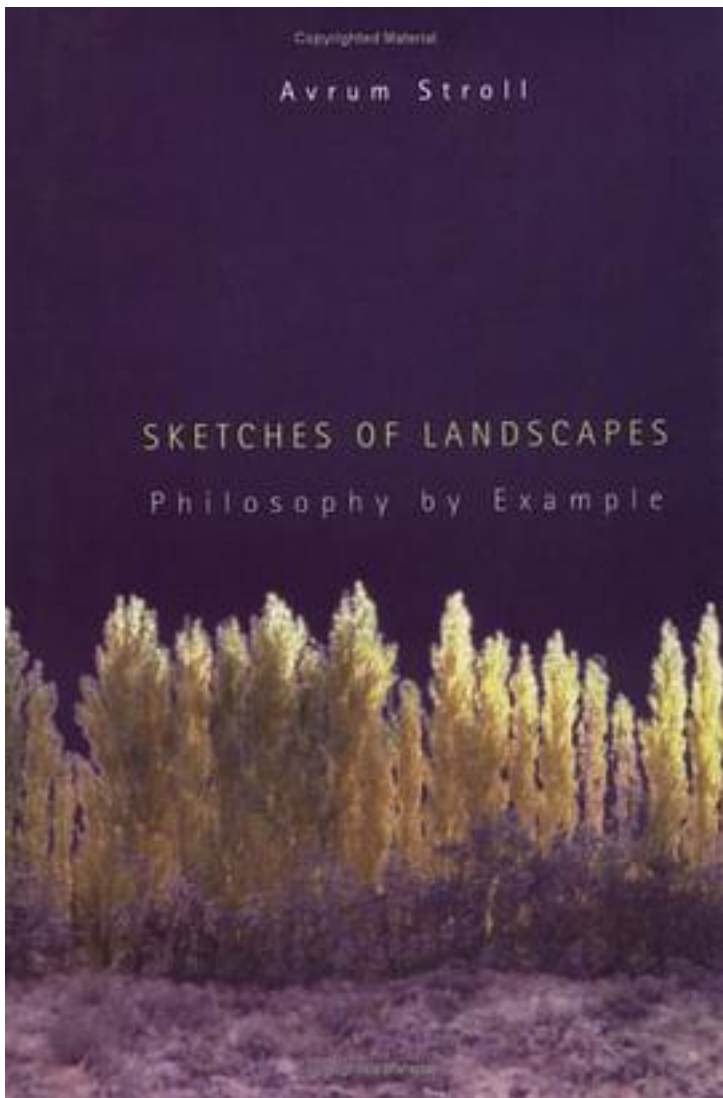


Sketches of Landscapes



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Avrum Stroll accepts the ancient tradition that one of the tasks of philosophy is to give an accurate account of the world's features, both animate and inanimate. But, he contends, because these features are inexhaustibly complex, no single theory or conceptual model can provide a complete account. Stroll's approach is piecemeal and example-oriented. In stressing the importance of examples, his work runs counter to one of the most powerful and seductive ways of thinking about the world--the Platonic tradition, which denigrates examples in the search for qualities or essences. Stroll favors pluralism, on the ground that this is how the world is. The "landscapes" of the title refers to various conceptual landscapes. Using the methodological approach he calls philosophy by example, the author discusses seven major problems of epistemology, metaphysics, and the philosophy of language: skepticism, direct reference theories and natural kinds, the relationship between the microscopic and macroscopic, the logic of examples, direct reference and fiction, holistic theories of meaning, and direct versus indirect realism in perception. It is the author's method that binds together the different topics, but the method is not the message. What matters are the substantive results. His unique analyses reveal new understandings of some difficult problems.

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