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Intentionality - the relationship between conscious states and their objects - is one of the most discussed topics in contemporary debates in philosophy of mind, cognitive neuroscience and the study of consciousness. Long a foundational concept in Phenomenology, it has also received considerable coverage in the writings of analytic philosophers. This book is the first study to offer an impartial, well-informed assessment of the two traditions' approaches through an in-depth investigation of the principal thinkers' ideas, so that their positions emerge side-by-side, converging and diverging on certain shared themes.

Beginning with a historical discussion of the development of the term in the work of Continental thinkers in the 19th and early 20th centuries, the book considers the work of Brentano and Husserl and subsequent existentialist critiques. From there, it explores how empirical-analytic philosophers took up the topic, drawing as they were to materialist and computer models of the mind. Finally MacDonald presents a new 'hybrid' account of intentionality that will be a crucial work for scholars working on consciousness and the mind.

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