

of his thought; and only then, perhaps, appreciate the greatness of St Thomas's speculative achievement as an interpreter of St Augustine in developing an ontology capable of supporting so profoundly spiritual a phenomenology.

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ESSAYS IN CONCEPTUAL ANALYSIS. Selected and edited by Professor Antony Flew. (Macmillan; 18s.)

Professor Flew admits with disarming frankness that most of the papers collected in this volume are available in "the least inaccessible philosophical journals", and it is not his fault that the blurb-writer has altered this to "certain inaccessible philosophical journals". It is often useful, he tells us, to have a second copy of an article, and those who can pay eighteen shillings for the luxury will certainly find that this book contains some of the duplicates they want.

Five out of the twelve are important papers by Strawson, Daitz, Warnock, Toulmin and Urmson respectively; three might well have been omitted, notably Professor Flew's own, which though interesting enough is really just another conducted tour of contemporary philosophy. It can safely be said that no one who needs to read this article would dream of buying the book. It appears to me, incidentally, that Professor Flew makes an unwarranted fuss about the 'Argument of the Paradigm Case'. (If the meaning of a word—e.g. "freedom", "causality" etc.—can be taught by reference to paradigm cases, then no argument can show that there are no cases of whatever it is.) This pattern of argument is surely at least as old as Dr Johnson's comment on Berkeley. The paper called *What is Explanation?* which is uncomfortably sandwiched between Warnock's brilliant criticism of the metaphysical techniques of Quine, and Urmson's patient examination of the limitations of the paradigm case argument for value words, is not one of which many people will need a spare copy. The author, having rejected two simple-minded accounts of explanation (it is telling the purpose, and it is showing that an event is unsurprising and ordinary), produces his own account: "To explain an event is simply to bring it under a law". This serves very well to show what contemporary English philosophers do not do. The whole tendency—as shown e.g. by most of the papers in this book—is away from such simple sweeping accounts ("the meaning of a proposition is its method of verification" etc. etc.) and towards a painstaking and subtle analysis of the multitudinous ways in which words like "explanation" are used. Peter Herbst's paper on *The Nature of Facts* is an attack on the notion that statements are about facts or refer to facts. What he has to say is sound enough, but by now,

in England at any rate, it is the purest orthodoxy. Apart from a few lingering Logical Positivists there must be very few who would now question the thesis that 'statements are not about facts, they state facts; they are about things'.

To come to the papers that make this book worth possessing: We have at last a reprint of Mr Strawson's well-known paper *On Referring*, which contains what seems to me to be a final refutation of Russell's theory of definite descriptions, and which makes very clear the important distinction between the meaning of a sentence and its use on a particular occasion. Miss Daitz' paper on *The Picture Theory of Meaning* is another which seems to close a chapter in philosophical thinking; it is an extremely lucid account of the accumulation of troubles which beset anyone who thinks that words and sentences are related to what they mean in the way in which pictures are related to what they are pictures of.

It is good to find Stephen Toulmin's paper on *Probability* reprinted. Typically, he eschews any questions about the nature of 'probability' and asks questions instead about the use of the words "probably" and "improbable". It is fundamental to his position that when I use "probably" in, e.g., "It will probably rain tomorrow", I am not using it either to say how it will rain, or to evaluate the evidence for the statement that it will rain, or to announce my feelings of uncertainty about the statement, but "to avoid unreservedly committing myself" to the statement. It was therefore a good idea to print this paper next to Urmson's article on *Parenthetical Verbs*, in which a similar point is made about phrases like "I suppose", "I believe" and "I conclude", in such sentences as "Your mother, I suppose (believe, conclude), is coming too". These phrases, says Urmson, have not the function of designating some mental act of supposing or believing or concluding, but "rather function as signals guiding the hearer to a proper appreciation of the statement in its context, social, logical or evidential".

There are two less interesting papers on Time and H. Brotman's extremely ingenious paper on what it would be like for space to be four-dimensional.

In general it may be said that those who want to know what contemporary philosophy is about would be better advised to read that other Macmillan publication, *The Revolution in Philosophy*, but those who simply want a collection of some important recent philosophical papers will find this book as valuable as Professor Flew's other philosophical anthologies.

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