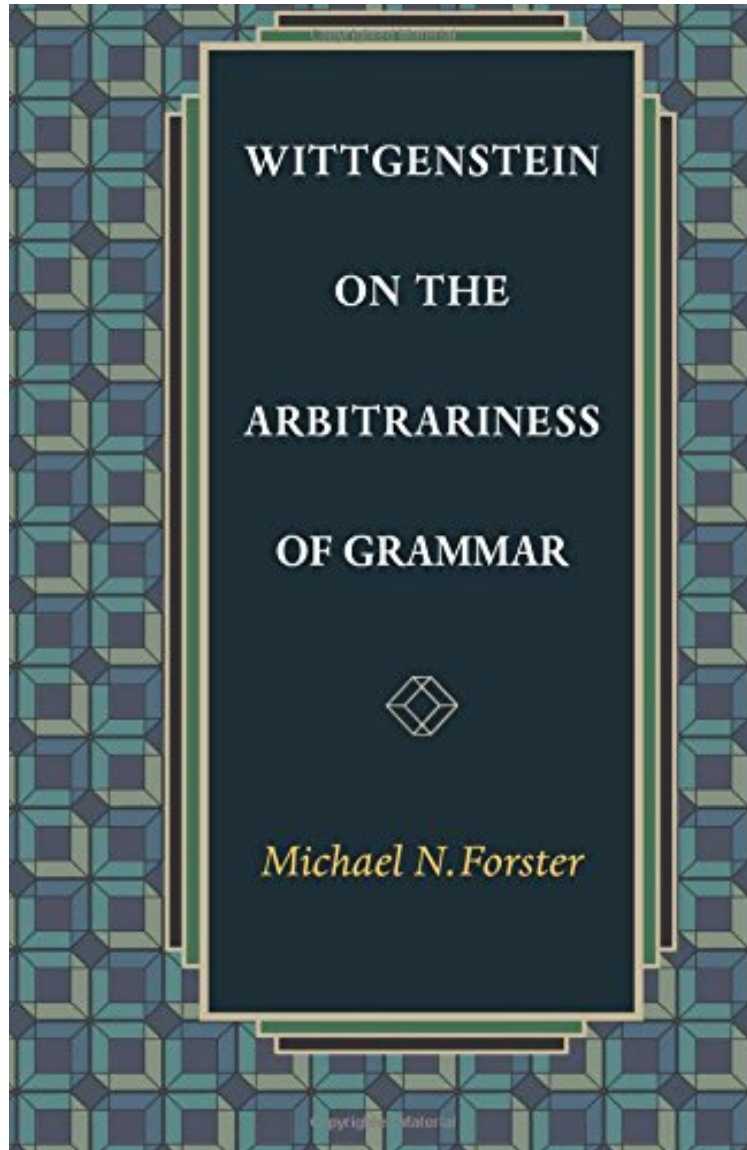


(Read free ebook) Wittgenstein on the Arbitrariness of Grammar

Wittgenstein on the Arbitrariness of Grammar

Michael N. Forster

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#4966772 in Books Princeton University Press 2005-11-06 2005-11-06Original language:EnglishPDF # 1
8.30 x .66 x 5.401, .40 #File Name: 0691123918264 pages | File size: 36.Mb

Michael N. Forster : Wittgenstein on the Arbitrariness of Grammar before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Wittgenstein on the Arbitrariness of Grammar:

9 of 11 people found the following review helpful. Kantian influencesBy William S JamisonIf anything the book begins by giving a good collection of quotations from many different selections where Wittgenstein says the sorts of things he does on the nature of grammar. This is examined in light of Kantian views and the author points out the similarities - something I do not recall reading about before. I was under the impression that Wittgenstein was

relatively unschooled philosophically. So seeing his views described as Kantian is exciting. "Wittgenstein's position can quite properly be described as idealist, in a sense closely analogous to that in which Kant's was." (P. 17) F contrasts his view (the diversity thesis) with that of Bernard Williams (may he rest in peace) and others, and in agreement with Norman Malcolm, on the interpretation of the later Wittgenstein's position on the "I" and the "We". (p. 24) So, the examples described here do not lead to the negative view that the alternatives given are unintelligible but rather that they are "either actual or possible." "In short, grammar is neither correct nor incorrect, neither true nor false, but is instead antecedent to correctness and incorrectness, truth and falsehood." (p. 48) Why does W hold this view? F says because "grammatical principles ... are rules or conventions, like those which govern games, that they have somewhat the character of commands, commandments, or categorical imperatives with which we enjoin ourselves to order our empirical or factual claims in specific ways." (p. 49) In some sense grammatical principles are non-arbitrary since they are "required to be useful." (p. 81) Chapter 4 deals with some criticisms. Part II of the book deals with the "diversity thesis."

What is the nature of a conceptual scheme? Are there alternative conceptual schemes? If so, are some more justifiable or correct than others? The later Wittgenstein already addresses these fundamental philosophical questions under the general rubric of "grammar" and the question of its "arbitrariness"--and does so with great subtlety. This book explores Wittgenstein's views on these questions. Part I interprets his conception of grammar as a generalized (and otherwise modified) version of Kant's transcendental idealist solution to a puzzle about necessity. It also seeks to reconcile Wittgenstein's seemingly inconsistent answers to the question of whether or not grammar is arbitrary by showing that he believed grammar to be arbitrary in one sense and non-arbitrary in another. Part II focuses on an especially central and contested feature of Wittgenstein's account: a thesis of the diversity of grammars. The author discusses this thesis in connection with the nature of formal logic, the limits of language, and the conditions of semantic understanding or access. Strongly argued and clearly written, this book will appeal not only to philosophers but also to students of the human sciences, for whom Wittgenstein's work holds great relevance.

"Nuanced and convincingly supported, Forster's work reaches conclusions of great intrinsic interest."From the Back Cover
"Nuanced and convincingly supported, Forster's work reaches conclusions of great intrinsic interest."--Paul Horwich, University College, London and City University of New York
About the Author
Michael N. Forster is Professor of Philosophy and Chairman of the Philosophy Department at the University of Chicago.