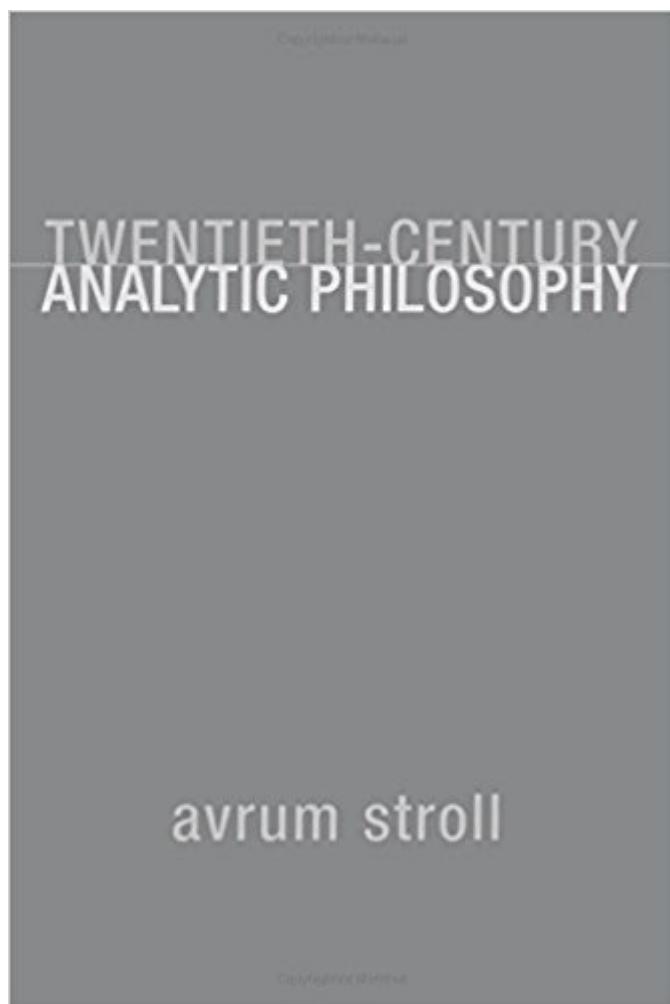


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Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy



Synopsis

Avrum Stroll investigates the "family resemblances" between that impressive breed of thinkers known as analytic philosophers. In so doing, he grapples with the point and purpose of doing philosophy: What is philosophy? What are its tasks? What kind of information, illumination, and understanding is it supposed to provide if it is not one of the natural sciences?

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Customer Reviews

Twentieth-Century Analytic Philosophy by Avrum Stroll is a useful but limited guide to the history of 20th century analytic philosophy. Stroll deals only with some of the giants. He explicitly limits his treatment to Frege, Russell, Moore, Wittgenstein, Carnap, Austin, Ryle, and Quine. These are indeed leading analytic philosophers but many other leading analytic philosophers are left out or only mentioned: Strawson, Grice, Rorty, Davidson, Putnam, Ayer, Rawls, Hare, Hart, Berlin, and so on. Furthermore Stroll almost entirely ignores 20th century analytic ethics. Rawls, who's stature is equal to Carnap, Austin, or Ryle, is never even mentioned anywhere in the book. Broad has more entries in the index than does Strawson. Despite the claims of the author this is not a book for the general reader. The treatment assumes a good background in philosophy and a command of the technical vocabulary used by philosophers. This is a book for the philosophy grad student or teacher who wants a good overview of some main threads in analytic philosophy. It would not be appropriate for use as a text in an undergrad course. For the most part Stroll's expositions are clear and correct, direct and fair. He is especially good on Russell's early philosophy, Frege, Austin, and some of Carnap. His explanations of e.g. Russell's theory of descriptions, Austin's treatment of

speech acts, Wittgenstein's Tractatus are very useful. In the final chapters Stroll considers the direct reference theories of Kripke and Putnam. These sections are especially weak. He does not understand what the new theory of reference is about. These sections are not historical expositions but critical engagements as Stroll acknowledges.

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