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# A very different kind of rule: Credal rules, argumentation and community

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# A very different kind of rule: Credal rules, argumentation and community

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**ABSTRACT:** In mainstream Anglo-American philosophy, the relation between cognition and community has been defined primarily in terms of the generalization of the mathematical function (Frege, Russell), especially as a model for the nature of rules (Wittgenstein and followers), which thus come to be understood as algorithms. This leads to the elimination of both the reflexive, synthesizing subject (for it is unnecessary to the algorithmic decision-making procedure installed in the rule), and the intrinsic communal-historical nature of argumentation and belief-formation.

Against this approach, I follow R.G. Collingwood's hitherto unrecognized strategy in his *Essay on Metaphysics* (1940) and argue that the relation of cognition and community is better understood by way of the ancient and forgotten model of credal rules of faith or trust. These will be shown to have the logical form of first person performative rules of faith or trust that generate third person declaratives or propositions, and so constitute the possibility conditions for an argumentational logic of question and answer. They restore the synthetic subject, for they are not algorithms but reflexive and interpretive formulae; they are communally constituted and so historically saturated; and they reinstate an ontological theory of truth as disclosure, with coherence and comprehensiveness as its criteria. In these respects, as Collingwood saw, the credal model provides a fresh interpretation of the historicity of argumentation and redefines the relation of cognition and community in terms of the interdependence of faith and reason.

**KEYWORDS:** rules, function, Collingwood, creeds, existence, subjects, change, realism, constructivism, truth, history

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The two fundamental questions, perhaps even the only fundamental questions, facing the typical modern Anglo-American philosopher are: How far can the mathematical-logical function be generalized, and what does its generalization imply?

Allow me to explain this claim.

## 2. THE GENERALIZATION OF THE FUNCTION AS A MODEL FOR RULES

For the last hundred years what is considered in Anglo-American culture to be philosophy proper takes its start from the moment that the Leibnizian Lambert defines a concept as a function (Cassirer 1923: 19-20). We all know the subsequent story: in the hands of Frege, Russell and the analytical tradition philosophy becomes the enterprise of generalizing the mathematical-logical function.

The fundamental idea is Frege's: to generalize the function beyond mathematics

and to use it as a model or analogue for the analysis of the logical structure of propositions. In a function such as  $fx = x^2$ , the variable or sign of the argument is  $x$ , whereas the full formula, function, or schema specifies a rule, 'is the number whose square is', by which to determine  $fx$ . Thus we might construct a variable sentence,  $f(x) = 4$ , which, given  $fx = x^2$ , is true if  $x = 2$  or  $-2$ , and false if otherwise. The function or schema explains what is going to be done; but nothing is done until something is put in the slot marked  $x$ , that is, until the variable or sign of the argument is given its value. Before that is done, the function, schema, or rule is, Frege says, 'incomplete' or 'unsatisfied' or 'unsaturated'. When the variable is given its value, the function is 'complete', 'satisfied', or 'saturated', producing a determinate sign.

Frege's analysis of propositions follows the structure of the mathematical function. The subject in subject-predicate propositions has the status of the variable, while the predicate has the status of the function-schema. This analysis gives rise to the so-called modern predicate. Subject-predicate sentences such as 'Socrates is human' are not to be analyzed in the triadic fashion of traditional logic as Subject: Socrates, Copula: is, Predicate: human. Rather, such sentences are to be analyzed as having the structure: Subject: Socrates, Modern Predicate: is human. Even a one-place predicate such as '... is human' is elucidated in terms of the dyadic relation ' $x$  is a member of  $y$ ', symbolized as  $xEy$ , which is the mathematical counterpart of the relation ' $x$  has (as one of its properties)  $y$ '. Propositions, in short, are to be analyzed in terms of the binary structure of the function.

This approach to the nature of propositions is thus called 'logical analysis'. R.G. Collingwood was I think the first to call the movement that prosecuted this strategy 'analytical philosophy', and the name has stuck (Collingwood 1933: ix). So great are the advantages offered by the functional analysis of propositions in the field of logic, there can be little doubt that Frege's work is revolutionary, as Whitehead and Russell were among the first to recognize. What are less clearly recognized—because usually taken for granted without comment—are the radical metaphysical consequences that flowed from the subsequent, unrestricted generalization of the function across all major areas of experience.<sup>1</sup>

First, consider what happens to the analysis of existence statements. The basic point is that propositions can be hierarchically ordered according to the range of the values of the variables of their arguments. First-order predicates are those whose arguments are the values of first-order variables, that is, individual objects. So individuals, it is worth noting, are here taken as logically primitive. Second-order predicates are those whose arguments are not individual objects but first-order predicates. For example, given the proposition

Jeff is a swimmer

two distinct modes of abstraction are available: (i) one could abstract on the singular, or individual term "Jeff" to obtain the first order predicate

$x$  is a swimmer

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<sup>1</sup> For a geopolitical account of the rise to dominance of analytical philosophy in the Anglo-American world, placing it in the context of the Cold War, see Mirowski (2004: 298-311).

whereas one could abstract on the common, or universal term “swimmer” to obtain the second order predicate

Jeff is an  $F$

So we can quantify in two different ways:

(i) There is an  $x$  such that  $x$  is a swimmer

or

(ii) There is a property  $F$  such that Jeff is  $F$

Any statement with a bound variable occupying the place of the predicate is said to be second order, that is, (i) is a sentence of first-order logic, whereas (ii) is a sentence of second-order logic.

Now, existence statements are first-order statements which are prefixed with an existential quantifier of the form 'there is...', or 'something is...'. Frege's claim is that statements with a leading first-order existential quantifier do not express the existence possessed by individual things, but rather say of a first-order predicate that it is instantiated.

On this analysis, existence is not a property possessed by an individual  $x$ , but rather the condition that a property be true of something, i.e., not be false of everything. Such statements say of a class or kind  $F$  that there are objects falling under it; or, to put it otherwise, they say about a certain kind of object that there are objects of that kind.

Existence is thus exhaustively definable as the satisfaction or instantiation of the quantified variables of the proposition. To exist is to answer a description. Whether one is talking about prime numbers or about concrete entities such as stones and people, statements of existence are defined in the same way: as saying that something satisfies a description. Existence is thereby drained of any features of its own outside of those defined by the schema of functional predicates. The schema alone determines the content of the logical subject of a proposition, so the existence of the logical subject is divested of any elements not imported by the modern predicate. Hence the existence of the logical subject is philosophically minimalized: in contrast to traditional metaphysical claims, it has no nature or activity of its own in virtue of which it is what it is. The existence of Socrates, for example, is not an opportunity for abstruse reflections on the nature of 'being' or activity, as in traditional metaphysics, but is nothing other than the substitution or instantiation of a variable. Thus the quantificational analysis of existence is not properly a *theory* of existence at all. Existence is simply removed from the realm of reflection and replaced by an analysis of the logical structure of propositions. It is not surprising that the development of analytic philosophy is marked by 'the linguistic turn' (Rorty 1967): the focus of interest shifts from questions about what it is to exist to questions about the nature of the meaning of propositions and what it is to make true or false assertions.

Secondly, consider what happens to cognition as a result of the generalization of the function. Whereas Kant held that the unity of judgment requires a cognitive activity of synthesis, after Bolzano and Frege it is held that the principle of the unity of judgments is meaning. You may object that, in order to grasp relations of meaning, the cognitive subject needs to engage in an activity of synthesis. But the logical analyst readily grants that, and at the same time makes a rigorous distinction between the act and the content of

judgments (Coffa 1991: Chapter 1). Subjective cognitive activity there is. Indeed, a cognitive act is required to grasp even analytic propositions such as 'All bachelors are unmarried' (which is of course Kant's real point). But the *content* of these as well as of synthetic propositions has nothing to do with cognitive activity: it is decided by the given relations of meaning. No subjective activity of synthesis is required to unify meanings; all the subject has to do is to follow their given relations. Once it is held that to understand a meaning is to be able to operate with it, and that a meaning itself constitutes a rule in the sense of a decision-making procedure, there is no need to appeal to a principle of connection or synthesis over and above the meaning itself. Kant is here hoisted with his own petard: having restricted activity to the cognitive subject, in contrast to traditional metaphysics, it now emerges that the activity of the cognitive subject is strictly a psychological feature of minds and has nothing to do with the objective order of meanings.

The crucial point here is that rules are understood or interpreted as decision-making procedures, as automatic recipes or algorithms. Nowhere is this more evident than in the later Wittgenstein's enormously influential extension of the model of the function—specifically, the first-order function—beyond cognition to all forms of linguistic and social practice and action. Just as following the rules of a game is what constitutes a game, so by following the rules of a language or social practice we constitute our world and ourselves. The Fregean dissolution of the cognitive, synthesizing subject is here extended to the realm of discourse and action, and goes hand-in-hand with the dissolution of the logical subject as a mind-, language-, or practice-independent reality. Both the world and human subjects or persons are thus nothing more than the effects of those functional structures that define their behavior. On this account, the possibility of any reflective relation to rules on the part of the cognitive subject is eliminated. Further, a radically nominalist account of rule-following is upheld: rules are simply a matter of “that’s how we do it” (Wittgenstein 1978: 199). As is well known, this has generated the enormous debate which swirls about rule-skepticism, something that is an issue only for nominalists.

Another example of the massive influence of the algorithmic account of rules is to be found in the philosophy of science. I refer to the early Thomas Kuhn's influential analysis of historical change in science, where ‘paradigm shifts’ from ‘normal’ to ‘revolutionary’ science are not rational or intelligible (Kuhn 1970). The reason for this is that Kuhn defines ‘normal science’ in terms of functions or algorithms, and there is no algorithm for historical change. The algorithmic model of rules here imposes a specific historiography.

So there you have it. As generally construed, the functional model of rules involves the following<sup>2</sup>: the elimination of existence as a subject of reflection; the elimination of the cognitive subject or agent, and thus of reflexivity; an extreme linguistic or pragmatic idealism, that is usually nominalistically constituted; and an account of historical change as non-rational, and perhaps irrational, irruptivism. With all the implications this has for our understanding of the nature and relation of argumentation and of community, it is surely time to consider an alternative model of rules, one much older and quite different from that algorithmic model which dominates Anglo-American philosophy as much as it does European structuralism and post-structuralism.

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<sup>2</sup> For a very different kind of generalization of the function, see A.N. Whitehead (1929); on which Bradley (2002: 253-71).

## 3. THE CREEDAL MODEL OF RULES

Here, I believe, lies the hitherto unrecognized greatness of R.G. Collingwood's *Essay on Metaphysics* (1940). Chapter XXI of that work bears the title "Quicunque Vult". This title is of course taken from the opening words of the Athanasian Creed, which is commonly known as the "Quicunque vult..." and is so referred to in the Book of Common Prayer. The full opening phrase is: "*Quicunque vult salvus esse, ante omnia opus est, ut teneat catholicam fidem...*"—"Whosoever will be saved must, above all, keep the Catholic faith..." This is part of the preamble that precedes the Creed's lengthy exposition of the doctrine of the Trinity, belief in which "Catholic faith" is expounded as necessary for salvation.

Now Collingwood holds that the Trinitarian Creed (as I will call it) is the "main or fundamental" (Collingwood 1940: 227) "absolute presupposition" of Western "science and civilization" (ibid.: 232), "a background that has remained unchanged" since the Patristic age (Collingwood, 1940: 227). And it is my contention that Collingwood's notion of absolute presuppositions takes creedal rules as its model. Creedal rules are offered as a universal model of rules, and thus as a model of the nature and relation of argumentation and community. There is of course no space to defend this interpretation of Collingwood's own text here (Bradley 2011). Instead, I will lay out the creedal model for your consideration.

A creed, in the primary meaning of the term, is a formal statement and explication (usually beginning 'I believe in...') of faith or trust in a body of fundamental theological rules that are held to be given or revealed to believers. As such, creeds are first person statements that are explicit performatives, not third person declaratives or propositions: to state them is to perform an act of trust in, and commitment to, the truth of the expressed statements, and involves taking those statements as rules for thought and action. In short, creedal rules, like all rules, are meaningful, but they are not propositions and they are not true or false. Rather, they are meaningful as the constitutive conditions that govern a given system of beliefs or practices.<sup>3</sup>

Equally, however, creeds are said to formulate revealed truths in the sense that rules of faith or trust (e.g., 'I believe in God') generate, or can have deduced from them, third person, rule-interpretive declaratives or propositions (e.g., 'I believe that there is God'). This relation can be stated in the form of a conditional: If you trust or have faith in rule *R*, then you believe (or ought to believe) that *p*. Because creedal rules in this way generate, or can have deduced from them, third person, interpretive declaratives or propositions, any two such rules may be contradictory or inconsistent. That is to say, rules *R* and *Q* are logically incompatible, when the following two conditionals are true: (i) If you trust or have faith in rule *R*, then you believe (or ought to believe) that *p*; (ii) If you trust or have faith in rule *Q*, then you believe (or ought to believe) that not-*p*. The interpretive declaratives or propositions thus generated by creedal rules have always been treated as such by those concerned with correctly formulating and understanding creedal rules, and

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<sup>3</sup> I should add here that creedal rules are not axioms, for while we may treat axioms as unprovable, we do not regard them as neither true nor false. Again, creedal rules are not conventions in any of the usual senses of the term. For while, as will emerge, creedal rules are in a significant sense agreed upon, they are neither arbitrary nor optional, as are conventions. As will also emerge, there are intelligible reasons for shifts in the nature of creedal rules, which is not always said to be the case with conventions. Unlike conventions, moreover, creedal rules are fundamental, or not further derivable, conditions of thought and practice, and they enjoy a real, albeit historically situated, universality. More will be said below on the relation of creedal rules to truth.

consequently have always been the subject of different cognitive or ‘propositional attitudes’ (asserting, questioning, supposing). Belief-‘in’-statements always generate belief-‘that’-propositions: rules can be valid or invalid, correct or incorrect, and, as noted, the validity of a group of rules depends on the logical compatibility or consistency of the third person, interpretive declaratives or propositions that those rules generate. Hence one of the main uses of creedal formulae is as a defense against heresies, which are invalid rules of faith.

Yet it remains the case that a first person performative rule of faith or trust, because it is *an act of faith or trust*, cannot in the nature of the case be reduced to a proposition or set of propositions, or to the relevant cognitive attitudes (Price 1969: 426-54). Indeed, it is supposed by their adherents that rules of faith and the revealed truths they are interpreted as generating could never have been reached by unaided human reason, and so are maintained to have developed non-deliberately: that is, they have unfolded or emerged out of the life and circumstances of the community of believers. This is what makes them historical in nature (cf. *EM*, p. 188).

The three main Christian creeds—the Apostles’, the Nicene and the Athanasian—are thus traditionally defined as embodying the ‘rule of faith’ (*regula fidei*), where *regula* or rule has its original meaning as that by which actions, statements or propositions are measured. As such, they have a hermeneutical function in the thinking and work of the believing community as both objects and instruments of interpretation. A creed is seen as stating a complex of doctrines, which together constitute the object of a unitary act of faith or trust. This complex has the character of a hierarchically ordered structure, in which some doctrines are the logically necessary presuppositions of others, so that belief in the Trinity presupposes belief in one God, and, in the same way, doctrines concerning God are more fundamental than those concerning the church. However, creedal doctrines cannot be deduced by logical necessity from one another, for they are held to be, not products of logical deduction or pure ratiocination, but the results of revelation that has occurred in the historical experience of the community of believers. Thus any doctrine constituent of a creed is, taken separately, an object of faith or trust.

#### 4. SOME FEATURES OF THE CREEDAL RULE MODEL

At least two or three of the consequences of taking creeds as models for rules are easy to see.

1. First, creedal rules of faith are not algorithms or recipes. For, as noted, a creedal rule of faith is a measure, standard or guide for thought and practice. As at once the object and instrument of right thought and practice, it is the condition of its own further development and elaboration, and it is the criterion for testing other forms of thought and practice. It is not, therefore, an automatic operation without any reflexive power, but a formula for theoretical and practical interpretation whose status as such depends upon the place it occupies in the hierarchy of such rules. On the creedal model, there is no opposition between rule-following and reflexivity: the cognitive, synthesizing subject plays a key role in the development and interpretation of creedal formulae out of the historical experience of the community.

2. Secondly, it hardly needs emphasizing that creedal rules, as such, cannot be interpreted in terms of any kind of extreme linguistic or pragmatic idealism. On the contrary, creedal rules entail ontological realism. For creedal rules are ontological commitments and claims: they are claims made about the nature of reality, in the sense of that which is mind-independent, or is so whether or not we think it to be so. Furthermore, in

my view (which is simply the standard view), creedal rules imply logical realism, in the sense that they are realist in respect of universals. In order fully to see the significance of these commitments, however, the nature of historical change in respect of creedal rules needs to be considered. Here I will freely draw on Collingwood's treatment of creedal-rule model of absolute presuppositions.

3. Collingwood claims that changes in absolute presuppositions, or rules understood on the creedal model, take place where various elements in a constellation of such rules are "logically incompatible" (Collingwood 1940: 331-32) and so give rise to "strains". In his words: "the absolute presuppositions of any given society, at any given phase of its history, form a structure which is subject to 'strains' of greater or less intensity, which are 'taken up' in various ways, but never annihilated" (ibid.: 48, note; cf. 73-74).

Though he says little else about rule-transformation, the important feature of Collingwood's treatment of strains is that he describes creedal rules in terms of the "consumpponible" (ibid.: 66, 331) and the "logically incompatible" (ibid.: 331). Two rules in a given constellation are consumpponible when they are performatives, or first person commitments that are "logically possible" to hold together (ibid.: 66), in the sense that there are no logical incompatibilities in the third person declaratives or propositions that they generate *which are evident those who believe them*. In other words, consumpponibility is an epistemic or cognitive condition that as such is not sufficient for logical compatibility.

The basic reason for this claim is that constellations of rules are neither brought nor held together by deductive connections alone, but by historical forces and correlative acts of interpretation of varying centrality and significance. Different kinds and degrees of strain thereby arise because of logical incompatibilities among the interpretive declaratives or propositions generated by, or deduced from, the constellation of rules that history puts together, and this is a universal and permanent characteristic of such constellations (ibid.: 48). Although the logical conflict that results in a strain is necessary, our knowledge of it is on the whole contingent. A strain exists in potential by virtue of purely logical relations, but, before a strain becomes actual, it takes someone to notice it in interpretive thought and action. Thus, when one rule in a constellation of absolute presuppositions or rules is identified as logically incompatible with another, this means, not that it is logically impossible for them to be consumpponible, but that it has subsequently emerged that they generate, or can have deduced from them, classes of third person, interpretive declaratives or propositions that are contradictory or inconsistent. Hence what was thought to be consumpponible emerges as "not consumpponible; or at any rate not consumpponible except under a pressure which must produce a somewhat violent strain in the resulting structure" (ibid.: 331-32).

In short, the consumpponibility of rules does not exclude logical incompatibility, for consumpponibility is an epistemic condition that is not sufficient for logical compatibility, whereas logical compatibility or incompatibility is a matter of the relations among the intrinsically variable classes of third person interpretive declaratives or metaphysical propositions generated by, or deducible from, a constellation of first person performative rules. Logical compatibility implies consumpponibility, but consumpponibility does not imply logical compatibility.



## 5. HISTORICAL CHANGE AND TRUTH

The account so far offered of historical change in respect of the creedal model of rules is, however, too formal and abstract: it does not take into account the relation of rule-change to truth, and thus does not address the nature or status of the relation of argumentation and community. It is clear enough what the truth-criteria for the assessment of rules are: namely, coherence and comprehensiveness. Coherence is a matter of the relations of logical compatibility among rules. Comprehensiveness is the measure of the relative adequacy or success of a constellation of rules in properly unfolding or developing its subject matter by way of the interpretive correlation of different rules in that constellation. Yet what is the relation of the strong ontological and logical realist claims made by creedal rules to the historical changes in formulation and interpretation that is so marked a feature of them? What is their truth-status? Bluntly: what is the relation between realism and constructivism?

In tackling this question, two things have to be kept in mind. First, implicit in what has been said about interpretation and change, is the view that, on the creedal model, rules are semantically vague: they are potentials for interpretation. For this reason, secondly, the standard linguistic view of truth is inadequate here: on the creedal model, truth is not exclusively or primarily to be understood as an epistemic relation of correspondence between propositions or linguistic structures and states of affairs, which relation is subject to the disjunction ‘true or false’. On the contrary, what the creedal model of rules implies is what R.J. Campbell calls the ontological theory of truth (Campbell 1992: 56). This theory of the nature of truth—in which the term ‘Truth’ is often capitalized to mark the difference from linguistic accounts – is fundamental to metaphysics from Plato to Peirce and Heidegger. On the ontological theory, truth is a state or relation of the real. Whether articulated in a platonic, scholastic, idealist or pragmatist framework, the real is understood to be an activity of disclosure or manifestation.

The central point here is that, after the rise of Christianity, the activity of disclosure or manifestation is held to occur in history and to be intrinsically a matter of the movement of history. This is, indeed, the distinctive feature of the Judaeo-Christian view of truth. Both on the Greek and the Judaeo-Christian view, truth is what endures and does not pass. Further, on both views the unity of truth guarantees the unity of experience. However, truth as Greek *aletheia* does not happen. Even though it is always connected to the relation of the speaker to the addressee, as in the Socratic dialogue form, truth is not something personal and is not an event. As Socrates always insists, he is a mere midwife, an impersonal conduit for that which is thoroughly impersonal: namely, that truth which is much more than an event because it is always identical with itself and is the reality that is hidden behind appearances, a reality that can be disclosed only by rational thought. In contrast, a key feature of the Judaeo-Christian view of truth is that truth is not a timeless state of affairs. It must occur, and it must be unfolded and realized again and again in new situations that shed fresh light on it. It is as such intrinsically connected to actions in time. As a result, truth is not a reality that lies behind appearances, but is something that emerges in history and is nothing other than its disclosure and realization in the movement of history. Truth and falsity are thus matters of degree, in the sense that they are historically context-relative.

From this perspective, the creedal model of rules has an obvious consequence: namely, because the real is to be found nowhere except in the movement of history, the movement of history is its unfolding and disclosure. The articulation of the real is a mat-

ter of the historically immanent and mutual critique of rules, a critique that is at once theoretical and practical, and as such is immersed in the contingent materiality of socio-economic and cultural development. As the movement of history itself, the real, with all its as yet indeterminate potentialities, is more than any of its specific historical manifestations. But the real is at least what the movement of history has shown it to be, and it is nothing less than that. History is thus not reducible to mere happenstance: the unity of the real and the historical is a relation of realization, a matter of the actualization of potentialities. On this view, reality itself is held to be vague, an indeterminate continuum of potentialities which come to determination in the thought and action of historical agents.

## 6. CONCLUSION

I will now briefly summarize the main consequences of the creedal model of rules.

1. First, there is no opposition here between ontological realism and constructivism. Argumentation, community and truth are bound together in the unity of history, where history is understood as the historical movement of the actualization of the potentiality of the real, a movement in which reflective subjects play a role that is a matter of action and interpretation.

2. Secondly, historical movement is not mere non-rational or irrational irruption, but can be analyzed in terms of its economic, cultural and conceptual conditions.

3. Thirdly, the real, as the movement of history, is not reducible to instantiation or quantification. On the contrary, instantiation is only possible in virtue of that activity of actualization which is the ground of evolution and of history.

4. Finally, the creedal model of rules serves to define the relation of argumentation and community in terms of the interdependence of faith and reason: the interdependence, on the one side, of faith or trust in the established deliverances of the historical community of which we are members, and, on the other side, of the practice of critical interpretation.

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Commentary on “A VERY DIFFERENT KIND OF RULE:  
CREEDAL RULES, ARGUMENTATION AND COMMUNITY”  
by James Bradley

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First of all, let me say how much I have enjoyed reading this paper and thinking about the many fascinating philosophical issues and territories which it raises, and explores.

I should note secondly that I am not primarily an argumentation theorist, and that my comments will be responses to some of the content of Professor Bradley’s analyses, and remarks, as they seem to me to present themselves. There may be implications for argumentation theory or informal logic, but if so they will likely be indirect (and possibly unintended).

In the way of the commentator, I will primarily bring out aspects of Bradley’s account which seem to me in one way or other problematic—insufficiently supported, or not to have connections he takes them to have, and similar difficulties. But I would like to stress that I find much to agree with, and certainly much from which I have learned, in his paper.

Some dissent stems from historical characterizations or claims which Bradley makes. Large interpretive issues are involved with each of them, but three clusters of claim appear, one at the beginning, one in the middle, and one at the end, all of which are, I think, problematic. The first is the characterization of “the typical modern Anglo-American philosopher”, identified as adhering to and continuing the work of “Frege, Russell and the analytical tradition” in pursuing philosophy as “the enterprise of generalizing the mathematical-logical function”.

As I have said, huge interpretive and historical issues are involved here, but the monolithic characterization proffered is indefensibly singular, and simplistic. Frege, and Russell, did inaugurate a program along lines which Bradley describes, and it was intended to be both reductive and revolutionary. But the story after about 1918 gets much more complicated, and more importantly, much more *pluralistic* than Bradley’s historical sketch suggests. While aiming to repudiate and eliminate *much* in traditional philosophical categorical taxonomy—including, as Bradley rightly says, a significant centering both of *existence* and of the *subject* as fundamental or bedrock categories of the world—Russell himself was throughout his career a remarkably traditional philosopher. He aimed to do metaphysics *scientifically*, we may say, but (with, of course, whatever degree of success) he aimed always to do metaphysics. The same was true of his fellow Cambridge originator of analytical philosophy, G. E. Moore, whom Bradley leaves wholly out of his account. It was the successors of Frege, Russell, and Moore—Wittgenstein, and the logical positivists—who sought to eliminate metaphysics, and to replace inner or mental agency with merely behavioristic structures of rules. And those successors met with no greater or unqualified success than the trio of founders have had. The long and the short is that nowadays “the typical modern Anglo-American philosopher” has enormously more to occupy his/her attention, and to guide his/her methodological practice, than simp-

ly to “generaliz[e] the mathematical-logical function”. (One would be hard pressed to find much evidence of that guiding motive in the work of, say, Davidson, Sellars, Chisholm, Kripke, Lewis, ... ; etc., etc.)

I am immensely interested in the history of analytic(al) philosophy, and would like nothing more than to enlarge upon these themes, if time permitted. But it doesn’t. I have myself argued, in print, against Russell’s treatment of existence, along lines not dissimilar to those Bradley follows (Loptson 2010: 83-86). Suffice it to say that there is, I would argue, a more inclusive story to tell, one that would place at least the founding trio more integrally and creatively within the tent of large or grand philosophical theory or conception, to which Bradley himself is clearly sympathetically drawn (as I am myself), than is implied in the paper.

The second problematic historical characterization appears, on p. 4, with the claim that the “reason”, according to Kuhn, for so-called paradigm shifts in the history of science not being rational or intelligible is that ‘normal science’ is defined “in terms of functions or algorithms, and there is no algorithm for historical change”. As with the previous claim-cluster, this is over-simple; and, I suggest, false in spirit as well as letter, for Kuhn. As it happens, while an admirer of the founding trio of analytic(al) philosophy, and their achievements, I am not particularly sympathetic to Kuhn. Nonetheless, it seems clear—from both editions of his famous book—that his view is *not* that if there had just been an algorithm for historical change—if some clever theorist had just managed to come up with one—there would never have occurred scientific revolutions. For good or ill, Kuhn’s narrative is, and means to be, much more empirical and pragmatic and contextual than this suggests. But, again, time constraints prevent expanding this interesting—and important—historical dimension of the issues Bradley raises.

The third case is of an altogether different sort than those which precede. Just as I am not a Kuhnian, so I am also not a Christian, but I think the characterization of Christian theory, specifically *vis à vis history*, which Bradley presents on p. 8 and following, is strongly contestable, particularly what is asserted in the last five sentences of the second last paragraph of section 5 (on p. 9). There have been of course so many versions of Christianity, and I wouldn’t at all dispute that some modernist or post-Hegelian intellectualist versions would embrace the contextualist posture affirmed here. But it would appear to be of the essence of Christian orthodoxy that, yes, indeed, truth disclosed itself in history, and that it did so with a uniquely and supremely significant instance, that is to say, precisely *once*, in the incarnation of Christ, about two thousand years ago. No doubt, for that orthodoxy, the meaning of the incarnation admits of, may even require, unending rethinking, and reinterpretation, and new situating in the historical circumstances of successive generations of Christians. Again, there would be very much more which it would be desirable to explore in this territory. I can do no better than leave the matter with some of the words which Bradley quotes from Collingwood, on p. 5. The fundamental convictions about the cosmos which Christians hold were disclosed historically in the first century comprise (certainly are held by them to do so) the “main or fundamental...absolute presupposition[s]...of [Western] science and civilization, ... a background that has remained unchanged” since the Patristic age.

I go on to the central conception of Bradley’s paper, and the case which he makes for it.

Here I take a more positive and sympathetic view than the preceding remarks might seem to imply. The analysis which Bradley presents of so-called creedal rules, as found in the several historical Christian *credos*, their semantic and pragmatic significance, roles, and logical structure and implications, seemed to me persuasive and insightful. Bradley refers explicitly just to the Apostles', Nicene, and Athanasian creeds—all of them dating from the first millennium—and one wonders whether he would include later Christian creeds, like the Augsburg confession, of Lutheranism, or entirely non-Christian bodies of believer-committing performative, within the same characterizing framework. Since he is presenting and advocating “the creedal model of rules”, i.e., quite generally, presumably he would.

I won't restate or summarize the account of creedal rules and their 'logic' which Bradley presents, very clearly and effectively. At first I found myself wondering whether, the Latin '*regula*' in medieval characterizations notwithstanding, what was being described was appropriately conceived as a 'rule', at least in the sense which Fregean and Wittgensteinian projects have had in mind. But I think that the term is plausible, and persuasive. A creed, and its affirmation by a believer, do give expression to multiple resolves of practice, that will find application in life-contexts as well as in ideological and theoretical reflection and self-inspection. These are rules, if of more general character than some more specific semantical or behavioural rules will have. And I agree with Bradley that the creedal case does make a powerful case for the need, in theory as well as in practice, for the presence and role of the whole subject or agent, the person, to be able to understand what is going on in this variety of area of life.

Nor will the creedal model be limited to religious contexts or sectors. The 'quarter-to-three' bar-room drinker who wants Joe to set them up, and who will share some but only a few of his amatory reasons for wanting to consume one for his baby and one more for the road, and who tells Joe that he could tell a lot, but that “you've got to be true to your code”, is presumably thinking with reference to a body of something like creedal rules, and, perhaps, a community to which he would in some sense be answerable, even if only *in foro interno*. Political contexts, and professional codes of ethics, would also suggest themselves for analogous assimilation to a creedal modeling.

Still, I do have questions about some aspects of the picture, some of them potentially the basis for objections. What will the case be for concluding that the creedal model of rules can or should wholly replace alternative accounts? Why not let, if not a thousand, at least several flowers bloom, and take *some* rule-governing or rule-applying behaviour or sectors of life to exhibit or conform to a creedal kind of model, and others to be more mechanical, or occasion-specific, or algorithmic?

On the creedal side of things, I also fail to see how a creed, in Bradley's sense—which I have been extending, I hope as he would endorse, also to non-religious contexts and cases—would need to be *realist*, either broadly metaphysically or with reference to universals. I am myself a metaphysical realist, and a committed Platonist on abstract entities. But I don't see why a creedal agent, or practitioner, if we may speak that way, could not manage to be a nominalist, or a metaphysical idealist, or a metaphysical fence-sitter, without declared or even implicit commitments in these areas. One thinks, not unnaturally, of Berkeley, who was, in addition to being a nominalist and an idealist, a *bishop*—a clergyman of the Church of Ireland, who presumably recited and affirmed Athanasian or Nicene creeds, internally as well as publically, on numerous occasions. I don't think there

is any evidence that Berkeley was insincere in such affirmations. Bradley tells us “creedal rules entail ontological realism...they are claims about the nature of reality, in the sense of that which is mind-independent”, etc.; but so far as I can see Bradley just claims these things, without offering a reason for them. In addition to Hegelian historicizing Christians, these days there are also demythologizing Christians (Iris Murdoch comes to mind<sup>1</sup>; but there are numerous others), for whom their Christian creedal commitments, and performative affirmations can, apparently, be innocent of literal ontological import; they are, rather, understood as ‘*existential*’, inner, passionate articulations utilizing historic or traditional Christian formulas, but with a this-world frame of real reference. And, even if creedal commitments and rule-affirmations *did* necessarily imply something or other about the real world, well, Christianity famously gives rise—has in actual history given rise—to a great multiplicity of *interpretations*. It doesn’t seem at all obvious that none of these could be nominalist, or idealist, or purely pragmatist.

#### REFERENCE

Loptson, P. (2010). *Reality: Fundamental Topics in Metaphysics*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press.

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<sup>1</sup> See Iris Murdoch, *Metaphysics as a Guide to Morals*, Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1994, pp. 81-85, 391-430, and *passim*.