

EDITORIAL:
THE SCHOLARLY AND CRITICAL EDITION (IN HISTORY OF
LOGIC) – HISTORIOGRAPHICAL REFLECTIONS ON ITS NATURE
AND PURPOSE, OR, HOW TO READ AND REVIEW A
SCHOLARLY AND CRITICAL EDITION*

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The editing of a critical/scholarly edition is one of the most difficult undertakings that can devolve on any historian of logic. Aside from the technical difficulties of selecting and authenticating, dating, collating and organizing texts, there is a responsibility to provide the logic community to an accurate written record of an author's work upon which to base its judgment of the contributions of the author and of the proper place of the author's work within the history of logic. Many, if not all, editorial projects having the goal of preparing the works of an author for publication in a critical/scholarly edition are team efforts. This collaborative effort allows experts with differing backgrounds and specializations and interests to cover all aspects and ramifications of an author's work; this approach can also, and perhaps even most importantly, help to ensure, through a competitive coöperation among the specialists, an objective balance in the presentation of the author's work insofar as that is possible.

It is not always clear to a reader or reviewer of a critical/scholarly edition that the edition is fair and impartial, or that the edition in hand serves to provide the "correct" interpretation of the author's work. In the

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former case, the reviewer or reader may second guess the editors; and this is a legitimate aspect of historical analysis when the reviewer or critic has evidentiary support for the analysis and criticism. In the latter case, however, the reviewer or reader may not have a full appreciation for the nature or purpose of a critical/scholarly edition. Some readers tend in particular to confuse the explanatory and textual notes in a critical/scholarly edition with imposed interpretations by the editors of the edition; and some readers tend in particular to confuse the editorial decisions to include or exclude materials in a volume with editorial interpretation.

Doing their task well and honestly, the editors of a critical/scholarly edition may certainly (and probably unavoidably) have an interpretive axe to grind as they prepare the text, but will conscientiously work to prevent that from affecting their editorial judgment and their editorial work. On the other hand, the reviewer of a critical/scholarly edition is under no obligation to set aside the interpretive axe in judging the critical/scholarly edition or the work of its editors, although to wield the axe in this case can be unfair to the edition and to the editors when it is used in a critique of the critical/scholarly edition to attack the editors for failing to do their job well and fairly. It is not at all obvious that the community of historians of logic have uniformly considered either the nature or purpose of the critical/ scholarly edition or the nature and difficulties of the task undertaken by editors of the critical/scholarly edition. Perhaps this is because history of logic has not yet been fully divorced from philosophy of logic. (And perhaps it is not yet certain that such a divorce can or should be consummated.) In any case, it is useful and important for historians of logic to be brought into an awareness and understanding of the nature or purpose of the critical/scholarly edition and of the nature and difficulties of the task undertaken by editors of the critical/scholarly edition, especially as greater numbers of historians of logic become engaged in such undertakings and as such editions become increasingly important and increasingly available for use by researchers.

The definitive exemplar of the scholarly/critical edition for logicians and historians of logic has undisputedly been Jean van Heijenoort's *From Frege to Gödel: A Source Book of Mathematical Logic, 1879 – 1931*. Although it is a collection of some of the most representative, important and influential papers in the history of the development of mathematical logic in its 'formative' period, and therefore collects the

work of numerous logicians, it has also served as a model for the preparation of single-author critical/scholarly editions, as it has, for example, for the work of the Gödel Edition Project (see pp. 98–100, Anellis, *Van Heijenoort: Logic and Its History in the Work and Writings of Jean van Heijenoort* (Ames, Modern Logic Publishing, 1994) and Anita and Solomon Feferman, p. 235 of their “Jean van Heijenoort (1912 – 1986),” in *Modern Logic 2* (1992), 231–238). What marked van Heijenoort’s anthology as the *ne plus ultra* of critical/scholarly editions are the great care, the high standards, and meticulous attention to details with which van Heijenoort invested his work. The selections included in the anthology are accorded introductions which provide expositions of their contents along with information on the background and influences of the selections. The chief contribution of the volume, as Anita and Solomon Feferman have noted (*ibid.*, p. 235) is that it made important primary materials readily accessible to researchers.

To understand the place of the the critical/scholarly edition in historical scholarship, it is useful and important to understand the nature and purpose of the critical/ scholarly edition.

The purpose of critical/scholarly editions is to “set *standards* for future scholarship by providing authoritative texts *reconstructed* to represent not only the authors’ last word (or final intentions) but also how they got there” (from p. 17 of Nathan Houser, “Appeasing the Shade of George Santayana,” *Documentary Editing 11*, no. 1 (March 1989), 15–20). There is a “difference between the reproduction of manuscripts...and the publication of a clear-text edition, usable for study and quotation, in which, so far as evidence permits, the author’s intention is achieved” (Don L. Cook, pp. 304–305 in Don L. Cook & Christian J.W. Kloesel, “Two Responses to Moore and Burks on Editing Peirce,” *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society 28* (1992), 303–309. The latter is distinguished (see, for example, “Textual Commentary,” pp. 582–612 in George Santayana, *Persons and Places: Fragments of Autobiography, Critical Edition* or “Textual Principles and Methods,” pp. 555–557 and “Guide to the Textual Notes,” pp. 558–559 in Bertrand Russell, *Philosophical Papers 1896–99*, vol. 2 of *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*) by the chronological and textual comparison of all extant variants of the texts in question in order to produce a standard version which in the judgment of scholars represents the most authoritative and accurate version technically achievable by the scientific standards of the latest scholarship.

The problem of producing a clear-text is significant and difficult when a considerable amount of the primary material to be prepared is comprised of archival documents represented to a large extent by an abundance of manuscripts. The magnitude of the difficulty of the task is increased exponentially when the manuscripts were left undated by the author and when variant versions of manuscripts on the same topic were produced over an unknown period of time, however long or short, and when manuscripts are incomplete or have become separated, is clear. The guidelines of the Committee on Scholarly Editions of the Modern Language Association of America may come into play when editors must rely upon unpublished materials or variant versions of the same or similar documents in preparing the clear-text. The guidelines require the construction of a textual apparatus in which each alteration and variation must be identified and listed. A brief description of the effort involved in the labor-intensive task of preparing the textual apparatus is given at p. 104 of Edward C. Moore and Arthur W. Burks, "Three Notes on the Editing of the Works of Charles S. Peirce," *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* 28 (1992), 83–106:

Listings must be provided in each volume showing all changes made by the editors — every case in which they depart from the original manuscripts. These lists include all emendations, such as additions or exclusions of hyphens, and a list of all rejected alternative wordings where the manuscript shows — as Peirce often did — several words without resolving their priority.

In the case of Peirce, when so much of the material in unpublished, therefore, Peirce's editors "have to do the editorial work for Peirce" that more published writers "did for themselves when they published their books,"

that of choosing among alternative manuscripts of the same article, organizing documents handwritten and then written over, rejecting unsuitable items, and identifying references to other works. The necessity of working from such a tangle of handwritten materials made the problem of making the required lists immensely complex and time-consuming. (*ibid.*, p. 104)

A sense of the difficulties inherent and implicit when undertaking such a

task emerges when one remembers, as the historian and international affairs specialist Edward Hallett Carr pointed out (*What Is History?* (New York, Random House, 1961), p. 16), that, trite and evident though it may seem, "no document can tell us more than what the author of the document thought." The editors of the scholarly/critical edition have peculiar dual duty in their task of preparing clear-text, namely, a special duty to be careful in letting their authors speak for themselves, even while balancing this against the need to make sense of an uncataloged mass of manuscripts, revisions, and rewrites in order to present the most accurate representation of the authors' words. And these two requirements must be sorted out in such a way as to apprise readers of such facts, without, insofar as possible, imposing an external interpretation on the text. Thus, the textual apparatus was devised. The necessity of undertaking the task described by Moore and Burks in the case of editing Peirce is not, however, specifically unique to the Peirce edition. It is a fundamental requirement that is inherent in the preparation of critical/scholarly editions, and especially when archival material plays at least as significant a role as published material in representing the work of an author. As Cook notes (*ibid*, p. 305),

if you undertake to prepare an edition...of the writings of an author who during his life never prepared most of them for publication, then you may have greater problems in deciding on the order of composition, the importance of individual items, the relative authority of one version over another, and the precise form the edited text should take, than if you had the author's published edition to guide you.

The technology available today (from chemical analysis of ink to analysis of watermarking on paper) that can be used in dating documents and determining their chronological order makes this task more accurate than it was even a few decades ago. But it also compounds the burden of preparing clear-text while it enhances the accuracy of the selections. (So it may be that one of the fundamental reasons that the Peirce Edition Project has developed a system of consulting editors is to provide, in each of the areas in which Peirce wrote, a team of independent experts on various aspects of Peirce's thought, each consulting editor coming to the task with expertise and knowledge of the history of his subject complementary and supplementary to that provided by the principal editors and to the other consulting editors. Thus, for example, a

single volume of the Peirce Edition Project may have relied upon as many as six historians of logic and historians of mathematics, each coming to the task with different backgrounds and different interests, but each with some interest and expertise in some aspect of history of logic or history of mathematics relevant for assisting with an analysis of "the order of composition, the importance of individual items, the relative authority of one version over another, and the precise form the edited text should take," of Peirce's work in logic and mathematics. To a greater or lesser extent, this system is also used by other editorial projects.)

The purpose of the textual apparatus in a critical/scholarly edition is to provide readers with a complete and accurate depiction of the manuscript material which was used in preparing the clear-text, and to provide the scholar with all the information that the editors had of the original source materials that were used to prepare the clear-text, giving a full account of every variant of a text and every alteration within a text by the writer. We are provided with information on every word crossed out by the author and word inserted interlinearly by the author, shown, so to speak every uncrossed 't' and every undotted 'i' in a manuscript, every flaw and every correction. Done thoroughly and well, the textual apparatus should therefore enable the reader to understand the choices made by the editors in the preparation of the clear-text without, however, betraying the editors' interpretation of the meaning or significance of the material.

Introductory headnotes by the editorial staff in critical editions are designed to orient the reader rather than to provide interpretations; in keeping with this goal, they ordinarily include (see, e.g., p. vi, vol. 1 or p. vi, vol. 2 of "Information for the Reader," in Kurt Gödel, *Collected Works*): historical background information for the texts presented, including in some cases the physical characteristics, conditions, and history of the documents themselves, as well as the circumstances that led to their writing (for example: the problems in the literature of the day they set out to solve; when and how the author became aware of and interested in the problems; a sketch of the status of the subject at the time the author became involved, and especially at the time the document being introduced was written; etc.); an exposition of the text, in particular an explanation of difficult or unusual concepts or notations used by the author; a sketch of the influence which the work had on the author or on the development of the subject, or a discussion of the place which a

particular work occupies in the development of the author's work may also be included. Along these same lines of reasoning, the bibliography of critical/scholarly editions is ordinarily restricted to the writings of the author whose edition is being prepared, works to which the author refers in the documents included in the edition, and works to which the editors refer in their introductory notes (see, e.g., p. vi, vol. 1 or p. vi, vol. 2 of "Information for the Reader," in Kurt Gödel, *Collected Works*).

Critical/scholarly editions are not intended by the editorial team to provide a historical or conceptual interpretation (collective or individual, by the editors) of the *opus* of the author whose work is being presented, but are intended to serve as a faithful reproduction, according to their best scholarly judgment, of the most accurate representation of that author's work. Reviews of such works should therefore focus primarily on the work of the author whose material is being presented, and in particular on the documents in the volume under review, outlining their importance and contributions to the subject and its history; secondarily on the degree of success with which an editorial project has met the intention of producing a critical/scholarly edition; and tertiarily on the place which the edition being reviewed occupies with respect to earlier editions of the author's work, on the place which the edition can be expected to occupy in the literature of the subject, and on the new edition's potential for improving scholarship on and understanding of the subject, the author, and the author's work.

In fine, and then by way of moralizing on the rôle of the critical/scholarly edition as an historical tool, the goal of the editors of a critical/scholarly edition is — or certainly should be — to allow an author to speak for himself in his own words, as that author intended. It is not the duty or task of the editors to insert their own interpretations of the meaning or importance or historical role of the work at hand, but to present as accurate a representation as the extant documents permit of the author by the author. A legitimate ancillary to this primary goal is to provide the context for the writing of the documents being presented, giving, for example, the physical characteristics, conditions, and history of the documents themselves, as well as the circumstances that led to their writing. But interpreting the text is not an aspect of providing this historical context and physical description of the documents. Interpreting the text is the task for the historian as reader of the text. Determining whether the editors have been accurate in presenting the clear-text, however, is a legitimate function not only of the historian of reader, but

also of the historian as reviewer. Nevertheless, if one understands and appreciates the purpose of a critical/scholarly edition, it is evident that the failure of the editors to provide an interpretation or a historical judgment of the work of the author is certainly not, and ought not to be, a legitimate critique of either the editors of the critical/scholarly edition or of the critical/scholarly edition itself.

How does this conception of the nature and purpose of the critical/scholarly edition impact the task of the historian of mathematics as a reviewer and as reader of the critical/scholarly edition? When the task of the editor of the critical/scholarly edition and the purpose of the critical/scholarly edition to make it possible for the author to speak for himself through his own writing, the reviewer would seem to be obliged to provide an insight into whether this purpose was fulfilled, and if so, how well, given the current state of knowledge of the work of the author in question as. It is also reasonable to ask and attempt to answer the question of whether the critical/scholarly edition being reviewed adds substantially to knowledge and understanding of the work of the author. One can raise such questions as: 'What is new and important here?' When it is neither the task of the editor of the critical/scholarly edition nor the purpose of the critical/scholarly edition to interpret what the author thought or to pontificate on what the author *should* have said, the reviewer is well within scholarly rights to ask whether the editors has presented a fair, objective, unbiased clear-text, insofar as that is possible, and to take the editors to task if they appear, in his judgment, not to have done so. The reviewer and reader should understand, and may wish to assert, that the critical/scholarly edition is not the place for the editors to express their views on the topics dealt with by the author; but it is the place for the editors to explain, where it is deemed necessary, what the author said, when it is not sufficiently clear from the author's own texts. At the same time, it is altogether appropriate for the reviewer and reader to provide their own interpretations of the meaning and importance of the work of the author that the critical/scholarly edition presents, to show why they think that editors have violated 'neutrality', whether through their principles of selection for inclusion and exclusion of materials or through explanatory notes that provide interpretations along with explanations and presentations of historical contexts.

Keeping in mind that when alterations are made to an author's text, or that when a clear-text is the result of a collation of various manuscripts or of several versions or drafts of manuscripts, the editors of the

critical/scholarly edition ought to, and frequently do, note these facts, line by line and letter by letter in the textual apparatus, so that readers will have a complete and unbiased perspective on the creation of the clear-text by the editors and a recognition of the status of the documents used to create the clear-text, the reviewer and reader can ask whether the choices made by the editors was the correct one, and, if he or she has grounds for doing so, may challenge choices made by the editors if they seem misleading or if they appear to misconstrue the author's meaning. Given that a legitimate function of the critical/scholarly edition is to provide readers with information on the physical condition of the documents used to prepare the clear-text, including information such as the circumstances of the writing of the documents and the time of their composition, it is equally legitimate for the reviewer or reader to inquire about the accuracy, completeness, relevance, and objectivity of the information being provided by the editor. If, as we believe, it is legitimate for editors of critical/scholarly editions to identify obscure references used by the author, especially when the author fails to provide that information, or when the sources used by the author are not otherwise readily identifiable, it is doubtlessly equally appropriate for the reviewer and reader to hold the editors responsible for the accuracy and completeness of the references supplied. And since, as a corollary it is also appropriate for the critical/scholarly edition to provide information on the historical context of the papers being published and of all of the documents used in preparation of the clear-text, and appropriate for the critical/scholarly edition to describe the historical connections which the texts being published in that critical/scholarly edition have with previous work, both previous work by the author whose edition it is and the materials of other authors whose work played a role in the preparation of the texts being published in the critical/scholarly edition, it is just as appropriate for the reviewer and reader of the critical/scholarly edition to inquire about the accuracy, completeness, relevance, and objectivity of the historical information being provided by the editor in recounting the historical background, circumstances of composition, and place within the history logic of the author's writings being published.

Once more, and in summary, since the goal of the critical/scholarly edition is to enable an author's writings to speak for themselves in the way that their author intended, the critical/scholarly edition can be seen as a collection of primary sources, that is, as a single-author sourcebook tracing that author's development of his subject and representing in as

complete, accurate, and objective a fashion as possible the author's work on the subject, in very much the same sense that van Heijenoort's *From Frege to Gödel* is a sourcebook, a multiple-author collection of primary documents representing the main trends in the development of mathematical logic in a specific historical period. The reviewer and critic are obliged to treat the critical/scholarly edition as such and to judge it by those criteria. If, in the view of the reviewer and the critic the critical/scholarly edition has failed in one or more of these respects, if the accuracy, completeness, relevance, and objectivity of the information being provided by the editor of the critical/scholarly edition is open to question, the reviewer and critic are within their rights to say so, to explain why they are making their charges, and to provide evidence to support their claims. Indeed, it is incumbent upon them to do so. A review of a critical/scholarly edition is precisely the place to point out the importance and accuracy of the critical/scholarly edition as a historical record. It is the place to likewise discuss how well or how poorly the critical/scholarly edition lives up to its goal as providing the historical record of the thought and contributions of the author. Likewise, it is appropriate for the reviewer and critic to discuss the significance and relevance of the work of the author in general to the development of his subject, and of the significance and relevance to the development of the subject of the work that made its way into the critical/scholarly edition. And at the same time that the reviewer or critic of a critical/scholarly edition may legitimately use his or her discussion of the edition to pronounce his or her own views on the work of the author, it is misleading at best, and academically dishonest at worst, to employ a review of a critical/scholarly edition to lambaste its editors either for failing to impose an interpretation upon the or, even more so, for failing to adhere to the reviewer's interpretive program. It should not be the intention of a review, especially a review of a critical/scholarly edition, to "score" philosophical points by a deliberate misreading of the text. But it is clearly useful, not to say important, to endeavor to identify any of the errors which one's understanding of the relevant topics and their history detect in reading a book.

Perhaps it is difficult to draw as careful a demarcation between history and philosophy of logic as one would like, or as strictly as our comments have indicated are desirable and necessary for properly and fairly weighing the critical/scholarly edition. And, to reiterate a point already made, perhaps this is because history of logic has not yet been fully divorced from philosophy of logic, since philosophers and mathe-

maticians have equally contributed to the development of logic, and especially when logic is viewed from the perspective of the logicist idea as the foundation of mathematics. That does not entail, however, that no such demarcation can or ought to be made. Here, the historian's distinction regarding use of primary sources, the distinction between *examination* of facts or documents and *interpretation* of facts or the meaning and significance of documents, is entirely relevant. At the other extreme, there can be a tension between history and philosophy in logic, a tension which may be especially acute in some circles, just because of the close history of still-recent interplay between philosophy and mathematics in the historical development of logic. And this tension, and the rivalries which undergird it, can raise suspicions when either (it is perceived that) too sharp a distinction is drawn between history and philosophy of logic and equally when (it is perceived that) the distinction between history and philosophy of logic has been blurred or even ignored. The reviewer is then apt to face unavoidable special problems in reviewing or critiquing a particular work. Recognition of a distinction between history and philosophy of logic, between *explanation* and *interpretation*, if not necessarily a close adherence to the distinction, together with a sensitivity to the opinion, orientation, or bias of the intended readership, can only help the reviewer in gaining, at this juncture, the understanding, confidence, and tolerance, if not the sympathy and support, of readers of the review.

In reviewing any work, it is worthwhile for the reviewer to keep the intended readership of the review in mind. It is equally worthwhile keeping the intended readership of the work being reviewed in mind while composing a review. If Houser is correct in declaring that the purpose of critical/scholarly editions is to "set standards for future scholarship by providing authoritative texts *reconstructed* to represent not only the authors' last word (or final intentions) but also how they got there," then assuredly it is incumbent upon historians of logic to apply the distinction between examination and interpretation in evaluating the critical/scholarly editions in representing "not only the authors' last word (or final intentions) but also how they got there" and in evaluating the success or failure of the critical/scholarly edition in carrying out its purported task — and to conduct the evaluation and appraise the critical/edition without attempting to impose one's own interpretation on the editors of the critical/scholarly edition, doing so, that is, keeping the interpretation separate and distinct from the evaluation, keeping philosophical analysis separate and distinct from historical appraisal.