
Some may find Klagge’s title ‘Wittgenstein in Exile’ perplexing. But at least part of its sense is explained by the splendid cover photograph, showing Wittgenstein rowing a boat across ‘his’ lake close to the Norwegian village of Skjolden, where he not only composed parts of the *Tractatus* but later owned a cabin in which a number of remarks printed in *Philosophical Investigations* were drafted or revised.

For, geographically speaking, something can be said for the idea that Wittgenstein was a kind of exile: he spent much of his adult life away from home—if ‘home’ is identified with the place where he was born and grew up and where most of his relatives continued to live. Moreover, the notion of exile tends to imply that one is forced—that it is necessary for the person concerned—to spend time away from home. And again there seems to be a good deal of truth in saying that it was necessary for Wittgenstein to move to a place different from the one he came from: it was necessary for him in order to get the work done which he was determined to conclude. But it appears that it was equally necessary for him to leave the scene of his labours at regular intervals. And indeed, as long as the political situation allowed him to do so, he periodically left this scene to return home in the strict sense of the word, for he went back to his family and the houses of his childhood. Returning from Cambridge, i.e. ‘exile’, to Vienna or the family mansion Hochreith, i.e. ‘home’, he managed to do what he might well have been unable to do without his exile: here too he spent most of his time doing philosophy, discussing his ideas with Schlick and Waismann, dictating selections from his manuscripts to a typist, correcting and revising his writings. So, in a sense Wittgenstein’s form of exile was a kind of home from home. His movements, even though they seemed to follow a pattern, had complicated reasons (‘internal and external’ reasons, as he liked to say). And originally, that is between 1929 and 1938, the only sense in which exile was enforced was that his moving away from ‘home’ was dictated by felt necessities of work.

But it is not only in geographical terms that Wittgenstein may be held to have been an exile. As Klagge points out and illustrates by means of adducing much helpful detail, Wittgenstein did not feel at home in the times he lived in. He was deeply at odds with the values he perceived as growing out of certain tendencies characteristic of the late nineteenth century and dominating western culture during the first half of the twentieth. In several chapters of his book Klagge describes the extent to which these ideas of Wittgenstein’s agree with, and may have been influenced or reinforced by, views developed in Oswald Spengler’s famous work *Decline of the West*. We know that Wittgenstein read Spengler’s book and had a comparatively high opinion of it. But in spite of a number of explicit and implicit references and parallels it is not always easy to decide the extent to which Wittgenstein was indebted to Spengler. As Klagge notes, Spengler’s name figures prominently on a list of people who, according to Wittgenstein’s own judgment, had influenced him. It may also be true that the distinction between culture and civilization employed in certain important passages written by Wittgenstein around 1930 is directly derived from Spengler. Perhaps the most impressive of these passages is the ‘Sketch for a Foreword’, written in November 1930 and published in the collection *Culture and Value* (edited by Georg Henrik von Wright).

Here, Wittgenstein underlines that the ‘spirit of this civilization—the expression of which is the industry, architecture, music, of present day fascism and socialism’ is ‘alien and uncongenial’ to him. And he continues to say that this civilization differs from a true culture through failing to assign ‘to each of its members his place, at which he can work in the spirit of the whole’. Wittgenstein’s criticism of the present is summarized by claiming that this is a ‘time without culture’ (see Klagge, 22–26).

Klagge makes a good job of clarifying the parallels between Wittgenstein’s views as pre-
sented in this ‘Sketch’ and certain passages from Spengler’s work. But these parallels seem less remarkable than the fact that it is uncommonly hard to connect these ideas with what we are prone to regard as Wittgenstein’s ‘philosophical’ writings. A revised extract from the ‘Sketch’ was chosen by Rush Rhees in his capacity as editor of *Philosophische Bemerkungen* to serve as a preface to this arrangement of remarks from Wittgenstein’s early middle period. But I think it is likely that most readers have found it extremely difficult to see in which way the spirit expressed in this ‘Foreword’ manifests itself in the body of the work. I am not saying that it is impossible to discover, or reconstruct, such connections; but surely no one will find it easy to paint a convincing picture representing Wittgenstein as the author of *Philosophical Remarks* and at the same time as the author of the ‘Foreword’ or the ‘Sketch for a Foreword’.

Klagge realizes that the points he makes in terms of the contrast between home and exile about Wittgenstein’s life, his attitude towards past and present, his use of the opposition between culture and civilization are very different from the way Stanley Cavell uses a similar distinction between home and exile (or non-home). Simplifying a great deal, one may say that, starting from *Philosophical Investigations*, § 116, Cavell reads ‘home’ as referring to our ordinary world of everyday activities and, in particular, to the use we make in this world of the means afforded us by language, whereas the world ‘away from home’ is identified with the territory where philosophers use words in ways that have lost their original ties with the language of our everyday practices. Thus, the contrast between home and non-home invoked by Cavell is not only different from the one described by Klagge; also its relation to Spengler is unlike that characterized by our author. According to Cavell, Wittgenstein ‘diurnalizes Spengler’s vision’ and ‘depicts our everyday encounters with philosophy […] as brushes with scepticism, wherein the ancient task of philosophy […] takes the form of returning us to the everyday’. Unfortunately, in describing this Spenglerian vision as a ‘process of externalization’ Cavell relies on a mistranslation: while Spengler speaks of ‘most extreme and artificial states’, Cavell assumes that Spengler has claimed that civilization is a ‘most external’ state of our species. So, this particular parallel between Spengler and Wittgenstein does not obtain. Klagge, on the other hand, surely has a point in claiming that in many of the passages he cites it is essentially ‘Wittgenstein himself who is exiled from his home culture and alienated from his civilizational surroundings’.

There can be no doubt that Wittgenstein did feel estranged from the civilization he lived in and that he admired certain aspects of an earlier culture. One remark where his attitude finds expression is the following observation, which has been quoted many times:

I often wonder whether my cultural ideal is a new one, i.e. contemporary, or whether it comes from the time of Schumann. At least it strikes me as a continuation of that ideal, though not the continuation that actually followed it then. That is to say, the second half of the 19th century has been left out.

Now, it seems that readers tend to understand Wittgenstein as saying that he sees himself as belonging to, or rooted in, this earlier cultural period exemplified by Schumann. And this appears to be the reading favoured by Klagge himself, who says that Wittgenstein ‘saw the era up through Schumann as the flowering of Western culture, and the time since, his and our own time, as deteriorating Western civilization’. And he continues by adding that Wittgenstein ‘considered himself to be a representative of that lost era of culture’ (Klagge, 24). In my view, however, this reading needs important qualifications that are clearly relevant to other passages in Klagge’s book. First of all, it seems a bit sweeping to speak of ‘the era up through Schumann’ in these glorifying terms: for one thing, when does this era begin? For another, why Schumann of all people? He cannot really count as a standard representative of that ‘flowering’; it seems more likely that his name was chosen by Wittgenstein because Schumann was a kind of late and perhaps somewhat over-intellectual figure, who also showed some of the weaknesses typical of the period’s coming to an end. In this way, it was easier for Wittgenstein to