!*" had died at last.

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#### **4.1.2**

Karl and Poldi had eight children. Their youngest son Ludwig became the 20<sup>th</sup> century's most influential teacher of philosophy. Their daughter Margharette was one of the first women to study psychology at university. She was a student and patient of Sigmund Freud's and the family funded his departure from Vienna when he fled Hitler.

Incidentally, Ludwig attended the same school in Linz as Adolf, though – despite being the same age – they weren't in the same class. Ludwig was clever and skipped a year, whereas Adolf was kept back.

Of the other children, Paul was a pianist, a virtuoso who lost his hand in the Great War. However, he continued to play concerts and it's thanks to him that we have a repertoire for left hand. Incidentally, the piece that Ravel wrote for him has been played at the Prague Spring festival. The three oldest sons, who were set to take over the industrial empire, gradually committed suicide, each for different reasons. There was nobody to take the helm of the empire so it ceased to exist.

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#### **5.1.1**

It's well-known that Ludwig Wittgenstein liked to whistle. It's also well-known that he was able to whistle an entire symphony, even in different voices. One of his characteristics is also well-known: if somebody was whistling imprecisely, or worse out of tune, he stopped them and explained how to whistle properly. Let's pass over how those concerned must have responded. In any event, Ludwig's favourite piece to whistle was Brahms's Variation on a Theme by Haydn...

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#### **5.1.2**

Of the music-loving Wittgenstein family, only Paul was fortunate enough to be able to devote himself to music. We'll return to his story elsewhere.

Prior to its world premiere in July 2003 it was impossible to hear Hindemith's Concerto for Left Hand. Paul Wittgenstein married a far younger woman, a pianist named Hilda. He had been her piano teacher. In the wake of Paul's death in 1961 at his home at Great Neck, New York State, his widow moved with her family to the nearby Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. She placed her husband's belongings in a room and locked the door. She never entered or let anybody else in, but wouldn't reveal why. Her children refuse to discuss it, but it appears any number of its contents may have upset or hurt her. Another explanation is that she gradually lost her sight and wouldn't admit to her family she could no longer see notes. When she died in 2002 at the age of 85 the locked room was found to contain Hindemith's lost Concerto for Left Hand, letters from Beethoven, handwritten scores from Richard Strauss and a lock of Brahms' hair. The following year the lost Hindemith piece was finally played in Boston and Chicago!

What's more, Wittgenstein didn't like Ravel's Concerto for Left Hand and refused to play it. In the end, however, he became reconciled to it and there is even television footage of him performing it. He had different taste than the composers from whom he commissioned the pieces. But let's put the issue of why he behaved thus so to one side.

What's more, the composers were handsomely paid and didn't complain. But it remains unexplained as to why pieces by the most progressive German composers of the 1920s and 1930s were taken out of musical circulation.

Hindemith was paid handsomely. His piece is named *Klaviermusik* and bears the opus number 29. Four movements without an interval. *1. Introduction 2. The Left-Handed Half 3. Trio. Basso ostinato. 4. Finale.*

He composed the whole thing the year he came to the forefront of the German avant-garde, 1923. With his generous fee he carried out renovations of his home in Frankfurt: his famous composer's tower. In a letter dated August 1923, the philharmonic in Weimar, conducted by Julius Preuwer from Wroclaw, gave the go-ahead to Wittgenstein performing the piece at the start of its 1924 season. However, it wasn't to Wittgenstein's taste. Though he couldn't have sensed that the composer would become a star of world music, he was too clever to lose or destroy the piece. So why wasn't it played for 80 years?

The answer lies in a brief letter from Paul Wittgenstein to the composer: "I don't understand one note and will not play the concerto." The good news: the manuscript was on a farm near Pittsburgh.

In 1923 Germany plunged into hyperinflation. Hindemith had the money for his house paid in dollars. The Frankfurt building today houses a museum dedicated to the musical genius. The cover page of the score's manuscript is on display on the second floor. The museum also presents Hindemith as an enthusiastic sketcher of drawings of all kinds. As to their quality, no comment. On the cover of Klaviermusik, opus no. 29, there is a drawing of the very house in which the page is on show, and which Hindemith funded thanks to the piece.

I repeat in conclusion: "I don't understand one note and will not play the concerto."

(...)

## 5.5

It is well-known that teachers are forever complaining. Sometimes about their salaries, other times about students' falling levels of knowledge and declining manners. But alongside these banalities there is one thing teachers will never accept or come to terms with. That is the premature departure from this life of one of their students.

One of these was named Francis Skinner.

Ray Monk\* describes it thus:

"He has been described by Skinner's sister as behaving like a 'frightened wild animal' at the ceremony, and after it, she recalls, he refused to go to the house but was seen walking round Lechtwoth with Dr Burnaby."

Wittgenstein himself recalls it as follows:

*My dear Rowland,*

*I have to give you very terrible news.*

*Francis fell ill four days ago with poliomyelitis and died yesterday morning. He died without any pain or struggle entirely peacefully. I was with him. I think he has had one of the happiest lives I've known anyone to have, and also the most peaceful death.*

*I wish you good and kind thoughts.*

*As always,*

*Ludwig*

\*Ray Monk, Wittgenstein. *The Duty of Genius*, s. 427.

## 6.2.0

It's well-known that imagination knows no bounds and that absolutely anything may be conceived of. However, there are things that are hard to imagine or are utterly unimaginable.

You are incredulous that such an idea could ever exist. I don't know about your imagination, but mine has such limitations. For instance, the following story is, to me, utterly unimaginable:

A certain Ludwig W., in a letter to a stranger, somebody he had never seen in his life, some editor in a regional town below the Alps, a certain Ludwig von Ficker, wrote on 14 July 1914 a bizarre letter offering 100,000 crowns (the equivalent of 10 kg of gold):

*"Dear sir!*

*I'm sorry to bother you with a big request. I would like to provide you with the sum of 100,000 crowns and to request that you share it out among impecunious Austrian artists at your discretion. I bring this matter to you having noticed that you know many of our greatest talents and you are aware which of them are most in need of receiving this support from you. If you are able to fulfil my request, please write to me at the above address. In any case, please keep this matter secret until further notice.*

*With great respect,  
Your devoted,  
Ludwig Wittgenstein"*

Within 14 days not only did von Ficker have the referred to astronomical sum but the war today known as World War 1 had also been declared.

Let us add that the anonymous donor wasn't fully discovered in his correspondence until 1988 and that some of that 100,000 went towards the creation of the most important German-language poetry collection of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Duino Elegies by Prague native Rilke. Meanwhile the most ill-fated of all ill-fated German writers, Georg Trakl, dedicated to his benefactor his two final and also best-known poems: Grodek and Sorrow, or the Song of Kaspar Hauser, about a child denied education or human speech.

Let's leave sorrow and suffering to others while also consciously shifting the borders of our imagination in a different direction. And let's repeat once again that one of the most effective steps in supporting literature in the 20<sup>th</sup> century was not preceded by complex discussions. These three letters were written in extremely convoluted language. Their existence was unknown for 74 years. The whole thing took a total of just 14 days. And the act, not the words, brought happiness to the recipients for the rest of their lives. Imagination is boundless, while the boundaries of the verifiable are, admittedly, given to change. However, it is likely that neither the reader nor the author doubt their existence. The author of this book has seen with his own eyes the receipts for that 10kg of gold sent to an utter stranger editing a provincial magazine. And that editor put it toward the creation of the most valuable German-language poetry of the 20<sup>th</sup> century: the Duino Elegies, and Sebastian in Dream.

(...)

### **6.5.2**

The world's most exquisite view in is from the saddle of a horse. This book isn't about animals but on this author and reader are surely in unison. And if the most exquisite view is

from the saddle of a horse, the most wonderful view of the Moravian city of Olomouc and the fertile Hané region is from the tower of Olomouc Town Hall...

Roughly from the time of Wittgenstein's move to Cambridge we find descriptions of his accommodations in his letters. He lived modestly. A safe for manuscripts, table, bed, chair, bare walls. On them a single bookshelf.

But we're getting ahead of ourselves. Jumps in chronology or theme don't serve narrative. Some readers have surely already asked whether Ludwig Wittgenstein was, for instance, ever in Kladno. After all, we know when he stayed in Olomouc, when he arrived and departed and pretty much what he did day by day, even without any of this being preserved in Wittgenstein's Diary.

When you spend your time in discourse with friends, putting your thoughts down in a diary is unnecessary. Still, we haven't a clue where he lived in Olomouc.

We know where his friend the architect Paul Engelmann lived. We know the location of the Groag family salon, where he met his new friends.

Nevertheless we know from Engelmann that after arriving in Moravia he considered living in the apartment of the guard/clockmaker in the tower of Olomouc Town Hall and was most disappointed that wasn't possible.

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#### **6.5.4**

The author of this book regards centenary of birth as a safe border as to when Central Europe can safely name streets after significant personalities. Most of the greats are by then safely dead and their copyright has either totally expired or is on the verge of expiry, and if by some coincidence relatives are still alive they are sufficiently decrepit when it comes to defending the deceased's interest. The street where Wittgenstein grew up in Vienna was so renamed in the new millennium, when even his last students were dying off. There is also a Wittgenstein Street in Olomouc. It's one of the few places he never was.

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#### **6.5.9**

Every accountant knows: zero derives from zero.

We shall leave who is and who is not a zero, the authors of would-be humorous books or perhaps capitalists with nobody to inherit their hard-fought empires, to the reader.

Mathematics expresses clearly: zero and infinity are two sides of the same coin. If you randomly divide the number zero you get infinity. Any multiple of zero is always zero.

A naïve conception of the infinity of the wisdom of Cambridge dons. The infinite wisdom of a philosopher doesn't exist. Only love is infinite.

A clash with reality. Zero, infinity, emptiness. The differences between them are clear to the philosopher.

Zero isn't required at a market. Either a trader has one, two, three or four apples or none at all. Indian and Arab mathematicians introduced the zero to mathematics. The zero later reached Europe.

The city was named Florence. The builder of the dome on its Duomo was named Filippo Brunelleschi (1377–1446). He also painted a picture in which perspective, a vanishing point, appeared. The point. Zero and infinity in one. Singularity. A place the rules don't apply.

If we look at Wittgenstein's travels we discover that Italy doesn't feature. The reason is Monte Cassino. The spot where St. Benedict built the first monastery and, according to the history books, from which the Middle Ages stemmed. In 1918 it functioned as a POW camp.

It was in this environment, at the foot of the mountain where the monastery stands, that Wittgenstein completed his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*.

The most illustrious of the Cambridge greats is Newton. The reader surely knows the story of Newton and the falling apple. However, Newton made his greatest discovery in mathematics. He came up with a way to split zero. Meaning to breach a rule that cannot be breached. Not to breach it but to find a way round it. A way known, in the spirit of the continental tradition, as derivatives and integrals. How to get closer to a value without reaching it. It breaches the rules, but for Newton something else was crucial. It works.

The story goes that the creator of computing, Alan Turing, attended a seminar by Wittgenstein. A confrontation ensued. If a construction engineer took your approach bridges would collapse! Machines can't be controlled by zeros and ones. Electricity. Turned on. Turned off. Logic has come to a halt. Functional solutions. Zeroes and ones. Wittgenstein was wrong. A professor's wisdom is never infinite.

This book's editor will surely welcome the fact that the reader now has the opportunity to make the acquaintance of its unusual chapter numbering.

The future Nobel Prize winner Bertrand Russell used decimal numbering in his *Principia Mathematica*. When Wittgenstein first visited him in Cambridge, he had travelled from Manchester due to incongruities in the fundamentals of mathematics. If something is a matter of principle and is wrong in its fundamentals, it has to be thought through again, properly. Previously philosophy had been a science of thought. For instance, in his paradox of Achilles and the tortoise Zeno wasn't saying anything other than that denying infinity is paradoxical. Achilles is of course faster than the tortoise. But his step will always be longer than the tortoise's and if the tortoise takes another, it will never be infinitely small. It will always "only" approximate an infinitely small step; in practical terms it will approximate zero, but two times zero is still zero!

The introduction of zero allowed mathematicians to distinguish abstract mathematical science from the empirical experience of counting apples or pears like a market trader. Integral calculus is today the basis of construction and much more. Tall buildings are ever taller. Bridges stand. It works.

Zero was therefore the greatest discovery in history for abstract mathematics. It shows even lay people the meaning of singularity, a place where rules don't apply. A clash between infinity and the real environment. When he set off in the opposite direction, a certain mathematician named Alan Turing said on/off could be illustrated as zero and one.

In Krakow, on the river Visle, Wittgenstein records the following in his Diary on 16 November 1914, in connection with his work:

*The introduction of the symbol "0", in order to make decimal notation possible: the logical significance of this approach.*

But much water will flow under the bridge before findings regarding the meaning of zero will be passed on in distant Cambridge.

Zero. Infinity. The void. It's clear to the philosopher. The mathematician too. The IT guy has zeroes and ones.

In conclusion, a quiz.

What question do philosophers most ask IT guys?

*Would you like fries with that?*

(...)

**7.1**

It's well-known that what can't be spoken of shouldn't be spoken of. However, at this point in this book, the dear reader rightly senses that the need to communicate is sometimes stronger than the impossibility of sharing the incommunicable. It's also well-known that in our contemporary society essential aspects of life, such as death, are completely expunged from everyday conversation. This is why stories like when representatives of two funeral homes fight right over the coffin for a deceased person because the first has already banked the fee from relatives but the second has already paid the investigating doctor's commission naturally appear on the front page of the best-selling tabloid in the country but practically nobody has a notion how the dying and death of our nearest and dearest looks. It's well-known that fascination with death can take various forms. For instance, small bells connected to coffins have served as a means of calling for help, though relatives would already have humanely pierced the deceased's heart. Eco-coffins, the scattering of ashes in a garden/the countryside, the ossuary at Kutná Hora, cremation and euthanasia are just some of the many proofs of this fascination.

The daily *Hospodářské noviny* even writes: "There is extensive literature about Vienna's fascination with death. Joseph Roth and Arthur Schnitzler write about it. Egon Bahr believes that you'll know a Viennese by their funeral. A Viennese death is lavish and nostalgic."

In Vienna they have faced fascination with death head on. They've even created a Funeral Museum (*Bestattungsmuseum*). The address is Goldeggasse 19 and this is their website: <http://www.bestattungsmuseum.at/>

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#### **7.4.1.1**

It's well-known that death comes for everyone and that even Elina Makropulos turned down the elixir of eternal life. It's also well-known that those around major artists do their best to capture their final moments.

For instance on his death bed the exhausted author of the inflammatory play about Father Ubu and creator of pataphysics, Alfred Jarry, expressed his last wish: "a toothpick". They brought him one, Jarry's eyes lit up and he died, contented.

For his part, shortly prior to his passing the Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa recorded in scarcely legible English: "I know not what tomorrow will bring." And because he was short-sighted his final words were: "Hand me my glasses". Mountains of paper have been devoted to recounting his desire not to leave this world short-sighted.

Wittgenstein's final years were detailed in their memoirs by his American student Norman Malcolm and his editor, von Wright. There we can find the likes of "Two days before his death he jotted down ideas that were the equal of his best" and "in the last two months he wasn't in bed and had all signs of a good mood."

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#### **7.4.1.3**

It's well-known that Anton Chekhov's final days and words were captured in the book *My Life in Art* by a Russian director working under the Polish-sounding pseudonym Stanislavsky.

Every Czech reader knows the meaning of the name Chekhov (a variation on the Czech word for a Czech), but few are aware of it while reading him or attending his plays. It's similar with life. Virtually nobody says anything worthwhile to you about its beauty and nobility while you're alive; around death, however, all kinds of comments are made, though some are totally silent about it.



So the master of the Russian short story and codifier of causality on stage shared the following “message” on 15 July 1904 at the Hotel Sommer (Summer) at the small German spa of Badenweiler near the Rhine and the Swiss border. Sticking with the German language, Baden is the German plural for baths and weiler means *hamlet*, *settlement* or even *solitude*. Chekhov visited in search of solitude, fearing for his Three Sisters, which Stanislavsky was rehearsing. The pioneer of causality in dramatic texts uttered his final words there: “*Champagne, please. I’m dying.*”

Stanislavsky added: “His death was wonderful, calm and noble. But its essence was not understood.”

Von Wright, Wittgenstein’s editor, also bore witness to the autumn of Wittgenstein’s life: “In the summer term in 1947 he delivered his final lectures in Cambridge. In the autumn he went on holiday and from the end of the year he ceased to be a professor. He wished to devote all of his remaining energies to academic work. As many times previously, he left to go live in solitude. In the winter of 1948 he settled on a farm in the Irish countryside. He later lived utterly alone in a small house by the ocean on Ireland’s west coast in Galway. His neighbours were simple fishermen. It’s said that Wittgenstein became known among his neighbours for taming/domesticating many birds; they habitually visited him every day to be fed. However, life in Galway began to exhaust him physically and in autumn 1948 he moved into a hotel in Dublin. From then until the start of the following spring he achieved an enormous amount of work. It was then that he completed the second part of the *Philosophical Investigations*... In autumn 1949 he learned that he was suffering from cancer...”

(...)

### **7.5.8**

It’s well-known that people treat one another like animals. It’s also well-known that, by contrast, all kinds of frustrated or lonely sorts, or people abounding in flair, time or money, frequently behave better toward animals than other people. In our book we’ve also promised to devote our attentions to animals at least twice. What sort of book would it be if we overlooked animals completely? The reader has already registered a rabbit, a duck and two monkeys no less, and now we turn to birds.

It’s well-known that the wealthy who haven’t earned their assets through the sweat of their brow or self-denial frequently don’t know the meaning of money. It’s also well-known that if people see somebody throwing money about without realising its value they can, without embarrassment, overcome their initial moral defences; words such as “shame”, “promise” and perhaps “ethics” and “commitment” cease to play their traditional role.

We have already shown that in his final years Ludwig Wittgenstein devoted himself with affection and perseverance to looking after songbirds.

When the philosopher needed to get away from his rural west of Ireland sanctuary in Rosroe near Galway, travelling across the whole country to the capital Dublin, he didn’t share the reason for his departure with the local villagers. Neither did he on his return say that the doctors at St. Patrick’s Hospital had diagnosed a fatal disease, informing him he had a year left to live.

However, while Wittgenstein was away he did ask his neighbour to look after his birds. He provided him with 200 pounds to feed the birds. He explained to the neighbour that he didn’t

know whether the birds needed the 200 pounds. But he would surely make use of the equivalent of a year's income.

However, he felt no obligation to Wittgenstein, going by the testimony of the Irish poet Richard Murphy. Murphy was not one of the major Irish writers of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. What's more, unlike a number of colleagues he didn't receive the Nobel Prize. His comprehensibility has earned him a place in Irish textbooks, meaning school pupils are forced to encounter the poem *The Philosopher and the Birds*.

Two years after Wittgenstein's stay ended Richard Murphy spent two years in the same cottage in Rosroe near Galway. There he heard the villagers' stories about the Cambridge philosopher in the Irish countryside. The professor of the philosophy of language most impressed the locals by the way he spoke to birds, successfully teaching them to talk. In the poem referred to Murphy captured the period of spring 1951, when the philosopher was on his deathbed in distant Cambridge.

The professor, who during his stay taught local birds to speak, and left to cover their feed the equivalent of a family's full expenditures for a year, did not in the last moments of his life live to discover what Irish school pupils have to learn by rote, which is that:

*"hordes of village cats have massacred his birds..."*

There is a clear lesson here, dear reader: No matter how rich a capitalist is, no matter how much he leaves for whatever purpose, if somebody has the chance to fleece him with impunity they won't resist the temptation, even when he's on his deathbed.

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### **7.6.1**

One of the best, if not the very best, characteristics of infinity is that it never ends. Unfortunately human lives do end.

Naturally one isn't in top form before death. Let's consider another example of what von Wright says about Ludwig Wittgenstein's latter years:

"Even in the final years of his life he was capable of spending the entire day with his beloved steam engines in the museum at South Kensington..."

As the above referred to "infinity" says, there are things that aren't infinite, but even the most boring book or story is, thank goodness, never infinite. So our book is also reaching its conclusion.

### **7.7**

There is a perverse notion that something important happens to people in the final hour before death and that, aware of their impending demise, they communicate in a single sentence the result of a lifetime's endeavours and knowledge.

For instance Goethe with his "More light!"\* suggests that the enlightened person, even on their death bed, has worked for the light of mankind, not that – at death's door in a darkened room – they are calling the shutters to be opened or another chandelier to be lit.

Nevertheless, it is instructive that Wittgenstein's last words are believed to have been: "Tell them that I had a happy life."

Nothing remains but to share this declaration with the kind reader.

\* *"Mehr Licht!"*