

nishing us with commitments to forms of understanding that hold out the promise of linking the universal bindingness of natural law with something that, though free of dogma, is nevertheless still (at some level) a recognizable reflection of our distinctively human concerns. Yet as philosophers seeking to do justice reflectively to our own intuitions about what is of ultimate value in human life, we are surely bound to want to look beyond this, too—to seek out some more substantive dimension within the thinking of these philosophers such as may help us to formulate and come to terms with our own intuitions about such things. The danger, as I see it, is that if we feel that what we then encounter there somehow falls short of what we would wish to see captured in a substantive philosophical account of the human condition as we ourselves recognize it, then the temptation arises to find refuge in the proceduralistically oriented interpretations of these thinkers' ideas, not because one is primarily concerned with issues relating to the threat of scientism, naturalism, determinism, and so on, but because this may serve to distract one from the question one really ought then to be asking—namely, why it is that one was dissatisfied, if indeed one was, with the substantive dimension one thought one had also discerned in their thought.

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Josef G. F. Rothhaupt, and Wilhelm Vossenkuhl, eds. *Kulturen und Werte: Wittgensteins Kringel-Buch als Initialtext. Über Wittgenstein*, 1. Berlin; Boston: De Gruyter, 2013.

For several years now, researchers dealing with the life and philosophy of Wittgenstein have had at their disposal a comprehensive tool in the form of the *Bergen Electronic Edition* of the *Nachlass*, in which “all of Wittgenstein’s unpublished manuscripts, typescripts, dictations, and most of his notebooks,”¹ totaling over three million words, have been collected in one place, and of which certainly no more than a third are available in printed editions of his writings. This is especially surprising if one realizes that

1. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Wittgenstein’s Nachlass: The Bergen Electronic Edition* (Oxford: Oxford University Press / Charlottesville, VA: IntelLex Corp., 1998–2001), <http://www.nlx.com/collections/124>.

during his lifetime Wittgenstein published a mere twenty-five thousand words or so, which constitutes a mere 0.83% of the entire *Nachlass* and about 2.5% of all of the publications that have appeared under his name since his death. But why did Wittgenstein publish so little? What would his book have looked like, if he had decided to publish it? And what are the relationships between Wittgenstein's various papers? There have been many attempts to answer these questions. One of them is found in Josef Rothhaupt's book project, known as the *Kringel-Buch*.² However, this answer is not so obvious, because it raises further questions: in what sense is the *Kringel-Buch* a "book" by Wittgenstein? How was it possible for Rothhaupt to alight upon the Preface, and the motto, for this "book"? Isn't it just a collection, or even a loose conglomeration, of observations gathered together from different groups of texts and text types? What is the place of the *Kringel-Buch* in the *Nachlass*, and how can it help us understand Wittgenstein's work better?

These, and many other issues, have been discussed in great detail by scholars at a conference devoted to the *Kringel-Buch*, held at the Ludwig Maximilians University in Munich from 27th to 30th April 2011. One of the results of this conference has been the book under review here: *Kulturen und Werte: Wittgensteins Kringel-Buch als Initialtext*. In the editorial notes to it, we read that "scholarly investigation into the *Kringel-Buch* will need to address its origin, as well as its significance for Wittgenstein's thought. However, we can already affirm that this collection of texts includes some highly interesting and currently relevant interdisciplinary perspectives on the topic of cultures and values. The present volume aims to launch a discussion about the significance of the *Kringel-Buch*."

Kulturen und Werte is composed of 24 papers written by leading experts in the field of Wittgenstein's philosophy (to mention only a few of them: Josef G. F. Rothhaupt, David Stern, Wilhelm Vossenkuhl, Ilse Somavilla) and is divided into eight sections: "Philosophy and Philology," "Psychology," "Anthropology" (all three texts from this section are focused on the relationship between Wittgenstein and Frazer's *Golden Bough*), "Culture," "Aesthetics," "Music," "Literature," and "Language Poetry." Except for the first part, which is concerned mostly with critical analysis of Rothhaupt's proposal, and for the two final sections, comprising three poems

2. Ludwig Wittgenstein, "Wittgensteins 'Kringel-Buch': Recherchiert, rekonstruiert, arrangiert und ediert von Dr. Josef G. F. Rothhaupt," ed. Josef G. F. Rothhaupt (unpublished manuscript, February 2011, München: Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, 2011), Adobe PDF file, partially available online. Accessed 28 January 2014. http://www.philosophie.uni-muenchen.de/lehreinheiten/philosophie_5/aktuelles/kulturen_u_werte/kringel.pdf.

by Charles Bernstein (who belongs to a group of poets called “language poets,” strongly inspired by Wittgenstein), the rest of the book deals with the content of the *Kringel-Buch*, and with its relevance to discussions taking place in the disciplines indicated.

Due to the large numbers of authors and topics that feature in *Kulturen und Werte*, I shall focus here on just two sections from the book: “Philosophy and Philology,” and “Aesthetics.” Josef Rothhaupt’s lengthy opening paper, “Zur Philologie des ‘Kringel-Buches’ und seiner Verortung in Wittgensteins Oeuvre,” (3–77) is a presentation of his method and approach to the *Nachlass*, but can also be seen as an attempted justification and defense of these. Whereas the most common strategy for “making Wittgenstein’s book” has been to gather together those remarks written by Wittgenstein that concern similar topics, in this way creating a new “book” by him (cf. *Culture and Value*, *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*, *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*, etc.), Rothhaupt’s attention has focused instead on the circular-shaped signs left by Wittgenstein in his manuscripts. Thus, I think this approach can be called “philological.” As a result of Rothhaupt’s work—i.e. his “research, reconstruction, arranging and editing”³—we have the “book project” known as the *Kringel-Buch*. It is worth noticing that it is not exactly a “new” book, because the great majority of remarks there have been published previously, and may be found in *Philosophical Remarks*, *Culture and Value*, the *Remarks on Frazer’s Golden Bough*, and the *Big Typescript*. Crudely speaking, what is “new” in Rothhaupt-Wittgenstein’s book is not *what* lies inside, but *how* it has been arranged.

The *Kringel-Buch* consists of those remarks from Wittgenstein’s manuscripts from the 1930s that he labeled with the small circle “○” at the beginning. Rothhaupt argues that sections marked with “○” (he has located 234 such paragraphs) were elements of a book planned by Wittgenstein. According to him, these remarks are divided up again, into different text groups, by additional section markers, in combination with the mark “○”. The 234 paragraphs of the *Kringel-Buch* are divided into four “chapters,” plus Preface, Appendix, and even a motto, all of them supposedly intended to be thus by Wittgenstein himself. The principal themes of each chapter are: (1) “description of immediate experience, and especially talk about pain,” (2) “methodological concerns and questions about the nature of Wittgenstein’s work; . . . [also] art, music and the interpretation of

3. This is Stern’s translation of “recherchiert, rekonstruiert, arrangiert und ediert” (cf. footnote 2). David Stern, “A New Book by Wittgenstein? The Place of the ‘Kringel-Buch’ in Wittgenstein’s Papers,” in *Kulturen und Werte*, 99.

cultures,” (3) religion and rituals (remarks from this section correspond mostly to *Remarks on Frazer’s Golden Bough*), and (4) “many themes in the philosophy of mind and philosophy of language.”⁴ A quick glance is enough for one to notice that this “book” has a rather loose structure.

A critical point of view is presented in the two texts that follow after: Stefan Majetschak’s “‘Kringel’-Sektionen in Wittgensteins Nachlass. Kritische Bemerkungen zu ihrer Deutung” (77–95) and David Stern’s “A New Book by Wittgenstein? The Place of the ‘Kringel-Buch’ in Wittgenstein’s Papers” (97–111). Stern points out that “there is no systematic way of looking at Wittgenstein’s use of sigla,” and for this reason “we cannot rule out the possibility that Wittgenstein used the same marks for different purposes in different manuscripts, or at different stages of revision.” Moreover, “in the case of some more elaborate sigla, it is far from clear whether the differences between certain inscriptions are merely orthographic, or should be taken as distinguishing different sigla” (106). Hence, if we do not even know this for sure, how can we entertain suppositions about what kind of book Wittgenstein had in mind when he himself spoke of “his book”? Stern notices that it is possible to imagine a few other candidates for a book emerging from Wittgenstein’s sigla, alongside the *Kringel-Buch*. Moreover, he agrees with Alfred Noodman and James Klagge that there is a specific sort of danger lurking here for Wittgenstein scholars, which they ought to keep in mind: “One of the reasons we scholars want to read the *Nachlass* is that we are very content with Wittgenstein’s formulations—happy to read and quote them. The formulations seem perfectly adequate for our purposes. Indeed, when Wittgenstein is least satisfied we tend to be most satisfied, because he is least satisfied when he falls into the idiom that we find most familiar and understandable, and that he does not want to buy into.”⁵

Let us come back for a moment to the question of why Wittgenstein published so little. A partial answer is provided by Wittgenstein himself: he wrote in the Preface to *Philosophical Investigations* that “The best that I could write would never be more than philosophical remarks; my thoughts were soon crippled if I tried to force them on in any single direction against their natural inclination.”⁶ However Thomas Wellgren, in the article “The Genius, the Businessman, the Sceptic: Three Phases in Wittgenstein’s Views on Publishing and on Philosophy” (113–139), argues, relying

4. Ibid., 99–100.

5. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Occasions, 1912–1951*, ed. James Carl Klagge and Alfred Nordmann, (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1993), ix n4.

on biographical facts, that Wittgenstein's attitude toward publishing underwent some changes. He believes that it is possible to point to three different phases—those of the “Genius,” “Businessman,” and “Sceptic”—and also to explain why it is that he published only one book in the first phase, one paper in the second, and absolutely nothing in the last.

The section entitled “Aesthetics” has papers by Marjorie Perloff and Gabriele Tomasi. What is more interesting, both of them are concerned with the same section—section 52 from the *Kringel-Buch*,⁷ which is “one of the most enigmatic and complex notebook entries” ever set down by Wittgenstein. While Perloff is interested in the connection between Wittgenstein's view of art and artistic performance, especially in the context of Marcel Duchamp's works and conceptualism, Tomasi is concerned more with the contribution of Wittgenstein's conception of “right perspective” to ethics and aesthetics (though she also refers it to art—in this case, Dutch painting of the 18th century). However, in spite of both authors' attempts to link their topics to the *Kringel-Buch*, their papers are, in my opinion, only loosely connected with it at best. Although Perloff and Tomasi start out on their investigations by considering the *Kringel-Buch*, they in fact focus on just one remark, which is paragraph 52: “Though to strip the section from its larger context and consider it as an autonomous piece is disputable, I hope this move is excusable on the one hand on the grounds that the *Kringel-Buch* as *Initialtext* or book project has a relatively loose structure and, on the other hand, because section 52—if I am not mistaken, the longest in the *Kringel-Buch*—conveys a sense of completeness” (355).

Even after such a quick survey of the contents of *Kulturen und Werte* as this one, we are able to see that it offers a multifaceted and highly valuable discussion of Wittgenstein's thought in the so-called “middle period” of his development, not only in the context of the history of philosophy, but also in that of its contribution to almost every area of human activity (including religion, aesthetics, music, etc.). This book provides a good introduction to the issues relating to the *Kringel-Buch*, and also shows that projects like Rothhaupt's have the capacity to elicit interesting and stim-

6. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations: The German Text with a Revised English Translation*, trans. G. E. M. Anscombe, ed. P. M. S. Hacker and Joachim Schulte, revised 4th ed. (Oxford; Chichester; Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009).

7. The same remark, MS 109 28, dated 22 August 1930, may be found in Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Culture and Value: A Selection from the Posthumous Remains*, ed. Georg Henrik von Wright, Heikki Nyman, and Alois Pichler, rev. 2nd ed. (Oxford, UK; Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1998), 6–7.

ulating debate among scholars, even though at the same time they may themselves be exposed to evaluation and criticism that is by no means always favorable.

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