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The Influence of Wittgenstein's Philosophy of Language on the Textual Production of the Vienna Group

Abstract: The entirety of Wittgenstein's problematization of language was of particular importance for numerous Austrian postwar artists and art movements, but was possibly most evident in the poetics and heterogeneous practices of the Vienna Group. Analysis of selected texts of the latter neo-avantgarde movement – namely, Konrad Bayer's *the philosopher's stone*[1] (1963) and Oswald Wiener's *the improvement of central europe, novel* (1969) – unveils the direct influence of both of the early and late Wittgenstein, paradigmatically represented by his two major books: *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921) and *Philosophical Investigations* (1953). Texts of the Vienna Group to which this article refers to are not interpreted as literary works, but rather as diverse examples of textual production; instead of being analyzed as aesthetic objects, these texts are examined as platforms of potential inscription of Wittgensteinian critique of language.

Keywords: Ludwig Wittgenstein, philosophy of language, critique of language (*Sprachkritik*), linguistic turn, Vienna Group (*Wiener Gruppe*), textual production

Introduction: a very short note on the Vienna Group

This paper examines the influence of Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy of language on the Vienna Group (*Wiener Gruppe*) and, in particular, its textual production. The Vienna Group was a collective of five loosely linked artists in postwar Austria. Members of this neo-avantgarde movement were (in alphabetical order rather than their chronological involvement with the group): Friedrich Achleitner, H.C. Artmann, Konrad Bayer, Gerhard Rühm, and Oswald Wiener.[2] Although somewhat different in their respective approaches, these five artists shared similar *conceptual*

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[1] Almost all of the Vienna Group written material is set in lower-case letters. Consequently, in this paper, the original orthography of the group's respective texts is being preserved.

[2] Cf. Konrad Bayer, "the vienna group", in: *Selected Works of Konrad Bayer*, London, Atlas Press, 1986, 141–142.

positions, which Peter Weibel sums up in the following words: "criticism of the state and of reality by means of criticizing the language, an anti-literary, anti-artistic, anti-monetary and anti-authoritarian position, and the overcoming of the limits of genre and the limits of art and life."[3] Besides their experimental literary production, members of the Vienna Group were also extremely active in live presentations, especially by organizing and performing two 'literary cabarets', held in December 1958 and April 1959, although both without Artmann.[4] These two events, crucial for the establishing of the group's modest popularity at the time of its existence, were unconventional assemblage of disparate artistic (but also philosophical, theoretical) disciplines, genres, and procedures.[5]

A list of heterogeneous artistic methods and techniques of the Vienna Group include: "typewriter-ideograms, typocollages, formular poems, word und [*sic*] phonetic compositions, newspaper collages, inventions, montages, series, rows, constellations, text montages, studies, picture texts, text films, projections, picture montages, dialect poems, theatre pieces, spoken pieces, text sculptures, etc."[6] At the same time, radical and anarchistic performances of the group – culminated in their above-mentioned literary cabarets – obviously paved the way for the later happenings and bodily practice of the Viennese Actionism (*Wiener Aktionismus*) of the 1960s.[7] Nevertheless, despite such a fertile and seemingly influential artistic production realized during its rather short lifetime, there was a general lateness of reception of the Vienna Group in Anglo-Saxon culture. In order to illustrate this point, one can briefly consult the short foreword to the translation of Wiener's essay "Remarks on Some Tendencies of the 'Vienna Group'" ("Bemerkungen zu einigen Tendenzen der 'Wiener Gruppe'", 1998), wherein Benjamin Buchloh states that the text serves as a sort of an introduction of the *Wiener Gruppe* to the English speaking audience;[8] the translation was published in 2001, almost four decades after the suicide of Konrad Bayer (October 1964),[9] an occurrence which officially and practically designated the end of the group.[10]

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[3] Peter Weibel, "preface", in: Peter Weibel (ed.), *die wiener gruppe: ein moment der moderne 1954–1960: die visuellen arbeiten und die aktionen=the vienna group: a moment of modernity 1954–1960: the visual works and the actions: friedrich achleitner, h.c. artmann, konrad bayer, gerhard rühm, oswald wiener*, Wien, Springer, 1997, 15.

[4] Ibidem. H. C. Artmann already left the group in 1958, and therefore was not engaged in the activities of literary cabarets.

[5] For a more detailed description of literary cabarets of the Vienna Group, with a critical insight into their radical potential and limitations, see: Oswald Wiener, "das 'literarische cabaret' der wiener gruppe", in: Gerhard Rühm (ed.), *Die Wiener Gruppe. Achleitner, Artmann, Bayer, Rühm, Wiener. Texte, Gemeinschaftsarbeiten, Aktionen*, Reinbek bei Hamburg, Rowohlt, 1967, 401–418.

[6] Peter Weibel, "the vienna group in the international context", in: Peter Weibel (ed.), *die wiener gruppe: ein moment der moderne 1954–1960…*, op. cit., 776.

[7] For the English language introduction to the Vienna Actionists, with special emphasis on their writings, see: Malcolm Green (ed.), *Brus, Mühl, Nitsch, Schwarzkogler. Writings of the Viennese Actionsts*, London, Atlas Press, 1999.

[8] Oswald Wiener, "Remarks on Some Tendencies of the 'Vienna Group'", *October*, vol. 97, Summer 2001, 121.

[9] Cf. Malcolm Green, "Introduction", in: *Selected Works of Konrad Bayer*, op. cit., 3.

[10] Cf. Gerhard Rühm, "die wiener gruppe", in: Gerhard Rühm (ed.), *Die Wiener Gruppe. Achleitner, Artmann, Bayer…*, op. cit., 36.

In spite of the specific differences between members of the Vienna Group, diverse exploitations of language were central and permanent to their radical avant-garde investigations. In the chapter that follows, I will outline the wider context of language-oriented epistemology in Austria, which directly informs the poetics and artistic practice of the group, with a particular emphasis on Wittgenstein's thought.

The linguistic turn and Wittgenstein's philosophy of language in postwar Austria

The linguistic turn (*linguistische Wende*) primarily refers to the far-reaching epistemological and methodological shift in social sciences and humanities, when language became a common focus as well as an instrument of the analysis of disparate phenomena of art, culture, and everyday reality. Possibly most widely popularized as a term by Richard Rorty in the anthology of essays of the same name published in 1967,[11] *linguistic turn* became an all-encompassing phrase that signifies and describes a large part of the 20th century epistemology, in its persistent insistence on language. According to many modern thinkers – Wittgenstein included – critique of language (*Sprachkritik*) could bring potential solutions to all of the problems of philosophy and almost all other disciplines. Wittgenstein, in retrospect, is probably one of the most famous German-speaking practitioners of critique of language,[12] but many other philosophers and scholars in Austria – e.g. members of the so-called Vienna Circle (*Wiener Kreis*) – have devoted themselves to study the epistemological problems created and induced by language, in a wider and narrower sense of the latter word;[13] however, due to the specific scope of this study, the present analysis is strictly limited to the philosophy, and particular influence, of the former thinker.

To begin with, it would be vital to enlighten the peculiarity of Wittgenstein's reception in the context of postwar Austria. Namely, Wittgenstein's thought is commonly divided into two phases, paradigmatically represented by his two most important books – *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (1921), and *Philosophical Investigations* (*Philosophische Untersuchungen*, 1953), respectively. However, contrary to this frequent demarcation between early and late Wittgenstein, in Austria, during the years following the end of World War II, these two titles became available, at least for the

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[11] Richard Rorty (ed.), *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1967.

[12] For instance, Fritz Mauthner was also a significant and highly influential figure concerning his critique of language; however, due to the fact that his work is still untranslated, he remains unknown to the English-speaking audience. See: Fritz Mauthner, *Beiträge zu einer Kritik der Sprache*, Stuttgart, Cotta, vol. 1–3, 1901–1902.

[13] In his article "Philosophy as a Critique of Language. Language Critical Epistemology in Austria Around 1900" (1983), Peter Weibel maps and outlines a list of thinkers from the late 19th and early 20th century Austria who were mainly focused on language as the most important social and cultural agent: Peter Weibel, "Philosophie als Sprachkritik. Sprachkritische Epistemologie in Österreich um 1900", *manuskripte*, 1983, no. 79, 64–73.

members of the Vienna Group, during a relatively short time interval between them.[14] This, almost simultaneous, reception of Wittgenstein's two phases – usually distinctly separated in the 'official' history of philosophy – to some extent obscures the exact detection of the thinker's influence on individual Austrian neo-avantgarde movements and, in particular, his importance for the Vienna Group.

As well known, *Tractatus* was based on an idealistic and utopian attempt to construct the perfect language of philosophy, mathematics, logics, and science, by means of eradicating all of the language inaccuracies and inconsistencies,[15] whereas *Philosophical Investigations* marks Wittgenstein's turn towards the analysis of the pragmatics of everyday language and interpretation of common utterances. Contrary to the early 'project' of *Tractatus*, Wittgenstein demonstrated in his late writings that *there is no metalanguage* – also famously proclaimed within the discourse of Lacan's theoretical psychoanalysis[16] – i.e. second level language that could certify, in an imaginary hierarchy of languages, the distance between subject's speech and the first level object of his parlance. Assuming that "the *speaking* of language is part of an activity, or of a form of life"[17], a speaking subject is always caught in the complex network of disparate language-games (*Sprachspiele*) – a new Wittgenstein's concept, introduced in his *Philosophical Investigations*[18] – and there is no possibility to unite and synthesize all of them, nor to establish a metalanguage criteria for their unification. Due to its particular and incommensurable character, a language-game could be explained only according to its own singular specificity; therefore, the Austrian thinker claims that the easiest way to describe a given language-game to someone would be to simply point at it: "This *and similar things* are called 'games.'"[19] It seems, in short, that the differences between early and late Wittgenstein, even obvious on the plain textual level of author's writing style,[20] are fundamental and non-resolvable. However, despite such an assumption, in the context of artistic production of the Vienna Group, both of the Wittgenstein's philosophies, traditionally considered as mutually exclusive, find their adequate place, and even a possible reconciliation through the intertwinement of these two phases – a hypothesis explored in more detail in the next chapter of this paper.

Peter Weibel points out that the Vienna Group was one of the very first art movements that have implemented premises of Wittgenstein's philosophy in the

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[14] Franz Schuh, "Das Material der Sprache", in: Kurt Bartsch and Stefan Schwar (eds.), *DOSSIER Gerhard Rühm*, Graz, Droschl, 1999, 14.

[15] Cf. Bertrand Russell, "Introduction", in: Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, London, Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1963, ix–xxii.

[16] Jacques Lacan, *Écrits: The First Complete Edition in English*, New York, W. W. Norton & Company, 2006, 688.

[17] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1986, 11.

[18] Ibid, 5.

[19] Ibid, 33.

[20] Cf. Jelena Berberović, "Problem jezika u filozofiji Ludwiga Wittgensteina", in: *Filosofska istraživanja*, Beograd, Nolit, 1980, 16.

artistic practice; in this respect, it has historically preceded even conceptual artists in the Anglo-Saxon world, famous for their noteworthy exploitation of writings of the Austrian thinker. According to Weibel, at the time when Joseph Kosuth discovered *Tractatus*, members of the Vienna Group – primarily headed in this enterprise by Oswald Wiener – have already adopted basic assumptions of *Philosophical Investigations* and, more precisely, Wittgenstein's language-game theory.[21] Wittgenstein, therefore, should be doubtless considered as one of the most influential figures – even a 'hero'[22] – to the Vienna Group, as well as other post-war avant-garde movements in Austria, and of crucial importance for the direction of their artistic and experimental research. The following case study more carefully examines this influence on the textual production of the Vienna Group.

Case study: *the philosopher's stone* and *the improvement of central europe, novel*

Due to the limited scope of this paper only two texts – paradigmatic for the radical textual practice of the Vienna Group – have been selected: *the philosopher's stone* (*der stein der weisen*, 1963) by Konrad Bayer and *the improvement of central europe, novel* (*die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman*, 1969) by Oswald Wiener. These texts are equally heavily influenced by Wittgenstein, both on the thematic and on the terminological levels.

The Vienna Group, as previously suggested, was distinguished for expanding its language investigations "into other media such as pictorial art, sculpture, photography and film, as well as founding new forms of art such as the action, the happening and conceptual art"[23]. Nevertheless, two works of the Vienna Group that are included in the succeeding case study could formally belong to the category of literature. However, these texts are interpreted as examples of a radical mode of textual production, and in context of this study are principally relevant due to the inscription of Wittgenstein's philosophical concepts and termini into them. *Textual production* could be defined, in poststructuralist terms, as a particular form of writing (*écriture*). According to the poststructuralist materialist textual approach (practiced by *Tel Quel*, for instance), and contrary to one of the basic presuppositions of structuralism, *text* signifies an open, intertextual network of signs, whose meaning is constituted only in the performative act of its reception.[24] At the same time, the notion of text, as a wider term than *literary work of art*, opposes itself to the hermeneutics and the theoretical framework of traditional history and theory of literature. Therefore, in this paper, selected texts of

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[21] Peter Weibel, "the vienna group in the international context", op. cit., 780.

[22] Wittgenstein's name is also included in the "bayers vaterländische liste". Konrad Bayer, "bayer's fatherland list", in: *Selected Works of Konrad Bayer*, op. cit., 142.

[23] Peter Weibel, "preface", op. cit., 15.

[24] Cf. Oswald Ducrot and Tzvetan Todorov, "Texte", in: *Dictionnaire encyclopédique des sciences du langage*, Paris, Éditions du Seuil, 1972, 443–448.

the members of the Vienna Group, instead of being analyzed as aesthetic objects, are rather examined as platforms of potential inscription of Wittgensteinian critique of language into their heterogeneous spaces of textuality.

During his short lifetime, Konrad Bayer published only one book, written between 1954 and 1962 – *the philosopher's stone*, a poly-genre text that intriguingly combines a philosophical treatise of sorts with fictional and poetical linguistic examinations. For example, in the section entitled "topology of language" Bayer combinatorially generates an extensive, curious list of various words that uses prefix *blue* (*blau*) – whereas some of them do not officially belong to the German vocabulary[25] – thoroughly exploiting and metonymically exhausting most of the potentiality of such an activity. The ending paragraph of this segment of text contains several statements, starting with the following claim, typical of the philosophy of the linguistic turn: "nothing is common. only language creates things in common."[26]

Two sections of Bayer's text – to be precise, "the electrical hierarchy" and "afterword" – consist of statements that are apparently adopted from early Wittgenstein. Thus some paragraphs of *the philosopher's stone* include numerous sentences that directly or obscurely refer to certain statements of *Tractatus*. A comparative analysis of the two texts – primarily focused on their strictly material level of signifiers, in Saussurean terms[27] – clearly demonstrates the implementation of the technique of rather unconventional quoting and paraphrasing. Ulrich Janetzki, in his, at the time of publication, only book-length study on Konard Bayer, gives the following example:[28]

[Wittgenstein, *Tractatus*, 5.634]
"Whatever we see could be other than it is.
Whatever we can describe at all could be other than it is."[29]

[Bayer, *the philosopher's stone*, "the electrical hierarchy"]
"everything can be called this and that.
everything may also be called something else."[30]

According to one of the most important *dictum* of early Wittgenstein, "what can be said at all can be said clearly"[31]. Hence, some parts of *the philosopher's stone* – such as the above-mentioned extract – are based on Bayer's intention to purify the language by discarding all supposedly necessary vocabulary and by simplifying its

[25] Malcolm Green, "Notes", in: *Selected Works of Konrad Bayer*, op. cit., 149.

[26] Konrad Bayer, "the philosopher's stone", in: *Selected Works of Konrad Bayer*, op. cit., 108.

[27] See: Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, New York, McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1966, 65–67.

[28] Ulrich Janetzki, *Alphabet und Welt: über Konrad Bayer*, Königstein/Ts., Hain, 1982, 168.

[29] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, op. cit., 117.

[30] Konrad Bayer, "the philosopher's stone", op. cit., 109.

[31] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, op. cit., 3.

syntax; in the process, the level of language inaccuracy and ambiguity should be potentially reduced, as Wittgenstein, indeed, intended with his *Tractatus*. (In effect, this particular method had become a commonplace for many other texts written by members of the Vienna Group, as well as those of the *Grazer Gruppe* – a somewhat more conventional literary movement, but similarly interested in the critique of language, founded at the beginning of the seventh decade of the previous century.)[32]

Of course, the importance of Wittgenstein's philosophy for Bayer's writings exceeds the limitation of the preceding brief analysis.[33] In that sense, Malcolm Green – principal English translator of texts of the Vienna Group in the last few decades – identifies Bayer's literary-philosophical approach as indeed a complex one, which therefore could not be reduced to the simplistic formula of "lyricised Wittgenstein"[34]. It seems, therefore, that Bayer's rapport with *Tractatus* surpasses the level of mere imitation: after having textually materialized some of its central premises, the member of the Vienna Group even creatively upgraded, in certain aspects, Wittgenstein's original (in words of Janetzki, "Bayer tackles that which Wittgenstein passes over in silence"[35]). Whatever the case may be, Konrad Bayer "worked with language as a poet, not just as a linguistic philosopher"[36], which explains the distinctiveness of his epistemological approach.

Oswald Wiener commenced the drafting of *the improvement of central europe* in 1962, and sequentially published the text in the renowned Austrian journal of the avant-garde literature *manuskripte*, in small installments, as a "work in progress".[37] Ironically signified and classified by its author as a "novel", the book actually does not share many similarities with the traditional forms of literature, or even avant-garde ones for that matter. According to Klaus Hohmann,[38] *the improvement of central europe* roughly consists of "index" (I–X),[39] "foreword" (XI–CLXXIV), and "appendix A–C" (CLXXV–CXCII); therefore, it seems that "foreword" comprises the largest section of the book, which concludes with an extensive bibliography (CXCIII–CCV). In contrast to conventional fictional prose genres, in this book of 205 pages one cannot

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[32] For example, in his theatrical text *Kaspar* (1968) – a modern take on the case of Kaspar Hauser, written in line with the new discoveries and experiences of the linguistic turn and contemporary language investigations – Peter Handke, also a member of the *Grazer Gruppe*, explores *Tractatus'* writing style. For the more general Wittgensteinian reading of Handke, see: Hartmut König, *Peter Handke: Sprachkritik und Sprachverwendung: Anmerkungen zu ausgesuchten Texten*, Hollfeld, J. Beyer Verlag, 1978.

[33] For more on this matter, see: Ulrich Janetzki, op. cit., 30–31.

[34] Malcolm Green, "Notes", in: *Selected Works of Konrad Bayer*, op. cit., 148.

[35] Cited in ibidem.

[36] Ibidem.

[37] Elisabeth Wiesmayr, *Die Zeitschrift Manuskripte, 1960–1970*, Königstein/Ts., Hain, 1980, 69.

[38] Klaus Hohmann, *Experimentelle Prosa: eine neue Literatur des Sprachexperiments: Texte und Einführung für den Deutschunterricht*, Paderborn, Schöningh, 1974, 102.

[39] Roman numbers, given in brackets, refer to the pagination of: Oswald Wiener, *die verbesserung von mitteleuropa, roman*, Salzburg, Jung und Jung, 2013. Incidentally, this is the newest edition of the *improvement of central europe*, which completely maintains the original typeset of the 1969 rendition of the text.

discern "representation, plot, characters of the novel, figures, nor narrative point of view or narrator's position"[40]; correspondingly, the book includes textual forms such as "aphorisms, reflections, theoretical excurses, parodies, experimental poems, dramatic texts"[41]. Wiener's text, in short, is primarily a hybrid collection of diverse modes of writing – or language-games, in Wittgensteinian terms – usually mutually separated and reserved for specialists. From that point of view, *the improvement of central europe* represents a complex non-hierarchical textual structure comprising of many disparate, though interconnected and inseparable, discourses: scientific, philosophical, essayistic, prosaic, biographical, everyday jargon, etc.[42] However, notwithstanding a few minor exceptions, *the improvement of central europe* could not be denoted as an experimental text, at least if the criteria of avant-garde experimentation were mostly based on unconventional formal and typographical construction of the text,[43] possibly most visible in the practice of concrete poetry; thus the book's transgressiveness is rather a result of its heterogeneous discursivity and textuality, i.e. its design of a language *gray zone* in which science, philosophy, literature, and everyday speech textually interweave. As a consequence, such an intertextual and rhizomatic linkage between incongruent discourses has contributed a lot to the book's high level of untranslatability.[44]

According to the basic epistemological hypothesis of the linguistic turn, enthusiastically shared by Oswald Wiener, *language produces reality* – a notion explicated and implied many times in *the improvement of central europe* (e.g. CLVI–CLVII, endnote no. 21). Consequently, Wiener explores in his book many language-games, fatalistically aimed, in the last instance, only at the confirmation of inevitability of "the prison-house of language"[45]. For example, by emulating a writing technique characteristic of the French *nouveau roman*, Wiener meticulously describes an object at length (XLIII ff), with an extreme language precision, leaning as a result towards the absurdity; but in spite of such an attempt, the object of his description remains firmly confined in the order of language-generated reality. It is hence obvious that the problematization of language permeates the book as a whole: even Wiener's utopian concept of *bio-adapter* – developed in an essay with the most formal resemblance to a conventional scientific article (CXXXIV–CLXXIV) – derives from an inventive mixture of cybernetics, philosophy of language, and linguistics.

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[40] Bodo Heimann, *Experimentelle Prosa der Gegenwart*, München, Oldenbourg, 1978, 44.

[41] Klaus Hohmann, op. cit., 103.

[42] In my article "Interdiscursivity of Oswald Wiener's Experimental Novel *the improvement of central europe*" (to be published soon in the Serbian language) I analyze, in more detail, different discourses of Wiener's book.

[43] Cf. Elisabeth Wiesmayr, op. cit., 75.

[44] For instance, a short excerpt from Wiener's *improvement of central europe* – comprising of several random segments of the first part of the book (XXXIV–XXXV, XLVIII, L–LI) – was translated by Tyrus Miller, Oswald Wiener, "From *The Improvement of Central Europe*", *boundary 2*, vol. 26, no. 1, "99 Poets/1999: An International Poetics Symposium", Spring 1999, 272–274.

[45] This phrase, commonly ascribed to Friedrich Nietzsche, was used by Fredric Jameson as a main title for his earlier book: Fredric Jameson, *The Prison-House of Language: A Critical Account of Structuralism and Russian Formalism*, Princeton, N.J., Princeton University Press, 1972.

the improvement of central europe includes, formally within the frames of only one text, many influences and references to Wittgenstein's early and late thought, testifying at the same time to the theoretical as well as ideological transformation of the artistic practice and philosophy of Oswald Wiener.[46] Wittgenstein's philosophy explicitly shaped Wiener's radical skepticism towards language in its various modes, from undermining the sophisticated scientific discourse towards the non-formal exploitation of ordinary language jargon; as a point of reference, according to the index of the book (IX), Wittgenstein's name is explicitly mentioned on ten pages of *the improvement of central europe*. In order to give a brief illustration, it would suffice to randomly enlist names of several short chapters of the book, which apparently refer to some of the key topics of Wittgenstein's philosophy: "language and mathematics" (XII), "metalanguage" (XIII), "learning to use a word" (XIV), "science and language" (XXVI), "why do you speak?" (XXXII), "truth and reality and language" (XXXIV), "language investigation as confrontation of reality and language!" (XXXV), "critique of the first forty-nine pages" (L), "linguistics" (L), etc. Finally, Wiener ("probably the first austrian who publicly held a lecture on wittgenstein"[47]) elucidates this influence, among his other writings, in one of the later essays, "Wittgensteins Einfluß auf die *Wiener Gruppe*" (1987),[48] published long after the formal dismemberment of the Vienna Group. Therein, Wiener states the following: "from the beginning, the *Language* was, to some of us, the 'foreign', the instrument, the machine. from the approximation to this problematic originated *the philosopher's stone*, *the sixth sense* [*der sechste sinn*, Bayer's unfinished experimental novel posthumously published in 1966], and *the improvement of central europe*."[49]

The preceding analysis demonstrated that Konrad Bayer and Oswald Wiener, even when they have changed the focus a bit and, along with some other members of the Vienna Group, moved towards the philosophy of the late Wittgenstein, maintained in their texts analytical precision of language expression, terminologically typical for *Tractatus*; in the process, the group has managed to preserve the two concurrent philosophies of language. Previously, *the philosopher's stone* and *the improvement of central europe* were examined as platforms of potential inscription of Wittgenstein's philosophy, as well as Wittgensteinian language and writing style. Both of these texts, historically positioned among the postwar neo-avantgarde production, are in fact proto-postmodern examples of the Derridean poststructuralist strategy of loosening and destroying the boundaries between philosophical and poetical discourse; the transgressive, subversive, and even revolutionary potential of the texts stems from such a complex inter- or even transdiscursivity.

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[46] Cf. Elisabeth Wiesmayr, op. cit., 70.

[47] Peter Weibel, "the vienna group in the international context", op. cit., 780.

[48] Oswald Wiener, "Wittgensteins Einfluß auf die *Wiener Gruppe*", in: Wendelin Schmidt-Dengler et al. (ed.), *Wittgenstein und: Philosophie, Literatur*, Wien, Österreichische Staatsdruckerei, 1990, 89–108.

[49] Ibid, 108.

Conclusion: Contemporary place of the philosophy of language, and its interpretative relation to the Vienna Group

One could say that, even in our contemporary moment, at a time when we see the emergence of new and alternative theoretical discourses (for instance, the unexpected *return to philosophy*, carried out by thinkers such as Alain Badiou and Jacques Rancière during the last decade of the 20th century),[50] linguistic turn still preserves its radical, excessive stance that, consequently, hardly could be dismissed. Consistent with the basic axiom of linguistic turn, language remains *the* key social agent, both in everyday reality and in specialized cultural practices such as philosophy or art. In this context, teachings of Ludwig Wittgenstein still maintain their distinguished freshness and undisputed quality of wide applicability.

Wittgenstein, as already said, was highly influential to many neo-avantgarde movements in postwar Austria, but his influence was possibly best evident in the work of the Vienna Group. Previous analysis showed that the division between Wittgenstein's early and late phase is, to a certain extent, unattainable when applied on the textual practice of the Vienna Group. Thus both *Tractatus* and *Philosophical Investigations* have coequally their own place within the complex performative textual production of, in particular, Bayer and Wiener. Namely, even if *Tractatus* could be somewhat considered as outdated (i.e. metaphysical, essentialist, etc.) by standards of the *Philosophical Investigations*, the former's writing style – primarily represented by an analytically-reduced vocabulary and syntax[51] – was still relevant for the Austrian avant-garde art and literary movements during the 1960s and after.

In any case, it would be important to emphasize that even current interpretations of work of the Vienna Group, in spite of the great temporal distance, are still based on and carried out according to the basic concepts of Wittgenstein's philosophy. For example, a book of various articles exclusively devoted to the *opus* of Konrad Bayer was published quite recently in Austria (September 2015);[52] many of the philosophical and theoretical approaches in the texts that comprise the book are still inclined towards Wittgensteinian mode of linguistic turn and its radical critique of language.

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[50] Cf. Miško Šuvaković, "*Imati pravo* na teoriju i *ići pravo* na teoriju; o paradoksalnim odnosima teorije i filozofije u savremenoj kulturi/društvu", *TKH*, no. 16, "Pravo na teoriju", 2008, 66–77.

[51] Cf. Jelena Berberović, op. cit., 16.

[52] In fact, the book represents a collection of papers from a symposium held a year earlier, on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Bayer's death. Thomas Eder and Klaus Kastberger (eds.), *Konrad Bayer: Texte, Bilder, Sounds*, Wien, Zsolnay, 2015.