

THE CAMBRIDGE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHY, 1945–2015

This landmark achievement in philosophical scholarship brings together leading experts from the diverse traditions of Western philosophy in a common quest to illuminate and explain the most important philosophical developments since the Second World War. Focusing particularly (but not exclusively) on those insights and movements that most profoundly shaped the English-speaking philosophical world, this volume bridges the traditional divide between “analytic” and “Continental” philosophy while also reaching beyond it. The result is an authoritative guide to the most important advances and transformations that shaped philosophy during this tumultuous and fascinating period of history, developments that continue to shape the field today. It will be of interest to students and scholars of contemporary philosophy of all levels and will prove indispensable for any serious philosophical collection.

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PREFACE AND ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We, the editors of this volume, began this project in early 2014, but its roots go back several decades. As long-time friends, philosophical colleagues, and dialogue partners working in quite different philosophical traditions, we always found it helpful to hear the other explain the history behind the latest debates. We thus hoped that our philosophical collaboration could produce a history of post-war philosophy that would be balanced yet expansive, authoritative yet accessible, pluralistic in its approach and yet respectful of the depth and complexity of the achievements of the overlapping and competing philosophical traditions that defined this fruitful and fascinating period. We thought it best to select leading authorities in these areas and give them as much freedom as possible to define, examine, and explain the most important philosophical developments in their areas of expertise. The happy result, we think, is a diverse volume filled with wonderfully clear and insightful chapters that illuminate almost all the most significant movements in contemporary philosophy. Some readers will notice the occasional gap, of course, and a few anticipated chapters were indeed dropped along the way for various reasons. We believe the volume remains impressively comprehensive nonetheless, and hope it will help contribute to a growing understanding of these diverse, overlapping, and often competing philosophical traditions, while also giving readers some sense of the most promising paths opening beyond them.

Do we incur some debts in our philosophical formation that remain too profound merely to acknowledge with thanks? If so, then thirty years of close philosophical friendship ranks high on that list. In grateful acknowledgment of such immeasurable debts, we dedicate this book to philosophical friendships everywhere. Long may they prosper in unforeseen places and unexpected ways, bringing strangers together as friends to think through and beyond their differences. We would, moreover, like to thank Cambridge University Press for entrusting us with this important volume. Hilary Gaskin has been a continual source of expert guidance and advice since this book's inception, and Sophie Taylor's generous efforts have been invaluable in seeing it through to completion.

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