

Einladung zum GASTVORTRAG

Edward Harcourt
(Oxford)

Method, Methodology, and Ethics in the Later Wittgenstein

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The word 'methodology' has suffered a dilution of meaning in recent academic writing. 'What's your methodology?', people ask, when what they mean is 'how are you going to go about it?'. But what they are really asking is 'what's your method?' In this paper, I will insist on a distinction between 'methodology' and 'method': one's method is how one goes about something, one's methodology is one's doctrine of method. Insisting on the distinction leaves room for a mismatch between a philosopher's methodology and their method.

The later Wittgenstein's methodology – sometimes discussed under the heading of his 'conception of philosophy' - is well-known and highly distinctive. This paper argues, first, that Wittgenstein's methodology is not a good description of his method. Secondly, it seeks to explain the mismatch. The ethical significance the activity of philosophy had for Wittgenstein imposed on him a particular way of conceiving of what he was doing (a particular methodology), and this made him unable to see clearly what he was actually doing.



Edward Harcourt has been a Fellow of Keble College, Oxford, since 2005. His research is in ethics, in particular in moral psychology, and he has published on topics including neo-Aristotelianism and child development, the ethical dimensions of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy, the moral emotions, love and the virtues, Nietzsche's ethics, the philosophy of mental health and mental illness, literature and philosophy, and Wittgenstein.

Alle Interessentinnen und Interessenten sind herzlich eingeladen!