



## Wittgenstein ein Philosoph der Kulturen

### Wittgenstein, Philosopher of Cultures

### Wittgenstein – filozof kultur

"Welch ein kleiner Gedanke doch ein ganzes Leben füllen kann!"

"How small a thought it takes to fill a whole life!"

"Taka mała myśl, a przecież potrafi wypełnić całe życie!"

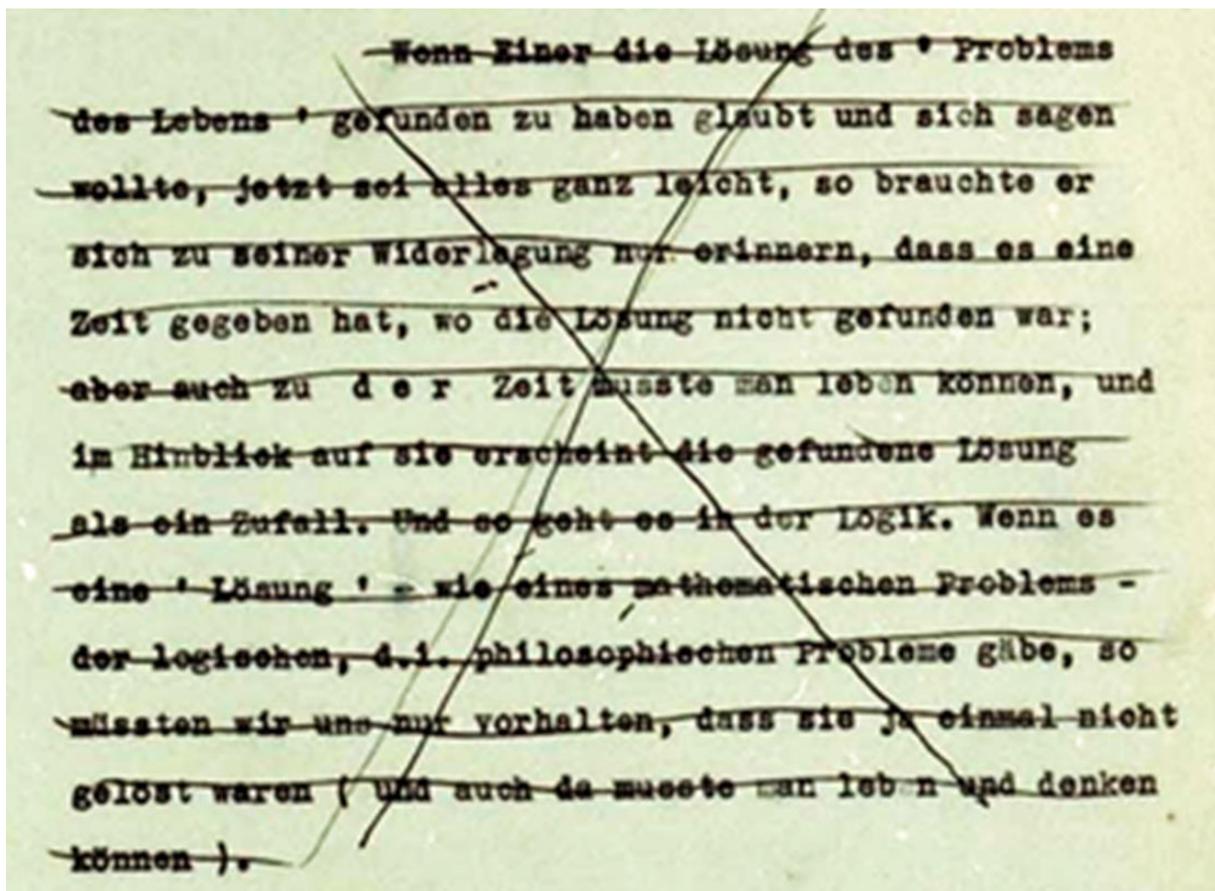
Ludwig Wittgenstein: MS131,181 (2<sup>nd</sup> Sept. 1946)

The above quotation may serve as the motto for this academic conference, which will take place in Cracow from 28<sup>th</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup> October, 2014. The aim of the conference is to investigate the impact of the thought of Ludwig Wittgenstein on the philosophy of culture. The basis for such an exploration is the entire legacy of philosophy to date. The choice of venue and location for the conference reflects the fact of our having already enjoyed a tried and tested collaboration with our Polish colleagues. In addition, we have been led to it by two historical events, whose centennial anniversaries we shall be marking in 2014: firstly, it will be 100 years since Ludwig Wittgenstein, during his time spent in Cracow, began writing the first of his philosophical notebooks (to have survived until today), and secondly, it was in that same year, and also in Cracow, that Georg Trakl died – just three days before a planned meeting with Wittgenstein.

Such are the external reasons for our choice of conference location. However, “Wittgenstein, Philosopher of Cultures” may not seem such an obvious choice of conference theme, if one is inclined to view him as, above all, a philosopher of language. In connection with this, Christian Bermes writes that “It is easy to overestimate the importance of Wittgenstein’s role as a philosopher of language and to fail to appreciate the significance of his contribution as a philosopher of culture. At first glance one may simply not perceive the philosophico-cultural aspects of his philosophy, which, when they eventually see the light of day, turn out to possess a quite particular subtlety. Philosophy of language and philosophy of culture are not to be

found positioned alongside one another there in mutual isolation – rather, they create a unity, even if this is not always visible.” (Christian Bermes, “Ludwig Wittgenstein”, in: Ralf Konersmann (ed.), *Handbuch der Kulturphilosophie*, 2012, 138-143).

We would like to see the source texts pertaining to Wittgenstein’s oeuvre analyzed in accordance with the current state of research in this area. Let us even take on board his *Remarks on Frazer’s “Golden Bough”*, which until now have for the most part been treated as a rather *sui generis* erratic deviation relative to his overall legacy. That view surely calls out for revision. It turns out that in fact the *Remarks* are indissolubly connected, in many ways and on many levels, with other parts of his oeuvre. That claim is now already something more than a mere research hypothesis. We are already in a position today to acknowledge that the philosophic-cultural dimension of Wittgenstein’s thought is present throughout his entire oeuvre. Indeed, it stretches from the early *Notebooks* dating from 1914 to 1917, right through to the last notes jotted down by him in the late autograph manuscripts of the years 1949 to 1951. Beyond this, we wish to see the emphasis placed not just on his *Philosophical Investigations*, but also on the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology* and *On Certainty*.



(TS239: Early draft revisions for the *Philosophical Investigations*; Trinity College Library, Cambridge)

If someone believes he has found the solution to the “problems of life“ and is inclined to tell himself that now everything is simple, then to refuse himself he would only have to remember that there was a time when this „solution“ had not been found; but at t h a t time too one had to be able to live, and in reference to this time the new solution seems like a coincidence. And that’s what happens to us in logic. If there were a “solution“ to logical (philosophical) problems then we would only have to call to mind that, after all, at one time they had not been solved (and then too one had to be able to live and think).

Summing this up in just a few points: in the philosophy of culture of Wittgenstein we are dealing with topics relevant to culture, values, anthropology, religion, ethics and aesthetics. These indicate perspectives from which his entire output may be investigated, as well as providing a basis for highlighting the significance of the philosophico-cultural dimension of his thinking that, until now, has been unjustifiably neglected.

Conference organizers:

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