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TABLE OF CONTENTS

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS	VII
PREFACE	IX
1. DUMMETT AND REVISIONISM	1
CRISPIN WRIGHT	
2. HOLISM, MOLECULARITY AND TRUTH	31
NEIL TENNANT	
3. IN DEFENCE OF MODESTY	59
JOHN MCDOWELL	
4. TRUTH BEYOND ALL VERIFICATION	81
BRIAN LOAR	
5. DUMMETT ON A THEORY OF MEANING AND ITS IMPACT ON LOGIC	117
DAG PRAWITZ	
6. FIXED PAST, UNFIXED FUTURE	166
D.H.MELLOR	
7. PLAYING CARDS	187
SYLVIA MANN	
8. TWENTY YEARS OF RACIALISM AND MULTI-RACIALISM	200
JOHN REX	
9. REPLIES TO ESSAYS	219
MICHAEL DUMMETT	
A. REPLY TO CRISPIN WRIGHT	221

B. REPLY TO NEIL TENNANT	235
C. REPLY TO JOHN McDOWELL	253
D. REPLY TO BRIAN LOAR	269
E. REPLY TO DAG PRAWITZ	281
F. REPLY TO D.H.MELLOR	287
G. REPLY TO SYLVIA MANN	299
H. REPLY TO JOHN REX	313
CHRONOLOGICAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF MICHAEL DUMMETT'S PUBLICATIONS	331
ALPHABETICAL GUIDE TO MICHAEL DUMMETT'S PUBLICATIONS	336
INDEX OF NAMES	337

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

Michael Dummett, whose work is the focus of this book, was born in 1925. Since 1979 he has been Wykeham Professor of Logic in the University of Oxford, and a Fellow of New College; the separate Bibliography towards the end of this volume provides a guide to his numerous publications in Philosophy. Together with his wife Ann, he has for many years been an active campaigner against racism, especially in Britain; and he has served on many committees, and issued a number of publications, in that cause. In addition, he has a longstanding interest in the history of playing-cards and of card games, and a distinguished list of publications also stands to his credit in this field.

*

Brian Loar is a Professor in the School of Philosophy, University of Southern California.

John McDowell has recently been appointed as a member of the Philosophy Department at the University of Pittsburgh. At the time of writing his essay for this volume, he was a Fellow of University College, Oxford.

Sylvia Mann is an expert on the history of playing-cards and of card games, on which topics she has published several books. She is an Honourary Fellow, and a Vice President, of the International Playing-Card Society.

D.H.Mellor is Professor of Philosophy in the University of Cambridge.

Dag Prawitz is Professor of Theoretical Philosophy in the University of Stockholm.

John Rex is Research Professor in, and Associate Director of, the Centre

NOTES ON CONTRIBUTORS

for Research in Ethnic Relations, University of Warwick.

Neil Tennant recently has been appointed as Professor in the Philosophy Department, Australian National University. At the time of writing his essay for this volume, he was Professor in Philosophy at the University of Stirling.

Crispin Wright is Professor of Logic and Metaphysics at the University of St. Andrews.

*

Barry Taylor, the editor of this volume is Senior Lecturer in Philosophy at the University of Melbourne.

PREFACE

P.A.Schilpp's 'Library of Living Philosophers' is the series which introduced to the philosophical community the format of a volume of essays on the work of a distinguished philosopher, combined with replies to the essays by the philosopher targeted. The format proved attractive to a discipline which has always placed a high premium on debate. But the Schilpp series has shown itself unenterprising in its choice of subjects, concentrating on end-of-year reports on philosophers who are of undoubted distinction, but whose contribution to the subject can be regarded as rather definitely over. Which leaves a gap, which the present series is designed to fill, for volumes of a similar format aiming at assessment of philosophers who have distinguished themselves already by making a substantial impact on their discipline, but whose further work too is awaited with eager anticipation.

Michael Dummett is an ideal subject for a series with this goal of mid-term assessment. His writings to date have permanently altered philosophy's conception of what is at issue between realism and idealism (and its paler cousin, anti-realism); and this has been achieved by way of a supplementary clarification of a host of issues in the philosophy of language and of mathematics, and of the Frege/Wittgenstein historical tradition from which such issues are typically approached in contemporary philosophy. At the same time, his magnum opus on Frege is as yet incomplete, awaiting its second volume on mathematics; the final version of the 1976 William James lectures has not yet appeared; a projected 'What Is a Theory of Meaning? (III)' is so far unglimped; and these and the other works which may confidently be expected to flow from his prolific pen will expand and clarify the contribution to philosophy he has made so far. This volume, then, is no Festschrift, if a Festschrift honours a completed oeuvre; rather, it aims to serve as a focus for debate on a distinguished but continuing contribution to the subject.

PREFACE

I set out originally, under the instructions of the series editor, to put together a volume which would comprehensively evaluate the full range of Michael's work. Knowing how dauntingly slim are the chances of inducing philosophers to write to an editor's brief, my cunning ploy was to invite contributions allowing the writers free rein, but so to construct the invitation-list as to ensure that the natural interests of its members would result in full coverage of the field. Alas, the tactic was less than a total success: some writers who agreed to participate produced papers with a different emphasis than my calculations had expected; others were prevented by illness or other mishap from producing essays at all, so that areas I had thought would be covered were left untreated. In the upshot, indeed, D.H.Mellor with his essay on the asymmetry of time alone stands apart from the other philosophical contributors, all of whom concentrate on various aspects of Dummett's treatment of the realism/anti-realism dispute, or the closely related issue of the form of a theory of meaning. It is a pity that the volume has turned out accordingly to have no paper specifically addressed to questions of Frege interpretation, or to the more technical aspects of Michael's work in the philosophy of mathematics. At the same time, it is no accident that my haphazard editorial methods have ended with a volume whose philosophical focus is squarely upon the area where Michael's work has most fired the current philosophical imagination, and stirred the greatest controversy. (It is interesting further to note how many of the papers, despite their differing perspectives, find themselves to a greater or lesser degree dissatisfied with the treatment holism has received in Michael's writings so far. No doubt much of the interest in the present volume will be in the way the contributors articulate this dissatisfaction, and in Michael's attempts to dispel their doubts in his Replies.)

My original ambitions to achieve comprehensive evaluation of the whole of Michael Dummett's intellectual contribution survive most heroically in the final product in the essays by John Rex and Sylvia Mann. All readers of the Preface to Frege: Philosophy of Language will be aware of the strength of Michael's commitment to the anti-racialist cause, a commitment he shares with his wife Ann; and I thought it fitting that his work in this field be marked alongside his purely philosophical work. John Rex's cool but thought-provoking essay is the result. Once I had decided to extend the

PREFACE

scope of the volume beyond pure philosophy, it seemed a good idea too to include something on his work on playing-cards and card games - for, though I knew little of the field, I was vaguely aware that Michael had extended a hobby into what would constitute for many an entire academic career. Sylvia Mann's fascinating essay has enlightened me on how this could be so; I recommend it as a delightful read for any who are as unenlightened as I was to how playing-cards could possibly constitute a field for intellectual enquiry.

This volume has been produced by the camera-ready process; which means that I, as editor, have been largely responsible for its final physical appearance, taking over the roles normally assigned to printers and sub-editors. I have been hampered, of course, not only by the limits of my equipment but also by a certain lack of experience in these fields; still, I trust the result is acceptable. Let me forestall one source of potential criticism by announcing that my policy has been Maoist: eschewing grey uniformity, I have allowed a thousand flowers to bloom. So methods of giving references differ from paper to paper, as they did in the original manuscripts, my only requirement being that they are clear and consistent within an essay; and I have even allowed Brian Loar's American spelling to survive unaltered. Michael Dummett's Replies were, for obvious reasons, originally supplied without page-numbered cross-references; those that there are have been supplied by me, and I am accordingly to blame for any deficiencies either in their accuracy or in their number.

One feature of the apparatus criticus might be worth drawing to the attention of the potential reader. It is common in volumes with the format of this one to include a comprehensive Bibliography of the subject philosopher. This I have not attempted here, in part because of my limited library facilities; instead, I have contented myself with a Bibliography which lists all the Michael Dummett works referred to in this book. What is novel is that I have included, under the entry for each work, a list of the pages on which it is referred to in this volume - a feature which I hope will aid someone working, say, on 'Truth', who wants a guide to discussion in this volume relevant to its themes.

It remains for me to give some thanks: to the essayists for the volume, for forbearance over various vicissitudes the project has gone through; to Michael Dummett, for taking the time and trouble to write his Replies; to

PREFACE

Josie Winther, for her assistance in preparing the camera-ready copy; to Rudolf Teuwsen, for assistance in preparing the Index and Bibliographies; to the Arts Faculty of my University, for financial assistance which made other assistance possible; and to the editor and publishers of the Philosophical Quarterly, for permission to reprint Crispin Wright's essay, "Dummett and Revisionism", which originally appeared in that journal (Vol.31 (1981) pp.44-67). All other essays in this volume are new.

Barry Taylor.