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By Rupert Read



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A Wittgensteinian Way with Paradoxes examines how some of the classic philosophical paradoxes that have so puzzled philosophers over the centuries can be dissolved. Read argues that paradoxes such as the Sorites, Russell's Paradox and the paradoxes of time travel do not, in fact, *need* to be solved. Rather, using a resolute Wittgensteinian 'therapeutic' method, the book explores how virtually all apparent philosophical paradoxes can be diagnosed and dissolved through examining their conditions of arising; to loosen their grip and therapeutically liberate those philosophers suffering from them (including oneself). The book contrasts such paradoxes with real, 'lived paradoxes': paradoxes that are genuinely experienced outside of the philosopher's study, in everyday life. Thus Read explores instances of lived paradox (such as paradoxes of self-hatred and of denial of other humans' humanity) and the harm they can cause, psychically, morally or politically. These lived paradoxes, he argues, sometimes cannot be dissolved using a Wittgensteinian treatment. Moreover, in some cases they do not need to be: for some, such as the paradoxical practices of Zen Buddhism (and indeed of Wittgenstein himself), can in fact be beneficial. The book shows how, once philosophers' paradoxes have been exorcized, real lived paradoxes can be given their due.



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Editorial Review

Review

Rupert Read seems to be a spoilsport, until you realize how serious and important his objectives are in this book. He explains away several brain-teasing paradoxes, and he uses those explanations to illustrate and illuminate themes in philosophy, in general, and Wittgenstein, in particular. However, he also investigates subjects such as racism and self-hatred that greatly affect our lives outside of the classroom or study. (Don Levi, University of Oregon)

A fascinating study, by a major Wittgensteinian, of Wittgenstein's seemingly paradoxical view of paradox: on one hand, mere confusion in a philosopher's use of words; on the other, the deepest expression of our human nature. In these lively and powerfully illuminating essays, Rupert Read takes us to the very heart of Wittgenstein's enterprise, offering one way of understanding the sense in which this crucial figure of modern thought both was and was not an anti-philosopher.

(Louis A. Sass, author of *The Paradoxes of Delusion: Wittgenstein, Schreber, and the Schizophrenic Mind*)

About the Author

Rupert Read is reader in philosophy at the University of East Anglia.

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