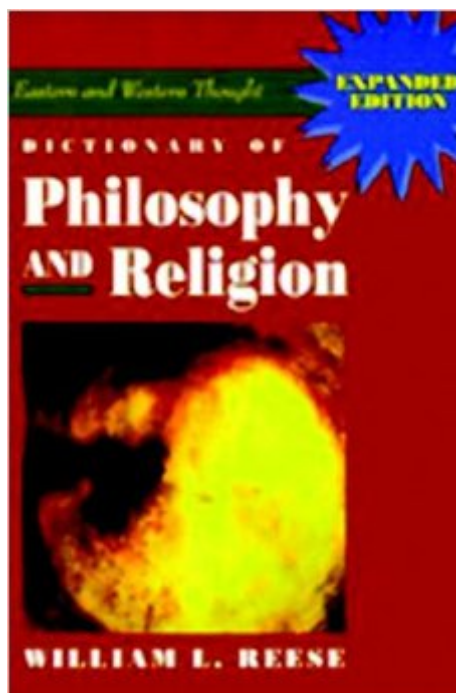


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Dictionary Of Philosophy And Religion



Synopsis

First published in 1980, and now substantially revised and enlarged, this panoramic survey of philosophic and religious thought, both ancient and modern, provides access to a wide array of ideas. More than just a dictionary, this well-designed reference work contains analytical commentary and historical accounts on a vast range of topics, select bibliographies attached to many of the entries, and considerable cross-referencing. The cross-references run from philosophic movements, to technical terms, to the positions of individual philosophers, thus encouraging a personal exploration of the themes, movements, and thinkers of any particular school of thought. The end result is a reasonably compact single volume with many of the features of a multivolume encyclopedia. Reese covers both analytic and Continental philosophy, and includes a good deal of the history of philosophy. There are biographical entries for more than 900 ancient, medieval, and modern philosophers, for a total number of entries of over 4000. This new edition expands on the original treatment of religion and Asian philosophy and includes enlarged perspectives on Continental philosophy. Named "Outstanding Reference Work" by the American Library Association, the first edition was a Book-of-the-Month science pick and a selection of the Quality Paperback Book Club. Authoritative, comprehensive, clear, and interesting, The Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion will benefit the nonspecialist and specialist alike.

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Customer Reviews

This is one of the most readable books that I own, which seems out of character for a "Dictionary of Philosophy and Religion" but it is very true. I can sit down with this book for hours at any given time.

I think a big part of that is the excellent cross-reference system, so you can start anywhere and then see the linkages between different thoughts; which means that every reading of the book is like a journey. Another great feature of the book is that it covers both ideas and the people who forwarded them in the linking system so you can start with a study on epistemology and then end up ranging over half the book because you link to the people with the ideas and then back to the other ideas that the particular philosopher had. The drawbacks to such an approach are clear. After all, the book has to have some limitation to its length and it is covering many authors who wrote many thousands of pages on their own ideas, so the articles have to do quite a bit of summing up. Since it is absurd to expect deeper coverage from such a book anyway, I feel just fine highly recommending it.

This book saw me through many a philosophy course, and 8 years later I still find the need to use it for quick, concise cross-referencing of the major tenets of philosophy and religion. I actually won it in a bet while in college. It was the best bet I ever made, which speaks poorly of my gambling ability, but highly of this book.

I haven't read this book for a while, but I can say that it's the most extensively cross-referenced dictionary of philosophical and religious concepts I've personally seen. This makes it very easy to compare disparate sources of opinion on many concepts, including the most basic ideas such as truth, knowledge, reality, etc., as well as very specific ideas that are associated with one person or group. Each entry contains a somewhat limiting, but very convenient, numbered list of different perspectives and ideas on the subject-- and each item on each list usually contains a reference to another section of the dictionary. The commentary isn't always as detailed or perhaps QUITE as professional as, say, The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy... However, the holistic approach of this work probably contributed more to my personal sense of the interconnectedness of human thought than anything I've ever seen.

my father used to call surfing the dictionary shelf-reading -- you look up one thing and read all the other stuff on the same page and the references. as the first reviewer of this book notes, the cross-referencing in this book is most enlightening to a lay person. i looked up "intentionality", which someone said was the key to sartre, and discovered not only husserl and his world, but brentano, a history of philosophy in one tiny paragraph from avicenna to the theory of types. the clarity with which it is written and defines arcane (new) terms like noema deserves reprinting.

I used the earlier edition of this in my teaching days. This is an excellent source in a handy format. It manages to be both comprehensive and yet provide considerable detail about the more important philosophers and terms. I know of no other reference work of the same quality in this format.

I have been using this book for years, but I never had to learn anything that is in this book, being so amateur in philosophy that I don't have to trouble myself with the ideas for which most of the people in this book have become famous. I have usually expected things to be much simpler than the information which this book has to offer. It has nice definitions of some Greek and Latin words that I find meaningful, once I know what they are supposed to be about. On the Hebrew source of the word "Gehenna," the place used for "the city dump of Jerusalem" where fires burned constantly, the extra information, "according to tradition, [first-born] children had been sacrificed there to the god Moloch," provides a lot of insight into its use in The New Testament, where the King James Version often uses "hell." For years, this book was my main source of information on Giordano Bruno (1548-1600). I suspect that it is right about "he was condemned to death, and burned alive in the Campo Dei Fiori on February 17, 1600." I have tried to make sense of a few of Bruno's books, like THE EXPULSION OF THE TRIUMPHANT BEAST, but I'm inclined to accept the list of main ideas in this dictionary as the sum of his accomplishments. Dying for the idea that "The universe is infinite" makes more sense than some of his monads, and "To consider reality in its multiplicity" is an achievement that I can appreciate. On the other hand, the entry for Paul Tillich (1886-1965) illustrates a theologian's ability to distinguish "between three forms of reasoning~heteronomous, autonomous, and theonomous." I thought heteronomous would be pretty good, but Tillich thought that even "Autonomous reason takes its principles from within, but thereby reveals itself as vacuous and tautological." Being able to accept that Tillich would say that is part of being able to appreciate what this book is all about. I'm not saying that these guys are always right about anything.

I have owned earlier edition of this work for a number of years. I have consistently found it to be the best dictionary for philosophical and religious terms, superior to others that I own. I'm glad to have this revised version now and look forward to using it for many years to come. Very highly recommended.

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