

Wittgenstein as a Wild Mystic: Michel de Certeau on Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy of language

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Michel de Certeau was born in 1925 in Chambéry, Savoie. He obtained degrees in classics and philosophy at the universities of Grenoble and Lyon and studied at the École pratique des hautes études (Paris). He undertook religious training at a seminary in Lyon, where he entered the Jesuit order (Society of Jesus) in 1950 and was ordained in 1956. In 1960 he earned his doctorate at the Sorbonne with a study of co-founder of the Society of Jesus Pierre Favre before embarking on his celebrated study of Jean-Joseph Surin. Certeau's most acclaimed and influential work has been *The Practice of Everyday Life*. In this work, he combines his disparate scholarly interests to develop a theory of the productive and consumptive activity inherent in everyday life.

The Practice of Everyday Life

In *The Practice of Everyday Life* Part I the first chapter is called *A Common Place: Ordinary Language*. In that chapter a few pages are dedicated to Wittgenstein's model of ordinary language, especially to Wittgenstein's views of language in his later work, the *Philosophical Investigations*. In this essay I will show that Certeau's reading of Wittgenstein involves reading Wittgenstein as a *wild mystic*. However, in the *Philosophical Investigations* we find no remarks about mysticism or the mystical, that is something peculiar to Wittgenstein's earlier work, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*. The early Wittgenstein is the mystical Wittgenstein.

Now the first thing to notice is that Certeau in his discussion of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language in *The Practice of Everyday Life* does not make a sharp distinction between the early and the later philosophy of Wittgenstein. But there is a connection between Wittgenstein's philosophy of language and his mysticism and the way in which he may be called a 'wild mystic' in Certeau's sense of the word. To show this connection I will start with a consideration of Wittgenstein's two major works and the different conceptions of language in these works. Then I will look at the context of Certeau's remarks about Wittgenstein in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. The paragraph called *The Wittgensteinian Model of Ordinary Language* is preceded by the one called *The Expert and the Philosopher* and I want to consider the distinction between the expert and the philosopher because this distinction turns out to be important for Certeau's interpretation of Wittgenstein. For his discussion of Wittgenstein is not just about Wittgenstein's views of language but also about Wittgenstein's ideas of the task of philosophy, what philosophy is and can do. And it is also about Wittgenstein himself and his work as a philosopher. When discussing *Tractatus logico-philosophicus* I will focus on the meaning of what Wittgenstein there calls 'the mystical' and how his ideas of logic and language determine this meaning. Do his remarks *about* the mystical make him a mystic, a mystical author or even a wild mystic? To answer this last question I will consider how Certeau's view of wild mystics can be applied to Wittgenstein.

Wittgenstein's philosophy of language

Wittgenstein is unique in the history of philosophy in having developed two comprehensive philosophies. Although language is the central issue in both, they are opposed in many ways. His first major work, *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, was published shortly after the first World War, in 1921, the *Philosophical Investigations* was published posthumously in 1953. The *Tractatus* is what may be called Wittgenstein's mystical work, but his most important contribution to the philosophy of language is found in his later work, especially the *Philosophical Investigations*.

In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein develops his picture theory of language. In this view language pictures reality, or *the world*, to use Wittgenstein's own word. There are many different kinds of pictures that may be made of reality, e.g. paintings or scale models. In fact all kinds of things may be a picture of something else. Wittgenstein regards sentences also as pictures. Every sentence is the picture of a piece of reality: it pictures a *state of affairs*. Here Wittgenstein restricts himself to sentences that assert something, that state something that can be true and can be verified, and for him these are the only sentences that are meaningful. These sentences are *propositions*. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein develops his view on logic, i.e. on what logical analysis is about.

If we analyze propositions, that is if we apply logical analysis, we find their compounding propositions and if we go on analyzing we find elementary propositions and eventually their elements, that is *names*. Names correspond to the basic elements of reality, that is *objects*. Now we can combine words, or names, in many ways but we will always have to compare the proposition to reality in order to know whether it is true or not. This means that a sentence or proposition is meaningful if we can verify it. And that again presupposes that we know what the world looks like if the sentence is true. We must know what state of affairs would make it true. And this knowledge is what Wittgenstein regards as understanding the sentence. According to Wittgenstein we can never know if a proposition is true by just looking at it, we have to compare it to reality. The only exceptions are the propositions of logic, that are necessarily true or false. Every real proposition *can* be true or false and only propositions that can be either true or false have sense. If a sentence is not a picture of reality, e.g. because there are words in it that refer to nothing, then the sentence is not false but meaningless. Pseudo propositions fail to say anything, they are nonsense. Now with sense being so strictly defined, a lot of what we say fails to be meaningful, it is nonsense.

Within this domain of the nonsensical there are sentences that can be seen to be nonsense straight away. The example Wittgenstein gives is 'Socrates is identical'. But on the other hand there are many sentences that are not so easily recognized as nonsensical. Such pseudo propositions *appear* to say something and often even to say something very profound. According to Wittgenstein this is the case both with many propositions of philosophy, especially metaphysics and expressions about values. They often make assertions that can in no way be verified and for that reason they are nonsense. Wittgenstein regards it as the task of philosophy to be a critique of language and to set limits to what can be said. It must expose nonsense. At the end of the *Tractatus* he says:

The correct method of philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said, i.e. propositions of natural science – i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy – and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions.

Although it would not be satisfying to the other person – he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy – this method would be the only strictly correct one.

So in the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein has a rather narrow view of meaningful language. Propositions are sentences that assert something. All genuine propositions are empirical and contingent. Propositions can express nothing that is higher, nothing about values, they can only say how things happen to be. This rules out most metaphysical statements. We can e.g. say nothing about the world as a whole. A sentence itself is a picture and so it is also a fact within reality. If we utter a sentence about reality or the world as a whole, this sentence is part of the world, so it is logically impossible to compare it to the totality of the world. We would have to step outside the world to say something about it and this we can never do. We can never take a position, a place, from which it would be possible to make a meaningful statement about all of reality. This notion of the *place* from which we can speak will be important in Certeau's thought too.

Wittgenstein himself started his *Tractatus* with statements about the world as a whole (his first proposition is: *the world is all that is the case*). His book is full of sentences that he himself would brand as metaphysical nonsense. In the end Wittgenstein admits that in the way he has explained before indeed his own propositions are nonsensical and anyone who understands him now will recognize them as such.

The *Philosophical Investigations*

In his later work, the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein formulates a fundamental criticism of his own earlier conception of language and proposes a quite different view. He abandons the idea that behind the motley appearance of language some precise and definite order must be hidden. Meaning is not something static connected to sentences.

Wittgenstein presents his new view as opposed to what he calls a primitive conception of language in which words are thought to stand for properties or objects. He criticizes his own former theory of meaning by pointing out that not all words are used to signify objects. In fact, people do many different things with language and he now compares words to tools in a toolbox: there are many different tools for many different purposes. If we want to grasp the meaning of words we should not look for the objects for which they may stand but we should acknowledge the diversity of their functions in language. Assertions about meaning are equivalent to assertions about use. Therefore the meaning of a word can only be shown by a linguistic investigation into its use. This view of language in *Philosophical Investigations* is new, but the transition from the *Tractatus'* view of philosophy and language to that of the *Investigations* did not happen at once. And besides, some of the ideas of the *Tractatus* were retained in the later work, especially the ideas about what philosophy can do and what it should not try to do. In the preface of the *Philosophical Investigations* Wittgenstein says that he when he reread his *Tractatus* after many years it had seemed to him that he should publish his old ideas and the new ones together because the latter could only be seen by contrast with and against the background of the older way of thinking.

Certainly not all of his old views were abandoned. Wittgenstein retained the notion he already had in the *Tractatus* that language is an activity guided by rules, and in the *Philosophical Investigations* he compares language to playing a game. This led to the development of the concept of a *language-game*. The language-game method is employed to gain a clear view of our use of

language. Wittgenstein makes it clear that linguistic activities are interwoven with other, non-linguistic practices. Language is not something completely isolated from the rest of human life or of others kinds of activities. Our language-games are embedded in the overall practices of a linguistic community, in what Wittgenstein calls a *form of life*. The notion of a form of life is important because it serves as a reminder of the broader context of linguistic practices. So a word has meaning only within a context of application, and this again is embedded in a larger whole, a communal form of life.

Wittgenstein's second conception of language became very influential in twentieth century philosophy and the *Philosophical Investigations* is rated by many as Wittgenstein's most important work. For instance Peter Hacker, one of the acknowledged experts on Wittgenstein, regards it as Wittgenstein's masterwork. He claims that the *Tractatus* was the culmination of a tradition in Western philosophy, but the *Philosophical Investigations* is virtually without precedent in the history of thought. It marks a whole new era. However, the relation between Wittgenstein's early and his later thought remains a point of discussion is. Hacker says:

The transition from the *Tractatus* to his later philosophy ... is the transition of truth to the method of meaning. It is a transition from Wesensschau – putative insight into the nature or essence of things – to the clarification of conceptual connections in the grammar of our languages, with the purpose of disentangling knots in our thought.

And he adds:

The conception of philosophy advocated in the *Investigations* has no precedent, although it is, in a qualified sense, anticipated by the *Tractatus* programme for future philosophy.¹

This is the view Certeau takes as well. In the *Practice of Everyday Life* we notice that in his comment on Wittgenstein's philosophy, Certeau does not distinguish sharply between the early and the later Wittgenstein. In fact he quotes both from the *Philosophical Investigations* and from the *Tractatus* to make his point. Certeau says that Wittgenstein draws from the inside of everyday language the limits of that which, whether ethical or mystical, exceeds it. In my opinion this is the project of only the *Tractatus*, in his later work Wittgenstein is not concerned with the limits of language any more. There are no limits to be discovered or to be drawn, there is no 'outside' of language that remains ineffable.

Certeau however does not make this distinction. He calls this section of his book 'The Wittgensteinian model of ordinary language', but his concern here is not in the first place common language. He discusses Wittgenstein's idea of what the philosopher can say about language and what the position of the philosopher as regards to language is or can be, and these ideas have consequences for Wittgenstein's own position as a philosopher. Certeau recognizes the importance of the consequences of his thought that Wittgenstein himself acknowledged and which he had tried to integrate in his career and his life. Certeau therefore discusses not only Wittgenstein's ideas of philosophy, but also Wittgenstein as a philosopher, this life of the philosopher. Wittgenstein's life then is, as it were, the third part of his philosophy. The central notion in this discussion is the notion of *place* and its many different aspects and connotations. To see what this means I will turn to the

¹ P.M.S. Hacker, *Connections and Controversies* p. 20.

context of the section about Wittgenstein in Certeau's chapter about ordinary language as a common place.

The Expert and the Philosopher

In the section preceding the paragraphs on Wittgenstein, Certeau introduces two figures that play a major role in society: the expert and the philosopher. Both have the task of mediating between society and a body of knowledge. The first, says Certeau, as he introduces his specialty into the wider and more complex arena of socio-political decisions and the second insofar as he re-establishes the relevance of general questions to a particular technique. Formerly the philosopher was the specialist of the universal. But now in the Expert competence is transmuted into social authority and as he grows more common in society he becomes its generalized figure. Thereby he blots out and in a certain way replaces the philosopher. When he gains authority something curious happens to an expert's knowledge: the status of authority leads to a reduction of his competence. The result is that the social place of the expert and his technical discourse become confused and in the end the expert no longer knows exactly what he is saying and cannot limit himself to talking about what he knows. The expert pronounces on the basis of the *place* that his specialty has won for him and confuses social place with technical discourse. It is a case of mistaken identity. Certeau concludes this section by saying:

A few individuals after having long considered themselves experts speaking a scientific language, have finally awoken from their slumbers and suddenly realized that for the last few moments they have been walking on air, like Felix the Cat in the old cartoons, far from scientific ground. Though legitimized by scientific knowledge, their discourse is seen to have been no more than the ordinary language of tactical games between economic powers and symbolic authorities.²

Wittgenstein on ordinary language

Then Certeau introduces the Wittgensteinian model of ordinary language as a countermodel that allows for the production of knowledge without producing expertise and the concomitant loss of knowledge. Certeau finds in Wittgenstein a radical critique of the expert, including the notion of the philosopher as an expert. This model is to be found in Wittgenstein's later philosophy, in the *Philosophical Investigations*. There, as Wittgenstein says himself, he brings words back from their metaphysical use to their everyday use. Wittgenstein sets himself the task of being the scientist of the activity of signifying in common language. He wants to treat language in such a way as not to state anything that exceeds the competence of this language and thus never to become an expert. Certeau says about Wittgenstein:

He thus changes the *place* of analysis, henceforth defined by a universality identical with submission to ordinary use. This change of place modifies the status of the discourse. By

² Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, p. 8.

being 'caught' within ordinary language, the philosopher no longer has his own (*propre*) appropriable place. Any position of mastery is denied him.³

Certeau sees Wittgenstein mainly as a philosopher of ordinary language but he also refers to Wittgenstein's previous ideas about language and the task of philosophy. For instance he quotes what Wittgenstein says in proposition 6.53 of the *Tractatus* about the correct method of philosophy, which is 'to say nothing except what can be said... and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his proposition'. Here Wittgenstein's purpose is to show how to avoid speaking nonsense, which includes all metaphysical statements. This purpose is not very much different from what Certeau says about the later Wittgenstein. Wittgenstein's aim in the *Tractatus* is to stop nonsensical statements by showing what is nonsensical about them. Speaking nonsense occurs when someone tries to speak about language as it were from a place outside language, or outside the world. We cannot assume such a position. There is no privileged place to speak from, it is impossible to step outside language, to go beyond language or beyond the world. In the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein tried to find the limits of language in order to establish when a speaker oversteps them, but he in the process he has overstepped them himself. Now what exceeds these limits is the ethical or the mystical, what cannot be spoken about. As Certeau says:

Philosophical or scientific privilege disappears into the ordinary. This disappearance has as its *corollary the invalidation of truths. (...) Wittgenstein attempts to reduce these truths to linguistic facts and to that which, in these facts, refers to an ineffable or 'mystical' exteriority of language.*⁴

As already noted, this attempt is something that is explicit in the *Tractatus*, but not in the *Philosophical Investigations*.

The Mystical: what is 'the mystical' for Wittgenstein?

Wittgenstein refers to this mystical exteriority of language three times in the *Tractatus* and now we will first have to find out what is meant by what Wittgenstein there calls the 'mystical'. This is not an easy task because the three remarks about the mystical are rather obscure, as are many of the statements in *Tractatus*. These are the mystical propositions:

- 6.44 It is not *how* things are in the world that is mystical, but *that* it exists.
- 6.45 To view the world *sub specie aeterni* is to view it as a whole – a limited whole.
Feeling the world as a limited whole – it is this that is mystical.
- 6.522 There is indeed the inexpressible. This *shows* itself; it is the mystical.

The same problem that we encountered about the relation between the early and the late Wittgenstein is found in the *Tractatus* itself. There seem to be two parts of the book, the first and

³ *Ibid.*, p.11.

⁴ *Ibid.*, p.11.

larger part being about logic and the second, which comprises the last four or five pages, which is the ethical or mystical part. Some critics argue that the so-called mystical parts of the book are a culmination of the work, reflecting back on everything that went before. Others, e.g. Hacker, take the opposite view. Hacker says that clearly the mystical parts were of great importance to Wittgenstein, but it is not obvious that they follow from the earlier sections of the book.

In a letter Wittgenstein wrote to the publisher Ludwig von Ficker he explains what he sees as the point of his book. He says:

the point of the book is ethical. I once wanted to give a few words in the foreword which now actually are not in it, which, however, I'll write to you now because they might be a key for you: I wanted to write that my work consists of two parts: of the one which is here, and of everything which I have *not* written. And precisely this second part is the important one. For the Ethical is delimited from within, as it were, by my book; and I'm convinced that, *strictly speaking*, it can *ONLY* be delimited in this way. In brief, I think: All of that which *many* are *babbling* today, I have defined in my book by remaining silent about it. [...] For the time being, I'd recommend that you read the *foreword* and the *conclusion* since these express the point most directly.⁵

There have always been different opinions about what may be the origin of the mystical sections in the *Tractatus* and why Wittgenstein added them to a book that is for the main part about logic. Even readers who maintain that the mystical sections are an essential part of the *Tractatus* often find themselves obliged to give some additional explanation why they are included in the book. Although the mystical seems to be important to Wittgenstein and his argument culminates in the ineffable and the mystical, the three remarks quoted here are the only mentioning of the mystical and they do allow different interpretations. Some commentators try to derive the meaning from what went before, but many look for others sources, notably about Wittgenstein himself, his origin, his experiences and his life. Certeau too takes Wittgenstein's life into account. He speaks about the primary historical context of Wittgenstein's thought.

Wittgenstein's Life

Now what are these facts about Wittgenstein's life that induce commentators to characterize him as a mystic of sorts? More than is the case with other philosophers, Wittgenstein's ideas are often explained by referring to his life. The first thing to be mentioned is his origin. Wittgenstein was born in 1889 in Vienna to a wealthy industrial family. In their book *Wittgenstein's Vienna* Allan Janik and Stephen Toulmin refer to Wittgenstein's viennese cultural background in order to explain the ethical and mystical aspects of the *Tractatus*. They too assert that it is impossible to make a distinction between the man Wittgenstein and the philosopher. His philosophical activities should be regarded as only one of many means of expressing his overall personality. They add that they found that when

⁵ Quoted by Ray Monk in: *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*. Wittgenstein here speaks about the ethical purpose of his book and the *ethical* being delimited from within, but the ethical also comprises what Wittgenstein later calls 'absolute value', the meaning of the world and the *mystical*.

they were students it was hard for them to understand his reasoning, and this was for a large part because they did not understand him as a person. Many commentators on Wittgenstein's work share this view.

When he was 19 years old Wittgenstein came to Manchester University to study engineering. There he became acquainted with the work of both Frege and Russell who had published pioneering works the foundations of mathematics and logic. In 1911 Wittgenstein went to Cambridge to study with Russell and in the years that followed he developed his own view on the nature of logic. In 1914, at the start of the first World War, Wittgenstein joined the Austrian army. He was taken captive in 1917 and spent the remaining months of the war at a prison camp. During the war he wrote the notes and drafts that were the basis of *Tractatus logico-philosophicus*, which was published in 1921. Wittgenstein thought that in his book he had finally solved the problems of philosophy, as he claims in the preface, and there was no more philosophical work for him to do. So after having finished the *Tractatus* he abandoned philosophy and decided to pursue a different career. First he became a schoolteacher in a small Austrian village, later he worked as a gardener in a monastery.

In 1929 Wittgenstein returned to Cambridge to resume his philosophical vocation. He went back because his ideas about language were changing gradually and he thought there might be some useful philosophical work for him to do after all. But another reason may have been that his career as a schoolteacher had failed. It had become painfully clear to him that he was not really fit to be a teacher to young children. There had been many conflicts with his pupils and their parents because his expectations far too high. Besides he could not bridge the cultural gap between himself and the peasants whose children were his pupils. Later he would say that he had become a philosopher because he was no good for anything else, and this was not said in jest. Wittgenstein always valued manual work and a job with practical results higher than the theoretical work he did as a professor in Cambridge and he encouraged his students to seek what he called a real profession. Around 1934 Wittgenstein himself again conceived the idea of giving up academic life altogether. He planned going to Russia where he would seek work as a manual labor, or when that seemed impractical, to qualify as a doctor and work in a hospital there. He wanted to go, not from a political conviction, but more because of the sort of life he believed was led in the Soviet Union. His restlessness in this respect was characteristic of all of his life. But Wittgenstein stayed in Cambridge till 1947. The last years of his life were spent living as a guest in the homes of his friends and disciples. In 1951 he died from cancer in the house of his doctor.

As already stated, authors who want to explain the appearance of the mystical in the *Tractatus* often refer to Wittgenstein's life, but they do not all refer to the same experiences or occurrences in his life. Brian McGuinness has written an article dedicated to the mysticism of the *Tractatus*. He asks in what way the term *mysticism* is appropriate for Wittgenstein's work and he tries to find the answer by concentrating on Wittgenstein's experiences during the war, especially some kind of mystical experience he may have had. His question is: did Wittgenstein have a mystical experience or is he misusing the word? Ray Monk is the author who has written the standard biography on Wittgenstein, called *Wittgenstein, The Duty of Genius*. For him it is necessary to see the link between Wittgenstein's ideas and his life and experiences. It is almost a precondition for really understanding Wittgenstein's philosophy. Monk asserts that what Wittgenstein had wanted from the war was a transformation of his personality and a kind of religious experience. According to Monk Wittgenstein found the religious conversion he had wanted and this had a profound influence on his work, 'transforming it from an analysis of logical symbolism in the spirit of Frege and Russell into the

curiously hybrid work which we know today, combining as it does logical theory with religious mysticism.⁶

Now we return to Certeau. For him too there is a connection between Wittgenstein's ideas and his life, and this connection as Certeau conceives it can make us understand Wittgenstein as a wild mystic. Certeau concentrates on Wittgenstein's ideas about philosophy and the task of the philosopher as well as on his later ideas of language. I will quote the parts of his section on Wittgenstein that express most clearly his interpretation of Wittgenstein's view of ordinary language. Here elements of Wittgenstein's early and his later philosophy are combined. Some quotes from *The Practice of Everyday Life*:

Rarely has the reality of language – that is, the *fact* that it defines our historicity, that it dominates and envelops us in the mode of the ordinary, that no discourse can therefore “escape from it,” put itself at the distance from it in order to observe it and tell us its meaning – been taken seriously with so much rigor. (p. 10)

We are subject to, but not identified with, ordinary language. As in the ship of fools, we are embarked, without the possibility of an aerial view of any sort of totalization. (p.11)

By being “caught” within ordinary language, the philosopher no longer has his own (*propre*) appropriable place. Any position of mastery is denied him (p.11)

Philosophical or scientific privilege disappears into the ordinary. This disappearance has as its corollary the invalidation of truths. (...) Wittgenstein attempts to reduce these truths to linguistic facts and to that which, in these facts, refers to an ineffable or ‘mystical’ exteriority of language (p.11)

The critical return of the ordinary, as Wittgenstein understands it, must destroy all the varieties of rhetorical brilliance associated with powers that hierarchize and with nonsense that enjoys authority. (p.13)

Finally, this science of the ordinary is defined by a threefold foreignness: the foreignness of the specialist (and of the wealthy bourgeois) to common life, of the scientist to philosophy, and, until the very end, of the German to everyday English language (in which he never settled down)... In the accidental ways of being a foreigner away from home ... Wittgenstein sees the metaphors of foreign analytical procedures inside the very language that circumscribes them. (p.13)

Certeau concludes:

By these characteristics Wittgenstein's fragmented and rigorous body of work seems to provide a philosophical blueprint for a contemporary science of the ordinary. (p.14)

⁶ Ray Monk, *Ludwig Wittgenstein: The Duty of Genius*, p. 116.

Conclusion: The Wild Mystic

1.

We saw that in his description of Wittgenstein's philosophy of language Certeau does not distinguish between Wittgenstein's early and his later philosophy. The early ideas are the basis or form the embedding of the later thought. Because of the ideas of the *Tractatus* we have a clear view of the limits of language. We will remain within ordinary language, that is our common place. And yet we do not coincide with our language. We cannot be identified with it. A certain foreignness remains which Wittgenstein, who always stayed a foreigner, has made us aware of.

After having discussed Wittgenstein's model of ordinary language Certeau goes on to discuss every day practices. But if we leave theoretical texts, we do not leave Wittgenstein; we follow him and set out, as he did, toward the open sea of common experience that surrounds and finally carries away every discourse.

2.

In the man Wittgenstein we can see the wild mystic, not because he may have had mystical experiences or because in the *Tractatus* he mentions 'the mystical' several times, but because of his restless life, never settling down, always planning to leave the place where he is staying and pursue another career. Because of his life we are more able to understand his philosophy.

After the *Tractatus* Wittgenstein never completed any work for publication. He wrote remarks in many small notebooks and then selected the best of them and wrote them out into large manuscript volumes, from which he made further selections. But it never culminated in an arrangement with which he was fully satisfied. None of the works of the later Wittgenstein can be regarded as a completed work. He was always in the process of writing and rewriting and editing.

Wittgenstein remained a wanderer, never regarding a work as completed, never satisfied with his career and always seeking another vocation, never settling down until in the end he was living as a guest in the houses of friends, always moving, until he died in his doctor's house. One of the last chapters in Monk's biography is entitled 'A Citizen of no Community'. He remained a wanderer till the end. What Certeau in *The Mystic Fable* says about Jean de Labadie we can also see to apply to Wittgenstein:

There were also minds for whom the work of the infinite consisted in refusing one by one every specific place. They spent their time "untying" themselves from local identifications. That passion for untying (for the absolute) reiterated at every step the gesture that says "this isn't it", "this isn't it," endlessly, till the end of one's strength. That latter gesture is the mainspring of mystic life.⁷

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Published on: www.philosophyplus.com