



# Gellner

Words and Things



When Ernest Gellner was in his early thirties, he took it upon himself to challenge linguistic philosophy, the prevailing philosophical orthodoxy of the day. Finding a powerful ally in Bertrand Russell, who provided the foreword for this book, Gellner embarked on the project that was to put him on the intellectual map, *Words and Things* was the first determined attempt to state the premises and operational rules of the movement. The basic charge was that linguistic philosophy was an aberrant, trivializing perversion of good philosophical practice, substituting, in place of honest theorizing and argument, pedantic scrutiny of intrinsically uninteresting detail. When this now-famous critique originally appeared in 1959, it created a scandal, causing a flurry of correspondence in *The Times*. *Words and Things* remains the most devastating attack on a conventional wisdom in philosophy to this day.