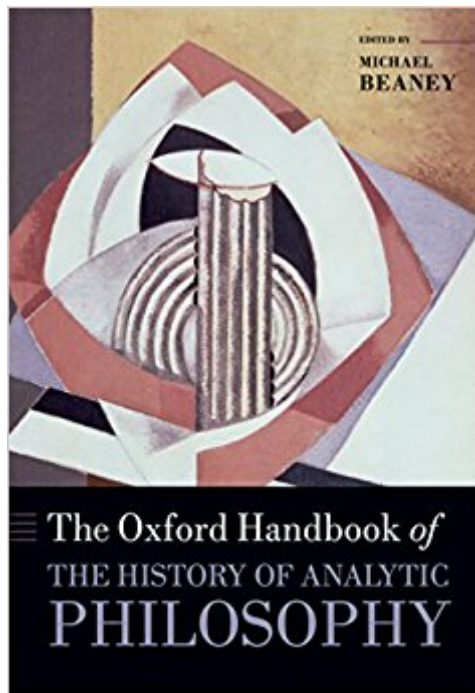




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The Oxford Handbook Of The History Of Analytic Philosophy (Oxford Handbooks)



Synopsis

During the course of the twentieth century, analytic philosophy developed into the dominant philosophical tradition in the English-speaking world. In the last two decades, it has become increasingly influential in the rest of the world, from continental Europe to Latin America and Asia. At the same time there has been deepening interest in the origins and history of analytic philosophy, as analytic philosophers examine the foundations of their tradition and question many of the assumptions of their predecessors. This has led to greater historical self-consciousness among analytic philosophers and more scholarly work on the historical contexts in which analytic philosophy developed. This historical turn in analytic philosophy has been gathering pace since the 1990s, and the present volume is the most comprehensive collection of essays to date on the history of analytic philosophy. It contains state-of-the-art contributions from many of the leading scholars in the field, all of the contributions specially commissioned. The introductory essays discuss the nature and historiography of analytic philosophy, accompanied by a detailed chronology and bibliography. Part One elucidates the origins of analytic philosophy, with special emphasis on the work of Frege, Russell, Moore, and Wittgenstein. Part Two explains the development of analytic philosophy, from Oxford realism and logical positivism to the most recent work in analytic philosophy, and includes essays on ethics, aesthetics, and political philosophy as well as on the areas usually seen as central to analytic philosophy, such as philosophy of language and mind. Part Three explores certain key themes in the history of analytic philosophy.

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Customer Reviews

After reading the first two essays in this massive work, it is my considered opinion that Michael Beaney knows more about analytic philosophy than any other person alive. OUP is noted for selecting the top scholar in the field to edit the volumes in its prestigious Handbook series, and they did not let us down here. This astonishing compilation is the largest (over 1100 pp.) I am aware of under one cover, and the breath, depth, and rigour of the contributions are to be greatly admired. So you like comprehensive? Try chapters 3 and 4 (also written by Beaney). The former is a chronology of the key thinkers, publications, and events in the history of analytic philosophy. It is in the form of a chart with the thinkers listed alphabetically and the events by year (starting in 1781 and finishing with 2013). Chapter 4 is an exhaustive bibliography that is 84 pp. and contains thousands of entries. These two chapters are a scholar's dream and a heaven for completists. The history of analytic philosophy is usually divided up into significant movements. The first is the logicist period that was the origin of analytic philosophy. Gottlob Frege's work in the philosophy of mathematics in the 1880s was followed by Bertrand Russell's seminal publications in the first part of the 20th century, culminating in his profound three volume treatise with Whitehead titled Principia Mathematica. The logicist philosophers thought that mathematics could be reduced to logic. Their project was ultimately a failure, but is deemed a magnificent failure by historians of the philosophy of logic and mathematics. Part I of the Handbook goes into exquisite detail concerning these matters.

Although this book is highly professionally done, I have found almost no use for its contents in the months since I purchased it. This is surprising, since I am deeply interested in what I take to be analytic philosophy. Perhaps it is the way that the text is organized around big, looming problems, instead of logic, metaphysics, epistemology, or ethics per se? It is hard to see how someone could find the book useful, even though clearly a big effort was made to make it useful for its intended audience. My sense is that it is slightly too dry, slightly too ponderous (if that is possible? I mean in

a psychological sense), and does not get to the point (un-moored?). This text seems to take all the criticisms of history to heart, and therefore lose the vigor that would make it communicate to young philosophers. But if it is only for old philosophers, what is the point? This is nothing like Aquinas, Nietzsche, or some other powerful minds. It does not have conviction. It does not seem to believe in itself. My conclusion, then, is that it is obsessed with mathematics. But that is not the quest it sets out to complete. It might even be confused, if a high qualification is granted. This text would be better off with some creative ideas from an undergraduate, and some bulleted lists. My opinion maybe. but I have been a Top Writer in analytic and modern philosophy on Quora.

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