Culture and Value Revisited – Draft of a new electronic edition

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Since the publication of Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Vermischte Bemerkungen* (VB) in the year of 1977 by Georg Henrik von Wright, VB has always been a source of both inspiration and confusion. On the one hand, some of the remarks illuminate Wittgenstein's philosophy, but most of them are quite ambiguous and cannot be easily understood. In response to this difficulty the *Forschungsinstitut Brenner Archiv* in Innsbruck (FIBA) and the *Wittgenstein Archives in Bergen* (WAB) are collaborating on a new electronic edition of VB. This paper spells out aims and archievements of the project "Culture and Value Revisited".

1. *Culture and Value* – a Short History

It is well known that after the death of Ludwig Wittgenstein scholars found many valuable manuscripts in Wittgenstein's unpublished papers. Most of them have been published according to the main subjects they treat, e.g. *On Certainty*, or *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics*. While the topics of these publications are genuine philosophical concerns, there are other remarks by Wittgenstein which do not seem to fit into any certain category, or there are just too few of them and too scattered around the remains of Wittgenstein to be published together. Von Wright collected these remarks and published them as *Vermischte Bemerkungen* in the year 1977:

> In the manuscript material left by Wittgenstein there are numerous notes which do not belong directly with his philosophical works although they are scattered among the philosophical texts. Some of these notes are autobiographical, some are about the nature of philosophical activity, and some concern subjects of a general sort, such as questions about art or about religion. (Wittgenstein 1998, ixe)

In 1978 a second, expanded edition of *VB* was published by Prof. Wright. In 1980 Peter Winch translated the second edition; it was published under the title *Culture and Value* (CV). These editions have two flaws: First, only the year of the remark is printed, but the sources of these remarks aren't given; so it was very difficult to find the exact source of the remarks. Second, some of the remarks aren't transcribed correctly. So, in 1994 Alois Pichler edited and published a revised edition of VB, several errors of transcription were corrected in this version; and scholars can now find the source of every remark.

In 1998 Peter Winch translated Pichler's revised version again and thoroughly revised his own earlier translation. The commonly used version of CV, as far as I can tell, is this edition published by Blackwell which includes both the German text and the English translation.

The most important contribution of VB to understanding Wittgenstein's philosophy is its ability to fill in some gaps in our understanding. Though some scholars have suspected that the later philosophy of Wittgenstein is based, or at least inspired, by other philosophers, the publication of VB presents evidence for its origins in Wittgenstein's own thinking.

> I think there is some truth in my idea that I am really only reproductive in my thinking. I think I have never *invented* a line of thinking but that it was always provided for me by someone else & I have done no more than passionately take it up for my work of clarification. That is how Boltzmann Hertz Schopenhauer Frege, Russell, Kraus, Loos Weininger Spengler, Sraffa […] have influenced me. Can one take Breuer & Freud as an example of Jewish reproductive thinking?--What I invent are new *comparisons*. (Wittgenstein 1998, 16e)

Notes of this kind can fill up gaps in understanding Wittgenstein's later philosophy. Paradoxically, they do not do this without creating further gaps, as the following remark shows:

> There is definitely a certain kinship between Brahms & Mendelssohn; but I do not mean that shown by the individual passages in Brahms's works that are reminiscent of passages in Mendelssohn but the kinship of which I am speaking could be expressed by saying that Brahms does with complete rigour what Mendelssohn did half-rigorously. Or: Brahms is often Mendelssohn without the flaws. (Wittgenstein 1998, 18e)

No doubt, we can find even darker aphorisms in VB. The contexts in which Wittgenstein wrote the notes are not always clear, even after Pichler's edition. Neither is it possible to find out what Wittgenstein thought about Mendelssohn or Brahms just by reading VB.

2. The Project "Culture and Value Revisited"

In 2006 a new project on VB, based on the cooperation between WAB and FIBA was begun. Its aim is to overcome the difficulties described above. It is our hope that this can be best done by a new electronic edition of VB, enriched with other notes from other sources in Wittgenstein's papers, indices and full historical commentary.

In the 1990's WAB transcribed the philosophical remains of Wittgenstein (*Nachlaß*). They are published in the *Bergen Electronic Edition* (BEE). The subjects dealt with in VB are scattered throughout the whole BEE. In 2004 FIBA has published Wittgenstein's *Complete Correspondence* (*Briefwechsel*, BW) in an electronic edition. Letters written by and to W, with full historical commentary, are now available to scholars. It is not surprising that some of those letters are of philosophical importance, not to mention their value for the biographical research on W. In the new edition of VB we want to provide philosophers and cultural historians with the complementary information available from both BEE and BW as it will illuminate this specific publication from Wittgenstein's papers.

Let us take an example: Assuming a researcher wants to find out more about Brahms and W. In VB there are several remarks on Brahms: MS 153a.127v; MS 138.28a; MS 147.22r; MS 153a.128r; MS 154.24r; MS 156b.14v; MS 157a.45v. But the research will not be complete if the researcher missed one of the following pages: MS 121.6; MS 124.55; MS 156b.20; MS 161.61r; MS 183.10, 12, 59, 77f, 105ff. She will probably also want to take a look at those letters concerning Brahms: To Bertrand Russell [1913.10.25-11.28]; to George E. Moore [1914.03.10]; to Paul Engelmann (1917.04.09); to Rudolf

Koder [1930.01.21-02.28], to Hermine Wittgenstein [after 1931.11.01]; to Rudolf Koder (1935.09.04); to Helene Salzer (1947.01.16); to Helene Salzer [1947.12]; to Helene Salzer (1948.02.20)[1].

Of course, not every letter and every remark Wittgenstein made about Brahms is relevant to understanding Wittgenstein's view of Brahms, nevertheless all of them must be taken into account. So what we want to do is to support the readers, who do this kind of research, with the new electronic edition. Though we cannot provide indices for every possible topic, at least the index of persons (names) can be complete. References for some general themes and thematic concept fields will also be included in the electronic edition.[2]

What are the historical commentaries I mentioned above? Though this kind of commentary is common in the study of literature, within philosophical context it is seldom used. In general a comment is a piece of information the editors find to be helpful in understanding the text. Unlike commentaries in the Middle Ages the historical comments are not full interpretation of the text itself. But they are hints and references on the text which are relevant to establishing the text-immanent context for interpreting the text. We want to include three different kinds of commentaries in VB.

First, there will be contextual comments. These comments are linked to a certain remark. E.g. if Wittgenstein is speaking of Brahms, we explain who Brahms was, identifying his dates of birth, death etc. as well as providing specific information about the given remark inasmuch as such information exists. A few comments of this kind can already be found in Wittgenstein (1998), e.g. note i, p. 15e, where Winch explains what a "Rösselsprung" is.

Second, we want to provide general background information about some of the specific topics Wittgenstein speaks about. Taking Brahms as an example again, a short biography on Brahms will be included. Information on books, on music pieces and on several geographical places will be also embedded in a similar way. These comments should facilitate understanding of VB and help prevent misunderstandings of the remarks.

Third, there are general comments on the VB itself. While comments of the first kind are somehow like footnotes, notes of the second kind have similarity with glossary or appendices of a book, comments of the third kind are written as short essays. These essays take e.g. the genesis of VB, the English translation of the remarks or the editorial processes as their subjects.

3. An Electronic Edition

Due to the nature of this project, we believe that an electronic edition of VB will be the most viable way of publishing for two major reasons:

1. *The availability of the sources*: The literary remains of W, BEE and BW, are both already digitalized. So the "preparation" of an electronic book is already done.

2. *The practical handling of the indices and the comments*: While we do think that a printed book – just due to the fact that it is printed – has many advantages over an electronic publication, we do not think that in the case of VB they would outweigh the problems with paper: Printed indices are very difficult to handle. We will have different volumes: The core VB, the letters, the other remarks from BEE and the indices. They can be reduced to a link table containing all the links between the different parts. The index can be accessed easily from everywhere and will be the core of the text nexus.

There are also some benefits for the "electronic approach". In this paper I want to mention two of them:

1. *Possibilities for corrections and additions*: We all know that it is difficult to do corrections to a printed work, or to cite different editions of the same work. Within an electronic publication corrections and additions are done by "correction tables". We can practically update the information daily and keep tracks of earlier versions at the same time. In principle (and I hope also in practice) earlier versions can be (re-)created easily. According to the date of access, as it is usually stated in the citation of an online resource, we can reconstruct the original text. This will replace the need for different editions of VB.

2. *Possibilities for a later printed publication*: There should be no textual differences between an electronic edition of a book and its printed equivalent. There are however practical differences concerning "links" in both versions. In the traditional publishing links within a book are usually references between pages or chapters of the book. Within an online edition links are just hyperlinks between different anchor-points. Since these hyperlinks can be converted to page references easily, but page references cannot be converted to hyperlinks automatically, starting with the electronic edition will probably ease the work on the printed edition, but not vice versa.

As for the technical issues: We are using XML-technology[3] to encode the texts, following the TEI-Guidelines in the fifth edition (P5)[4].

For two aspects the electronic edition of VB can be regarded as a pilot project. On the one hand, since VB contains only a small number of remarks, we can check the technical feasibility of a complete linkage between BEE and BW. The idea is to create indices which link both to BEE and to BW. If the electronic edition of VB is successful, then a new edition of BEE and BW will contain every known philosophical remain of W, and this is definitively a help for researchers.

On the other hand, we want to see whether the XML-TEI technique is suitable for digital archiving. Right now, most digital archives only digitalize different documents as digital images, but they do not transcribe the documents into (searchable) files. But within literary archives (like FIBA and WAB – i.e., as opposed to archives containing state documents) transcribing is a central activity. The XML-TEI-format seems to be the best choice. Unlike – say – MS-Word-format the XML-technology is more flexible. Though the encoding process in XML is not as easy as in other standard word processors, the semantic loaded mark-ups (e.g. <author>, or <sourceDesc>) can help to do refined searches within the archive database.

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[1] References to the letters are written according to Wittgenstein 2004.
[2] Please refer to the paper of Kerstin Mayr, Innsbruck, Austria, in this volume. Her analysis of VB is the base for the registries.

[3] See the XML-Specification from the W3-Consortium in "http://www.w3.org/TR/2006/REC-xml-20060816/" (2007-04-30).
[4] See The TEI-Consortium: "http://www.tei-c.org/", Sperberg-McQueen / Burnard 2007.

Literature

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