

# Controversies and the Metaphysics of Mind

Yaron M. Senderowicz

Tel Aviv University

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# Table of contents

<b>Acknowledgments</b>	<b>XI</b>
<b>Introduction</b>	<b>1</b>
1. Introduction	1
2. Rediscovering old truths in a new idiom	3
3. Metaphysics and metaphysical controversies	5
4. The Kantian approach to the problem	6
5. Metaphysical controversies and relevant alternatives	8
6. The structure of the book	11
<b>PART ONE. Outline of a theory of metaphysical controversies</b>	
<b>CHAPTER 1</b>	
<b>The Kantian framework</b>	<b>17</b>
1. Introduction	17
2. Metaphysics and Kant's image of science	19
3. The required revisions	20
4. The modified framework	22
5. The first antinomy: The explicit argument	27
6. The first antinomy: The implicit argument	29
<b>CHAPTER 2</b>	
<b>The idea of controversy and metaphysics</b>	<b>35</b>
1. The limits of Kant's theory	35
2. The nature of controversies as polemical dialogues	37
3. Presumptions and the burden of proof	40
4. Radically opposed views and chains of controversies	45
5. The addressee	50
6. Persuasion and the rational support of reasons	51
7. Epistemic function	52

CHAPTER 3

**Intuitions, thought experiments, and controversies** 59

1. Introduction 59
2. Intuitions and beliefs 60
3. The fallibility of intuitions 63
4. The emendation of intuitions 64
5. Intuitions and the role of imagined ideal cases 66
6. Objectual imagining, propositional imagining, and imagining ideal cases 69
7. Imagined ideal cases and perception 70
8. Logical matters and “matters of fact” 72
9. Types of responses to conflicts of intuitions 74
10. Controversial relevant alternatives 75
11. Conclusion 77

**PART TWO. The knowledge argument**

CHAPTER 4

**The polemical character of the knowledge arguments** 81

1. Introduction 81
2. Kripke’s modal argument for dualism as a polemical argument 82
3. Nagel’s argument 88
4. Jackson’s knowledge argument as a polemical argument 91

CHAPTER 5

**The antinomies of consciousness and their resolutions: Phenomenal concepts, representationalism, and two-dimensional semantics** 97

1. Churchland’s response to the knowledge argument 97
2. Jackson’s response to Churchland 100
3. The causal efficacy of conscious qualitative states 103
4. The paradox of phenomenal consciousness 107
5. The phenomenal concepts strategy 109
6. Tye’s PANIC account of phenomenal consciousness 114
7. The knowledge argument and two-dimensional semantics 116
8. Mind and illusions 122

CHAPTER 6

**A priori knowledge and the explanatory gap** 125

1. Introduction 125
2. Levine’s argument 126

3.	Jackson: Serious metaphysics and conceptual analysis	131
3.1	Entry by entailment	131
3.2	Conceptual analysis	133
4.	Chalmers: Supervenience and scientific explanations	138
5.	Block & Stalnaker's attack	140
5.1	The arguments against the epistemic version	141
5.2	The apriority of reductive explanations and uniqueness	143
5.3	The explanatory gap and two-dimensional semantics	146
6.	Chalmers & Jackson's response	149
7.	Chalmers's two-dimensionalism refined	153
8.	Conclusion	158

### **PART THREE. Personal identity and revisionary metaphysics**

#### CHAPTER 7

#### **Personal identity, self-consciousness, and bodily identity** 161

1. Introduction 161
2. Strawson's *Individuals* 163
3. Williams: Personal identity and individuation 169
4. Shoemaker: *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity* 173

#### CHAPTER 8

#### **From transcendental arguments to revisionary metaphysics** 181

1. Wiggins: Relative identity and personhood 181
2. Shoemaker: Quasi-memory and revisionary metaphysics 187
  - 2.1 Wiggins on identity 188
  - 2.2 Persons and their pasts 190

#### CHAPTER 9

#### **Neo-Lockeanism, reductionism, and animalism: The emergence of a new debate** 197

1. Introduction 197
2. Self-identity and self-concern 199
3. Parfit and "what matters" 202
4. Perry; identity and "what matters" 205
5. Wiggins's animalism 211
6. Conclusion 218

**Conclusion** 221

**References** 225

**Index** 233

# Introduction

## 1. Introduction

Metaphysics is an ancient discipline. In the first half of the 20th century, many philosophers considered it an outmoded discipline. Overcoming metaphysics is a theme expressed in different ways by logical positivists as well as by ordinary language philosophers such as Wittgenstein, Ryle, Austin, and their followers. Yet, in the second half of the 20th century, metaphysics was revived in various branches of analytic philosophy and, in particular, in the philosophy of mind. As is well-known, the logical positivists' anti-metaphysical stance resulted from their attempt to provide an account of *meaning* that, in their view, was faithful to the methods and practice of the empirical and exact sciences. Philosophy had to provide criteria of demarcation that could distinguish between "real" science and "pseudoscience," that is, between science and metaphysics. Interestingly, the philosophers who revived metaphysics at least partly share the logical positivists' view regarding what the tasks of philosophy were. Many of them, who happily accept the title of 'metaphysician' today, especially philosophers of mind, locate metaphysics in the epistemic space that includes the empirical and exact sciences, even if they seem to believe that metaphysics is a discipline that has its own subject matter, or at least its own mode of approaching it. Moreover, these rather surprising relations between science and metaphysics are in many cases the subject of disputes between metaphysicians – philosophers who combine in their philosophical reflections both metaphysical contentions and information derived from scientific theories – and those philosophers who deny that this approach to philosophy is sound.

The reunification of science and metaphysics in one of the most influential branches of analytic philosophy deserves to be understood. What makes this reunification possible? Is metaphysics distinct from the empirical sciences, and in what ways? How is it possible to integrate metaphysical contentions with scientific knowledge? These questions are rarely asked by contemporary metaphysicians. The reunification is usually seen as a reasonable step in the development of analytic philosophy. Quine's (1953) attack on the analytic-synthetic distinction and the verificationist criterion of meaning is often pointed out as a significant step towards combining metaphysical reflections and empirical inquiries. By

undermining the basis for the criteria of demarcation, Quine's arguments seem to facilitate the reunion. Yet the same logical and epistemic ideas led some philosophers to question not only the adequacy of metaphysics, but of philosophy as a whole.<sup>1</sup> Moreover, according to the philosophers who practice metaphysics, the rehabilitation of metaphysics was required partly due to what they regarded as the demands of an adequate semantics for natural languages, which involved reinstating the traditional modal distinctions between the necessary and the possible. Some of these philosophers, most notably Jackson (1998) and Chalmers (1996), reinstate the a priori/a posteriori distinction. Needless to say, the distinction between necessity and contingency, and that between a priori knowledge and a posteriori knowledge were also within the scope of concepts attacked by Quine.

A rational discipline that blurs the boundaries between metaphysics and the empirical sciences is bound to be puzzling. By addressing issues such as the mind-body problem, personal identity, the nature of mental representations, and similar topics, its domain of study seems to overlap with that of the relevant empirical sciences. By involving conceptual considerations or modal considerations, metaphysics seemed to be closer to logic and mathematics. But "matters of fact" and conceptual subject matter seem to be mixed together in the contentions that articulate metaphysical intuitions and in the reasons that support their acceptance.<sup>2</sup> As is clear to anyone practicing metaphysics, the reasons that support the acceptance of metaphysical contentions, say, the claim that phenomenal properties are not physical properties, or that persons are basic particulars, are not *empirical* reasons in the ordinary sense. Similarly, the arguments that introduce the supporting reasons, although they apparently involve modal, conceptual, and logical considerations, are not of the same type of arguments as those used in the exact sciences. In other words, the reunion of metaphysics and the sciences is indeed a puzzling phenomenon.

My intention in the present book is to fulfill one part of the complex task of describing the nature of the relations between science and metaphysics in

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1. See in particular Rorty (1980).

2. For example, according to Stalnaker (2001: 635–636): "Metaphysical disputes are of course always disputes about the natures of things – disputes where questions about what the world is like interact with questions about what we are saying when we say what the world is like. The positivists famously argued that metaphysics as an enterprise is founded on equivocation between semantic and factual questions – between questions that call for a decision about how to talk and questions to be answered by science or mathematics. If we are clear and avoid equivocation, they argued, metaphysics will go away. But if there is no general and absolutely neutral way to distinguish the semantic from the substantive questions, it may not be so easy to dispense with metaphysics."

contemporary philosophy. I will attempt to clarify the nature of metaphysical controversies and their significance to the rational nature of the metaphysics of mind.

## 2. Rediscovering old truths in a new idiom

In the introduction to *Individuals* (1959), a landmark in the revival of metaphysics in analytic philosophy, Peter Strawson presented the following clarification of the significance and goals of what he called ‘descriptive metaphysics:’

The idea of descriptive metaphysics is liable to be met with skepticism. How should it differ from what is called philosophical, or logical, or conceptual analysis? It does not differ in kind of intention, but only in scope and generality. Aiming to lay bare the most general features of our conceptual structure, it can take far less for granted than a more limited and partial conceptual inquiry. Hence, also, a certain difference in method. Up to a point, the reliance upon a close examination of the actual use of words is the best, and indeed the only sure, way in philosophy. But the discriminations we can make, and the connections we can establish, in this way, are not general enough and not far-reaching enough to meet the full metaphysical demand for understanding. For when we ask how we use this or that expression, our answers, however revealing at a certain level, are apt to assume, and not to expose, those general elements of structure which the metaphysician wants revealed. The structure he seeks does not readily display itself on the surface of language, but lies submerged. He must abandon his only sure guide when the guide cannot take him as far as he wishes to go. (1959: 9–10)

The task of descriptive metaphysics is to reveal the structures that ground the basic features of understanding and meaning. One can “take for granted” that one knows only part of what this conceptual structure involves. Reliance upon the actual use of words “is the best, and indeed the only sure, way in philosophy” (ibid.) only up to a certain point. For “the discriminations we can make, and the connection we can establish...are not far reaching enough to meet the full metaphysical demand for understanding.”(ibid.) Descriptive metaphysics does not differ “in kind or intention” from philosophical, logical, or conceptual analysis but only in “scope and generality.” Nevertheless, there is a certain “difference in method.”

According to Strawson, concepts – at least some of them – are susceptible to change. But it is erroneous to suppose that metaphysics is “an instrument of conceptual change:”

For there is a massive central core of human thinking which has no history – or none recorded in histories of thought; there are categories and concepts which, in their most fundamental character, change not at all. Obviously these are not the specialties of the most refined thinking. They are the commonplaces of

the least refined thinking; and are yet the indispensable core of the conceptual equipment of the most sophisticated human beings. It is with these, their interconnections, and the structure that they form, that a descriptive metaphysics will be primarily concerned. (1959: 10)

The metaphysician does not attempt to improve or revolutionize human thought and human language but rather to reveal the “commonplaces of the least refined thinking.” Strawson believes that it is unlikely that the metaphysician will be able to discover “new truths.” Nevertheless, the recovery of the “core of human thinking” is not a task that accomplishes once and for all what the metaphysician aims to realize:

It has constantly to be done over again. If there are no new truths to be discovered, there are old truths to be rediscovered. For though the central subject-matter of descriptive metaphysics does not change, the critical and analytical idiom of philosophy changes constantly. Permanent relationships are described in an impermanent idiom, which reflects both the age’s climate of thought and the individual philosopher’s personal style of thinking. No philosopher understands his predecessors until he has re-thought their thought in his own contemporary terms... (1959: 10–11)

This oscillation between rediscovering the “central core of human thinking which has no history” and expressing it in “the new critical and analytic idiom that changes constantly” is both significant and puzzling. What is the method by means of which the central metaphysical core of human thinking is revealed? And what could be the basis for the assumption of the a-historical character of the metaphysical core of human language and thought, given that uncovering it “has constantly to be done over again,” since “permanent relationships are described in an impermanent idiom”? It could be assumed that the method Strawson has in mind is the method he used in his own investigations – a conceptual analysis that goes beyond the actual use of words, assisted also by philosophical thought experiments. The object of metaphysical inquiries – the conceptual structure that metaphysics aspires to reveal – is apparently not a historical entity. But metaphysical investigations are guided by the inquiries of previous philosophers. The descriptive metaphysician has to “*rethink* their thoughts in his own contemporary terms.”

It should be noted, however, that ‘rethinking’ for Strawson is not equivalent to ‘interpreting others.’ ‘Rethinking’ apparently means to address the same conceptual structure that one’s predecessors aimed to reveal. Nevertheless, ‘rethinking’ cannot be severed from ‘interpreting others’, if the core idea that underlies the metaphysical endeavor at least includes rediscovering old truths in a new idiom. “No philosopher understands his predecessors until he has re-thought their thought in his own contemporary terms.”(ibid.) Yet, no philosopher can understand his predecessors without interpreting them. The question that naturally arises in this context is whether “rethinking” the “massive central core of human thinking which has no



history” guided by interpreting one’s predecessors and one’s own contemporaries does indeed involve no novel *components of content*, as suggested by Strawson.

### 3. Metaphysics and metaphysical controversies

Strawson’s approach to the practice and goals of metaphysics is not the only approach to metaphysics, but it does seem to express some widely accepted ideas. There is, however, one feature about which Strawson and those who share his views say almost nothing. The idea that in practicing metaphysics one aims to uncover the conceptual structure that has to be rediscovered again and again seems to imply either that there is *general agreement* regarding the content of this conceptual structure, or that there is a *method* available to all thinking beings by which it is possible to achieve general agreement. Needless to say, nothing is more remote from the present state of metaphysics. Nor can we say that this is a proper depiction of metaphysics in the past. There is not even one metaphysical issue on which there is *general agreement*. The disputed issues include the questions regarding the nature of truth, the nature of time, the existence of abstract entities, the nature of causality, of events and propositions, the nature of mental states and of the qualitative features of conscious mental states, the grounds that constitute personal identity, the fundamental concepts of existence and being, of the possible and the actual, and other metaphysical issues. Although metaphysicians appear to directly approach their subject matter from the depth of their own reflective capacities, in many cases, they are unable to argue for their views *without arguing against a rival position*. In other words, the past and present discourse of metaphysics is fraught with controversies. Understanding the nature of metaphysics cannot be disconnected from understanding the nature of metaphysical controversies and their significance to the rational and epistemic character of metaphysics.

The fact that controversies are prevalent in metaphysics raises the question of whether there can be any progress in it. Indeed, it is not easy to comprehend the nature and possibility of progress in metaphysics. There are, however, some examples of significant changes in metaphysics that could be clues for understanding its nature. For example, in 1982, Frank Jackson, an eminent metaphysician, published “Epiphenomenal qualia,” in which he first presented the knowledge argument – the argument that aspired to establish the epiphenomenal character of qualia. Jackson’s argument was discussed and debated extensively. However, almost twenty years later, Jackson abandoned his earlier position.<sup>3</sup> His new theory combines features related to a position labeled ‘representationalism’, together

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3. See in particular his paper “Mind and illusion” (2004).

with Lewis's (1983b, 1988) and Namirow's (1980) ability hypothesis. As Jackson's arguments (which will be discussed in Part Two) clarify, his revision of his position did not result from a blind leap of faith. As the extensive literature on the knowledge argument indicates, it would be equally mistaken to suppose that Jackson and those that followed him simply missed some good reasons that were already apparent in 1982. To be sure, these reasons were not beyond the reach of human understanding, and yet, at the time Jackson's paper was published, they were not explicitly articulated by anyone in a way that *clarifies their relevance* to the problem at hand. These reasons only became available by virtue of painstaking and creative philosophical labor. It is widely agreed, I would assume, that Tye's (1995, 2000) arguments for representationalism, Lewis's (1983b, 1988) and Namirow's (1980) arguments for the ability hypothesis, and Jackson's (2004) arguments in his recent reappraisal of his earlier view are all novel philosophical contributions, *even if* one might disagree with what these theories assert.

A close scrutiny of the development of the literature reveals two facts that need to be stated if one wishes to provide an account of the *rational change* that took place between these periods. Firstly, although the progress of the relevant empirical sciences formed a significant layer of the background knowledge that allowed these changes, the change itself was not generated by means of the discovery of new *empirical evidence* in psychology, neuroscience, or any other branch of empirical science. The arguments and counterarguments for and against the intended results of the knowledge argument and the philosophical method by which it is carried out do not directly involve the data contributed by the relevant empirical sciences. Rather, they involve puzzles that seem to go beyond what allows empirical warrant. These conceptual puzzles concern the nature of our modal concepts, meaning, conceptual analysis, scientific explanations, and scientific reduction. Secondly, the arguments that aim to warrant each of the respective competing positions are not merely based on conceptual analysis. *They inherently involve criticism and denunciation of competing positions.* As I hope to convince the reader, these two facts are connected to the nature of progress and changes in this field. One of my main claims here will be that the dialectical character of the metaphysical contentions can play a significant role in the reassessment of the rational nature of metaphysics, and the way in which metaphysics – together with the empirical and exact sciences – forms one unified body of knowledge.

#### 4. The Kantian approach to the problem

The claim that the pervasiveness of metaphysical controversies may serve as a clue to the discovery of the rational character of metaphysics is not novel in the

modern history of metaphysics. One of Kant's main goals in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and in related writings was to reveal the connection between metaphysical controversies and the rational and epistemic characteristics of this discipline. In Kant's view, the prevalence of metaphysical controversies raises the question of *whether it is possible for metaphysics to be a science*. As is well-known, Kant believed that metaphysics, if it is possible, is a synthetic a priori science. As clarified by the arguments included in the "Dialectic of Pure Reason," when one attempts to make objective judgments merely on the basis of the conceptual resources of pure reason, one is bound to be entangled in unresolved conflicts. Pure synthetic a priori judgments are possible only within the limits of *possible experience*. But Kant's critique of metaphysics does not end with this contention. Its most interesting feature probably consists in the explanation of the role of pure reason in experience. In Kant's view, a transcendental use of the ideas of pure reason and the concepts of the understanding, which transgresses the limits of possible experience, is unavoidable. This type of use leads to transcendental illusions that are rooted in our rational capacities. Although these illusions are unavoidable, they can be cured by means of a critique that assigns the proper role to each representation. As Kant's arguments clarify, his transcendental idealism – the ontological position developed throughout his critical writings – is necessarily required for any possible resolution of the conflicts within reason. Though they generate transcendental illusions, the ideas of pure reason – the concepts of objects of reason (objects that we cannot know) – are not "mere figments of the brain." (CPR B 371) Pure reason has a necessary but regulative role in the gappy continuum of objective knowledge due to the demand for a total and all-inclusive explanation of observed phenomena. Without using the concepts of reason, the *experience* of objects qua rule-governed enterprise would not be possible. And yet, the role of the concepts of reason differs from the role of pure and empirical intuitions as well as from the role of the pure and empirical concepts of the understanding.

In examining the connection between metaphysical controversies and the rational character of metaphysics, my approach to the role of controversies in metaphysics is inspired by Kant's theory. Following Kant, I believe that the fact that metaphysical controversies are no less prevalent today than in Kant's time is important in order to reveal the rational nature of metaphysics. However, I distinguish between Kant's explicit position regarding the role and nature of metaphysical controversies and his implicit position, which is revealed by the arguments that can be reconstructed from his writings. One type of argument that will be examined in the present book is connected to Kant's antinomies and the solution he offers for them. An antinomy consists of two conflicting contentions, each of

which can be traced to a plausible metaphysical intuition.<sup>4</sup> The arguments that support each of the conflicting contentions inherently involve the refutation of the opposed contention. Kant's account of the antinomies uncovers the conflicts and their rational sources. But it also includes an argument for transcendental idealism. Kant justifies the acceptance of his novel ontological position also by claiming that a resolution of the antinomies is possible on the basis of his transcendental idealism. Interestingly, Kant does not present this argument as a *metaphysical argument*. Rather, he places it outside his discussion of the nature and possibility of metaphysics. Yet my claim is that the overall argument that begins by revealing the antinomies and then proceeds by arguing for a novel metaphysical position exemplifies a significant type of argument that is widely used in current metaphysics. This type of argument will be explored throughout this book.<sup>5</sup>

## 5. Metaphysical controversies and relevant alternatives

One of the main concepts that I coin in this book in order to clarify the nature of progress in metaphysics is the concept of a *controversial relevant alternative*. I suggest that establishing a position as a relevant alternative is the type of epistemic achievement that best fits the actual way in which 'progress' is grasped by metaphysicians. Recognizing a position as a relevant alternative does not entail maintaining that the position is true. Rather, it usually means that the position is recognized as a plausible competitor in the field, that is, as a position supported by persuasive arguments. In addition, it means that any attempt to establish a position

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4. In the present context, by metaphysical intuition I do not mean intuition in Kant's technical sense, but rather 'intuition' in the sense that is prevalent in the current metaphysical discourse. See, for example, Jackson (1998). I discuss this concept in Chapter 3.

5. Why didn't Kant explicitly discuss the features of the overall argument that he himself used in his critical writings? I do not wish to engage in speculative exegesis regarding his underlying intentions. Let us merely note that viewing the implicit argument as a metaphysical argument would have placed Kant's theory within the dialectical process and not outside it. Kant believed that the antinomies of pure reason originate from a-temporal, abstract structures of pure reason. He believed that reason itself could not be dialectical in its deepest level. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, he wanted to end the conflicts of reasons, that is, to bring reason to the state of "eternal peace". Placing himself within the dialectical process apparently conflicts with this goal. Needless to say, metaphysical and ontological controversies did not end after the publication of Kant's critical writings. Already in his lifetime, his own metaphysics and ontology were furiously debated. Yet, philosophers who refused to accept Kant's novel ontology were nevertheless *motivated by his arguments* to develop their own positions. Kant's arguments persuaded them to consider his theory as a *relevant alternative* to their own theories even though it was unacceptable to them.

that competes with the relevant alternative *has to address* the reasons involved in the arguments that support the relevant alternative. A position is established as a relevant alternative not merely by virtue of its characteristic contentions, but rather by virtue of the arguments that support it. These arguments also usually aim to clarify why, given the shared background of the competing positions, the position is *more plausible than its competitors*. In other words, the arguments that establish positions as relevant alternatives are inherently *dialectical arguments*. I will discuss the concept of a relevant alternative in Chapter 3.<sup>6</sup>

I suggest that the following steps form a structure which clarifies the rational role of controversies in the epistemic changes in metaphysics:

- a. A metaphysical controversy emerges. The controversy has the following features: (1) proponents of each of the conflicting positions persuasively argue for contentions that articulate metaphysical intuitions emphasized by the position that they support; (2) the arguments that support each of the conflicting contentions inherently *involve reasons that apparently refute the contentions supported by proponents of the competing position*; and (3) given the state of knowledge within which the controversy emerges, it is not possible to rationally resolve the conflict *by favoring one of the positions involved*.
- b. Philosophers (the contenders themselves or other philosophers) present arguments that attempt to resolve the controversy by including various types of conceptual innovations. These arguments and the reasons used are motivated by the *paradox* or the *aporia* revealed by the controversy. The attempts to resolve the conflict either reinforce one of the old positions (by presenting a new version of it), or introduce new positions. The successful resolutions of the conflict, which are widely recognized as persuasive, establish (or reestablish) positions as relevant alternatives to existing positions.
- c. A new controversy emerges which involves the relevant alternatives that are introduced in stage (b) above.

Kant's implicit argument in "The Antinomy of Pure Reason" is a metaphysical argument that has the features of stages (a)–(b). However, his argument generated several metaphysical controversies in which he himself was involved either directly or indirectly, in conformity with stage (c).<sup>7</sup>

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6. Clearly, a theory could also be considered important enough to require a response because one believes that it is bound to have "a bad influence," or that it contains mistakes that are bound to tempt one to stride in hopeless routes of thought. But this is not the only possible response to a relevant alternative. The more interesting response *inherently involves genuine metaphysical innovations*.

7. On this subject, see Allison (1973); Beiser (1987); Saner (1973); and Senderowicz (1998).

Probably not all metaphysical controversies have the above structure. Nevertheless, as I hope to show in Parts Two and Three of this book, the above structure can be discerned in some of the most interesting and stimulating controversies in contemporary metaphysics of mind.

It might be argued that this structure is in fact a Hegelian dialectic in disguise. But this supposition is mistaken. Specifically, controversies that reach antinomic states do *not impose their resolution, and in particular, they allow for more than one resolution*. Controversies that reach an antinomic state may *motivate* attempts to resolve them. These attempts may share the recognition of the controversy's underlying antinomic state and the fact that each position involved is a relevant alternative. But even this is not a necessary feature of metaphysical controversies. Normally, there are varied and conflicting ways of responding to a metaphysical controversy that, among other things, depend on the way the controversy is interpreted, and (if it is interpreted as an antinomy) on how the antinomy is interpreted.

One of the interesting results of the theory developed in this book is that progress in metaphysics cannot be represented as a change from stages in which some conflicting *positions* are discernable to new stages in which novel *positions* supersede the former positions. *The arguments that establish the acceptance of controversial relevant alternatives seem to be much more significant to the development of metaphysics*. As noted above, a position is recognized as a relevant alternative not merely by virtue of *the contentions* that characterize it. Analytic philosophers in the 1940s and 1950s regarded Cartesianism, for example, as relevant to philosophical theories of the mind merely as the straw man that served to point out what was wrong with earlier theories. They *did not* view it as posing a challenge that raised intriguing puzzles conceived *as relevant to the tasks* the theories themselves were meant to accomplish. But Cartesianism reemerged as a powerful and intriguing relevant alternative to physicalist theories of the mind in the 1970s and 1980s. To be sure, this did not happen by virtue of Descartes's original arguments. It became a relevant alternative to the contemporaneous positions by virtue of original arguments presented by some of the finest philosophers in the last four decades, some of which will be explored in Part Two of this book. The historical fate of Cartesianism or of Aristotelianism is a clear indication of the fact that positions *need not be eliminated* from metaphysical discourse when a competing alternative is recognized by most experts as a position that has *better rational support*. In contrast to the nature of scientific theories in the empirical and exact sciences, metaphysical positions may reappear time and again, not merely due to blind leaps of faith but because of reasons introduced by arguments that establish these particular metaphysical positions as relevant alternatives to the existing positions in particular discursive contexts. This inordinate

history of appearance and reappearance of metaphysical positions has a rational character that at least partly consists in the polemical arguments that reintroduce them qua relevant alternatives. In other words, the intellectual history of the metaphysics of mind should not merely be depicted as a history of positions replaced by opposite positions, but rather, at least partly, *as a history of their status as relevant alternatives*. This history is constituted by dialectical arguments that establish certain positions as relevant alternatives at a given historical period and that undermine their power as such at latter times.

## 6. The structure of the book

The book is divided into three parts. In the three chapters of Part One, I will present a theoretical framework that clarifies the rational and epistemic role of controversies in metaphysics. The framework consists of a modified Kantian account of metaphysics combined with issues pertaining to the pragmatics of controversies.

In Chapter 1, I will develop a modified Kantian account of ampliative arguments in metaphysics. I will begin by pointing out the intricate features of Kant's image of science and the place of metaphysics within it. I will then analyze Kant's explicit argument in the "The Antinomy of Pure Reason, First Conflict of the Transcendental Ideas" and what I consider to be his implicit argument.

Kant's explicit and implicit views regarding the rational and epistemic role of metaphysical controversies in metaphysics leave out the features of real polemics. In Chapter 2, I will present some themes of the pragmatics of controversies that are relevant to controversies in the metaphysics of mind. I will analyze the features of the central dialectical argument – which derives from Kant's notion of antinomy – which will be examined throughout the book.

In Chapter 3, I will discuss the role of metaphysical intuitions, and of conflicting metaphysical intuitions in metaphysical controversies and in metaphysics. Given the fundamental role of the appeal to intuitions, the idea of conflicting intuitions seems to jeopardize metaphysics by opening it up to the hazards of ontological and metaphysical relativism. In this chapter, I will suggest a way out by distinguishing between shared rational intuitions and cognitive dispositions that vary with the cognitive differences between individuals. I will clarify the sense in which conflicting responses to possibilities are motivated by the *incomplete and indeterminate character* of our concepts as expressed in language. I will address the role of the unique type of thought experiments involved in metaphysical inquiries, and will discuss one of the distinctive features of metaphysical intuitions, that is, *the merging of "matters of fact" and logical matter*. In the final

section of this chapter, I will discuss the concept ‘relevant alternative’ which underlies my account of progress in the metaphysics of mind.

In Parts Two and Three, I will apply the theory developed in Part One to two examples of chains of controversies in current philosophy of mind. In Part Two, I will interpret a chain of controversies regarding the nature of consciousness that are motivated by Nagel’s and Jackson’s knowledge arguments and by Kripke’s modal argument. The epistemic changes related to this chain of controversies exemplify *the strategy of descriptive metaphysics*.<sup>8</sup> In Chapter 4, I will interpret Kripke’s modal argument and Jackson’s knowledge argument as dialectical arguments of the type discussed in Chapter 2. In Chapter 5, I will address some of the polemical exchanges that refer to Jackson’s argument and to Kripke’s argument. These exchanges *motivated* interpreting these controversies *as expressing antinomies* (in the sense discussed in the first three chapters). The resolutions of these antinomies generated other controversies that widened the scope of topics addressed and added issues pertaining to logic and modality, scientific explanation, and related issues. These implications of the knowledge arguments and Kripke’s modal argument will be discussed in Chapter 6 where I will address the debates on the explanatory gap, on two-dimensional semantics, and on the concept of scientific explanation that evolved from the debates on the nature of consciousness.

In Part Three, I will examine another chain of controversies related to the question of the connection between personal identity, self-consciousness, and bodily-continuity. I suggest that the epistemic changes motivated by these polemical exchanges constitute a *revisionist approach* to metaphysics, which differs from the descriptive approach. The debates to be addressed have motivated novel types of accounts of personal identity that transformed the questions addressed by metaphysicians. Whereas the early debates were between adherents of accounts of personal identity based on criteria of bodily-continuity (Williams), those that based such accounts on criteria of psychological continuity (Lockeans), and those that viewed persons as basic particulars (Strawson), the current debate is between the neo-Lockeans (whose views differ significantly from their predecessors’ views), reductionists (Parfit and his followers), and animalists (Wiggins, McDowell, Olson, and others).

In Chapter 7, I will examine the positions of three philosophers who first started the debates on personal identity in analytic philosophy: Strawson, Williams, and Shoemaker. Particular attention will be given to Shoemaker’s

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8. In the sense to be used here, descriptive metaphysics consists in the attempt to resolve metaphysical conflicts by constructing concepts and theories assumed all along to be implicit in our ordinary conception; that is, making these concepts explicit is at least partly motivated by the relevant metaphysical controversies.



Brown-Brownson (body exchange) thought experiment, and the way in which it influenced the debates on personal identity and bodily continuity.

In Chapter 8, I will examine the exchange between Wiggins and Shoemaker on the identity of persons. I will show how Shoemaker's earlier position could be interpreted as involving the notion of 'relative identity' that is attacked by Wiggins, and how his revised account aims to avoid the commitment to relative identity. This criticism was one of the grounds that motivated Shoemaker's shift from quasi-transcendentalism to his neo-Lockean physicalist-functionalist account of the identity of persons. Shoemaker's novel account introduced the concept of 'quasi-memory' into the debate. This is a concept of a memory-like state the existence of which does not imply personal identity, and that therefore seems to make a non-circular definition of personal identity in terms of such states possible. This concept, the content of which apparently conflicts with our ordinary grasp of personal identity, had a significant role in setting a new agenda for the debates on personal identity. In Chapter 9, I will clarify how the new stage in this chain of debates evolved from the early stages. I will first examine Williams's puzzle of personal identity as presented in his paper "The Self and the Future." (1970). This puzzle has the features of the modified Kantian antinomy. I will proceed by interpreting Parfit's reductionist approach to persons and personal identity in "Personal Identity" (1971) as an attempt to resolve this puzzle. I will then show how Perry's (1972, 1975, 1976) and Lewis's (1976) neo-Lockean modifications of Shoemaker's definition of identity and of the continued existence of persons can be viewed as a polemical response, both to Shoemaker and to Parfit's arguments. I will conclude this chapter by examining Wiggins's arguments in Chapter 6 of the first edition of *Sameness and Substance*, which aim to clarify why his animalistic position should be preferred over the neo-Lockean position and the bodily-continuity position.

Taken together, I hope that the three parts of the book clarify the role of controversies in the metaphysics of mind.

Before I embark on the tasks set out in this introduction, may I add one last preliminary word. In this book, I have chosen to focus on controversies and the metaphysics of mind, and on a particular type of argument that is significant in facilitating an understanding of the significance of controversies in the metaphysics of mind. I wish to stress, however, that this by no means entails that controversies are significant only to the metaphysics of mind. I hope that what I will present in the following chapters will at least indicate how the type of analysis conducted here can be extended to other branches of metaphysics.