Ilse Somavilla, Carl Humphries, Bożena Sieradzka-Baziur, eds. Wittgensteins Denkbewegungen (Tagebücher 1930–1932/1936–1937) aus interdisziplinärer Sicht. Wittgenstein's Denkbewegungen (diaries 1930–1932/1936–1937): Interdisciplinary Perspectives. Innsbruck, Wien, Bozen: Studien Verlag, 2019.

Denkbewegungen (hereinafter DB) consist of diary entries by Ludwig Wittgenstein, written from 26 April 1930 to 28 January 1932 and from 19 November 1936 to 24 September 1937. This manuscript (MS 183) only became an object of research after 1993, when Johannes Koder and Margarete Bieder-Koder announced that the estate of their father, Rudolf Koder, contained documents by Ludwig Wittgenstein.¹ Rudolf Koder (1902–77) had been working as a teacher in Puchberg am Schneeberg in Lower Austria when he met Wittgenstein in 1923, who also had worked as a teacher in Lower Austria. They remained friends until the end of Wittgenstein's life and, following his death, his sister Margaret handed over these writings as a keepsake to Rudolf and Elisabeth Koder (255).

Some years after this discovery, the diaries were published by Ilse Somavilla in 1997 (Innsbruck: Haymon), with the English translation "Movements of Thought. Diaries, 1930-1932, 1936-1937" by Alfred Nordmann being published in 2003 (Lanham: Rowman & Littlefield)—hereinafter I refer to it as "MT"

1. All these documents are of substantial value for research on Wittgenstein since, besides the diaries, they comprise a typescript of the *Tractatus*, a manuscript of the *Philosophical Investigations*, a manuscript of the "Lecture on Ethics" and a single sheet of paper on which Wittgenstein described a dream (253).

The title of these editions is not Wittgenstein's own, but one chosen by the editor of the manuscript, Ilse Somavilla, which refers to Wittgenstein's use of the word "Denkbewegung" in these diaries as well as in other texts. In MT, Wittgenstein uses the word twice. In one remark, he tries to find out himself how his movement of thought could be classified: "The movement of thought in my philosophizing should be discernible also in the history of my mind, of its moral concepts & in the understanding of my situation" (MT 7.11. or 12.31). In the other, he describes a shift in his way of thinking: "My main movement of thought is a completely different one today from 15 or 20 years ago. And this is similar to when a painter makes a transition from one school to another" (MT 28.1.32). Both remarks address topics which Wittgenstein deals with regularly in MT (as well as in other private notes): First, the question of interrelations between the individual and the culture he is embedded in; second, the importance for Wittgenstein of the way of philosophizing, of its style.

The publication of these diaries has evoked great interest, evidenced by the fact that the German original was quickly translated into several other languages. According to the editors of the anthology, there was a particularly high level of interest in DB in Poland, an interest which was to be found among researchers working in different disciplines—be it philosophy, psychology, pedagogy or linguistics (10). Against this background, the idea arose to initiate an interdisciplinary research project with the aim of "fostering a full and proper reception of the rich variety of different aspects made manifest in Wittgenstein's diary, approaching these from an interdisciplinary point of view" (10). This anthology is the result of this project.

As the authors of the eleven articles deal with diverse topics and the contributions are written from very different perspectives and with different goals, in this review I will provide an overview of the main topics and theses of the respective articles.

The contributions are divided into three sections. The first section, "Linguistico-philosophical approaches to interpreting *Denkbewegungen*," starts with an introductory article by Bożena Sieradzka-Baziur, who looks at the diaries from the perspective of literary theory and linguistics. She starts by describing some of the specific features of a diary as a text genre (16–8). First, as diary entries are written out of an inner need, they enable readers to obtain an insight into the more intimate aspects of the life of the writer. This seems to be the reason why researchers from numerous disciplines are interested in diary notes: psychologists, pedagogists and sociologists, as well as linguists and literary scholars. A second feature is its specific dialogical form, in the sense that writers of diary entries often

hold a dialogue with themselves. Furthermore, this kind of prose has an open form and shows a thematic discontinuity, it doesn't encompass the vision of a whole that has to be accomplished and hence there is no ordering principle that precedes the writing in regard to its topics or structure. Referring to the work of Rudolf Hallig and Walter von Hartburg, she then designs a term network (*Begriffsnetz*) of the most relevant terms used in DB, such as "thinking," "emotions," "language," "religion, spirituality," "science, philosophy, creativity, work, lecture" and "ego, self-education" (21–33).

Jakub Gomułka advocates an interpretation of Wittgenstein's writings that focuses on the "diachronic interrelations" (37) between them (instead of the division between Wittgenstein 1 and 2, or even 3 and 4). In this context, he puts forward the thesis "that what I shall be calling the 'humanistic' themes in Wittgenstein's writings foreshadow in a sense his 'official' philosophical perspective" (37). His line of argumentation goes—roughly—as follows: The diaries show that Wittgenstein regularly violates the rules of senseful talk established by himself in the Tractatus and in the "Lecture on Ethics," in the sense that he makes "broadly 'humanistic'" remarks about ethics, religion, "holistic visions of history and culture," among others (49). As Gomułka indicates, according to Wittgenstein's own view, to do so is "plainly irrational" (49). In regard to the development of Wittgenstein's philosophy and his upcoming interest in analysing language-games and world-pictures, Gomułka sees this development as including a "broad[er] conception of rationality" (52) that allows one to speak about the abovementioned topics without being suspected of articulating nonsense. Furthermore, for Gomułka these "humanistic intuitions" can be considered "the crucial factor spurring Wittgenstein on in his restless search for new ways of discerning order in what we know about the human mind and language work" (52).

Sandra Markewitz tackles a very striking remark from the diary:

A characteristic of theorists of the past cultural era was wanting to find the *a-priori* where there wasn't one.

Or should I say a characteristic of the past cultural era was to create the *a priori*.

For it would have never created the concept if from the start it had seen the situation the way we see it. (A great—I mean, significant—error would then have been lost to the world.) But in reality one cannot argue like that, for this concept was founded in the whole culture. (MT 6.5.1931)

In analysing this remark, Markewitz draws several connections to other topics in the MT (for example, his antipathy towards the "bourgeois" brought up by Wittgenstein when thinking about the engagement of Marguerite Respinger and Talla Sjögren and condemning the "bourgeois odor" of it, MT 7.11. or 12.1931) or to his own later critique of some of the basic tractarian assumptions. In fact, for Markewitz it seems that the critique of the *a priori* can be seen as a kind of crystallization point in Wittgenstein's criticism of science as well of culture (69). Both this culture and science are dominated, inter alia, by the pursuit of safety and rationality, related with a mentality which lost the ability to wonder or worship (and thereby restricts the mind in scientific as well as in moral affairs). Hence, Wittgenstein's remark, according to Markewitz, firstly shall remind us that cultures sometimes lack reflections of their own premises (57) and secondly can be related to his critique of the bourgeois (60).

The second section, "The transcendental dimension in *Denkbewegungen*: aspects related to art and religion," opens with an article by Eran Guter about the remarks on music and composition. In this text, Wittgenstein's remark below serves as a starting point:

I often think that the highest I wish to achieve would be to compose a melody. Or it mystifies me that in the desire for this, none ever occurred to me. But then I must tell myself that it's quite impossible that one will ever occur to me, because for that I am missing something essential or <u>the</u> essential. That is why I am thinking of it as such a high ideal because I could then in a way sum up my life; and set it down crystallized. And even if it were but a small, shabby crystal, yet a crystal. (MT 28.4.30)

To explain this remark, Guter embeds it in several other lines of thought of Wittgenstein (presented primarily by means of the example of music), such as his enduring interest in the important topic of the problem of life (related to the claim for self-knowledge and authenticity), the reflections on aesthetics (and the significance of comparisons and connoisseurship in this context) and the pessimistic cultural view of his present as a time of civilization, not of culture (influenced by Oswald Spengler and the music theorist Heinrich Schenker), which requires a certain style of music as well as a "new style of philosophizing, appropriate to the time of civilization" (103). For Guter, the "essential" thing Wittgenstein believes he lacks is the ability to compose a melody that sums up his life, is "steady, regular step-by-step progression, a sense of cohesiveness, and a feeling of home. ... It was emblematic of his deeply personal worry that he could not grasp

his life as a whole, and hence could not experience meaning in it" (108–9). However, along with the development of his philosophical thinking towards the variety of language-games that were related to the importance of a "surveyable representation" (*Philosophical Investigations*<sup>2</sup>, 122) and elucidating comparisons, Wittgenstein, following Guter, "could see himself moving away from the Brahmsian ideal of 'motivic through composition' into the open: into a way of viewing things, rather than a view of things. ... Instead of self-deprecatingly wishing to set down his life as crystal, he gradually came to grant himself the latitude required to more fully note and appreciate its many and varied aspects" (110–11).

Wittgenstein's tense relationship with Christianity is the subject of the next contribution. Andreas Koritensky sees Wittgenstein in a state of diremption in regard to Christianity since, on the one hand, he views the practice of Christianity as right and valuable and therefore worth pursuing but, on the other, he feels alienated from precisely this practice (113). Based on the remark "A religious question is either a question of life or it is (empty) *chatter*" (MT 23.2.37), Koritensky believes that this diremption results from the three main life-problems of Wittgenstein: 1. the self-description of a person lacking authenticity; 2. the failure to fulfil his ideal of an ethical existence in his own life; 3. the experience of deep despair (121). Taking a theological point of view, Koritensky not only tries to explain some of the most relevant remarks in the context of (Christian) religion but also partly shows problems that seem to accompany Wittgenstein's thoughts. For instance, he raises the question as to the function played by language in the field of religion for Wittgenstein: given that he denies an explicating character of language for religious belief, Koritensky suggests that religious language can consequently only operate as an appeal in the sense that the "content" of it consists of the basic religious attitude of the speaker. In Koritensky's opinion, however, this leads to the problem that 1. a religious sentence can only be uttered meaningfully by a religious speaker and that 2. it can only be understood by a religious person. This leads to the situation that (religious) language would be restricted to be a distinguishing feature for insiders (117).

Krzysztof Korżyk looks more closely at Wittgenstein's "unceasing reevaluation of his and other's way of thinking in a manner that involved constant experimentation, both with ideas inherited from his philosophical predecessors and with the form in which they were to be expressed—be it

<sup>2.</sup> I refer here to G. E. M. Anscombe's, P. M. S. Hacker's and Joachim Schulte's translation (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell 2009).

logical, linguistic or stylistic" (134). To clarify this way of thinking, Korżyk differentiates between two "distinct sources of knowledge," one being "rational reflection," the other "direct insight in the essence of what is being studied" (135). In Korżyk's view, the latter source is especially important for those philosophical questions that deal "with our own value, meaning and dignity" (135) and that are to be found in Wittgenstein's diaries, very often presented in the form of pictures, analogies or metaphors. To elucidate these notes on Wittgenstein's "inner world of ... experience" (136), Korżyk takes some insights and tools from cognitive linguistics and semiotics for being fruitful, as for example identifying "key words," such as: "picture," "clarity," "self-knowledge," "doubt," "suffering," "sin," "order," "truth" (136) and "patterns of thought" (137)3 that should help us "to say something really important and revealing about either the text itself or its creator" (137). One of the results of such an investigation is "the entanglement of the subject in quasi-mythological structures" (144), substantiated by the author with some remarks of *On Certainty*<sup>4</sup> (hereinafter abbreviated as OC), where Wittgenstein writes of the world-picture as a part of a "kind of mythology" (OC, 95), using the riverbed-metaphor (OC, 97-9) and that of an "axis" (OC, 152). When applying this to Wittgenstein's private notes, Korżyk sees the following as a result: "Now if one treats this pivot or axis as being itself a manifestation of a traumatic hiatus in a human being's existence, in the sense of a set of nonverbalized experience that remain accidental, but around which one's own life has come to revolve, one will notice that much of the daily activity of the individual in question revolves around a few basic paradigmatic events and experiences which they are never fully able to deal with" (145). For Korżyk this "picture" comes to the fore when one reads MT "where the relationship between this pivot and that which revolves around it would appear to be a disharmonious one" (145).

The fourth article in this section is written by the editor of *Denkbewegungen*, Ilse Somavilla. She concentrates on Wittgenstein's descriptions of his struggles with various philosophical and personal issues, since these struggles or sufferings are frequently discussed in MT and in an intense and haunting way. For Somavilla, Wittgenstein's remark "I am petitioning & *I already have it as I want it to have: namely half heaven, half hell!*"

<sup>3.</sup> In this context, the author refers to the work of Anna Wierzbicka *Understanding Cultures through their Key Words: English, Russian, Polish, German, and Japanese* (Oxford: Oxford University Press 1997).

<sup>4.</sup> I refer here to Denis Paul's and G.E.M. Anscombe's translation (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing 2012).

(MT 24.3.37) gets to the heart of his situation in this context as it sums up his state while philosophizing and/or struggling to meet his own ethical-religious requirements (155). In this context, she analyses these sufferings of Wittgenstein more closely by means of the examples of his considerations concerning the "spirit," madness, genius, love, and furthermore his striving for morality, purity and perfection (for which authenticity and self-knowledge are necessary prerequisites). With regard to all these topics, Somavilla points out that Wittgenstein takes these considerations as relevant for his philosophical reflections as well as his personal ones, thereby hinting at possible connections between personal and philosophical lines of thought. To give just one example, the painful process of self-understanding or self-knowledge is not only the prerequisite to be clear about oneself, but also about philosophical problems (158).

In the last section, "psychological, anthropological and auto-pedagogical dimensions of *Denkbewegungen*," Carl Humphries pursues the target "to find a way to 'appropriately register' the significance of the personal in relation to [Wittgenstein's] activity as a philosopher" (175). As he is convinced that reading the MT can inform us about more than Wittgenstein's reflections about personal concerns in the sense that it helps us to understand better his "intellectual direction" (179), he chooses "a comparisonbased approach" (176), involving some of Wittgenstein's remarks about culture and cultural decline as well as some central aspects of his later philosophy. I will concentrate on the first one here. Referring to a draft for a preface of late 1930 in MS 109, in which Wittgenstein articulates his being alienated from the spirit "of the prevailing European and American civilization" (Culture and Value, 8e), Humphries works out the important "role of historico-cultural defined temporal perspective in his thinking" (177) that entails the tension between a (past) culture (and their postulated "spirit" to which Wittgenstein feels himself attached) on the one hand, and the (present) civilization on the other, raising the issue of cultural value and, as a consequence, giving rise to the question of "the very evaluativity of his own stance" (178). Against this background another question arises for Humphries, namely of whether this ambivalence concerning cultural values would have an impact on Wittgenstein's attitude concerning ethics. This question is largely motivated by thinking about the typical features of writing a diary concerning "temporal matters-and, in particular, ... temporal indexicality" (180). The first feature pertains to diary notes being "non-rearrangeable" in the sense that "they are indexed to a temporally

unfolding sequence of historico-personal 'nows' (corresponding to the contexts in which they came to be written)" (180). Humphries describes these "nows" as actually happening concerns about which the writer reflects upon. This doesn't mean that there cannot be interrelations between these "nows" or that it is impossible that one "now" may lead to a sequence of following entries. What is important for Humphries in this context, is the difference between this kind of thinking and writing and the articulation of fixed general views "about how meaning and/or value arise in relation to a life" (180). In other words, Wittgenstein's writing in MT (and in his later philosophy) is completely different from the writing of someone who puts forward a certain metaphysical thesis concerning ethical selfhood and its relation to contingent experience. In contrast to the latter, "ethical selfhood and/or self-evaluation is 'in play' or 'at stake' in DB, in, at the very least, a potentially more open-endedly and radically temporally perspectival way" (180) than the aforementioned position.

The next contribution is a special one: Tomasz Grzegorek, instead of going ahead directly with the task of a psychological reading of Wittgenstein's diaries, starts with a multi-faceted reflection on this task—some aspects of this reflection are related to Wittgenstein's diaries and his views on psychology, others to the discipline of psychology itself. Wittgenstein articulates his critical view about psychology in several remarks such as the following:

The confusion and barrenness of psychology is not to be explained by its being a "young science"; its state is not comparable with that of physics, for instance, in its beginnings. ... For in psychology, there are experimental methods and *conceptual confusion*.

The existence of the experimental method makes us think that we have the means of getting rid of the problems which trouble us, but problem and method pass one another by.<sup>6</sup>

To elucidate this harsh critique, Grzegorek hints at two different approaches (and respective goals) within psychology: one that is interested in "uncovering universal mechanisms that necessarily bear on all members of either selected populations ... or—preferably—the species as a whole" (194),

<sup>6.</sup> I refer here to G. E. M. Anscombe's, P. M. S. Hacker's and Joachim Schulte's translation of *Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment included in Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009, 371.

thereby abstracting "from the context of real life" (200) of individual persons; the other, on the contrary, looking for an understanding of "a single person as a unique being" (194). The latter, as a result, does not mainly focus on scientific methods such as those from biology and physics, but on "an unconventional methodology closer to that of humanities" (194), for which the work of Wilhelm Wundt serves as an example. Grzegorek sees a similarity in their critique. He elucidates this similarity by first hinting at Wittgenstein's conviction—one contrary to the one held by the majority of psychologists—that psychological verbs like "think" or "feel" are not to be understood as referring "to a definite process ruled by natural laws, or any other laws similar to natural ones" (200). Instead he "seems to follow Wilhelm Wundt in suggesting that the methodology of psychological research, insofar as it resembles that of scientific disciplines, results in inadequate knowledge, in that while such knowledge ostensibly concerns memory, personality and feelings, it is in fact about some other quite alien constructs" (201). This quote shows that Wittgenstein's critique, according to Grzegorek, has to be looked at in a differentiated way, as it is directed against psychological scientific theories and their (in his view) alleged insights, but not against psychotherapy or psychoanalysis (at least not to the same extent). Wittgenstein's analysis of Sigmund Freud's work, for instance, shows that even though he rejects the theoretical part, he notices several interesting and even illuminating aspects (see. e.g. MT 27.4.30). With regard to a psychological reading of MT, Grzegorek analyses some of the topics which Wittgenstein was struggling with. In this context, he concludes that "for Wittgenstein, keeping records containing intimate confessions seems to have fulfilled two functions: one descriptive, the other performative. It was to help him elucidate what it really means to be a human being, and also to help him become such a being himself" (203). According to Grzegorek, these two functions can not only be seen in the explicit personal remarks but also in other notes in which he does not refer to himself (remarks about music, religion, etc.).

Józef Bremer deals with the topic of emotions and investigates possible interrelations between some philosophical remarks in this context and private notes. Concerning the philosophical remarks, he describes Wittgenstein's attempts to obtain a "surveyable representation" of psychological terms without "aiming at some kind of completeness" (*Philosophy of Psychology – A Fragment*, 202). To give just one example, in the *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology*<sup>7</sup> (hereinafter abbreviated as RPP) Wittgenstein

gives a brief outline of a possible classification of psychological terms, hereby sometimes differentiating between concepts, e.g. between "directed emotions" (like "fear"/Furcht) and "undirected emotions" (like "anxiety"/ Angst), sometimes giving short descriptions of the respective terms, for example: "An emotion has duration; it has no place; it has characteristic "undergoings" and thoughts; it has a characteristic expression which one would use in miming it. ... Emotions colour thoughts" (RPP I, 836). In MT, following Bremer, several of these topics are already addressed: Here Wittgenstein, for instance, also differentiates between the use of (directed) "fear"/Furcht and the one of (undirected) "anxiety"/Angst. For Bremer, this remark can be seen as being echoed in the following entry: "The joy I have in my thoughts (philosophical thoughts) is joy in my own strange life. Is that the joy of life?" (MT 24.10.31) In his concluding remarks Bremer puts these assumed interrelations in a more encompassing way when he writes that in MT Wittgenstein's mentions of emotions can be seen as an ordering in ethical (e.g. "wretchedness," MT 19.2.31), religious (e.g. "eternal damnation," MT 20.2.37) and therapeutic ("work on oneself," MS 112, 46/14.10.31; Culture and Value, 24e) terms (227-8). This procedure again, in Bremer's view, is fundamental for Wittgenstein's philosophical conceptions of emotions as well as for his surveyable representation of emotions like love, hope or fear (228).

Finally, the article of Markus Lipowicz looks at MT from a pedagogicalanthropological perspective, characterized by the author as being a selfreflective attitude of research concerning the socio-cultural reality of the practice of education (237). Whereas rejecting an idea of the human being (or the human) (and instead insisting that the human has to be seen as a potentiality that can and will be unfolded in manifold ways), Lipowicz concedes that one cannot waive at least some basic terms of a pedagogical idea of humans, namely that of human beings in need of education as well as being capable of being educated (239). This human process of education is distinct insofar as it is not reduced to secure survival, but can be understood as fulfilling the fundamental human desire for a meaningful life. Against this backdrop, Lipowicz investigates if an ideal of (self-)education can be found in the diaries, or rather it is the thesis of the author that some of Wittgenstein's private entries can be read as a specific kind of auto-pedagogy (240, 236). One argument for this thesis is given by the example of Wittgenstein's reflections concerning the Christian picture of redemption: The entries in MT show an undecided attitude in regard to Christian belief as, among others, the following remark makes clear:

I don't have a belief in a salvation through the death of Christ; or at least not yet. I also don't feel that I am on the way to such a belief, but I consider that one day I will understand something here of which I understand nothing now, which means nothing to me now & that I will then have a belief that I don't have now. (MT 21.2.37)

This undecided attitude can be explained by the fact that, for Wittgenstein, religious belief is not concerned with theory but with practice in the sense of a form of life: "The demand is high. That is, whatever may be true or false in regard to the New Testament, one thing cannot be doubted: that in order to live right I have to live completely differently from what suits me. That life is far more serious than what it looks like at the surface. Life is frightfully serious" (MT 13.2.37). From these remarks and others, Lipowicz derives the following auto-pedagogical strategy: Wittgenstein pursues an ideal of a life which he is sure that he will not realize completely in his own life. This humble and challenging attitude can be understood, from a pedagogical-anthropological perspective, as the leitmotif of MT and its fundamental existential punch line (248–9).

As this overview has hopefully shown, the approaches, research interests and interpretations of Wittgenstein's private and philosophical notes are tremendously variegated. Nevertheless, the authors share one assumption in regard to their reading of Wittgenstein's texts: They are convinced that his personal and philosophical remarks are closely related to one another. Some of the authors address potential problems with this conviction: Somavilla, for instance, emphasizes that of course Wittgenstein's philosophy cannot be explained by his biography but then adds that nevertheless many of his personal remarks hint at a relationship with his philosophical line of thought (152). Bremer (212) expresses a similar position when he discusses the argument that using biographical information to evaluate a philosophical work is inadequate. He highlights the example of Augustine's Confessions as one in which philosophical theses and biographical information are interwoven to comprise a unity, adding that Wittgenstein rated the *Confessions* highly. There is no doubt that this interrelation can be found in MT in several remarks (elucidated in the articles of this volume from many perspectives). But in my view, it is at least an open question of how far this assumed interrelation can be extended. For example, I am sceptical as to how well this works when trying to integrate the earlier work (the war diaries and the *Tractatus*) and/or the later work (e.g. *Philosophical Investi*gations, Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology and even On Certainty) in an interpretation of MT, as some of the authors attempt. To avoid any

misunderstanding: I do not want to say that these connections are false, but nothing more and nothing less than drawing such connection lines is a very speculative procedure and may restrict an unbiased reading of the respective philosophical remarks.

When reading through the book, one is struck by the fact that the authors only rarely refer to the other contributions in the volume. Of course, this is a somewhat typical phenomenon in anthologies, yet it is astonishing in this case as the editors write of "a process of collaborative, interdisciplinary cooperation and cross-fertilization" (10) in its composition. Therefore, readers might have expected more references to the reflections of the other authors (not only a few scattered footnotes which merely hint at these other reflections), in other words, more discussion between the authors. This would have been even more interesting in light of the fact that some of the topics, which Wittgenstein was occupied with (and the respective remarks) are of importance for several contributors. These include, for instance, his conviction that he was living in a time of cultural decline (and his being influenced by Oswald Spengler, among others, in this respect), his struggle with religious belief and his continuing self-critique in regard to moral requirements.

Nevertheless, this anthology contains numerous interesting and illuminating insights, and suggestions for further research on Wittgenstein's personal and philosophical thoughts and their interrelations, primarily because of the fact that perspectives from different disciplines are represented.

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