

PROLOGUE: Metaphysics after the Twentieth Century

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THE LATEST "BATTLE OF THE BOOKS"

Metaphysics, as currently practiced in the English-speaking world, is a heterogeneous discipline, comprising a wide variety of philosophical questions and methods for answering them. *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics* is intended to favor no particular set of questions or philosophical school, and to feature the best work on any metaphysical topic from every philosophical tradition.

"Yes, yes, of course that's the sort of thing everyone *says*. But there's obviously a big difference between analytic philosophy and other kinds. In metaphysics the contrast is particularly stark, and people on either side of the analytic/non-analytic divide don't have much to do with those on the other. So where does *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics* fall? Is it to be a venue for analytic metaphysics, or for the kinds of metaphysics that are practiced outside analytic circles?"

Given the frequency with which lines are drawn in the sand using the label "analytic", and the ferocity with which battle is often joined, I suspect that many philosophers with an interest in metaphysics will find this question to be a natural one. (The question is, in effect, "Which side are you on, boy?") But the term "analytic" means different things to different people; an attempt to answer the question in a simple and straightforward way would invite serious misunderstanding. It should either be rejected as too ambiguous to be answered, or answered with a thousand qualifications. Lacking both the good sense to do the former, and time and space to do the latter, I attempt an unsatisfactory compromise. With a couple of crude distinctions, I convey my impressionistic sense of the differences that are typically being indicated when philosophers call some metaphysicians, but not others, "analytic". Then, with a few paragraphs of "potted history", I describe the origins of the deepest divide between groups of contemporary metaphysicians and show how unfortunate and unnatural it is.

Readers who already have a sense of the divisions within metaphysics, and a passing familiarity with the history of the subject (or no interest in either), should now please skip ahead to the more intrinsically worthwhile contents of the volume. Only those who have found themselves bewildered (and perhaps occasionally blind-sided) by the bitter struggles and strange alliances one sometimes encounters in contemporary metaphysics have any reason to read on—and then only if they want to hear my version (idiosyncratic, no doubt) of the story of how we got here.

I begin by recording some ways I have noticed present-day metaphysicians in the English-speaking academy lining up on one side or another of a supposed “analytic/non-analytic” divide. Two ways of drawing the distinction—a very common one, and then a much more specialized one—provide the means to distinguish three metaphysical “camps”.

1. Many contemporary metaphysicians belong to movements that broke away during the first half of the last century from what passed, at that time, for “analytic philosophy”. For many in these movements, “analytic” became a dirty word, and “analytic metaphysics” practically a contradiction in terms. Call philosophers in these circles “*non-analytic metaphysicians*”. Paradigmatic non-analytic metaphysical movements include process philosophers (the heirs of A. N. Whitehead: Charles Hartshorne, Robert Neville, David Weismann, and many others¹), neo-Thomists (Norris Clarke, Ralph McInerny), personalists (Borden Parker Bowne, Peter Bertocci, Austin Farrer, Josef Seifert, Erazim Kohak, Karol Wojtyla), some phenomenologists (J. N. Mohanty, Dallas Willard), neo-Platonists (J. N. Findlay), some types of idealist² (the non-Berkelian types: W. E. Hocking, G. R. G. Mure, Brand Blanshard), and a few Hegel-inspired but non-idealist system-builders (Paul Weiss, William Desmond). Non-analytic metaphysicians of all varieties usually characterize “analytic philosophy” as fundamentally hostile to the deeper questions of metaphysics.

But the pool of metaphysicians who would be called “analytic philosophers” by these non-analytic metaphysicians is itself far from

¹ Nicholas Rescher is one friend of process thought who is perfectly at home among analytic metaphysicians.

² Present-day idealists in the tradition of Berkeley, such as John Foster and Howard Robinson, tend to be analytic metaphysicians; fans of 19th-century idealism, on the other hand, are mainly non-analytic metaphysicians.

homogeneous; and there are divisions within it that have sometimes *also* been seen as a difference between metaphysicians who are or are not “analytic” in some (hard-to-specify) narrower sense.

2. Many professional philosophers who publish in metaphysics have no qualms about describing themselves as “analytic philosophers”. They take up the traditional problems of metaphysics without apology, and offer philosophical theories meant to resolve them. Call them “*analytic metaphysicians*”, and think of Roderick Chisholm, Saul Kripke, and David Lewis as paradigmatic. In fact, I have the impression that this category includes the vast majority of philosophers active in metaphysics today—at least, the majority of those publishing books with academic presses or articles in scholarly journals.

3. My final group of metaphysicians is neither very cohesive nor very large; but its members do have some important things in common. (a) They resemble non-analytic metaphysicians in thinking that metaphysics as practiced by Chisholm, Kripke, Lewis, *et al.* is a dead end; (b) they tend to call this (putatively) misguided style of metaphysics, but not their own, “analytic”; but (c) they nevertheless would generally be thought of as “analytic philosophers” by the non-analytic metaphysicians (and also by many other non-analytic philosophers—e.g., followers of “continental” figures such as Foucault and Derrida).³ For lack of a better term, I will call these philosophers “*new wave metaphysicians*”; and I am thinking of the more recent work of Hilary Putnam and John McDowell as paradigmatic—if paradigms are possible for this category. New wave metaphysicians are analytic metaphysicians from the point of view of the non-analytic metaphysicians, yet *not* analytic metaphysicians by their own, apparently stricter, standard.

(Of course plenty of philosophers within the ambit of analytic philosophy, broadly construed, regard metaphysics *in toto* as moonshine; new wave metaphysicians, by contrast, are philosophers who still ask, and offer some sort of answer to, many traditional metaphysical questions.)

Analytic metaphysicians generally take as little interest in what goes by the name “metaphysics” in non-analytic circles as they do in the “metaphysics” found in New Age bookstores. Non-analytic

³ As a general rule, philosophers who use the word “analytic” to pick out the sort of philosophy they *don't* like tend to apply the term very broadly, while those called by that name tend to be more discriminating—an understandable situation.

metaphysicians repay the compliment, since they tend to think of analytic philosophy—construed broadly so as to include the work of both analytic and new wave metaphysicians—as inherently anti-metaphysical (as, indeed, it was for a time—but more on that later). More generally, there is a great gulf fixed between analytic philosophers (broadly construed) and other philosophers, including non-analytic metaphysicians. Precious little news travels across it, and a journal or book series initiated on one side will be largely invisible to those on the other. And there is little prospect of the disappearance of this division in the near future, since there have been casualties on both sides—and much more than hurt feelings caused by snide remarks. Departments have split down the middle, tenure has been denied, papers and books have been rejected, and the source of the injury has been “the other side”.

Analytic and new wave metaphysicians, on the other hand, remain in considerable dialogue (justifying the non-analytic metaphysicians’ perception that they belong to a common tradition), although new wave metaphysicians tend not to engage the positive views of their counterparts in much detail, since they regard their methods as fundamentally misguided.

WHAT IS “ANALYTIC PHILOSOPHY” ANYWAY?

F. H. Bradley was famous for saying that to make distinctions is to falsify one’s subject matter. Well, he was right—at least with respect to *these* distinctions and *this* subject matter. There are, of course, no sharp lines to be found where I have tried to draw them. Philosophers can be found who occupy intermediate positions. Some use the word “analytic” in slightly different ways, and some refuse to use the term at all—not a bad policy, given how multivalent and emotionally charged it has become. I feel certain, nevertheless, that there are fairly deep divisions running between groups of metaphysicians *more or less* along the fault lines I’ve tried to sketch. And the slippery term “analytic” is often used—by different philosophers in different ways—to mark them.

But are philosophically interesting territories being distinguished by these means? Are there “analytic” and “non-analytic” approaches to metaphysics that differ from one another in principled ways? What does “analytic” mean, in the expression “analytic philosophy”?

The word “analytic” is associated, in some people’s minds, with the doctrine that most traditional philosophical problems, including all the metaphysical ones, are pseudo-problems arising from misunderstandings about how words work; that philosophical problems can all be solved (or dissolved) by some sort of purely linguistic investigation. After all, isn’t “analysis” a matter of *a priori* reflection upon the meanings of words, and “analytic philosophy” the kind that prefers to talk about words rather than about the world? Isn’t the origin of “analytic philosophy” some kind of “linguistic turn”?

I don’t want to deny that the term “analytic” may have been used by some philosophers, fifty or sixty years ago, to mean something along these lines. But it should not be forgotten that, when it was first used to describe the philosophical movement that begins with Frege, Russell, Moore, and Wittgenstein, the expression “analytic philosophy” did not carry these connotations. And its extension today includes *mainly* philosophers who reject general deflationary attitudes toward metaphysics. It would be odd to identify the meaning of the term “analytic philosophy” with a set of doctrines peculiar to a generation of philosophers falling in the *middle* of the history of analytic philosophy.

How *did* the word “analytic” come into the tradition? The answer is pretty clear. Bradley railed against “analysis” in the late 1800s. When you try to break some fact down into components, he claimed, the result is not the fact you started with, nor even a set of things that were parts of the original fact. We not only murder to dissect, but we murder all the organs, and all the cells, etc., until there’s *nothing* left that was in the living animal. When Russell became a realist, he attacked this element of Bradley’s idealism, defending the thesis that the components of facts *can* be identified by analysis—even though the original fact would admittedly not appear on a mere list of its components. It was on Russell’s lips that “analysis” became, first, a rallying cry in the revolt against idealism; and then the name of the whole movement spawned by the revolt. But in the mouths of both Russell and Bradley, “analysis” was the name of a non-linguistic activity; it was the prying apart (in thought) of the very contents of the world, a procedure with serious ontological implications. Analysis was definitely *not* a mere search for the definitions of words, nor a mere elucidation of concepts—at least, not if concepts are taken to be mental entities of some kind.⁴

⁴ According to the early Russell, “concepts” are just properties—mind-independent universals—that someone or other happens to be thinking about.

Today, once again, the label “analytic” has no anti-metaphysical implications—or, at least, it shouldn’t, given its actual extension. Most contemporary philosophers in the analytic camp reject blanket dismissals of traditional metaphysical problems, and recognize that “philosophical analysis” inevitably involves much more than simply unpacking the meanings of ordinary words and idioms. I suspect that, by now, the majority of all those, living or dead, who have been called “analytic philosophers” would reject any sort of radical “linguistic turn”. There was a period when many analytic philosophers—perhaps even the majority—believed that the problems of metaphysics were either demonstrably meaningless, or resolvable by the clarification of terms or the recitation of platitudes “in a plonking tone of voice”. But it was a relatively short phase in the history of a longer philosophical tradition—a phase I describe in more detail below.

So being an analytic philosopher does not mean that one tries to turn all philosophical problems into problems about language. Some analytic philosophers have tried to do so, but most have not. What, then, *are* the distinctive features of analytic philosophy—in the broad sense in which both analytic and new wave metaphysicians count as “analytic philosophers”? I’m tempted to answer: there are none. Philosophers who fly the “analytic” flag—or who find the flag often pinned to their chests by others, like it or not—are united by no single substantive doctrine or methodology.

Yes, analytic philosophers have great respect for advances in formal logic, and for rigorous argument. But Whitehead managed to put himself outside the analytic fold without renouncing his role in *Principia Mathematica*. In fact, only the most radical non-analytic philosophers explicitly impugn logic and rational argument.

Yes, some analytic philosophers behave as though philosophy began with Frege. But that can hardly be a distinctive trait, since very many of them also take history seriously; and, in any case, many non-analytic philosophers are just as guilty of writing as though philosophy began with Hegel, or Husserl, or Heidegger, or . . . whomever the next big “H” will prove to be.

The only definitions of “analytic philosophy” that come close to tracking actual application of the term (in its broadest use) are ones that appeal to *historical connections* and *self-identification*. Consider A. P. Martinich’s counterfactual criterion, which comes as close to accuracy as any proposal I have seen: analytic philosophers are those

who “would have done philosophy the way Moore, Russell, and Wittgenstein did it if they had been doing philosophy when Moore, Russell, and Wittgenstein were”.⁵ Interpreting this counterfactual is tricky, and some qualifications must be made. On a first reading, the criterion will seem too permissive. Everyone who attempts to characterize the distinctive marks of analytic philosophy (including Martinich) seems to agree that the movement springs from the work of Frege, Moore, Russell, and Wittgenstein. Clearly, Martinich intended that philosophers who came before them should be excluded—despite the fact that some of those earlier philosophers would surely have been on the side of Russell, Moore, and company had they been born later or lived longer. On the other hand, some finesse is required to interpret the counterfactual in such a way that *later* philosophers are not ruled out for the wrong reasons. Some of today’s philosophers, though analytic by everyone’s lights, are notorious cultural and philosophical conservatives. It’s likely that, had they been alive in 1910, they would have defended the idealists against Russell and Moore, simply out of respect for their elders!

Perhaps the best way to understand Martinich’s suggestion is this: the distinctive thing about analytic philosophers is that they see themselves as the rightful heirs of Russell and Moore, or of philosophers who saw themselves as the rightful heirs of Russell and Moore, or . . . “Analytic”, so understood, is an adjective grounded, rather loosely, in the way philosophers think about their debts to their predecessors active at the beginning of the twentieth century. To be an analytic philosopher is to accept a version of the history of philosophy according to which the heroes at the beginning of the last century were Frege, Russell, and Moore—not Bradley, Bosanquet, and Bergson. It is to admire the philosophical impact of the analytic revolutionaries, and to hope to be a similar “force for good” in one’s own time.⁶

⁵ “Introduction”, *The Blackwell Companion to Analytic Philosophy*, ed. by A. P. Martinich and David Sosa (Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 2001), p. 5.

⁶ When forced at gunpoint to pick “the greatest philosopher of the 20th century”, I often answer, “Russell”. A few of my friends have been scandalized by this response: “Only a morally virtuous and deeply self-aware person can be a truly ‘great’ philosopher,” they say, “and Russell was neither.” Perhaps they are right about Russell’s character. And I suppose they are right about what it takes to be a great philosopher, if “philosophy” essentially involves showing others how to live. But that’s not what I mean by “philosophy”; someone who does metaphysics, or epistemology, or logic is doing philosophy, and perhaps doing it *extremely well*, even if she is clueless about all sorts of ethical and practical matters. There are intellectual skills that can make someone a philosophical

Is there a sensible reason to use the word “analytic” in a narrower way, so that it does not apply to new wave metaphysicians, who tend to dislike the label? The question is hard to answer, since members of the little group of philosophers I’m calling “new wave” differ among themselves in the reasons they give for dissatisfaction with the practice of “analytic-metaphysics-as-usual”. My suspicion is that it is not very sensible for new wave metaphysicians to characterize the “bad” sort of metaphysics, but not their own, as “analytic”. But it also seems to me not worth arguing about. *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics* is certainly intended to be a forum broad enough to include (among other things) both old school analytic and new wave metaphysics. But there was never much danger of someone suspecting that one of the two might be excluded. From now on, I shall ignore narrower uses of the term “analytic”. This means that the category will include some philosophers who prefer not to call themselves “analytic philosophers”. Nevertheless, construing the term this broadly fits with widespread usage. Many socialists prefer not to call themselves “socialists”. One can understand their reservations, and recognize the importance of subtler distinctions they want to make, while continuing to use the word in such a way that it applies to them.

THE FALL AND RISE OF METAPHYSICS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

So why do many people—particularly non-analytic philosophers and scholars in other disciplines—still regard “analytic philosophy” as hostile, in principle, to the traditional problems of metaphysics? Those who think that anti-metaphysical doctrines are among the defining features

giant, but that are quite compatible with massive moral failure and deep character flaws. Of course the same is true of the skills required to be a great mathematician or composer.

Does this prove that I have an “impoverished conception of philosophy” (as I have sometimes been told)? Perhaps; but it’s an impoverished conception that has been the accepted meaning of the term for hundreds of years—we’re all paupers now. The activities that go on under this impoverished heading need not be valueless just because they are not some *other* activity—such as demonstrating, by precept and in practice, the nature of the good life for human beings. It is true that, in some eras, all philosophers were quasi-religious figures who taught their disciples how to live. But it is also true that, in some eras, all philosophers were scientists who developed theories of motion and chemical change. Contemporary philosophers need not be worthless just because we no longer attempt to do either one—or so I tell myself!

of analytic philosophy are mistaking the movement as a whole for the forms it took during the middle third of the last century—a period during which many philosophers in the United States and nearly all of the most influential philosophers in England were under an anti-metaphysical spell of one sort or another.

The story of the fall and rise of metaphysics in the twentieth century is well known, in broad outline, because it is the flip side of an even more famous story: the story of the rise and fall of three of the most important philosophical “schools” of the century—logical empiricism or positivism, the “therapeutic” view of philosophy advocated by the later Wittgenstein, and the sort of ordinary language philosophy inspired by J. L. Austin. These movements offered a succession of reasons for thinking that metaphysical claims are about as meaningful as whistling; or, more pessimistically, that they are “as blank as a fart” (to borrow Jacques Renault’s colorful phrase).

The beginning of this dark age (dark for metaphysics, anyway) might well be set at 1935—the year of Carnap’s *Philosophy and Logical Syntax*, an English distillation of *Logische Syntax der Sprache*—or 1936—the year of Ayer’s *Language, Truth, and Logic*. For the next twenty-five years, philosophy was dominated by movements opposed to the very idea of metaphysics: first by positivism, then by Wittgensteinian “quietism” and the ordinary language philosophy championed by Austin. Metaphysics languished during the years of occupation.

But the anti-metaphysical biases of this period in the history of analytic philosophy appear, in retrospect, as an aberration. They were not present during the first phase of the analytic movement: the revolt against British idealism effected by Russell and Moore. (Frege’s monumental achievements came a bit earlier; but his influence upon English-speaking philosophers was at first mainly indirect, mediated by Russell.) Russell and Moore, however, were neither dismissive of the traditional problems of metaphysics, nor anti-theoretical in the solutions they proposed. In Moore’s early papers and classic lectures of 1910–11 (which helped to set the agenda for much of Russell’s work⁷), and in Russell’s classic essays and books from the same period (e.g. *The Problems of Philosophy, Mysticism and Logic, Our Knowledge of*

⁷ Moore’s lectures were published much later as *Some Main Problems of Philosophy* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1953). Russell adverts to these “unpublished writings” in *The Problems of Philosophy* (Oxford University Press, 1912), p. 6.

the External World), nearly all the traditional problems of metaphysics are discussed, and positive solutions are defended. It is no surprise that Russell's later philosophical books, such as the ambitious *Inquiry into Meaning and Truth* (1940), were unpopular and largely ignored; he explicitly rejects the verificationism of the positivists and the "quietism" of Wittgenstein and his followers, defending instead the possibility of discovering metaphysical truths. Despite his unrivalled initial influence, by mid-century Russell could hardly have been more out of step with the philosophical trends.

Of course there were plenty of other first-rate philosophers doing metaphysics in the usual way right through the 1930s and 1940s. G. F. Stout, C. D. Broad, C. A. Campbell, H. H. Price, D. C. Williams, C. J. Ducasse, G. Dawes Hicks, William Kneale, A. C. Ewing, and a handful of others produced impressive work that is continuous with that of Brentano and Meinong on the one side, and today's analytic metaphysicians on the other. At the time, the eyes of the philosophical world were elsewhere, however; and so, when metaphysics re-emerged a decade or two later, these philosophers were relatively obscure figures. None, save Russell, had widespread immediate impact upon the new generation of metaphysicians.⁸

(The seriousness with which Moore took metaphysics was largely lost upon the next generation or two. Some of Wittgenstein's most able students saw Moore as a sort of John the Baptist, making the way straight for their teacher's appearance on the philosophical scene.⁹

⁸ Here and there, I detect a metaphysical heritage passed on from this "lost generation" to the next. Chisholm has emphasized the inspiration of Russell and Moore, but also that of his undergraduate teacher and then colleague, Ducasse. A quick reading of Ducasse's *Nature, Mind, and Death* (LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1951) is enough to show that Chisholm's metaphysical agenda owes at least as much to Ducasse as to Moore and Russell. Richard Swinburne—whose significant contributions to metaphysics are overshadowed somewhat by the scope and impact of his work in philosophy of religion—was a doctoral student of H. H. Price. Swinburne could be seen as carrying Price's dualistic metaphysics into the next generation.

⁹ Cf. the contributions of John Wisdom, Norman Malcolm, and Alice Ambrose to *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, ed. by P. A. Schilpp (La Salle, Ill.: Open Court, 1942). Chisholm, on the other hand, saw Moore primarily as a traditional metaphysician and epistemologist. He took Moore's appeals to the propriety of ordinary language to be echoes of Thomas Reid's commonsense philosophy, not harbingers of Wittgensteinianism. (While a student at Harvard, Chisholm met Moore and had the job of showing him around Cambridge; he later said that Moore was the "one person [who] impressed me even more than Russell did": Chisholm, "Self-Profile", in *Roderick M. Chisholm*, ed. by Radu Bogdan (Dordrecht: D. Reidel, 1986), p. 4.)

I suspect that their reading of Moore screened him off, to some extent, from many of the younger philosophers in the post-Quinean metaphysical renaissance.)

Recent years have seen a revival of interest in Broad and Williams; but thousands of pages of well crafted metaphysics sank without a ripple. Call me old-fashioned, but I quite enjoy the authors of this “lost generation”; I find it easier to adopt their perspectives than to get into the heads of the more naturalistically inclined among my contemporaries. And I expect that metaphysics would have been better off today had this generation been allowed to make its mark.

The anti-metaphysical movements that eclipsed these philosophers dominated the discipline for two or three decades. But by the time of Quine’s attack on empiricism and defense of ontology, the darkest days were over. These two aspects of Quine’s philosophy were rightly perceived as friendly toward traditional metaphysics; their impact was felt well before 1953, when the collection *From a Logical Point of View* was published. Since then, metaphysics’ star has been on the rise. Throughout the 1960s and 1970s, the case files of most traditional metaphysical problems were reopened, one after another—in many instances, over Quine’s strenuous objections. Advances in modal logic paved the way for the revival of essentialist metaphysics, preeminently in Kripke’s *Naming and Necessity*. By the end of the 1970s the familiar metaphysical questions about universals, events, causation, numbers, and so on were nearly as central to analytic philosophy as they had been in the days of Russell and Moore. The revival of metaphysics even brought back such venerable chestnuts as “libertarian” (i.e. incompatibilist) theories of free action, substance dualism, and the ontological and cosmological arguments for the existence of God.

Although plenty of contemporary analytic philosophers still *dislike* metaphysics, hardly any would now pretend to have a principled reason for dismissing the entire budget of traditional metaphysical questions as pseudo-problems. And many of our best minds venture into deep metaphysical waters with no sign of fear. A list of the one hundred most prominent analytic philosophers of the last fifty years would include a sizable number who are famous, in large part, for their contributions to metaphysics—e.g. Quine, Nelson Goodman, P. F. Strawson, Wilfrid Sellars, Roderick Chisholm, D. M. Armstrong, Hilary Putnam, David Wiggins, Derek Parfit, Donald Davidson, Saul Kripke, Alvin Plantinga, Sydney Shoemaker, and David Lewis.

MEET THE NEW METAPHYSICS, SAME AS
THE OLD METAPHYSICS

What is distinctive about the approach most analytic philosophers take to the ancient problems of metaphysics? I'm tempted, once again, to answer: nothing. Russell and Moore broke decisively with the dominant metaphysics of their day, idealism. But they also saw themselves as champions of a patently metaphysical doctrine of their own: a version of realism more robust than most contemporary philosophers would believe. And they did not imagine themselves to be the first to hold their metaphysical positions. They recognized aspects of their own views in those of immediate predecessors such as Meinong and Brentano, whose work they discussed in detail. Russell frankly acknowledged the similarity between Leibniz's monadology (which he examined in its own right very early on, in *The Philosophy of Leibniz*) and the realist metaphysics he developed in *Our Knowledge of the External World*. Russell and Moore may have derided the obscurity and lack of rigor they detected in the work of the most influential metaphysicians of their day. (The three "B"s—Bradley, Bosanquet, and Bergson—were singled out for particularly harsh treatment.) But in their own more positive work, the only truly unprecedented developments were due to the fact that advances in formal logic shed some genuinely new light upon several familiar philosophical problems.

Russell and Moore certainly saw themselves as part of a "revolution in philosophy"; but the revolutionary aspect of analytic philosophy was, to begin with, primarily the overthrow of idealism in favor of realism, and advocacy of the "new logic". It was a revolution intended not to banish traditional metaphysical problems altogether, but to solve them in more commonsensical—or at least more *comprehensible*—ways. The ambitiously anti-metaphysical revolutionary myths were promulgated during a period fifteen to twenty-five years later: all metaphysical statements have been shown to be nonsense according to self-evident criteria of meaningfulness; or metaphysical problems are due entirely to insensitivity to the way language is actually used, and one after another is being exorcised by a sufficiently subtle recitation of truisms. As these myths took hold, Russell's metaphysically loaded brand of realism

quickly became almost as unfashionable as the idealism of Bradley and Bosanquet.

TOWARD REUNION IN METAPHYSICS

If my version of history is at all close to the truth, the non-analytic metaphysicians' conviction that analytic philosophy is *inherently* anti-metaphysical is quite erroneous, however understandable. The first generation of analytic philosophers were interested in most of the traditional problems of metaphysics; the anti-metaphysical period in analytic philosophy was comparatively short (albeit exceptionally virulent); and there was no lasting revolution in methodology that distinguishes metaphysics in analytic circles from what one finds in earlier periods and other traditions. Today's analytic metaphysicians have the tools of modern logic at their disposal; but, otherwise, it's pretty much business-as-usual. For good or ill, the problems they tackle are not significantly different from those that faced the philosophers of earlier eras; and they defend positions readily identifiable as variously Platonist, Aristotelian, Thomistic, rationalist, Humean, and so on.

The impression that there is a deep, principled difference between analytic philosophy and other traditions has proven pernicious for the health of metaphysics (and other subfields, too, no doubt), separating natural allies and preventing healthy criticism from being heard across various analytic/non-analytic divides. It is to be hoped that metaphysicians who think of analytic philosophy as fundamentally hostile to metaphysics will discover that the classic, substantive questions of their subject are high on the analytic agenda once again—indeed, that they have been quite high on the agenda for well over half of analytic philosophy's history, including its earliest chapters. And it is also to be hoped that metaphysicians in analytic circles will be open to the best contemporary work originating within metaphysical traditions too long alienated from analytic philosophy—e.g., neo-Thomism, neo-Platonism, process philosophy, personalism, idealism.

Eventually, perhaps even before *Oxford Studies in Metaphysics* has gone the way of all publishing ventures, the label "analytic" will have

ceased to seem useful to any of us—whether as badge of honor or term of abuse. Of course the disappearance of the already fuzzy boundary between analytic philosophy and other traditions should not be expected to usher in an idyllic era of philosophical agreement! But it might well mark the beginning of a period when the genuine differences and affinities among philosophical movements are easier to see than they are at present.¹⁰

¹⁰ I am grateful to Tamar Gendler and Alvin Plantinga for many helpful comments and suggestions.