THE ONTOLOGY OF THE ANALYTIC TRADITION
AND ITS ORIGINS
The Ontology of the Analytic Tradition and Its Origins

Realism and Identity in Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, and Quine

Jan Dejnožka

Littlefield Adams Books
Dedicated to
Panayot Butchvarov

with Honor
and
in Friendship
One cannot step twice into the same river, nor...grasp any mortal substance in a stable condition, but it scatters and again gathers...

—Heraclitus

The one...is now, all together, one, continuous....Nor is it divided, since it all exists alike; nor is it more here and less there, which would prevent it from holding together, but it is all full of being.

—Parmenides, Truth

Then may we not sum up the argument in a word and say truly: If one is not, then nothing is?

—Plato, Parmenides 166

That “unity” has in some sense the same meaning as that of “being” is clear...

—Aristotle, Metaphysics 1054a10–15

If we are to use the symbol $a$ to signify an object, we must have a criterion for deciding in all cases whether $b$ is the same as $a$, even if it is not always in our power to apply this criterion.

—Frege, The Foundations of Arithmetic

[T]he scholastics used to say ‘One and Being are convertible terms’. It now appears that ‘one’ is a predicate of concepts....And...‘being’ applies only to certain descriptions....These distinctions...put an end to many arguments of metaphysicians from Parmenides and Plato to the present day.

—Russell, “Logical Positivism”

But we forget that what should interest us is the question: how do we compare these experiences; what criterion of identity do we fix for their occurrence?

—Wittgenstein, Philosophical Investigations #322

Identity is...thus of a piece with ontology. Accordingly it is involved in the same relativity...

—Quine, “Ontological Relativity”
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Preface

I treasure memories of my mentors, Larry Hardin and Murray Miron of Syracuse University and Panayot Butchvarov of the University of Iowa, and many old teachers and friends. Words cannot express my gratitude to my wife, Chung Wha, and to our family for their love and support.

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I thank the United States Naval Academy Research Council for research grants in 1987 and 1988. Mrs. Connie Grigor of the History Department and Mrs. Katherine Dickson of Nimitz Library were exceptionally helpful. My views do not reflect those of the United States Navy, the Department of Defense, or the Federal Government of the United States.

I proceed to state the limitations, aims, principal argument, and likely main objections to the book. I shall begin with the book’s five main limitations.

First, much like its worthy predecessors, Michael Dummett’s *Origins of Analytical Philosophy* and Benardete’s *Metaphysics: The Logical Approach*, the present book is not a historical study in that there is almost no discussion of causal influences of earlier philosophers on the analysts, or of the analysts on each other. If you please, the book is a proto-historical study. It is not history of philosophy, but something that must be done prior to that. For the book identifies and analyzes the many different existence-identity connections in the different periods of Frege’s and Russell’s thought, so that others can then inquire after their causal antecedents and influences. If I had done a historical study of the causal relations of these connections, the book would have been far longer than it is, and would have taken many more years to write. Here I can only briefly state the obvious: Russell read Frege, Wittgenstein read Frege and Russell, and Quine read Frege, Russell, and Wittgenstein. As to influences of the ancients, I shall cite at the moment only Wittgenstein’s admission that his objects and Russell’s individuals were Plato’s primary elements (Pl #46; see *Theaetetus* 201–2). I do, of course, intend the book to be a historically accurate or at least reasonable account of the analysts. But in any case I hope that my helpful glosses and charitable interpretations result at least in a philosophically interesting book.

Johannes Herder defined the ambiguous term “origin” as meaning either cause, source (antecedent), or beginning (first of its kind). This book seeks the beginnings of the ontology of the analytic tradition. I seek to show that the ‘no entity without identity’ ontologies of the four analysts I discuss are far from the first of their kind. It is hard to make Herder’s definition precise. It is not always clear when antecedents end and things of a kind begin. But everything I describe as an origin is a source at the very least.

A second limitation is that I discuss only four analysts. I could not discuss the whole analytic movement in this book.

Third, I treat only Frege and Russell in depth. I hope to supplement and deepen, not compete with, the huge literatures on Wittgenstein and Quine. Even so, my strict concern with the theme of ‘no entity without identity’ precludes my giving a full ontological portrait of Russell. To see the full portrait, sandwich my “The Ontological Foundation of Russell’s Theory of Modality” (Dejnožka 1990) between chapters 4 and 5 and my “Russell’s Seventeen Private-Language Arguments” (Dejnožka 1991) between chapters 5 and 6.

Fourth, I may not cite enough literature on Russell to satisfy some specialists. But that is because my book covers virgin territory. I had to devote most of my time to primary Russell literature—nineteen books and many papers by Russell. Still, my bibliography shows that I have read more secondary literature than some others who have written on Russell—or on Frege.

Fifth, it may seem odd that in a book on the origins of analytic philosophy, I do not discuss the pre-1900 Russell. I had enough to do discussing ‘no entity
without identity’ in every major published work by the post-1900 Russell. The book would have been far longer had I repeated the fine work Nicholas Griffin did in *Russell’s Idealist Apprenticeship* on identity and difference in the pre-1900 Russell. My book aims to supplement and deepen, rather than compete with, his work.

The recent renaissance in Frege-Russell studies, though including some excellent work, has confined its quest for the origins of analytic philosophy to the nineteenth century. My book goes well beyond Frege-Husserl comparisons and historical studies of Russell’s idealistic upbringing to give a philosophical evaluation of what the analytic movement really amounts to. My thesis is that a single *kind of ontology*, ‘no entity without identity’ ontology, is fundamental to all of Russell’s major works from 1900 to 1948, to the work of Frege, Wittgenstein, and Quine—and also to substance metaphysics, its origin over two thousand years ago. Thus my aim is to show that the analysts, far from ending traditional ontology, at bottom continued and even developed it. I cannot see how our understanding of the pluralistic, diverse analytic movement, not to mention the pluralistic, diverse history of Western philosophy, could be more deeply transformed or unified, if I am right.

My methodology was to read the major books of the analysts, many of their lesser works, and a great deal of the secondary literature, gleaning like Rachel in the field of wheat for anything I could find on ‘no entity without identity’, then to create from scratch new portraits of Frege and Russell as the true analytic progenitors of this kind of ontology.

The specific thesis of my book is that there is a general kind of ontology, modified realism, which the great analysts share not only with each other, but with most great Western philosophers. Modified realism is the view that in some sense there are both real and rational (or linguistic) identities. In more familiar language, it is roughly the view that there are both real distinctions and distinctions in reason (or in language). More precisely, it is the view that there is at least one real being which is the basis for accommodating possibly huge amounts of conceptual relativity, or objectual identities’ ‘shifting’ as sortal concepts or sortal terms ‘shift.’ Therefore I hold that on the fundamental level of ontology, the linguistic turn was not a radical break from traditional substance metaphysics. I also hold that the seeming conflict in the analysts between private language arguments, which imply various sorts of realism, and the conceptual “shiftability” of objects, which suggests a deep ontological relativity, is best resolved by, and is in fact implicitly resolved by, their respective kinds of modified realism. There are many different sorts of modified realism, but all of them share a common general form.

I present Frege as a modified realist with fourteen ‘no entity without identity’ theories. Then I present Russell as a modified realist with forty-four ‘no entity without identity’ theories. Last, I briefly sketch Wittgenstein and Quine as
modified realists, to show that modified realism best merits the title, the ontology of the analytic tradition.

My principal argument is: (1) While in the analytic tradition ontology and philosophy in general are held to be supervenient on language or, more deeply, on logical and conceptual theses, there is enough reformulation and presupposition of ontological themes, and even enough express pursuit of metaphysics through analysis, to allow analogies to some basic theses of the substance tradition. (2) The sufficiency of the analogy to traditional modified realism is ensured by seven criteria of modified realism. Any one criterion establishes a kind of modified realism, and the analysts satisfy most of these criteria as well as substance metaphysicists do. Here I assimilate the analysts’ views to Aristotle’s metaphysics as the paradigm of modified realism. (3) Therefore the analysts are modified realists. The argument may appear to attack the analytic lion in its own den. For example, did not Russell deride substances as confused and at best a mere linguistic convenience?

Three clarifications are in order.

First, much of stage (1) of my principal argument is familiar ground. That analytic philosophy reformulates ontological insights was argued by Gustav Bergmann (Bergmann 1967: 1–77). That arguments against metaphysics presuppose metaphysics was noted by F. H. Bradley. Either point satisfies stage (1). Thus when I argue in this book that all four analysts admit express vehicles for referring to extra-linguistic reality, I go far beyond what stage (1) requires.

Second, while Quine uses the phrase “‘No entity without identity’” (OR 23), many very different kinds of thesis might be appropriately so described, some of which are not only incompatible with each other, but even with Quine’s thesis. Throughout this book, when I use that phrase, I do not mean Quine’s thesis in particular, but any theory on which some expression, conception, or property of existence is defined, explained, understood, or applied in terms of some expression, conception, or property (or relation) of identity. For instance, I argue that from 1905 on, Russell progressively divorces his ‘not always false’ existential quantifier from existence, reserving existence for any simple things which may constitute an ultimate interpretation of true existentially quantified sentences. If I am right, then Russell’s ‘no existential quantification without identity conditions’ theory applies to logical fictions as well as to simples. Such a nominal “existence”-identity connection is incompatible with Quine’s thesis, since so to speak, it takes the entity out of ‘no entity without identity’. Yet on my liberal usage, it counts as a ‘no entity without identity’ thesis.

I base this liberal usage on my liberal definition of ontology in chapter 1. But while I think that the definition is intrinsically plausible, and justified by the single unifying theme of ontological interest, others may perceive it as so inclusive and eclectic that it sweeps all differences between traditional and analytic ontology under the rug, and the difference between the later Wittgenstein and the other analysts as well. Therefore I now further explain and argue for
my liberal usage by modifying Peter Geach’s succinct and excellent analysis of ontological analysis. I believe this applies to all four great analysts:

On the face of it, we are committed to recognizing As as a kind of object when we use the logical apparatus [or a criterion] of identity....I further hold that this commitment is only a defeasible one; a thinker may in fact defeat his commitment if he can show, or at least sketch, a method of paraphrasing away the ostensibly identifying...language he uses about As... (Geach 1969: 66). For, as Quine has said, no entity without identity; he and I agree in regarding as *entia non grata* those philosophically postulated entities for which there is simply no telling whether men are talking about the same thing or not. And again Quine and I would both say: No identity without entity. Nonentities are not there to be the same or different... (Geach 1972: 288)

Geach speaks of the apparatus of identity *and quantification*, and of identifying *and quantifying* language; dropping quantification is my modification. I think that if As are identifiable and talk of them cannot be paraphrased away, that alone constitutes their existence. Quantification is a useful but formalistic rubber stamp. Identity is what counts in the practice of all the analysts; and I suspect that this is because at bottom they agree with my analysis of analysis. Anyway, Russell’s purely nominal “existence”-identity connection clearly is a ‘no entity without identity’ connection, on my analysis of ‘no entity without identity’ analysis. Russell holds that logical fictions are *not* entities; their ontological status is nil. He paraphrases logical fictions away in terms of classes, which he paraphrases away in turn through a contextual definition in *Principia*. In all this, Russell strictly conforms to ‘no entity without identity’ analysis as I just explained it, and just as much as Quine does, even though Quine admits classes and Russell rejects them, and both quantify over them. Thus my analysis of analysis is quite general. Even the later Wittgenstein is a ‘no entity without identity’ analyst, on my analysis of analysis. Whenever there is any puzzlement about admitting entities, he compares talk of such entities to paradigms of ordinary talk about ordinary phenomena using ordinary criteria of identity. He aims to discover whether talk of the putative entities is sufficiently analogous to paradigmatically correct talk for the putative entities to have sufficiently coherent identity conditions to be said to exist. In general, of course, he rejects talk of philosophically posited entities as so bewitched by simplistic conceptions of grammar that the identity conditions involved are not sufficiently coherent. And surely he would reject nonexistent objects as due to just such a bewitchment of grammar. The second stage of analysis, paraphrase, would consist of any cases where he does find an ordinary use that some talk of philosophical entities might have, to that extent reducing such talk to ordinary talk of ordinary things. While he admits only ordinary things, it must be realized that it is his profound and subtle *ontological theory* that
only ordinary things exist and are identifiable. What makes it an ontological theory is the philosophical argumentation he gives for it. Thus, in my sense of “analysis,” he is just as much an ontological analyst as anyone, due to the great ontological interest of his work.

Third, not only must we examine the intrinsic content of a ‘no entity without identity’ thesis, but we must also consider the role it plays in a philosophy. Russell illustrates this well. Concerning the intrinsic content of ‘no entity without identity’, Russell seems closer in 1903 to Quine, and to the Frege of Basic Laws, than at any other time. For the 1903 Russell, Quine, and the Basic Laws Frege alike, cardinal numbers are defined as classes of classes which preserve the identity conditions numbers ought to have, but are merely reduced to classes. Numbers are dropped as a special category, but classes are admitted. The 1910–59 Russell sharply differs from Quine by eliminating numbers. Russell continues to define numbers as classes of classes, but now rejects classes as strictly nothing. Yet from 1927 to 1959, Russell ever more closely anticipates Quine on the role ‘no entity without identity’ plays in philosophy. For during this period Russell questions and then weakens the analytic-synthetic distinction, adopts a holistic, social, and pragmatic theory of knowledge (if not theory of truth), and assimilates philosophy to science. Thus the 1927–59 Russell is closest to Quine on the role identity conditions play in defining physical events, space, and time. This book explores both the intrinsic contents of ‘no entity without identity’ theses and their roles in analyzing many specific topics, especially in chapters 3 and 5. I should add that my use of ‘no entity without identity’ is often better read as ‘entity if and only if identity’; I am merely conforming to popular usage.

I expect my argument that the four great analysts are modified realists will encounter tremendous resistance from, and will sow confusion among, orthodox Anglo-American analysts. In fact, it has already done so. That is good, because the ironic point of the book is to achieve a double Copernican revolution: disinverting and setting right what many analysts mistakenly believe is their Copernican revolution from hopelessly Ptolemaic substance metaphysics.

The principal objection offered is that any comparison of two philosophical traditions must be based on an accurate understanding of each tradition in its own right. Otherwise one will find oneself distorting the explained tradition by imposing on it the categories, theses, approaches, methods, and tools of the other. In particular, claiming to find a distinction between real distinction and distinction in reason in any of these four analysts is just such a distortion and just such an imposition. For the analytic tradition understands itself, and these four analysts understand themselves, as holding that philosophy of language is the foundation of all philosophy. In particular, for these philosophers, ontology is supervenient on language. Thus they are anti-ontological in the sense that the entire content of any ontological thesis is exhausted by linguistic considerations. Or, if you please, the analysts rest all philosophy on logical and conceptual considerations; and for humans, such considerations must be understood in terms of our capacity to use...
language. (I should perhaps rettitle my book more exactly as The Ontology of the Linguistic Turn and Its Origins.) Thus even to consider the analysts’ philosophies in terms of the many sorts of concrete entities, abstract entities, fictions, or phenomena they admit, in abstraction from their meta-philosophical view of ontology as a function of linguistic or, more deeply, logical and conceptual considerations, exhibits a pervasive misunderstanding of their philosophies.

Now, this principal objection is just the principal myth my book aims to explode. One fallacy in it is to assume that the best place to use a category, thesis, approach, method, or tool is necessarily its original home. Indeed, in interdisciplinary cross-fertilizations, the last place such things are used may be the best. It is an experimental question which the principal objection prejudges. Off-hand, we should have better luck understanding two consecutive traditions of Western philosophy in terms of each other then we would applying a car manual or socket wrench to either. Another fallacy is to assume that theses and methods cannot be adapted. A third fallacy is to assume that I am applying the categories, theses, approaches, methods, or tools of either tradition to the other at all. I am simply comparing them. In particular, Kahn and Hintikka argue that modern quantification should not be imposed as a tool to interpret the ancient Greeks. While I do note that Kahn and Hintikka do not seem to understand the modest aims and claims of modern paraphrase, my chief point in chapter 6 is that even accepting Kahn’s and Hintikka’s own anti-Fregean, anti-Russellian portrait of the ancient Greeks, Frege and Russell have far more in common with Aristotle than Kahn or Hintikka suppose. And on the analytic side of the house, consider Russell’s thesis that in respect of their brief duration, his ‘particulars [sense-data] differ from the old substances but in their logical position they do not’ (PLA 204). Are not momentary two-dimensional sense-data wildly different from Aristotle’s material substances? Is not the slim resemblance they do have merely supervenient on the logical position Russell assigns them in language, and not due to any intrinsic nature of their own? —Things look a little different when we learn that Russell’s sense-data are mind-independent and physically real, and have “that sort of self-subsistence that used to belong to substance” (PLA 202). Sense-data look even more like the old substances when we learn that Aristotle’s substances are just as supervenient on logico-linguistic position as Russell’s sense-data are, without any derogation of Aristotle’s physical realism (Categories 1a–4b). In terms of the seven themes characterizing substance with which this book begins, it turns out that only theme (6), persistence through changes, fails to apply to sense-data. And it is widely admitted that mere duration is the least important traditional theme.

In fact the chief problem with the principal objection is that it ignores my principal argument. No flaw has been detected in my principal argument. The objection may seem wise. Yet it is also wise not to criticize comparisons of traditions until these comparisons are understood in their own right. In particular, my argument is analogical, and my admission of varieties of modified realism is
as liberal as my admission of kinds of ‘no entity without identity’. Even those who reject substances in any traditional sense count as modified realists if, according to my seven criteria, they admit sufficient substance analogues or can be interpreted as admitting sufficient analogues to real distinctions and distinctions in reason. Even if it were the case that the ontology of every analyst is arrived at through linguistic, logical, or conceptual considerations, and that the ontology of no traditional ontologist is, this would only make such analogies to traditional ontology deeper and more exciting, since they would persist through such seemingly great differences. Indeed, I agree with Butchvarov that analogy is the deepest form of philosophical understanding.

Thus the principal objection to my book seems a non sequitur. In particular, consider the many realisms of the four analysts as supervenient on their private language arguments. These arguments aim at establishing some minimal extramental and extra-linguistic realism of public objects. But they are based on premises purporting to assert common-sense facts which obtain regardless of what we may say or think about them. Now, consider the relativism involved in objectual identities’ shifting as sortal concepts or sortal terms shift. Throughout this book, I use “shift” strictly as a metaphor. Viewing a card deck under the concept card does not literally chop the deck into fifty-two cards as if it were some nonresistant nullity. Sortal concepts simply individuate different but overlapping objects. Nor does an object literally change into a concept when we “shift” logical subject and predicate. Still, objects may seem never given independently of the concepts through which we conceptualize or view them. This relativism may be presented as a linguistic (or conceptual) thesis about objects. Yet the thesis is based on a common sense fact about our sortal terms or concepts, a fact which obtains regardless of what we think or say about it. Now, this realism and this relativism are just the two basic elements of the general modified realism common to the four analysts. Viewing the relativist thesis radically, as precluding realism by making it impossible or meaningless to speak or think about things as they really are, is self-defeating. Piercing the linguistic or conceptual veil reveals a host of assumed facts about language or concepts, facts which are assumed as objective in their own right—and on which the supposedly “supervenient” thesis is based. Thus the supervenience goes in the other direction. Linguistic or conceptual relativism is determined by the facts, not the other way around. All four great analysts, I shall argue, were well aware of this; it was many of their followers who inverted the insight.

Similarly for assertions that two things can exist independently of each other, and that one kind of thing is more real than another. Such assertions can be reconstructed as linguistic or conceptual proposals. Yet the proposals would be reformulations, admittedly often drastic reformulations, of what can only be called ontological considerations. To illustrate, let me reformulate these two kinds of assertion as they would apply to Frege.
First, then, Frege admits no modal operators in his notation. So how can he define real distinction as a capacity for independent existence? The short answer is that for Frege, being really distinct amounts to being wholly distinct. More deeply, Bergmann reformulates “categorially impossible” as whatever is ill-formed in the canonical notation (Bergmann 1967a: 23–24). As Bergmann well knows, this only hides a core aspect of traditional essence under a linguistic disguise. For Frege, this core aspect of essence is hidden under the disguise of an expression’s semantic role or function. For Frege an object or function, and likewise a complete or incomplete sense, can be identified only in terms of an expression’s logical role in sentences. It is precisely because of this “supervenience” that Frege can and does describe essential characteristics of objects and functions. This is the whole approach of Aristotle’s Categories, which is most charitably paraphrased as metalinguistic. For Frege, essence is shown, not said, in his canonical notation. This reformulation of essence arguably applies even to Quine’s canonical notation. Further, I admit four senses of “real distinction,” and I mainly rely on sense (2), the only one which does not require substances or substance analogues. The deepest point is that even traditional ontologists recognized that defining real distinction and distinction in reason in terms of what can or cannot exist independently of each other is not yet philosophically illuminating. The whole problem is to explain this capacity for independent existence, not just rename or reformulate it. The explanation will consist in showing why we admit the metaphysical categories we do, how they interrelate, and why we assign to each category the ontological status we do, such as real being or mutedly real conceptual being. Only then can we fully explain Frege’s or Bergmann’s approach to such modal distinctions. Though the explanation will be traditional in general form, it may be quite contemporary in content, and may be eliminative of the modal aspects of the distinctions. All this is transparent insofar as Frege’s and Bergmann’s canonical notations are both intended as ideal languages which reflect the true classification of things. And even outside an ideal language, “wholly distinct” is said in different senses, or is at least explained in different ways, for different categories of entities. So too for the term it glosses, “capable of mutually independent existence.”

Second, Frege calls his concrete objects more wirklicher than his abstract objects (FA 35, 71). Some say that J. L. Austin translated “wirklich” as ‘actual’ rather than ‘real’ because he felt that Frege did not intend the term to have any ontological significance, but only to mark the presence of causal laws governing concrete objects (FA 35). But if that is true of Austin, perhaps then Austin was overly scrupulous. Why does Frege choose that term to mark causation? Is it not because Frege naturally feels that, as Plato put it, in some sense existence is power, and that therefore causation is a mark of reality (see FA 29)? Far from hiding this aspect of the substantive, the word “actual” positively intimates it. And what about Frege’s reeller, wirklicher, greifbarer, which Austin himself translates as ‘more real or more actual or more palpable’ (FA 119)?
Russell was, if anything, even more explicit than Frege in his pursuit of metaphysics through analysis as a vehicle. Just think of his ending “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” with an *Excursus into Metaphysics*. Russell rejected most traditional metaphysics. But he did not reject metaphysics. Rather, he tied metaphysics very closely to logical analysis. In fact he required that every analysis preserve a robust sense of reality.

My own way of making Russell’s point against the principal objection would be this. Suppose that I make the logical, conceptual, and linguistic proposal in my metalinguage that in my object-language, only certain undefined expressions are to name items having all the characteristics of Aristotelian substances. Far from being some sort of relativistic barrier or hindrance to my realism, my metalinguistic proposal is precisely the vehicle by which I explain how I can denote Aristotelian substances. This metalinguistic rigmarole will never prevent me from being exactly the same kind of realist as Aristotle himself. Indeed, it will guarantee that I am, and as soon as I start using the expressions in question.

Jumping through metalinguistic hoops is like moving in Ptolemaic epicycles. Thus I hope I may be forgiven if I follow Frege and Russell themselves in so often using the “material mode” of speech. I am, of course, as aware as anyone that the heart of the linguistic turn is the reconstruction of meanings (or concepts or notions) as linguistic *uses*. In fact, I criticize others for forgetting this point in chapter 6.

Ideal language proposals for reconstructing substantive theses resemble metaphysical systems: “methodological” monism, nominalism, phenomenalism, physicalism. Any test of the adequacy of such reconstructions would seem to beg the question against some substantive thesis. As to ordinary language analysis, I need not repeat the criticisms made by the later Russell or recall Dummett’s observation that the later Wittgenstein had a theory of his own about the nature of language. But I will repeat Richard Rorty’s carefully understated point in *The Linguistic Turn* that there is much interplay between substantive philosophy and meta-philosophy (Rorty 1967: 39).

The principal objection is merely a reformulation of what I call the second revolt against the primacy of metaphysics in chapter 1. Correspondingly, my argument against that revolt is a version of the principal argument of this book.

A determined holder of the principal objection may reply that my daring to criticize the characterization of the analysts leading to the principal objection, and my offering criteria of modified realism as applicable to the analysts, beg the question against the principal objection. But if my argument and criteria are rejected by assuming that the principal objection is correct, who is begging the question? Surely the burden of proof lies with those who make the principal objection. For my principal argument already handles so-called supervenience. Specifically, objectors have to meet three conditions: they must destroy the analogical argument of this book, they must offer an anti-analogical argument that succeeds where my principal argument fails, and they must develop criteria of the
mere supervenience of ontology on language or logic, applications of which overrule my applications of my seven criteria of modified realism in much detail to the analysts. Needless to say, they have not met these conditions. Who then is misunderstanding whom? Ironically, the very supervenience of ontology on language or logic is itself a substantive thesis about the relationship of ontology to language or logic.

Thus it is not clear to me that the four analysts I discuss would accept the characterization of their work that leads to the principal objection. Their work seems too subtle, too complex, and too thoughtful for that. There seems to be something that is really the case about language and logic, and even about the world, in their work.

I shall also argue that identity is not always under a sortal concept for the analysts. A principle of charity calls out for this in light of (i) the vicious regress of classifications implied by the theory that identity is always under a sortal concept; and (ii) the need to explain how we acquire sortal concepts in the first place, i.e. in terms of prior identifications (Butchvarov 1979: 78–81). Russell expressly gives the regress argument (HK 423–24). Quine expressly acknowledges the need to explain how we acquire sortal terms, or “terms of divided reference.” Quine says that to learn verbal responses at all, a child “must have...a prior tendency to weight qualitative differences unequally...In effect therefore we must credit the child with a sort of pre-linguistic quality space” (WO 83). Here Frege and Wittgenstein are the principal charity cases. However, all four analysts actually admit some items which arguably have and must have given, though, I admit, not always phenomenologically presented, objectual identities. These include Frege’s phenomena, Russell’s earlier sense-data and later noticed events, Wittgenstein’s phenomena, and Quine’s sensory stimulus patterns, if not also his initially posited physical objects. All these items have sortal properties which may be called the basis of our identifying them (see Butchvarov 1979: 122–23). My argument is only that we may single such items out prior to acquiring any sortal concepts or sortal terms. The exception to the rule that to be given is to be phenomenologically presented is, of course, Quine’s neural stimulus patterns (and initially posited objects), which Quine presents as strictly physical. As Evan Fales observes, “Those who reject the given or its foundational role are not like sailors attempting plank by plank to reconstruct their leaky boat, but rather like sailors who do not even know they are at sea; nor what can serve as a plank” (Fales 1990: xix). Concerning stimulus patterns, Quine says, “...I do indeed combine foundationalism with coherentism, as I should think it evident that one must” (Quine 1990: 128). In the case of initially posited objects, my charitable gloss that their objectual identities are given to observers prevents Quine’s holistic science from boiling down to circularity (WO 3, 21–23). As we shall see in chapter 7, Frege admits phenomena which one can single out without using their sortal properties as sortal concepts, and prior to language acquisition. I wholly grant that for Frege concepts are properties. This is only a terminological
difficulty for my argument. The question is whether we have to use properties as concepts in order to single out phenomena.

Even when we do use sortal concepts or sortal terms to identify things, I shall argue that no serious relativity is implied. Again, far from being barriers between us and the world, Frege’s senses, Russell’s acquaintance and knowledge by description, the later Wittgenstein’s criteria, and Quine’s theories are all intended precisely as the vehicles by which we learn all we can of a mind-independent, language-independent reality.

Realism versus relativism has seemed to many the issue that most characterizes this “rootless and alienated” analytical century. Radical relativity is “above all ignorant of itself” and its need for a robust realism deeper than itself. We “post-philosophers” need to understand our realist roots in the analysts and in earlier ages. The recent reports of the death of philosophy have been greatly exaggerated.

In 1989, Longwood Academic/Hollowbrook Publishing accepted an early version of this book for publication under the title *Being Qua Identity: The Ontology of the Analytic Tradition*. I bought back all rights to the book in early 1993 after I learned of Longwood’s financial and legal difficulties, and dismal publication record, from a group of some thirty unhappy authors. That seems to be why Longwood sat on my book for three years despite what were called “unusually strong” pre-publication orders for the book. Longwood got as far as running galley proofs. But not one page of my book was printed; the book was never published. The book was advertised in the January 1993 *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* and elsewhere. I must apologize to anyone who ordered it from Longwood. Since Longwood and its people had some half a million dollars in court-awarded debts already, according to a detective’s report, you will probably never see your money again. I myself lost almost a thousand dollars in book orders, the repurchase of rights, and the legal fee. On the bright side, I consider myself lucky to be one of the authors who escaped, and I am deeply grateful to Rowman & Littlefield for publishing the book in 1996. It was almost continually revised from 1990 to 1995, though with no change in views. It has now been updated to 2003.

On August 11, 1995, as I was about to send the book to press, A. D. Irvine and G. A. Wedeking, eds., *Russell and the Analytic Tradition* (1993) arrived from California through interlibrary loan. A quick scan showed me that Griffin apparently had arrived independently at some of my major ideas, and some other authors came close to some of my other ideas as well. I decided not to attempt to alter my book at the last minute—no views of mine would change in any case—but I shall offer some comments in the next four paragraphs.

Griffin sees unity, one of my glosses for identity, as the one topic that unifies all of Russell’s philosophical phases. However, he says he cannot carry out the project of showing that to be so in a brief paper, and confines himself to a discussion of Russell’s early phases. In contrast, not only have I carried out the
project completely, but I extended it to Frege, Wittgenstein and Quine—and to the substance tradition as well. So there is overlap only concerning the early Russell. And even there the detail of our approaches differs. Also, while we both use the very same term, “modified realist,” to describe Russell, we use it differently. For me, a modified realist is one who admits both real things and less than fully real things. For Griffin, an absolute realist holds that every word denotes some entity, while a modified realist holds that not every word denotes some entity. The result is that Griffin deems Principles of Mathematics a work of absolute realism, and sees Russell as moving to a modified realism in “On Denoting,” while I deem Principles a work of modified realism, and see Russell as merely moving to a different sort of modified realism. Griffin is wrong even in his own sense of “modified realism;” see chapter 5, note 1. And Griffin’s modified realists can include my radical realists, i.e., philosophers who admit only real identities and fictitious identities, which are not even mutely real and lack all ontological status. Still, my compliments on a fine paper. Griffin reports that Francisco Rodríguez-Consuegra has been working along similar lines (Griffin 1993: 185 n.4). It seems that the idea of finding unity in Russell’s different philosophical phases, at least, is in the air.

Two other authors in Russell and Analytic Philosophy, R. M. Sainsbury and Bernard Linsky, come close to my views on Russell on modality. “Sainsbury finds a surprising resemblance between Russell’s theory of communication and recent theories of rigid designation” (Irvine 1993: x). Bernard Linsky reports that David Kaplan uses Russellian Propositions to explain direct reference, which is circuitously connected to possible worlds as “circumstances of evaluation” (B. Linsky 1993: 193). They might be interested in my more direct arguments that Russell’s logically proper names are rigid designators (Dejnožka 1990: 395). However, I am glad for some confirmations of my general view that Russell is more like Kripke than Kripke seems to think.

Finally, “According to Landini, the doctrine of the unrestricted variable, a doctrine which he says entails that there are no types or orders of entities, was never abandoned by Russell—not even in Principia” (Irvine 1993: xiv; see Landini 1993a: 387). Landini says that in Principia individuals within the scope of the individual quantifier include all entities: particular objects (including complex entities), qualities, and relations alike. He observes that individuals included all entities in Principles of Mathematics Appendix B (there individuals also included classes as one, which are rejected in Principia). Note that from 1903 to 1911, Russell held that universals can be indicated by both subjects (“redness”) and predicates (“is red”) (POM 43–44; RUP 109, 123–24; in 1918 Russell rejects this view, PLA 205–6). Much of Landini’s paper is devoted to showing that in Principia individual variables can be viewed as unrestricted in this sense; that is of course no argument that they are unrestricted in this sense, but only that such an interpretation is technically possible. I hold the more traditional view that in Principia individuals include only particulars, since universals are of different
types, or at least of different categories. But I think Landini is very close to the truth: namely, for the 1903–12 Russell, qualities and relations are complete entities in themselves, much like individuals. They subsist timelessly and independently of individuals. They are independent of each other too, except for certain a priori connections such as that red is a color. If I am right that Russell’s particulars (sense-data) are quality-instances, then one might say that the difference between qualities and individuals is merely that qualities are not individuals, but universals. But while most ordinary dictionary words name universals (PP 93), I suggest that in *Principia* universals appear only as determinate constituents of propositional functions. I have four reasons: (i) Russell seems to imply in *Principia* that all variables, even so-called unrestricted variables, are type-restricted or at least categorically restricted (PM 4). (ii) On the very same page Russell gives variables whose values are restricted to men as his example of restricted variables, whereas if Landini were right one would expect the example to be variables whose values are more generally restricted, e.g. to particulars (PM 4). (iii) That universals are determinate constituents of propositional functions is the express doctrine of the 1911 Russell (MAL 216, 220–21). Universals should not have two semantic roles, a subject-role and a predicate-role, in the formal notation; and being determinate constituents of propositional functions is a special sort of predicate-role. (iv) The 1910 Russell wants logic to minimize kinds of entities assumed. Logic without metaphysics is his aim, even aside from epistemic caution. I hold that in *Principia* quantification over propositional functions themselves is purely nominal, since Russell states that propositional functions are not entities themselves. I hold that while Russell admits universals in his metaphysics, he finds he does not need to name them or quantify over them in his formal logic (PM 24, 72, 74 on not needing classes in his logic is somewhat different because Russell does reject classes in his metaphysics). That seems enough to preserve most of Landini’s paper despite our disagreement on whether *Principia* uses unrestricted variables. I might add that Landini’s view that the individual variables are unrestricted is compatible with my view that those variables imply no ontological commitment. But the heart of Landini’s view—that all *Principia* “objects,” including qualities and relations (PM 43), are type 0 order 0 individuals—is just wrong. For Whitehead and Russell expressly say, “The division of objects into types....” (PM 161).

Also, in *Principia Mathematica* Russell’s variables were “absolutely unrestricted” and “any conceivable entity” could be substituted for them, including nonexistent entities such as the Homeric gods (POM 7, 14, 36, 40, 43–44, 89, 91. The variables in *Principia* can hardly be unrestricted in that sense because Russell no longer admits nonexistent entities. Of course, if there is no such thing as a merely possible entity, then in a certain sense the only possible entities are actual entities; and in that sense *Principia* variables would range over all possible entities (if not all conceivable entities) if Landini is right. That is not
quite the same thing as absolutely unrestricted variables in the *Principles* sense, but perhaps it may cast more doubt on Landini’s view.

On August 12, 1995, I acquired Francis Jeffry Pelletier, *Parmenides, Plato, and the Semantics of Not-Being* (1990). Pelletier notes a widespread agreement that the ancient Greeks used a “fused” sense of “is,” fusing existential, predicative, and veridical uses, if not also the identitative use, of “is” (Pelletier 1990: 19–20). Pelletier “find[s] it implausible to say that Plato did actually make conscious distinctions among an ‘is’ of predication, an ‘is’ of existence, and an ‘is’ of identity. For one thing, he nowhere says he was making such distinctions. For another it is not presupposed by anything he does say” (Pelletier 1990: 94). I find this close enough to Kahn and Hintikka that I need not change anything in chapter 6. Again, suppose we concede for the sake of argument that very much unlike the ancients, Frege and Russell make conscious distinctions among such uses of “is.” That does not really matter to my argument. What counts for my analogical argument is the existence of fusion, not the awareness of it. Frege and Russell fuse the distinct uses of “is” together too. They do it consciously. The concepts of existence, predication, truth, and identity are distinct only in reason for Frege, as are the corresponding meanings-in-use for Russell. For Frege and Russell, logic is a package deal, and so is ontology. That the Frege-Russell fusion differs from that of the ancients by simultaneously preserving the differences only deepens the analogy. That their fusions are deliberate, even formal, looks like the very sort of philosophical progress the analysts claimed to be making.

An ontology is a theory of what there is, or more deeply, of what it is to be. A theory of ontological commitment is a theory of what we say or imply there is, or more deeply, of what we say or imply it is to be. The relationship between the two kinds of theory is different for different theorists. The more you take theory of ontological commitment as a guide to answering ontological questions, the more of an analytic ontologist you are. On my own view, ontology is prior to ontological commitment. We must have some conception of what there is before we can have any conception of what it is to say or imply what there is. Therefore I am not an analytic ontologist. But I retain an analytic orientation in that I find that notations which perspicuously articulate ontological commitments are very helpful in articulating ontologies. Theoretically that is trivial, but in practice it is good dialectical discipline.

From the purely logical point of view, different canonical notations are possible. In particular, not all such notations need treat quantification the same way. Whether the ‘existential’ (individual) quantifier expresses ontological commitment, in my view, should depend only on whether that helps articulate your ontology. Since Frege is a reductionist who reduces numbers to logical objects which objectively exist, it makes sense that his individual quantifier expresses ontological commitment. Since the 1918 Russell is an eliminativist who analyzes bodies as series of classes and eliminates series and classes as fictions, it makes sense that his individual quantifier does not express ontological
commitment. He reserves ontological commitment for logically proper names and quantifications in a theoretically ultimate interpretation. Ordinary bodies would be quantified over in his initial interpretation of our talk of bodies, but certainly not in his final interpretation. While the later Wittgenstein makes existence a second-level quantifier, his discussion is too brief and nondescript to tell us whether he holds it expresses ontological commitment. Probably it does express ontological commitment, at least insofar as he would find taking ordinary talk of "some" nonexistent things as expressing ontological commitment a bewitchment of grammar. Like Frege, Quine insists on the ontological commitment of the individual quantifier, since like Frege, he is a reductionist as opposed to an eliminativist. Butchvarov’s individual quantifier expresses no ontological commitment because he allows it to range over neo-Meinongian nonexistent objects. I myself use the individual quantifier to express ontological commitment because what Butchvarov deems nonexistent objects I deem existent objects of perception or thought (these are my "qualified objects"), and because where others reduce the logically complex to the logically simple, I build the logically complex out of the logically simple and admit both as real. But while we all differ, both in our ontologies and in our theories of ontological commitment, the point I wish to make is that all of us have chosen theories of ontological commitment which are both logically acceptable in themselves and appropriate to our respective ontologies. That is the easy part; the hard part is coming by the ontologies. However, we do best when we understand both ontology and ontological commitment in terms of identity.

I so conceive the relation of ontology to metaphysics that two philosophers might admit the very same metaphysical categories but differ in ontology by each assigning a different ontological status to the same category. For instance, both might admit bodies and minds, while one deems bodies more real than minds and the other deems bodies and minds equally real. Even if you admit only one category and one ontological status, say minds and substantial reality, these are, or ought to be, two different admissions. Categories concern what things are; ontological status concerns how real things are. Categories are contentually differentiated ultimate kinds of things; an ontological status is not a kind of thing but a kind of reality. But while ontology and metaphysics are different, they are also intimately related and distinct only in reason. To deny any ontological status to things of a certain category is to reject that category. And to admit things of a certain category is to require of them the minimal ontological status of not being nothing, though it is not to fix their ontological status fully. Due to this relationship, identity is basic to metaphysics as well.