Oppy, Graham and N. N. Trakakis, eds, *A Companion to Philosophy in Australia and New Zealand*, Clayton, Victoria 3800, Australia: Monash University Publishing, 2010, xxiii+711, AU$59.95 (paperback).

If philosophy was an Olympic sport, Australia and New Zealand would fund it better, in order to extract even more gold from one of the richest intellectual gold fields of our time. Australasia's contributions to philosophy are well known to be out of all proportion to its population, and this book shows why. It does so by giving crisp histories of Australasia's philosophy departments, institutes, movements and sects, and of its best and most influential philosophers, saying where their ideas came and come from, and how they have changed, and are still changing, our ideas and thereby our world. The editors have done this big job well, in less than 720 pages, by recruiting 178 authors to write 190 articles. Nearly all of these are clear, concise, well-informed and fair, neither concealing nor exacerbating the deep and sometimes angry disputes endemic to any serious frontier subject. Between them they give a definitive guide to Australasian philosophy that is unlikely to be matched in the near future.

Unlike John Passmore, I could not begin to assess all this book's contents, and I shall not try. I already knew some parts of its political and departmental histories, and of its biographies, but most, fascinating as many are, I hardly knew at all and must take partly on trust. (Not entirely: since where they overlap, as many do, they are reassuringly consistent, requiring little if any paraconsistent logic to make them all appear true.) More serious for me is the extraordinary range of philosophical topics, only some of which I know about, and to which I must therefore apologetically confine myself. I am less apologetic about my analytic view of the very few of these that I have space to notice, for three reasons. One is that it fits a predilection in the *AJP* noted by several contributors to the book (and deplored by some).

Another is that I cannot, as Oscar Wilde put it, 'accept all schools of art with the grand catholicity of an auctioneer', since I am not an auctioneer but a practitioner. The third and most pertinent reason is that a broadly analytic method, applied especially to logic, metaphysics, the philosophy of mind and ethics, has yielded many of Australasia's most influential gifts to modern philosophy, both pure and applied.

My greatest debt to antipodean philosophy, though, is less to its doctrines than to its plain-speaking egalitarianism, well instanced in this book. The first response to my first talk in Australasia, in 1975, to RSSS philosophers at the ANU, was 'That's the most f**kwitted argument I've ever heard', which might disconcert anyone not toughened by exchanges in Cambridge with Jonathan Bennett and Richard Braithwaite. But it was said without too much anti-Pom animus, backed by points clear enough to be answerable, and followed by a practical introduction to Aussie wine worthy of Monty Python. That's the way to do it, I thought, and still think, as David Lewis and many others have done: blunt debate without much posturing or point-scoring; respect for argument, but not for status or reputation. Not perfect, of course, nowhere is; but more often than not the most constructive kind of competition, that of athletics, where doing your best doesn't entail trying to stop others doing theirs.

Idiom and attitude apart, the Australasian philosophy that has influenced me most is its metaphysics. On finishing a Ph.D. thesis on *The Matter of Chance* in 1968 I suddenly realised I'd been doing metaphysics for four years, just as Molière's M. Jourdain realised he'd been reciting prose, without knowing it. And then as now, that was a suspect activity to many Oxbridge philosophers, except some ancient philosophers. Their metaphysics, however, was often cabined by their ancient physics – e.g. 'you mean some people think

things can keep moving without being pushed?', as Elizabeth Anscombe once said to me – just as much modern US mereology is vitiated by its seventeenth-century atomism and ignorance of quantum physics. That's why Australasia was then, as it is now, the best place to meet serious metaphysicians, as responsive to contemporary science as to logic and semantics. Hence the pleasure and profit of my first visit to Australia in 1975, meeting the likes of David Armstrong, Jack Smart, Frank Jackson, Brian Ellis and Graham Nerlich, and, later, David Lewis. We have often differed, of course, but only substantively, wasting no more time on methodology than artists or scientists would: since most of us think, as they do, that what we do shows both how and that it can be done. In short, what most of us would say of metaphysics' detractors is what Wilde's Lady Bracknell said of society's: 'Never speak ill of society, Algernon. Only those who can't get into it do that.'

Within serious metaphysics I share the antipodean proclivity for the realism whose most famous product is the physicalist theory of the mind developed by Armstrong and others. That theory's combination of Rylean behavioural definitions of mental states with realism about their definienda transformed the philosophy of mind in three ways. First, it showed how states defined by behaviour can also cause it, as they seem to do. Second, it offered a credible plethora of brain and other bodily states to match that of behaviourally-defined mental states. And third, by so doing it bypassed the otherwise appealing objection that psychological truths are not translatable by physical ones.

That theory's realism about mental dispositions does not, however, entail its physicalism. What makes it seem to do so is a false dichotomy of dispositions and their 'categorical bases', the supposedly non-dispositional properties of objects that give them those dispositions. This dichotomy is based on what Ryle would call a category mistake, since

dispositionality is really a feature not of properties but of definitions of them, like that of inertial mass given by Newton's laws of motion. The platitude that real natural properties are categorical (since 'real' is all 'categorical' can mean here without begging the question) cannot stop their definitions being dispositional (i.e. of the form, in the simplest case, 'the property *F* such that, for all *x*, if ….*x* and *Fx* then _*x*'). That is why, applied to properties, 'dispositional' and 'categorical' mark no dichotomy. Unfortunately the belief that they do has lent specious support to the assumption that all categorical properties are physical. But even if they are, in some non-trivial sense of 'physical', which I doubt, it is not because apparently distinct mental properties are dispositions and therefore not categorical. Whether or not empirical psychology is reducible to biology, chemistry or physics, the dispositionally-defined properties it postulates can be as natural as and distinct from theirs.

Rejecting physicalist readings of realism about mental dispositions doesn't mean rejecting its key distinction, between what sentences mean and what makes them true, a distinction that has many other fruitful applications. One is to time, where I and others have used an indexical semantics to reconcile our tenseless metaphysics to the changeable truth-values of tensed beliefs and statements like 'It's cold now'. This again bypasses the objection, analogous to that against physicalism, that tensed sentences are untranslatable by tenseless ones. Similarly with first-person beliefs and statements, where an indexical semantics also shows how (e.g.) only Tom Nagel can truly believe or say 'I'm Tom Nagel' in an objective world that's the same for everyone, despite that truth's untranslatability by the objective statement of what makes it true, namely that it's believed or said by Tom Nagel.

This distinction between ontology and surface semantics applies to non-indexical predicates too, of course, as physicalist theories of the mind show. But it has a far wider implication:

namely, that satisfying a contingent predicate is not enough to endow an object with a corresponding natural property. Jack's satisfying 'is taller than Jill' does not show that he has, or that there is, a monadic property of being taller than Jill: he and Jill may simply instantiate a taller-than relation, or their heights may instantiate a greater-than one. The metaphysics needed to identify the natural properties and relations of things does not follow from the meanings of the everyday predicates they satisfy. This is not to deny that some combination of natural properties must make an object *x* satisfy a predicate '*F*', just as some must make tokens of '*F*' satisfy the predicate 'is an instance of "*F*"', merely to observe that it takes more than the meanings of '*F*', and of its name, to tell us what those combinations are.

The same goes for names, of course, as wholly or partly causal theories of reference admit, as direct ones do, and as descriptive ones tacitly imply. Similarly, therefore, for whole sentences: whence the most important product of a serious distinction between what we truly say means and what there is: the multifarious truthmaker theories of Armstrong and his successors. These differ in many ways: some are theories of truth, others only of when sentences are true; some credit all truths with truthmakers, others only some, e.g. contingent and/or atomic ones; some admit only present or actual truthmakers, others add past, future or merely possible ones; truthmakers are tropes in some, combinations of particulars and universals in others; some take all laws of nature to determine what truthmakers there are, others only those of microphysics; and so on.

This variety of truthmaker theories is no objection to them, of course, any more than the variety of modern logical, semantic and physical theories is to those theories. It is an inevitable consequence of their links to other metaphysical theories, of truth, actuality, time, laws of nature, causation, the mind, perception, communication, etc.; i.e. to their being parts

of metaphysical package deals. Yet for all their diversity, all truthmaker theories agree on one basic fact: that the truth or falsity of contingent sentences depends on the existence, properties and relations of non-linguistic entities in ways the meanings we give those sentences do not fix: in short, that semantics depends on metaphysics, not the other way round.

I have dwelt on this topic to indicate how much Australasian philosophy has done for the parts of metaphysics I know best. And this is only a fraction of what it has done not just for metaphysics but for philosophy generally, as indeed the lack of a separate truthmaking entry in this book shows. I can think of no part of philosophy, pure or applied, that antipodean philosophers have not affected, mostly for the better. If you want to know how, read this book.

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