

Notes on the use of this book

This book addresses three kinds of readers. Academics working inside or outside philosophy should find explanations of key terms and issues in Wittgenstein's work, and be able to find out what impact it might have on their own. At the end of entries, I sometimes indicate briefly what impact it has actually had, but for detailed information one should consult the items listed in the Bibliography of Secondary Sources. Students working on Wittgenstein or related topics (Frege, Russell, philosophical logic, metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of mind) should find an account of major exegetical and substantive problems. Wittgenstein scholars should find a state-of-the-art discussion, as well as some new ideas. I have striven for a comprehensive coverage of the topics, but it is synthetic a priori that I have failed.

Readers without prior knowledge of analytic philosophy are strongly advised to read the Sketch of an Intellectual Biography, by way of an introduction. I have tried to avoid formal symbolism, but some of it is inevitable in discussing logical and mathematical issues. The entries concerned are easier to understand with some knowledge of the propositional and predicate calculus. In line with Wittgenstein, I employ the notation of *Principia Mathematica*, although I use parentheses instead of dots as scope-indicating devices, and $(\exists x)(\exists y)xRy$ instead of $(\exists x,y)xRy$. Other technical devices are explained in the entries concerned.

Inevitably, many of the interpretations presented here are controversial. I have tried to state alternative readings which are plausible or widespread. In the end, readers will have to decide for themselves by looking at Wittgenstein's texts. To facilitate further study, I have not only quoted famous passages, but have also provided ample references, including references to the *Nachlass* where it provides significant additional material. I have made liberal use of cross-references, which are indicated by the relevant entry title (or a cognate – e.g., 'determinate'/'determinary of sense', 'grammatical proposition'/'grammar') in small capitals. Terms which do not occur as independent entries can be located from the index.

Unlike other, more distant philosophers in this series, Wittgenstein provides a 'live option' for contemporary philosophers. For this reason I have striven to convey, wherever possible, how his remarks might be attacked or

defended. Some commentators suggest that Wittgenstein does not engage in a rational debate with other philosophers, but merely tries to convert them to his point of view. These commentators find his work so out of the ordinary as to be incommensurable with the rest of philosophy. In my view this interpretation is unfounded. Although Wittgenstein's philosophical method is revolutionary in seeking to undermine even the assumptions underlying previous debates, he does so by way of arguments which can be assessed for their soundness. I have therefore stressed not only lines of historical influence, but agreements and disagreements with past and present thinkers.

Another view is that Wittgenstein's remarks often do not present answers to his self-posed questions, or hard-line positions, that they are full of qualifications and investigate rather than affirm or deny. There is some truth in this view. However, since this is a work of reference I have tried to present as clear-cut a position as Wittgenstein's prudent qualifications allow. Perhaps some of the views presented here should die the death of a thousand qualifications, and others the less-protracted death of straightforward refutation. The task of the continuing debate about the nature and merit of Wittgenstein's philosophy is to deliver or parry such blows; and the purpose of this Dictionary is to facilitate that debate.