WHITHER ANALYTIC ONTOLOGY?

ARTHUR FALK
Philosophy / Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, MI 49008-5022, USA
FALK@WMICH.EDU

Jan Dejnožka, *The Ontology of the Analytic Tradition and Its Origins: Realism and Identity in Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein, and Quine.* Lanham, Md., and London: Rowman and Littlefield, 1996. Pp. xxvi, 335. US$69.50; £53.00. Paperback: US$26.95; £21.95; CDN$36.95.

This is a very ambitious book, executed with intelligence and argumentative skill. But it is also flawed in several ways. Let us start with the least serious flaw, its presentation of itself. The representatives of the analytic tradition whom Dejnožka studies are Frege and to a lesser extent Russell. In the last chapter, Wittgenstein makes his only cameo appearance and Quine makes his second, justifying their mention in the book's subtitle, which is misleading. Indeed more space is devoted to Aristotle than to either Wittgenstein or Quine, who together account for only eight percent of the book's pages. The title's suggestion that the book is history is also misleading. It is textual exegesis according to a framework of interpretation which Dejnožka knows his authors rejected. The book argues from this framework that there was less change in ontological positions than you might think, both within the corpus of a single author and from one author to another. Indeed this reviewer while reading the book did not hear the rumbling of history at all concerning the author's main theses, and hardly at all concerning peripheral matters. These complaints now aired and Dejnožka's partial plea of *nolo contendere* noted (p. xii), I'll say the book contains much of interest for a philosopher with a metaphysical bent; it is worth reading despite its flaws.

Dejnožka defines the analytic tradition intentionally vaguely as adhering to the thesis "that analyzing language is basic to understanding the world". He soon clarifies this definition with the thesis that paraphrase (of our pre-systematic ontological thought?) into canonical notations is basic to ontology and metaphysics (p. 5). In the rest of the book, however, the ontology is stage centre, and little is said about the paraphrasis into canonical notations, which

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the analytic philosophers are supposed to have made basic to their ontology.[1] Yet in what way is analysis basic? Surely only as a technique for eliciting truth about the world. And how does it do that? Dejnožka does not tell us. I paused at his characterization of the tradition, because the point about basicness did not seem totally incidental to a book about the tradition, especially when its author confesses to an ironic intention concerning the concept of analysis (p. xvi). Also it has become a matter of controversy: Monk has defined the analytic tradition in a way that excludes Wittgenstein from the fold, and he concludes that Dummett's alternative definition would exclude Russell from the fold.[2] Indeed, even Dejnožka's definition would exclude Russell on a natural reading of his word "basic", although he does recognize that Russell's concept of analysis was that one analyzes complex things into facts (pp. 144f.). Since even Dejnožka's list of four paradigms of an analytic philosopher needs defence, I will defend his identification of all four as analytic philosophers with a definition of my own of the analytic tradition.

I agree with Dejnožka and Russell that the analytic tradition is not to be defined as that tradition which confines itself to thinking about language, about "the different ways in which silly people can say silly things" (*MPD*, p. 230); on the contrary, analysis of language is, for many analytic philosophers, merely one of several tools in an investigation of the world (which includes ourselves and our perplexities, of course). That said, it is a favoured tool. They often do look for enlightenment in a semantic ascent from the level of things and facts to the level of the words and sentences about the things and facts. When semantic ascent is appropriate, there are several quite different techniques of analysis used by the so-called analytic philosophers. Two distinctions, a trichotomy and a dichotomy, which cross-cut each other, yield six kinds. Russell made the first distinction in "On Denoting": some analysts leave the syntactic structures of the sentences they analyze the same as they find them and posit entities, either "senses" or mere possibilia, for those structures to denote. Let us call them the ontologizers. Frege was one, because his analyses posited concepts and thoughts that existed independently of anyone thinking them. Russell recommended an alternative to ontologizing, namely, being sceptical of the apparent syntax and allowing adjustments

[1] In Chap. 7, he defines a position he calls "linguistic modified realism", but the definition (p. 234) does not refer to canonical notation, although he later identifies Quine (and only Quine) as espousing this position "due to his canonical notation" (p. 268). If this were really basic, it wouldn't be only Quine.

[2] Ray Monk, "What Is Analytical Philosophy?", in R. Monk and A. Palmer, eds., *Bertrand Russell and the Origins of Analytical Philosophy* (Bristol: Thoemmes P., 1996). Michael Dummett, *Origins of Analytical Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. P., 1994).

to it to avoid the need to denote odd entities. Let us call these analysts the grammatical reorganizers. The reorganizers were not opposed to the project of ontology, but they were minimalist ontologizers. The later Wittgenstein saw that the distinction between the ontologizers and the reorganizers was not exhaustive of all the alternatives. He saw that an analyst could be neither an ontologizer nor a grammatical reorganizer, by looking instead to a sentence's social contexts, its use, for clarification of the sentence to be analyzed. He proposed an exhibition-analysis, in contrast with all the kinds of replacement-analysis.[3] To analyze a locution is to place it in contexts that suffice to exhibit the rules of its proper use. We can call analysts of this sort the social contextualizers. By acknowledging the relevance of pragmatics to meaning, they can split the issue dividing the ontologizers and grammatical reorganizers. Concerning syntax, they side with the ontologizers against the utility of drastic regimentation of the ways of speaking into a canonical notation. Concerning semantics, they side with the reorganizers against drawing lessons in ontology from grammatical forms. They thus avoid extravagance of both the syntactic and semantic varieties. For the contextualizers a deeper understanding depends on relating the contexts of use of problematic sentences to primitive contexts by a series of intermediate cases.[4] Thus these analysts preserve the ideal of understanding complexity by means of simples, which is the point of analysis, although they differ from other analysts about which simples yield that deeper understanding, and how they yield it.

Quine derives another distinction from Bentham's and Russell's ideas about definition: first, there are analysts who take the meanings of words as primitive, and construct the meanings of sentences from them, parasitically on a syntactic principle of compositionality. Let us call these the meaning-atomists, words being their atoms of meaningfulness. Quine recommends the alternative assumption, that sentences, or indeed groups of sentences, whole theories, are the units of meaning. The sentences have recursive definitions of their meanings, the clauses of which bring in the whole's components.[5] Let us call these analysts the meaning-holists, because they adapt Tarski's definition of truth so that it becomes a definition of sentence-meaning, making the meaning of sentences to be their truth-conditions. For example, I know the

[3] Stephan Körner, *What is Philosophy? One Philosopher's Answer* (London: Allen Lane, 1969), Chap. 2. P. F. Strawson, *Analysis and Metaphysics* (New York: Oxford U. P., 1992), Chap. 2, contrasts the connective model and the reductive model. This is the same contrast as Körner's.

[4] L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, §5. *Cf.* §§90–2.

[5] W. V. Quine, "Russell's Ontological Development", *The Journal of Philosophy* 63 (1966); reprinted in D. F. Pears, ed., *Bertrand Russell: Critical Essays* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1972), pp. 292f.

meaning of another's declarative sentences if I can state their truth conditions in my language. Crossing the threefold distinction with the Quinean distinction, we have six ways of being an analytic philosopher:

Ways of being an analytic philosopher, with exemplars	Atomist on compositionality; word is unit of meaning	Holist on compositionality; sentence is unit of meaning
Ontologizer	1892 Frege, preserving deniability[6]	1884 Frege
Grammatical reorganizer	Russell often, after 1920	Quine; earlier Wittgenstein
Social contextualizer		Later Wittgenstein

If anything follows from my analysis of analysis, it is this: not paraphrasis, not even analysis in general, can be "basic to ontology" in the way that telescopes are basic to astronomy. Telescopes are neutral instruments. In contrast, the analytic philosophers' ontological presuppositions determine to a large extent the very mode of analysis they practice. Not entirely, of course; a philosopher's choice of method is not purely for expository purposes. It sometimes yields arguments for his ontology that do not beg the question against the other analytic methods. Thus Russell demonstrated an ambiguity of scope in such sentences as "The King of France is not bald" and "George IV wished to know whether Scott was the author of *Waverley*", something of great importance to the philosophy of mind that the ontologizer's analysis would miss.

If Dejnožka's list of analytic philosophers is to be acceptable, his account of the analytic tradition must be revised, for, as we see in the last line of the table, the idea of a canonical notation has no place in a general characterization of the analytic philosopher, if "canonical" means some contrast with

[6] Frege's "senses" are a bit of ontology. Frege did enunciate a holistic "context principle" in 1884, but according to Michael Dummett, *The Interpretation of Frege's Philosophy* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. P., 1981), Chap. 19, Frege's later doctrines interfered with his continued explicit avowal of it, although he never denied it. Thus my proviso that Frege preserved deniability of meaning atomism. Dummett thinks Frege should have continued to avow the context principle, even if that meant revising the thesis of his later theory of meaning that sentences were just a form of name. I discuss the issue later in the text. See also Johannes Brandl, "What is Wrong with the Building Block Theory of Language?", in J. Brandl and W. Gombocz, eds., issue devoted to "The Mind of Donald Davidson", *Grazer Philosophische Studien*, 36 (1989): 79–95.

ordinary natural language in the ability to render perspicuous one's ontic commitments. Perhaps the later Wittgenstein wanted a perspicuous exhibition-analysis of speech practices,[7] but he had abandoned perspicuous ontology. So how conceive of the analytic tradition? We can discern a family resemblance. An analytic philosopher, broadly conceived, is defined by the prominent use of one or more techniques in the family of analytic techniques listed in the table, the philosopher's choice being of those particular techniques that are consistent with, and give expression to, the philosopher's assumptions about meaning and ontology. A master might even eke out of his analysis a non-circular argument for his ontology.

Of course, this definition of analytic philosopher now includes Plato and Aristotle, not to mention just about every other first-rank philosopher. To narrow the definition to cover just the last century and a quarter, we add that the analytic philosopher, narrowly conceived, either uses, or resists abusing, the advances in logic which Frege and Peirce initiated and which today's logicians continue to make. The later Wittgenstein would be the great resister among analytic philosophers, since he rejects the theorizing impulse in philosophy in favour of simply deepening one's philosophical perplexities until their very roots are dug up. I see no reason to make the theorizing impulse one of the definitive marks of the analytic tradition as Monk would have it, or of philosophy itself as Russell would have it (*MPD*, Chap. 18).

Beyond that cluster of somewhat similar methods, applied during a recent period of progress in logic, I see diversity within the analytic tradition and a trend against ontology, which might be a trend toward relativistic ontology. Dejnožka sees the opposite. He wants to convince us that the tradition is more unified than is usually realized, and the unity centres on commitment to a modified realism in ontology.

But before we get to those matters, let us return to my table. Dejnožka would object to my choice of exemplars in the column of meaning-atomists. I am following Dummett on Frege in the table. Dejnožka's note 13 to his second chapter is an eight-page defence of his claim, against Dummett and several other Frege interpreters, that the Frege of 1892 did not have beliefs that were in tension with the meaning-holism that he proclaimed so explicitly in 1884 in his context principle: only in the context of a sentence does any word have a meaning. Instead of tension, according to Dejnožka, in his

[7] *Philosophical Investigations*, §§51, 66, 90–2, 109, 122–4, 402. Wittgenstein flirted briefly with an alternative characterization of his practice as a phenomenology of language, but rejected it. See Hans Sluga, "Ludwig Wittgenstein: Life and Work, An Introduction" in Sluga and David G. Stern, eds., *The Cambridge Companion to Wittgenstein* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1996), p. 16.

theory that all terms, including sentences, are names, "Frege has achieved an elegant generalization which *subsumes* the context principle. The context principle is now a Stealth airplane, too hard for scholarly radars trained only on explicit assertion to detect" (p. 284). My impression, however, is that a key premiss of Dummett's argument *is* the Stealth airplane, too hard for Dejnožka's scholarly radars to detect. Dummett notes that the context principle builds on an asymmetry between words and sentences, such that the sentences are the contexts in which the words have meaning. It's not just that Frege's later theory destroys this asymmetry; rather he must respect an asymmetry between the way words function in sentences, and the way sentences function in more complex sentences.[8] For sentences (and sentential functions) are the units in the implication relation that logic studies, and sentences are the units with which we perform speech acts. So any sentence must have a meaning independently of its contribution to the meaning of more complex sentences in a way to which there's no parallel for words. But Frege's later assimilation of sentences to names deprived him of the conceptual tools to illuminate this asymmetry. (How are we to understand Quine's more radical holism that sentences themselves have meaning only in the context of theories? The single recursive definition that yields a truth value for each and every sentence defines a unitary language. Each sentence is in a language along with other sentences just because the definition which defines its meaning also defines theirs. Enough of them, in enough syntactic variety, can constitute an implicative structure that yields testable predictions. Quine says they then have the critical semantic mass for each of the sentences in the structure to be meaningful. Despite the extended holism there is still an asymmetry between words and sentences.) Aside from Dejnožka's failure to detect Dummett's premiss, his defence in this same note of the context principle's application to proper names (pp. 280 and 284) is illuminating.

Dejnožka's note 5 of Chapter 4 and note 8 of Chapter 6 marshall evidence for Russell's acceptance of the context principle. But he also cites contrary evidence, such as the chapter on language in *An Outline of Philosophy* (*OP*[9]), where it is apparent that the principle is not present in Russell's focus except as it applies to syncategorematic words, relations, and nouns susceptible to contextual definition. The remaining nouns have meaning in so far as they have effects the same as the effects of the things they mean (*OP*, p. 49), which would be consistent with the context principle if Russell conceded that

[8] Dummett, *Interpretation*, p. 371, ll. 1–4. I am emphasizing Dummett's "in succession ... in a similar way". He repeats the contrast in the middle of p. 373. Also on p. 372 Dummett is appealing beyond Frege for his view of what Frege should have said.

[9] Page citations are to the American edition titled *Philosophy* (New York: Norton, 1927).

the noun is being used as a holophrastic sentence (to use Quine's language). But no; he seemed to think one word sentences have to be ellipses, as his joke about the Patagonian language shows (*OP*, p. 51). Yet Dejnožka glosses this contrary evidence with "Russell is undogmatic enough to poke fun at overblown contextualism" (p. 300).

I find much in Russell's work on meaning starting in the 1920s hard to reconcile with the context principle. Russell had come to think of mental images as the constituents of mental propositions. How can we make the meaning of an image solely its contribution to the meaning of a proposition? The key to an unproblematic adherence to the context principle in explanations of language learning is the concept of a holophrastic sentence, not elliptical either syntactically or semantically. Examples are Quine's "Gavagai!" and Wittgenstein's "Slab!" These are not mere acts of naming, but useful sentences. Infants begin with them, not with nouns and verbs. Russell did contrast one word sentences with one word ellipses in *My Philosophical Development* (p. 150), but the sentences consisting of one word are "used explosively", suggesting an unstated mental complex (p. 151). In *Human Knowledge*, Chap. 5, his discussion of the ambiguity of one word sentences suggests the same mental completion by beliefs or desires which are not holophrastic. If Russell did have the concept of a self-sufficient holophrastic unit of sentence meaning, I have not noticed him exploiting it to affirm the context principle. Instead I find him saying, "Object-words have a meaning which does not depend on their occurring in sentences", and "if sentences contain object-words, what they assert depends upon the meaning of the object-words" (*IMT*, end of Chap. 1). He goes on to say, "At the lowest level of speech, the distinction between sentences and single words does not exist." What he supposes do exist are acts of naming, a thesis Wittgenstein criticized.[10] Russell seems not to appreciate that a Tarski–style definition of sentence-meaning reserves a clause to each object-word no differently from the way it treats other words. As Quine says, "knowing words is knowing how to work out the meanings of sentences containing them."[11] In sum, since I also agree with Dummett about Frege, I conclude that Quine and Wittgenstein are the first philosophers whose adherence to the context principle is totally unproblematic.[12]

Let us turn from the notes to the main text of *The Ontology of the Analytic Tradition and Its Origins*. Dejnožka claims to make three historical contribu-

[10] *Philosophical Investigations*, §49. Even the earlier Wittgenstein did not allow names to be exceptions to the context principle. See *Tractatus* 3.3; 3.311; 3.314.

[11] "Russell's Ontological Development", p. 293.

[12] Quine claims Jeremy Bentham was the first.

tions in this study:

(*a*) The thesis that "to exist is to be identifiable" enters the analytic tradition with Frege and Russell (p. 2).
(*b*) Thus the two earlier philosophers and the two later ones do constitute a quartet of similar ontological positions.
(*c*) Their ontology is "modified realism": The world consists of basic absolute individuals and, built on that, a range of composite individuals whose individuation is subject to a relativity to conceptual schemes (p. xiii).

This modified realism contrasts with a radical realism that attributes no reality except to the absolute basic particulars, and it contrasts also with a radical relativism that does not admit even basic individuals that are absolute. The radical relativist holds that "the ontological locus of identity itself is never in things, but only in our view of things" so that "there is no more to objectual identity than our choice to apply one concept ... as opposed to another" (p. 41). The three ontologies are the various ways of theorizing about composite entities. If composite entities *are* in some way what they are composed of, we must resolve the contradiction of supposing that a thing is one thing in as equally real a way as it is a many.

The position of modified realism depends on accepting the distinction between distinctions of reason and real distinctions (pp. 26f.). Thus there are identities and non-identities that are not real ones; they are only conceptual. Since Russell is on record as rejecting the contrast (*PoM*, §439) and so is Frege[13] and Dejnožka knows this, his imposition of this interpretive framework on their words, in which both Frege and Russell are shown to be modified realists, is ... well, a historian of ideas might say it is an example of the predatory power that the living exercise over the defenceless dead—alien interpretive frameworks, or reading as necrophilia. But philosophizing is not history-writing, and Dejnožka is philosophizing: The interpreting of the philosophers happens to be his way of convincing us that modified realism is the truth of ontology.

Dejnožka defends Frege against the charge that he is a radical relativist, which might seem to be the case, since (according to Dejnožka) Frege holds that "objects shift as concepts shift"; "identity is predicated not of objects,

[13] The passage Dejnožka cites is in P. Geach and M. Black, trans., *Philosophical Writings of Gottlob Frege* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1960), p. 235. In asserting the univocity of the identity relation here, Frege is rejecting a special identity relation that accommodates only improper objects which do not obey the law of excluded middle.

but of names expressing senses"; and "existence itself is predicated not of objects, but of concepts" (p. 39). Well, as you might expect, much of the defence of Frege is taken up with pinning these theses to him, particularly the second one of the three.

On Dejnožka's reading of Frege's "On Sense and Reference", "the relata of the identity relation are genuinely different objects. Specifically these relata are different names" (p. 49). He avoids the evident self-contradiction by asserting that the identity sign does not for Frege express the identity relation, but rather it expresses the relation of denoting the same denotation. The usual reading (and my reading) of "On Sense and Reference" is that this is the very theory Frege repudiates there. He was returning to the naive reading of the identity sign as expressing the identity relation and resorting to the contingency of the thought-sense expressed by an assertion of an identity using two names, $a = b$, to explain the informativeness of the statement, and to explain the truth values of modal statements and statements reporting beliefs. Dejnožka calls this explanation of informativeness mere "smoke and mirrors" (p. 49). I will not comment further on his elaborate but ultimately unconvincing arguments for his reading, since the chapter's ostensible purpose is to defend Frege from being labelled a radical relativist, a claim that only begins to look plausible on Dejnožka's unusual reading of Frege's mature claims about identity.

One must skip to the seventh and last chapter for the continuation of the story about modified realism. It is possible to make the skip from Chapter 1 to Chapter 7 without a sense of having missed anything, whereas if you read Chapters 2 through 6 before 7 you may feel it necessary to refresh your memory of Chapter 1 when you do get into 7. Indeed the last two paragraphs of the first chapter are almost an invitation to make the skip. In Chapter 7 the arguments that none of the four philosophers is a modified realist are listed, then the more numerous arguments are listed for the thesis that each is, and the arguments against are undermined, leading to the conclusion that each philosopher never wavered in his commitment to modified realism. What one makes of this depends on whether history or metaphysics is your main motive for reading it. As history it is smoke and mirrors. It is also blindness. Due to his allegiance to the scholastic discipline of debating questions preset by an interpretive framework and due to his imperfect grasp of the discipline of intellectual history, Dejnožka has missed a development in ontological thought of historic importance, namely, the deflation of ontology, its trivialization: all the real action is on the ideology side (to use Quine's term for making the contrast).

Dejnožka cops the plea by denying that he is writing history; his is a "proto-historical study" (p. xii). But what good to historiography is a proto-

historical study that points away from history? Here, however, I should say more about the right way for a philosopher to think of philosophy's history, and how Dejnožka falls short. I subscribe to the view that the best history of philosophy focuses on problems.[14] We should use our contemporary sense of importance to choose the problems we study, and we should be biased toward those past periods when progress was being made on them. Perhaps even an alien conceptual framework can be useful in dialoguing with a text to elicit its contemporary importance. A pure historian might say such selectivity falsifies the picture of the past, but our interest in the history is not in the past as such, but in the historical unfolding of the problematic area, for we want to contribute to the progress. That's why, within a problem, we focus on the arguments: arguments about the importance or unimportance of the problem, arguments for and against various solutions, arguments for clarifying definitions, distinctions, and analogies. In principle, the names of their authors could be omitted; the dates of their introduction would be more interesting than the names or—ugh—nationalities of those who introduced them. I suspect Dejnožka would agree. One could never fault Dejnožka's attention to arguments. Every paragraph of his book has two or three. His choice of a problematic area, realist ontology, is laudable. So what's my beef?

Russell fathered the deflation of ontology, the single most important development in the history of analytic thought within Dejnožka's areas of interest, and he misses it. I think, then, that I should not be forgiving of his interpretive framework. He himself admits the value of his use of the framework is "an experimental question" (p. xvii). Well, the experiment was a flop. Dejnožka is a controversialist of the "bang bang, you're dead" school, and in his preface he has anticipated something close to my criticism and shot it down. But what he shot down was the criticism that

> ... 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. (P. xvi)

That is not my criticism.

The deflation of ontology had two sources, one in philosophical scepticism and the other in the mathematician's and relativity theorist's concept of the essence of objectivity as that which stays invariant in a transformation of

[14] John Passmore, "Philosophy, Historiography of", *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1967).

structures to equivalent structures. Russell and Carnap brought the latter lesson home to philosophy, Russell with his concept of structure and Carnap with his principle of tolerance.[15] It is a lesson that Quine has also been teaching now for several decades: "A lesson of proxy functions is that our ontology, like grammar itself, is part of our own conceptual contribution to our theory of the world."[16] In a recent conversation,[17] Quine expressed perplexity at his own earlier fascination with ontology: "... it's puzzling why people, including me in the old days ... why they take questions of the identity of objects so seriously." The sceptical arguments—for example, Quine's indeterminacy of translation—also show that ontology's importance cannot be sustained. And Wittgenstein allied himself with "the common-sense man, who is as far from realism as from idealism", distancing himself from the common-sense philosopher's realism.[18] Kripke's analysis of Wittgenstein's sceptical argument suggests that it supports Quine's indeterminacy of translation thesis and that it targets ontology as well as meaning.[19]

In support of my claim that Russell fathered this trend within philosophy, let me quote Quine:

> Structure is what matters to a theory, and not the choice of its objects. F. P. Ramsey urged this point fifty years ago, arguing along other lines, and in a vague way it had been a persistent theme also in Russell's *Analysis of Matter.* But Ramsey and Russell were talking only of what they called theoretical objects, as opposed to observable objects.
>
> I extend the doctrine to objects generally, for I see all objects as theoretical.[20]

This passage should not be the last word on Russell's contribution to the historic trend against ontology. In particular, Russell presented his notion of structure in popular form years earlier in 1919, in Chapter 6 of *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy,* thus predating Ramsey's work on "Ramsey sentences". Russell's concept of structure is the precursor of Quine's proxy func-

[15] R. Carnap, *The Logical Syntax of Language* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1937), §§17 and 78.

[16] W. V. Quine, "Reactions", in P. Leonardi and M. Santambrogio, eds., *On Quine: New Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. P., 1995), p. 351.

[17] *In Conversation: Professor W. V. Quine,* video, ed. Rudolf Fara (London: Philosophy International: Centre for the Philosophy of the Natural and Social Sciences, London School of Economics, 1994), panel with Daniel Dennett.

[18] L. Wittgenstein, *The Blue and Brown Books,* 2nd ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1965), p. 48.

[19] S. Kripke, *Wittgenstein On Rules and Private Language* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. P., 1982), pp. 55–7.

[20] W. V. Quine, *Theories and Things* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard U. P., 1981), p. 20.

tions, as is clear from Russell's remark in that Chapter 6: "what matters in mathematics, and to a very great extent in physical science, is not the intrinsic nature of our terms, but the logical nature of their interrelations"; and from his remark dismissive of "that essence of individuality which always eludes words and baffles description, but which, for that very reason, is irrelevant to science." This sentence was influential. It impressed Sir Arthur Eddington, for instance, and he quoted it at the head of his chapter on the theory of groups in his *New Pathways in Science*.[21] Not all interpreters of Russell's ideas on structure are as positive as I am about their power,[22] and sometime I will have to defend my view against their evaluations. But Dejnožka is just not insightful at all; he notices in Russell what Quine notices, but he rejects it: "Thus the later Russell's physical structures are structures of nothing. For they are complex relations whose relata we must reject as unknowable substratal quality-instances" (p. 163). Toward Quine's more radical view he is just as unsympathetic: "Without a domain [of quantification], physics would be no longer about anything" (p. 268). Dejnožka is exercising the prerogative I have granted to a philosopher of dismissing what by his lights are retrograde movements in the historical record. But the reasons he states for thinking them retrograde are the baldest combination of question-begging about the nature of knowledge, and straw-man argumentation about the terms of relations. Neither Russell nor Quine gives up aboutness, nor does Davidson despite his provocative title, "Reality without Reference".[23]

Let us leave behind the alien interpretive framework of "distinctions of reason" which plays so large a role in Dejnožka's semi-fictional story of modified realism. In his central chapters he tells a second, non-fictional story that does not depend on this framework. It is the story of identity as necessarily connected to existence, so that *ens et unum convertuntur*, which we may translate as "no entity without identity". This is the import of the author's theses (*a*) and (*b*) that I mentioned earlier. The third chapter defends the claim that Frege never gave up the thesis that existence is identifiability, "where an object is identifiable if every identity statement about it has a

[21] New York: Macmillan, 1935, p. 255.

[22] E.g., William Demopoulos and Michael Friedman, "The Concept of Structure in *The Analysis of Matter*", in W. Savage and A. Anderson, eds., *Rereading Russell* (Minneapolis: U. of Minnesota P., 1989).

[23] Donald Davidson, *Inquiries into Truth and Interpretation* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1986), essay 15. His point is that a system of reference for names enters a theory of meaning, not as a basic constituent and determinant of theory, but as a theoretical construct precipitating out of the theory of truth and having little independent explanatory value. Dejnožka criticizes this article on pp. 285f.

determinate truth value" (p. 103). Such identifiability is indispensable to the introduction of names. Dejnožka defends his view that Frege applied this thesis to numbers and functions, and that he should have explicitly denied the existence of ideas and minds. Instead Frege looked for ways to avoid this consequence of the thesis when it is joined to his argument that the thoughts that constitute common knowledge are not ideas. For, according to that argument "no predicate can be appointed to characterize an idea and still express a public sense.... [S]ince 'is identifiable' is a predicate of a public language and expresses a public sense, ideas cannot be said to be identifiable" (p. 110). Thus the thesis that existence is identifiability leads us to see the anti-mentalist Quine stepping out from the threshold of Frege's house.

Russell makes his debut in Chapter 4 on the subject of the robust sense of reality that he found Meinong to lack. In earlier chapters, Dejnožka used other philosophers' interpretations of Frege as a foil for introducing his own. But here Dejnožka's mode of arguing slides from simply defending a way of interpreting Russell, to defending the truth of Russell's claims and the adequacy of his modes of arguing. His targets are Butchvarov's and others' criticisms of Russell. For example, "Then Russell was right. Meinong does lack a robust sense of reality" (p. 130). According to Dejnožka, Russell isn't accusing Meinong of believing in hallucinations. There's a classificatory sense of "exist", in which Russell and Meinong both deny the reality of hallucinations, and there is a non-classificatory sense of "exist", the sense in which all objects exist, in which sense even Russell would admit hallucinations exist. In this latter sense of exist, there are irreducible, neo-Parmenidean atoms of being, which are the only objects of acquaintance. Russell would say, if you lack this existence, you're nothing at all. That is the robust sense of reality. Meinong would say, if you lack it, well, you can comfort yourself with being subsistent. That's a weak-in-the-knees sense of reality. Against Butchvarov's defence of Meinong, Dejnožka zooms in on Butchvarov's criticism of a non-classificatory sense of existence and ably dismantles the criticism. Like "round square" there are predicates that apply to no possible thing, and like "not both round and square" some that apply to all possible things. The concept of existence is like the latter.

I found myself agreeing with Dejnožka's defences as interpretive of Russell's intentions. But we must remember, if we are going to defend also the truth of Russell's views, that neo-Meinongians are in full sway today, making us all do logic in terms of possible worlds. The arguments in D. Lewis's *On the Plurality of Worlds*[24] for possible things are not Meinong's arguments or

[24] Oxford: Blackwell, 1986.

Butchvarov's. Then there is that messy annoyance, empirical data from quantum mechanics. All elementary entities in the universe occupied the same place all at once in the point-singularity from which our universe evolved, making one wonder about the reality of today's apparent pluralism. The elementary entities have the property of indistinguishability because of their wave characteristics, making one wonder about the reality of apparent identity over time.[25] Even the duality of elementary and compound is not absolute. Particles are paired, e.g., solitons and quarks, such that treating one as simple and the other as composite is equivalent to the reverse treatment.[26] It is now up to the physicists to tell the rest of us the conditions of entity-hood. Ontologists should learn this lesson, if only to avoid the embarrassment of their "a priori truths" meeting empirical defeat.

Chapter 5 lists and discusses Russell's "forty-four 'No entity without identity' theories". What Dejnožka means is that Russell held forty-four theses on various topics at various times during his career and they all imply "no entity without identity" at least for some type of entity. The twenty-second of these is "Two structures are identical if the relata of the relations involved are correlated one-one in order" (p. 150), which expresses the identity condition for structures. In the chapter Dejnožka refers to this thesis only a couple of times, without much discussion. But it has a major implication for the identity conditions for all objects, since the identity conditions themselves are structures, and according to this thesis they are reinterpretable as alternative identity conditions. The conditions of entity-hood for structures surprisingly deflates the discussion that begins and ends the book about the kinds of ontological positions. But the deflationary implication goes unnoted. To paraphrase Dejnožka's remark about three contemporary interpreters of Russell, substituting his name for theirs: certainly to the 1927–59 Russell, Dejnožka is just a morning innocent (p. 180). Or perhaps that is as excessive and unfair to him as he was in applying the epithet to them. For on the whole I found this chapter insightful in connecting the many theses to "no entity without identity". I recommend note 9 to this chapter; it ably defends Russell's priority in developing a fully elaborated causal theory of reference of names. But the book has whetted my appetite and left me hungrier than I was; oh, what I'd give for some real history of analytic ontology.

[25] Hans Christian von Baeyer, "Tiny Doubles", *The Sciences*, Oct. 1997, p. 12.
[26] *Scientific American*, Jan. 1996, p. 90.