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A companion to analytic philosophy.

Edited by A. P. Martinich and David Sosa.

Blackwell Companions to Philosophy, 20.

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This impressive volume is a compilation of thirty-nine short original studies on forty-one key figures of analytic philosophy of the twentieth century by relevant scholars in the field. The selection ranges from Gottlob Frege, Bertrand Russell and G. E. Moore to Saul Kripke and David Lewis. The extension of the articles ranges from the twenty-five pages dedicated to Ludwig Wittgenstein (pp. 68–93) or the twenty four dedicated to W. V. Quine (pp. 181–204) to the four pages assigned to Ruth Barcan Marcus (pp. 357–360) or the five pages assigned in a joint article to each of the mathematicians Alfred Tarski (pp. 124–128), Alonzo Church (pp. 128–133) and Kurt Gödel (pp. 133–137).

A very short “Introduction” (pp. 1–5) by A. P. Martinich tries to sketch a general overview of analytic philosophy throughout the century—“If there is anything constant in analytic philosophy, it is change” (p. 2)—and to justify the organization of the volume: “Perhaps what makes current analytic philosophers analytic philosophers is a counterfactual: they would have done philosophy the way Moore, Russell, and Wittgenstein did it if they had been doing philosophy when Moore, Russell, and Wittgenstein were. The multiplicity of analytical styles is one reason for organizing the volume by individual philosopher and not by theme” (p. 5). In that introduction the selection of the forty-one authors discussed in the book is also justified: “At least thirty of them, we believe, would be on virtually any sensible list of forty outstanding analytic philosophers. Many other philosophers have almost as good a claim to be included in this volume. Neither of us completely agrees with the final selection. Each believes that at least three other philosophers have a better claim to be included than some that were. In order to preserve ‘plausible deniability,’ we have agreed not to comment further on the lists in any written form, and not to appear together at any public gathering of philosophers for five years” (p. 5).

The papers collected are isolated pieces without internal references to the related articles in the volume. An index with only some key terms and proper names is included at the end of the book.

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