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Abstract

This essay examines how, in the early twentieth century, ontological arguments were employed in the defense of metaphysical idealism. The idealists of the period tended to grant that ontological arguments defy our usual expectations in logic, and so they were less concerned with the formal properties of Anselmian arguments. They insisted, however, that ontological arguments are indispensable, and they argued that we can trust argumentation as such only if we presume that there is a valid ontological argument. In the first section I outline the history of this metalogical interpretation of the ontological argument. In the subsequent sections I explain how Royce and Collingwood each developed the argument, and how this impacted their respective conceptions of both logic and metaphysics.

Keywords: ontological argument, Josiah Royce, Robin George Collingwood, Gilbert Ryle, Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, Hermann Lotze

In a debate from the mid 1930's that has retained some repute at least as a fringe episode of twentieth-century philosophy, Gilbert Ryle publicly lambasted his senior colleague's and professorial predecessor's adherence to a so-called Hegelian ontological argument.¹ Collingwood had recently published his *Essay on Philosophical Method*, in the sixth chapter of which he claimed that ontological arguments "hold good" for a specific class of objects.² Ryle's reply in the 1935 issue of *Mind* mixed metaphysical debate with dismissive surprise: Collingwood's attachment to a scholastic trope represented, according to Ryle, a failure to acknowledge or appreciate the major developments of

Idealistic Ontological Arguments in Royce, Collingwood, and Others

KEVIN J. HARRELSON



modern logic. That “particular matters of fact cannot be the implicates of general propositions” was known already to Hume and Kant, and this discovery should be taken as the basis of all further logical inquiry.³ Ryle thus added to any *ad rem* arguments an aggressive historicizing rhetoric, and the intention was no more to refute Collingwood’s arguments directly than it was to indicate that his exposition lay outside the trajectory of modern philosophizing.⁴

By the end of the twentieth century a Russellian account of those earlier decades had so pervaded the collective consciousness of anglophone philosophers that it might now seem that Collingwood, not Ryle, was the outsider in the polemic. A closer look at the relevant publication history, however, would reveal that this is at least not obviously the case. Collingwood’s reduction of ontological arguments to a methodological principle and *sine qua non* of philosophizing concluded nearly four decades of public debate concerning the Anselmian inference. A string of notable thinkers of the time, led by Josiah Royce and Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison, had transformed the old *a priori* argument for theism into a last-ditch defense of idealism. In the earliest cases these philosophers emphasized the indispensability rather than validity of Anselmian inferences, and as a result they were able to sidestep Kantian objections about predication and existence. They placed their arguments in a dialogical context that targeted a range of new defenders of realism in metaphysics, and aimed to show that the realists concealed instances of ontological reasoning beneath their own positions. The assumption was that if both realists and idealists had presupposed the same inference, then disputes over the formal properties of that inference would diminish in relevance. Moreover, since ontological arguments were understood as rather uncontroversially implying idealism, these alleged unintentional commitments to ontological arguments on the part of the realists represented a tacit but ubiquitous acknowledgement of idealism.

This essay recounts the fate of this argumentative strategy among a very late generation of anglophone idealists, with the intention of both evaluating the historiographical significance of idealistic ontological arguments and providing some context for the positions of Royce and Collingwood. Whereas anglophone idealists had initially followed Hermann Lotze in claiming that ontological arguments are necessary but invalid, these two philosophers reworked the foundations of logic to underwrite a special brand of validity for Anselmian inferences. Their comprehensive theories of philosophical knowledge likewise accommodated and accounted for the thesis that all metaphysicians tacitly assent to ontological arguments. They thereby developed the contrary of Ryle’s position: Ryle argued that since Russellian logic excludes ontological arguments, such arguments are dead⁵; Royce and Collingwood concluded (albeit differently from each other) from the very same

premise that the realist movement in logic was inadequate.⁶ These moments in the history of philosophy are far enough behind us to permit serious, wholesale reassessment, and the premise of my exposition is that the Ryle/Russell mythology should be more explanandum of history than explanans. In general anglophone histories of early twentieth-century philosophy still too much rely on stories told by the participants, and my hope here is to contribute to a more historically defensible history of early twentieth-century philosophy.⁷

A responsible history of the period will have to contend with the variety of positions defended at that time on basic issues in metaphysics and logical theory, and the debates over ontological arguments cut to the heart of several key divides in these areas. Royce's interpretation of the ontological argument, for instance, was central to disputes between realists and idealists well into the 1930's.⁸ More important for my purposes, however, is an explanation of why literature such as this has been largely neglected. My central historical contention is that the perceived need for a monolithic and metaphysically neutral logical canon obscured the details of the relevant disputes. The critique of ontological arguments was central to the establishment of such a canon. Such arguments were no mere artifacts of a scholastic philosophy of religion, but rather a compact way of expressing the point that our choice of logics is motivated by metaphysical tendencies or prejudices. To whatever extent ontological arguments were still topics for debate, then, apparent advances in modern logic could not maintain the appearance of professional consensus. This point explains the need for the kind of aggressive rhetorical strategy that Ryle so successfully propagated.

I.

In this first section I outline the public debates over ontological arguments from the first two decades of the last century, in the interest of showing both that Kant's predication objection was not highly regarded at the time, and that ontological arguments were seen as having an essentially metalogical character. The immediate textual background of the controversy lies with a pair of widely-read texts by Lotze.⁹ In his *Mikrokosmos* of 1856 he had called ontological arguments an expression of "the self-confidence of reason."¹⁰ He further claimed that the God referred to in such arguments was only a name for metaphysical postulates such as "the order of the world." A more focused statement of these positions appeared in the 1883 posthumous publication of his *Outlines of the Philosophy of Religion*.¹¹ In that work Lotze stated rather boldly three claims that became the subject of debate in the anglophone world: ontological arguments are logically invalid; ontological arguments have comprehensive metaphysical significance rather than mere apologetic application; and ontological arguments express a truth that neither admits of nor requires proof.¹²

These topics were first integrated into anglophone literature by C.C.J. Webb in an 1896 lecture entitled “Anselm’s Ontological Argument for the Existence of God.”¹³ Webb communicated the Lotzean reading within a scholastic history by isolating a relative superficiality of the medieval disputes. He credited Kant with shifting the discussion from first-order concerns about predication and existence to deeper worries over the efficacy of reason, and he accordingly lamented the fact that these more pressing issues had been concealed by Kant’s explicit objections. The undeserved popular repute of the latter was a result, Webb insisted, only of the misleading and infamous monetary example. Webb’s first concern was thus to show how predication objections had been addressed even by scholastic figures. He highlighted the analogy between Gaunilo’s lost island and Kant’s hundred thalers, and the corresponding one between Anselm’s response to the former and Hegel’s to the latter. Such discussions as Gaunilo’s island and Kant’s imagined money were, on the one hand, vulgar appeals to popularity, and on the other philosophically misleading objections that had been adequately answered by Anselm and Hegel: “when Hegel answers that God is very different from a hundred dollars, it seems as if he did not meet the objection, that he only bluffed it, so to speak: yet this answer is right and it is also Anselm’s.”¹⁴

The joint appeal to Anselm and Hegel demands that statements in philosophical theology not be treated as analogous to mundane claims about so-called particular matters of fact, and most of the later developments among idealists concern whether this scholastic position on divine attribution permits conversion into logical dualisms of various sorts. Webb, however, did not belabor this point, and the remainder of his historical argument instead prefaces his assertion that Kant’s opposition to the proof lay at the heart of his metaphysics. Kant, on Webb’s view, was in the curious position of recognizing the foundational status of the proof and yet still not accepting it. The corollary of this decision in metaphysics was the theory of things in themselves, which Webb and others (leaning on a certain neo-Kantian tradition) took to suggest that reality is unknowable. Kant’s fundamental position, in other words, was a skeptical one, and this was seen as co-extensive with his rejection of ontological arguments.¹⁵

This interpretation of ontological arguments, according to which they are only humble attempts by the mind to reassure itself of its grip on reality, aimed also to place the Anselmian reasoning on the side of common sense. Webb better developed this point in his 1911 book *Problems in the Relations of God and Man*, by insisting in that work that “the ontological argument reposes on and expresses what the plain man never doubts, that real knowledge is attainable.”¹⁶ Kant, on the other hand, brought the argument into doubt only by asking the “subversive and revolutionary question whether all this is really so.”¹⁷ The result of

this was that an entire generation of philosophers viewed ontological arguments as asserting only that the rules of argument somehow reflect the order of the world. What is important in Webb's variation on this theme is his insistence that all parties to metaphysical dispute, on pain of extreme skepticism, commit some kind of ontological inference, the differences being only in whether and to what extent they acknowledge or accommodate this.

Webb's dismissal of Kant's predication objection constituted the fairly uncontroversial half of his conclusion: Kant's analysis had not been taken as historically decisive even in what was then the traditional Kant literature, and the odd homage to Kant's examples was frequently dismissed as 'popular' in the derisive sense of this term.¹⁸ Philosophers of many persuasions had indeed recognized that Kant's criticisms of metaphysics marked an important turning point in philosophical theology generally and the ontological argument specifically, but this did not signal the end of either endeavor.¹⁹ One reason for this was that many philosophers sought criteria for proof more flexible than those that Kant assumed in his objections. These tendencies, along with Lotze's distinction between the argument's formal difficulties and its metaphysical meaning, combined to form the heart of dozens of publications on ontological arguments from the period between 1896 and 1916.²⁰ When William Ernest Hocking wrote much later (1932) that the "criticisms of Kant and Hume were necessary, not to demolish the argument, but to prepare the way for a valid statement," he was perhaps expressing an opinion on the wane, but one that had been widely held among an array of philosophers for the previous half-century.²¹

There was in this time, to be sure, a small movement (led by FCS Schiller) of those who were convinced that Kant had exposed for all time the "fatal defects" of the argument, but this opinion worked against not only the Hegelian backlash, but even some vindications of the scholastic tradition.²² A decade after Webb's lecture, William Paulin produced a competing history of debates over ontological arguments in which he concluded that such arguments are question-begging at best.²³ What is most important in this account is that it reveals how even philosophers who were skeptical of ontological arguments did not consider Kant's point about predication to be successful. Paulin saw Kant's shortcoming to consist in his illicit application to theological statements of the general rules that govern either existential or predicative propositions. To make the matter very simple: the rule that, to use Ryle's formulation, "particular matters of fact cannot be the implicates of general statements" would apply to the ontological argument only if the existence of God (or the fitness of reason, etc.) were taken as a particular matter of fact. But to interpret the arguments in this manner is to ignore important strands in the history of philosophical theology, and Paulin insisted that even Anselm had adequately deflected this

worry. Anselm's *id quo maius* is not a particular entity but rather "the universal which embraces all particulars."²⁴ Given this appropriate theological clarification Kant's famous objection appeared irrelevant.

The metalogical interpretation of ontological arguments flourished in this context, and saw its most lucid defense in Seth Pringle-Pattison's Gifford lectures of 1911-13, *The Idea of God in Light of Recent Philosophy*.²⁵ In a single lecture late in the course, Seth not only defended the premise that Anselm's inference is indispensable, but he also completed the argument by drawing its idealist conclusion. In this period Seth defended a version of organic personalism, insisting that the human mind cannot be entirely divorced from reality.²⁶ Our knowledge possesses some kind of special, antecedent relation to reality, even if we cannot elaborate this relation with any greater precision than the organic metaphors provide. He buffered his limited idealism by a very modest appropriation of an ontological argument that accuses the realist of skepticism and misology: if the order of the world were utterly distinct from the human mind, then "argument about God or the universe would seem to be a mere waste of time."²⁷ The latter consequence is something that no one who engages in sincere metaphysical argumentation, including those who intend a version of realism, can consistently accept. Seth nevertheless allowed that the hypothesis of the fitness of reason possesses an element of "unproved belief."²⁸ In other words, arguers always implicitly postulate that reasoned argument tracks reality, but without explicitly establishing the point. Anselm's argument was one, perhaps feeble, attempt to make an explicit case.

Just as Lotze and Webb before him, Seth acknowledged that the arguments, considered in abstraction from their role in guaranteeing argumentation as such, seem formally invalid: "We have all of us, I suppose, as good moderns and children of the light, had our gibe at the ontological argument, and savoured Kant's pleasantry of the hundred dollars."²⁹ But the validity of an inference is not in play so much as is its indispensability in regard to the ubiquitous assumption of the basic intelligibility of reality. The Kant who threatened this type of ontological argument is the one who named empirical objects 'appearances', not the one who cracked a joke about a sum of cash. The Hume who threatened this argument is not the empiricist who stipulated that the opposites of matters of fact are never contradictory, but rather the skeptic who worried whether arguments as such still held in metaphysical matters, wondering whether "our line is too short" to discuss such topics:³⁰

But this fundamental confidence of reason with itself is just what the ontological argument is really laboring to express—the confidence, namely, that thought, when made consistent with itself, is true, that necessary implication in thought expresses a similar implication in reality. In this large sense, the truthfulness of thought . . . is certainly the

presupposition of all thinking: otherwise there could be no inducement to indulge the operation.³¹

One might reasonably object that these philosophers overstated the analogy between the metalogical premise that arguments track reality and the theological arguments made famous by the likes of Anselm, Bonaventure, Descartes, and Spinoza. At the very least, the idealists could have made the former point without appeal to such a contested relic of the history of philosophy. The analogy between these arguments appears slightly stronger, however, when we consider the role that the Christian God, Spinoza's substance, Hegel's absolute, etc., played in guaranteeing the justice of rational argument. In proposing ontological arguments, the idealists claimed, philosophers from Anselm to Hegel were trying to show that reason could prove that something exists, which could then guarantee the fitness of human rationality (if God exists, Descartes famously inferred, my best reasoning processes cannot be faulty). Indirectly at least, ontological arguments had always demonstrated the fitness of reason to reality. Philosophers from Lotze to Seth only selected this fact as the sole salvageable core of such argument, thereby dismissing most of the usual theological issues. More importantly, they allowed that such "self-confidence of reason" need not be elaborated in accordance with any one form of inference that could then apply also to particulars such as sums of money and vacation destinations. As Seth insisted, ontological arguments express a central presupposition of all reasoning, which does not imply that such arguments also instantiate a general and widely applicable form of inferential reasoning. It is worth noting that this issue concerning the possibility of an argument that establishes the efficacy of arguments would persist even if the references to the Anselmian tradition were omitted.

II.

At the time of these publications, America's leading philosopher, Josiah Royce, had not yet offered a sustained discussion of ontological arguments.³² Nonetheless the dialectical strategy of discovering an idealistic implication of the realist thesis bears a strong analogy to many of Royce's central arguments. In the first series of his Gifford Lectures on *The World and the Individual* (1899), Royce had followed the idealist tendency to relate the problem of an ontological argument to the issue of mind-independence, and he shared the worry that Kantian objections leave reality unintelligible.³³ He also described the fundamental questions of metaphysics in terms of the scholastic concepts of 'essence' and 'existence'.³⁴ On Royce's account it is the basic proposition of realism that the former bears no relationship to the latter, and he influenced his student, George Santayana, to formulate an equally comprehensive version of that metaphysical option. It was not until his final semester at Harvard (1915-6), however, that Royce finally

delivered a set of lectures on “the relational form of the ontological argument.”³⁵

In these lectures, Royce claimed that ontological arguments underscore an array of what one might call reality concepts: the past, the world, individuals, etc. These arguments make more explicit the metalogical exceptionalism of Lotze, Webb, and Seth, viz. the position that the foundational argument for the fitness of arguments is not itself a standard form of argument. Royce takes the position much further in that he specified a wide range of self-justifying foundational concepts, suggesting that these do not obey the same logic as do concepts such as one-hundred dollars or an imaginary island. He then elucidated the reality concepts in such a way that they more directly undercut Kant’s predication objections. At this second stage of his argument it can no longer be said without qualification that, as Lotze insisted, the arguments are logically invalid. Royce rather paved the way for logical theories not based exclusively on the description of individuals (rather than relations), and his own logical theory accounted for metaphysical postulates such as ‘the world is orderly’ as well as for theories in the hard sciences.³⁶

Royce’s dismissal of objections based on formal characteristics of existence assertions was initially less serious than Webb’s. Whereas the latter engaged in historical inquiries in order to show that the predication objections had been unsuccessful in the actual course of philosophers arguing, Royce joined the enemy’s parade by lending his remarkable wit to the popular criticisms. He added his own examples to Kant’s money and Gaunilo’s island, suggesting that if “it were possible to define the greatest possible amount that one could write out on a check, that would hardly guarantee that the check would be honored.”³⁷ This discussion was merely rhetorical, and he rather adapted from the extant idealist literature the thesis that ontological arguments are both ubiquitous and indispensable.³⁸ The subsequent discussion supports the common position that “we are using something like the ontological proof all the time” by employing at least three classes of ontological argument.³⁹ The first set of arguments delineates a series of purportedly self-justifying concepts, illustrating the claim the ontological arguments “underlie all your notions of reality.” The second set of arguments presents a dialectical dilemma for logic in the Russell/Whitehead tradition, and the third insists on the relational nature of metaphysical knowledge.

The class of self-justifying concepts includes such basic reality indicators as ‘the external world’, the ‘past’, the ‘order of the world’, etc. The details of Royce’s applications of the point are perhaps disappointing, since he pretended that respondents would mime the Anselmian reasoning when presented with explicit skeptical dilemmas. The exposition also likely fails of seriousness, since it is clear from many other places in Royce’s corpus that there is more to say about these concepts

than that they are self-justifying.⁴⁰ Nonetheless we should grant that what he attributes to the realism of common sense does as much justice to that view as does Moore's mute glance at his own hands.⁴¹ One might say that whereas Moore (in the best case) argued that skeptical doubts are self-defeating, Royce went the more direct route and argued that reality concepts are self-justifying:

Aren't you using at the moment something like an ontological argument for supposing that there is a real world and why there isn't rather nothing at all? You reply that something has to exist; some such a somewhat as you take to be the world must needs be; you know there is a world from the nature of the case, from the very definition of the world.⁴²

A similar argument appeals to the existence of the past, alleging that the common conception of past time also has a self-justifying aspect to it. While the reality of the past is perhaps open to a kind of abstract doubt, given the inherent fallibility of individual memories, the hypothesis of past reality is justified not so much inductively but rather by appeal to "something which you are likely to call the very nature of the situation."⁴³ Although we cannot infer inductively from the presence of particular memories to the existence of the past, this fact does not lead very many people to considered skepticism. The terms by which people avoid this instance of doubt, then, beg for elaboration. Royce stated one not so implausible elaboration when he insisted that the nature or idea of the past implies its existence. To state the point negatively, the effort to think of the past as nonexistent leads to a difficulty like the one Anselm claimed for the attempt to think of the *id quo maius* as nonexistent, even if Royce has failed (at this stage) to highlight the specific contradiction involved.

The ontological arguments in this first category underwrite even those propositions that do receive inductive justifications. Such justifications famously conceal a metaphysical postulate about the application of evidence to reality, since inductive reasoning presupposes and so cannot establish the orderliness of the world. Royce's method of addressing this worry was to insist that the idea of evidence has an element of ontological reasoning about it.⁴⁴ One might then say we at all times indulge implicit ontological arguments as the only escape from a high Humean skepticism. We employ induction precisely because we are sure that the world is orderly, that the future will resemble the past, etc. But we are sure that the world is orderly because, one might say, it is of the nature of the world to be orderly. Since this cannot be a conclusion of either empirical reasoning or inductive hypothesis, we have no other generalizable way of concluding the point. To say that we use ontological arguments all the time is, in this context, to say little more than this.

Royce subsequently offered a second class of arguments that more decisively undercut the new realist logics and the accompanying revival of Kant-inspired predication objections. The usual answer to those objections, an answer given by Anselm and Hegel and much discussed in the current literature, was merely to insist that the existence of God is a different kind of thing than the dreamy island, the hundred bucks, etc.⁴⁵ This amounted to insisting that the subjects of ontological arguments, viz., God, substance, etc., require a unique method of rational treatment and cannot be analyzed in the same manner in which we discuss particular entities. The classical theological/metaphysical postulate of the uniqueness of God presents one purported justification for this move, but that postulate reasonably can be rejected as arbitrary and incredible. Royce's playful elaboration of reality concepts as self-justifying makes a similar move, and as such is no better than the scholastic trope it resembles. Although not even Kant could devise a direct disproof of such a view, the arbitrariness of it rightfully prevented ontological arguments from achieving widespread acceptance. In the face of this problem, Royce attempted a much more ambitious, two-pronged dialectical strategy. He explained how predication objections imply a brand of nominalism, and then argued that nominalism implies ontological arguments. The curious dialectic of predication objections, then, was that they imply the very argument they were designed to refute.

The particular nominalist assumptions of predication objections are such as 'all existents are individuals'. If the nominalist is to elevate this above the status of inarticulate assumption (as rarely happens), s/he must argue either *a priori* or from empirical evidence. In the former case the argument is like Anselm's, in that it uses reasoning *a priori* to draw a conclusion about existent things.⁴⁶ The latter course less obviously makes such a move, but Royce argued that individuals cannot even be identified—and so serve as premises for an induction—without implied ontological arguments. The rationale for this appeals to the experiential indemonstrability of utterances of the sort 'This is Odysseus'. Royce insisted that "your recognition of a man involves assertions which go beyond merely accepted sense-contents,"⁴⁷ so that a common referent for various experiences, impressions, etc., cannot be established empirically. Even if one were to thoroughly inspect Odysseus at every moment, continuity would not be a safe inference. Our vulgar insistence on continuous objects, then, does not receive empirical derivation, but rather it always presumes some general propositions of the sort 'there cannot be objects of such a degree of similarity that . . .' Royce's claim is that these presuppositions are reiterable as ontological arguments. In claiming I met my brother yesterday, for instance, I appeal to a set of evidential relations that do not imply an individual referent except by some categorical principle of the sort:

There can't be anyone else who looks so much like him as this; my brother is essentially one; there can be but one of that sort; there can be but one man who looks and speaks so much like him.⁴⁸

If the identification of individuals requires a principle akin to the *id quo maius*, this would have severe consequences for the claim that the world consists only of individual entities. Royce rather plausibly considered these nominalist theses to be integral to the upstart realist logic and metaphysics, although he recognized Santayana and Russell as subtle enough to try to skirt the problems.⁴⁹ The realist is in particular need of individual objects that are distinct from relations to other things (they must especially be distinct from minds), and Russell insisted upon the existence of such despite his allowance for problems of identification.⁵⁰ In his lecture Royce selected a decidedly weaker target, namely the nominalist theses that underlie Herbert Aikins then-popular textbook *The Principles of Logic*.⁵¹ Nominalists like Aikins merely assumed that the world consists mainly or only of individual entities. Such a position, however, cannot be the inductive result of counting existents and generalizing, since such a procedure would not yield a metaphysically articulable position. The nominalist rather implicitly appeals to an ontological argument, with the suppressed premise including a connection of essence and existence:

My thesis is this: the principal users of the ontological proof, not about God but about the world of common sense, are the nominalists. Nominalism is a doctrine depending on its own form of the ontological proof. The only grounds which you can give for the assertion that this world consists of individual beings, depends on say "It couldn't be otherwise, it is of the essence of existence that the existents be individual . . ."⁵²

All this argumentation might seem to rely heavily on skeptical puzzles of a Humean sort. In a revealing passage, Royce dismissed the notion that he meant to entertain such skepticisms as serious options in philosophy or otherwise. He was rather illustrating some presuppositions of realism in metaphysics (viz., mind-independence) or nominalism in logic (viz., logics that appeal to logical primitives and employ them in the description of relation-less individuals). He appealed throughout to the widespread opinion among idealists that an empiricist epistemology is impossible, and his arguments would probably fall short against an extreme and committed empiricist of a Humean sort. The opinion itself is a child of Kantian and neo-Kantian historiography, one that took the lesson of modern philosophy to be drawn from Kant's supposed victory over Hume, or from the recognition that general concepts such as 'cause' and 'substance' need not be drawn from experience and so must be *a priori* impositions on experience.⁵³ His own

conclusions from this discussion include his last version of idealism in epistemology, which was a pragmatic idealism that relied on Peirce's theory of interpretation.⁵⁴ This pragmatic idealism was merely one method of dealing with the consequence that ontological arguments assert the intelligibility cum mindedness of reality.⁵⁵

Royce's third class of argument appeals to the priority of relations in knowledge, and so further develops the required theoretical context for ontological arguments. Here, he reverses the suggestion that reality concepts possess a different logic than do empirical ones, and he argues that even the latter possess ontological significance by means of their relational character. In a causal claim, for instance, the relation between the two terms is known prior to the appearance in experience of either term. When we infer from the appearance of a footprint to a walking human we thus appeal to the "essence of a relation" between the footprint and the human, and so in a sense argue that "in view of the essence of a relation, some object of the sort in question must exist."⁵⁶ What Royce seems to have meant is that a footprint is not a footprint if it is not caused by a walking human, so that the concept 'footprint' is relational or, in more contemporary terms, inferential. If that is the case, then a statement such as 'there is a footprint in the sand and it was caused by humans' could be only misleadingly formalized in accordance with a theory like Russell's. Whether or not a case can be made for such analysis of empirical concepts, it is less of a stretch to rephrase a metaphysical concept in terms of the relational interpretation of ontological arguments: "the essence of (temporal) relation in view of the present requires that there shall have been a past and that there will be a future."⁵⁷ Terms such as 'past' and 'future' at the very least, not to mention empirical terms such as 'footprint', do not admit of analysis by anything like the theory of descriptions.

A number of implications follow from these discussions by Royce. The first and most important point is that, considered from the standpoint of the idealists, any logic devised to describe individual entities would beg all the central questions if it is employed to establish core metaphysical theses. Such a logic could propose nothing that should change the mind of an idealist. The idealists simply did not understand statements such as 'there is an orderly world' in a manner that would permit analysis as 'there is an x, such that x is a world and x is orderly'—this is again not to mention the matter of how one would analyze something like 'there is a footprint in the sand'. Quantification and predicate logics serve as analytical tools only on the basis of certain metaphysical assumptions, ones that are by nature contentious and were at the time widely disputed among reasonable and consistent philosophers.⁵⁸ Royce summarized this conclusion when he rightly insisted that the new realists could not resolve the scholastic disputes over universals, since it was not their intention to even seriously engage the matter. He went yet a

step further than this, perhaps one too far, when he argued that such underlying metaphysical assumptions themselves (e.g., ‘all existents are individual existents’) in turn rely on ontological arguments. But his opposition to any logician who attacks an ontological argument by employing nominalist principles—this includes any logic in which relation-less individuals are final and irreducible terms—at the very least isolates a point of unanswered contention in such logics.⁵⁹

In the second place, what Royce established imposes serious restrictions on articulations of realism. These restrictions are not unanswerable, but they are serious nonetheless. The realist cannot make an assertion of the sort ‘there is an orderly, coherent world’ without making categorical claims such as Royce suggests, but such a philosopher could argue something of the sort ‘rational arguments commit us to the existence of a coherent and orderly world’.⁶⁰ This concession could permit the philosopher in question to tell a consequent story about us arguers and our relation to our world, one more subtle and qualified than any bare insistence on mind-independence. Such a story could avoid the errors of facile realism and yet differ somewhat from the personalism of Seth or the logocentric, pragmatic idealism of the late Royce. A realism of this sort would be methodological and provisional, and thus less starkly contrasted to Royce’s own position.⁶¹ Finally, an important implication is that basic metaphysical theses are not interpretable as concerning what we call facts, which is a problem that Kant had thematized with his notion of an Idea. Whatever we should say about the status of the world and its order, these last are not—either on the idealist, Kantian, pragmatist, or any reasonably restricted realist principles—facts that would correspond to our descriptions of them in the same manner in which utterances about cats on mats correspond to so-called real cats and real mats. The metaphysical questions concern commitments of a different order.

III.

Although Collingwood belonged to a younger generation than did Pringle-Pattison and Royce, and as such confronted a somewhat different argumentative context, his defense of ontological arguments stands in agreement with those of the idealists on most matters of concern.⁶² He specifically developed the idea that the subjects of the arguments represent a series of basic metaphysical presuppositions, a point that he both generalized and historicized. He generalized the point by defining metaphysics as the study of such presuppositions, and historicized it by discussing how a range of concepts from the history of philosophy (Spinoza’s substance, Hegel’s absolute, etc.) were the subjects of contextually appropriate ontological arguments. Collingwood’s historicist logic allowed him also to underwrite a brand of validity for ontological arguments, so that he was under less pressure to offer qualifications about

predication objections. In the process he offered an even more explicit and thoroughgoing critique of the Russellian tradition in logic than we find in the late Royce.⁶³

As with many philosophers who concern themselves with the argument, Anselm's proof was something of a lasting preoccupation for Collingwood. He delivered a set of lectures at Oxford in 1919 on the history of the topic, and these have unfortunately remained unpublished.⁶⁴ Nonetheless he did discuss the arguments in his mature works of the 1930's, and the chapter on "Philosophy as Categorical Thinking" from his 1933 *Essay on Philosophical Method* devotes a dozen pages to Anselm's argument, its history, and its application. A few of his historical theses warrant closer scrutiny, although Ryle rightly protested some of the lesser moments.⁶⁵ Of particular interest is Collingwood's location of the Platonic origins of Anselm's proof. His thesis that Anselm borrowed a doctrine found variously in the *Republic* (476 E) and *Parmenides* (132 B), and combined this with a neo-Platonic theology has not, to my knowledge, been examined in the detail that it deserves. He also makes interesting claims about medieval discussions of ontological arguments that favor the idealist interpretation outlined in the previous sections.⁶⁶

Despite these points of historical interest, the substance of Collingwood's direct discussion of the topic provides little that we have not seen among idealists of the previous generation. He insisted on removing the argument from its apparent theological setting, and instead considered only its application to broader reality concepts. He summarized affirmed the Lotzean expressive interpretation of the argument:

Divesting [Anselm's] argument of all specially religious or theological colouring, one might state it by saying that thought, when it follows its own bent most completely and sets itself the task of thinking out the idea of an object that shall completely satisfy the demands of reason, may appear to be constructing a mere *ens rationis*, but in fact is never devoid of objective or ontological reference.⁶⁷

The passage begins by repeating nearly verbatim one version of Seth's comments ("the best we can think, must be"), and it is highly probable that a younger Collingwood was familiar Seth's writings.⁶⁸ Collingwood's phrasing nonetheless states the lesson of those episodes in especially clear terms: if the object of philosophical construction cannot be a mere figment of the mind, then skepticisms about the value or result of philosophy—Collingwood might say 'systematic metaphysics'—can never reasonably arise. In other words, the worry that we are not discussing anything is an incoherent one. His particular characterization of what metaphysical activity involves, viz. "thinking out the idea of an object that shall completely satisfy the demands of reason," represents

an idiosyncratic reading of philosophical systems, one to which he later added a degree of historical relativism.⁶⁹

Collingwood likewise reiterated the standard defense of the Anselmian tradition by invoking the uniqueness of the *id quo maius* in the face of the traditional objections. In this regard he properly distinguished Gaunilo's objection from Kant's, which some of his predecessors (as well as Ryle in response) had conflated:

Anselm's argument . . . is an argument open to objection on the logical ground that existence is not a predicate; but the substance of his thought survives all such objections, no less than it survives the baseless accusation that he was trying to argue from a mere thought to the existence of its object. He was careful to explain that his argument applied, not to thought in general, but only to the thought of one unique object, *id quo maius cogitari nequit*.⁷⁰

The subsequent pages emphasize further the two important lessons of the idealist tradition: that the argument applies not to a religious object but rather to "the object of metaphysical thought," and that it requires a distinct brand of logical analysis. Although Collingwood presented only a few examples of historically prominent subjects of ontological arguments (Spinoza's substance, Plato's good), his subsequent works devoted considerable attention to outlining a view of metaphysics as a descriptive endeavor that pertained to what he called absolute presuppositions.⁷¹ While this reading does not commit him to an idealism in metaphysics as rich as Royce's—and Collingwood did not, like Seth or Royce, conclude from ontological arguments to a specific account of the relation of mind to world—it is nonetheless quite clearly a development of the expressive interpretation of ontological arguments as this was popular in the last generation of anglophone idealism. Whereas the earlier idealists had more or less vaguely insisted that ontological arguments express a presupposition of all rational thought or argument, Collingwood further distinguished a specific series of such presuppositions—what he later called 'absolute presuppositions'.

The second point concerns the difference that this argument would imply for the further analysis of metaphysical claims in contradistinction to empirical claims. The basic question of ontological arguments reduces, on this reading, to a simple one: is philosophical knowledge analyzable in precisely the same terms that empirical knowledge is? Collingwood allowed that it is *prima facie* reasonable to think of philosophical propositions on the descriptive model (in which case predication objections are not ruled out of hand), but he also insisted that the matter cannot be decided in advance by fiat.⁷² The purpose of the *Essay on Philosophical Method*, rather, was to distinguish a unique method for the analysis of philosophical knowledge, one that would make sense of

traditional theories (Plato, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, etc.) without apologizing for them. In this context we can only briefly discuss how Collingwood accommodated his decision that philosophy possesses a *sui generis* character. In his previous chapters he had elaborated two of his central doctrines, viz., the principles of overlapping classes and of the scale of forms.⁷³ The consequence of these for his discussion of the ontological argument is as follows: general philosophical concepts such as 'knowledge', 'pleasure', and 'soul' do not divide into species in the same manner that, for instance, 'water' or 'animal' do. The species of the former concepts are overlapping ones, whereas the species of the latter concepts are distinct. If that is the case, however, then such concepts require different kinds of treatment as far as concerns formal analysis. Whereas categorical statements are excluded from the latter class, the overlapping species open the door for something like Anselm's argument.

In his polemical reply in *Mind*, Ryle did not so much directly attack these doctrines as merely indicate their incompatibility with the Russellian logic. At this point we can without further ado dismiss this move as argumentatively irrelevant, it having been precisely the premise with which not only Collingwood but Royce before him began. Nonetheless Ryle's rhetorically aggressive application of the point is historiographically significant. The issue is hindered somewhat by his attempt to execute merely negative aims, viz., to indicate Collingwood's mistakes without committing himself to a theory of "the character of philosophical propositions." Philosophers of the preceding generations, whether they were for or against ontological arguments, had recognized that it was impossible to decide for or against them without making core metaphysical commitments. Ryle's desire to speak on logical matters with metaphysical neutrality thus reflected a glaring lack of awareness of what his opponents saw as at stake in the debate.

The key point in the dispute occurred when Ryle attempted to interpret Collingwood's use of 'categorical' into Russellian terms:

This we now see means that they refer to something which exists, or contain or rest on propositions which do so. And this must mean, *to use language which is not Mr. Collingwood's*, that philosophical propositions are or contain or rest on propositions embodying either at least one logically proper name or at least one definite description which does in fact describe something. In short, every philosophical proposition is or contains or rests on a genuine singular proposition. (my emphasis)⁷⁴

The use of the Russellian terminology of course obscures the entire debate, and Ryle has not so much refrained from committing to a theory of philosophical propositions as he has merely borrowed one from

a competing school of his own day. The disagreement was thus pushed back to a deeper level: if we understand Collingwood's position in Russellian terms, the former's attempt to salvage something of the ontological argument was a plain failure. But Collingwood did not consider the subjects of ontological arguments to be "logically proper names" or definite descriptions. He had instead provided a very different and subtle logical context for ontological arguments with his scale of forms and principle of overlapping classes. In later works Collingwood improved his case further with his logic of question and answer and his theory of history, both of which underlined the distinct nature of philosophical knowledge in more readily applicable terms than did the scale of forms.⁷⁵ Ryle acknowledged these differences to some extent, and thus implicitly the question-begging nature of his entire polemic, when he sarcastically allowed that the scale of forms will save Collingwood from his objections:

... it is upsetting to find that apparently after all some judgments may be universal and so (I suppose) expressible in purely general terms and yet categorical in the sense of referring to something actually existing. I fear that the principle of Overlap of classes will be brought in to give us *carte blanche* to have it both ways when it suits our convenience.⁷⁶

In a subsequent passage, Ryle acknowledged that philosophical context informs the premises of such arguments, and he allowed that objections about predication and existence were contingent upon wider issues. He specifically recognized that the criticisms of Kant and Hume could not suffice as independent objections to ontological arguments because those philosophers were "too subjectivist." No such complaint, however, could be levied against Russell because the latter's "theory of descriptions and his consequential analysis of existential propositions as a species of general proposition has been before the philosophical public long enough for this ontological fallacy to merit immunity from any more exhumations."⁷⁷ The entire rejection of the Collingwood's position thus hinged on an uncritical acceptance of Russell's theory of descriptions, which of course Collingwood, as Royce before him, had not only rejected but also opposed with an equally impressive logical system. One final passage from Ryle warrants some attention, insofar as it reveals that his confrontation with Collingwood amounts to little more than a frustrated complaint, one that cannot be seriously shared in historical retrospect, that there was not in the middle 1930's an unopposed consensus on core metaphysical issues:

It is to me rather shocking that there should exist a large school of thought which treats as a well-established principle a doctrine which has been for a century and a half accused of formal fallaciousness.

IV. Conclusion

In the Introduction to this essay, I announced my intention to pose a particular challenge to what I call the Ryle/Russell mythology, and it should be clear at this point that the protracted idealist discussions of ontological arguments indeed touch upon central issues in the reception of early twentieth-century philosophy. The disappearance of the idealist argumentative strategy paved the way for the opinion that Kant's predication objections forged an unobstructed path for modern mathematical logics. Although a rogue sect of philosophers did revive Anselm's arguments in the middle of the last century, these arguments pertained to religious topics rather than to fundamental problems in metaphysics and logical theory.⁷⁸ The common interpretation of the history of logic, as this appears still today in textbooks and other sources, has left the realist position relatively unchallenged. The misleading appearance of a monolithic canon, however, failed not only in its representation of what options were pursued by philosophers in the first third of the last century. The Ryle/ Russell mythology failed also in the substance of its argumentation, since the powerful alternatives of rival philosophies went largely unanswered.

In portraying philosophers such as Royce, Pringle-Pattison, and Collingwood as pursuing analogous strategies in response to the critique of ontological arguments, not to mention my use of the suspicious and ambiguous moniker 'idealist', I do not mean to understate the diversity among their positions. On the contrary, the strongest point to be raised against Ryle's narrative is precisely that there were several strains of plausible and coherent responses to the critique of ontological arguments. At the heart of each of these replies, I have argued, was the need to modernize the scholastic, theological thesis that god poses a unique case for analysis. Collingwood pursued the clearest and most straightforward path by arguing that philosophical knowledge is *sui generis*, and thus that philosophical concepts possess a different logic than do ordinary, empirical concepts. Royce's position is more subtle, and in his case the appearance of a logical dualism is misleading. Royce considered philosophy to be a pursuit continuous with other forms of speculation, so that he needed to develop a more robustly idealistic theory of empirical and natural knowledge.⁷⁹ Both philosophers, however, pose the same sort of challenge to the historiographer of early twentieth-century philosophy: they beg us to view the period in question as one of lively debate among diverse and compelling thinkers.

The crux of idealistic ontological arguments was a question about the metaphysical basis for logical theory, and ontological arguments drifted into the background of philosophical discussion only as the key disputes over logical theory disappeared. When Ryle's call for disciplinary unity was heeded by some philosophers in the middle of the

last century, the remaining debates on ontological arguments descended into professional bickering.⁸⁰ This period presents a lamentable contrast to the stark but substantial disagreements between, for instance, Royce and Santayana or Collingwood and Ryle. Another debate from *Mind* offers an instructive case study. John Findlay argued in the 1948 volume that an adequate conception of god is patently incompatible with modern logic, and he littered his text with references to what “the modern mind” or “any contemporary philosopher” would think.⁸¹ A reply by George Hughes the following year fairly objected to this rhetorical technique (of which Findlay was not normally a guilty party), although this apparent aside represents the high-point of his contribution:

Now admittedly we all have to baptize our own and other people’s philosophical children, but we ought to be careful in our choice of names; the claiming of a royal title at the font does not automatically confer sovereignty. To refer to what is in fact only one among many modern philosophical views in terms which suggest that it is the only one, or at least that it is the only one which any sensible man can now hold, is simply to throw a spurious cloak of authoritativeness over something which is still *sub judice* . . .⁸²

The lessons of this history are thus no less historiographical than argumentative. As far as ontological arguments are concerned, even the best criticisms of them in contemporary philosophy appeal to the assumption that they must be capable of being restated in quantification logics of some sort.⁸³ Idealistic ontological arguments are thus useful in that they reveal a set of open questions about philosophical method. The historiographical point concerns the status of figures such as Royce and Collingwood in the history of early twentieth-century philosophy. In evading the criticisms of traditional ontological arguments and developing one of its more promising traditions, they posed some philosophical alternatives that are worthy of further historical study. One task of historical research is to seek neglected but legitimate philosophical options, and the cast of characters for a non-partisan history of philosophy in the last century is yet to be chosen. Figures such as Royce and Collingwood, who offered bold alternatives, have much more to offer to the historian than do figures such as Ryle or Ayer, who merely attached themselves to an existing party. One might select some earlier historical moments for illustration: we do not today consider Cartesians like Clauberg to be more worthy of study than the likes of Hobbes or Gassendi, merely because they attached themselves to a movement that had, at the time, a wider influence within the relevant institutions.

Ball State University
kjharrelson@bsu.edu

NOTES

1. An earlier version of this paper was presented to the Josiah Royce Society in Indianapolis, September 2011. I wish to thank the participants of that conference for their insightful comments.

2. A new revised edition, including transcripts of Collingwood's subsequent correspondence with Ryle, has been edited by Guissepina D'Oro and James Conroy, Oxford 2005. Pg. 133.

3. *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 44, No. 174 (Apr., 1935), pp. 137-151 (reprinted, with the Ryle-Harris debate in *The Many-Faced Argument*, ed. John Hick and Arthur C. McGill, MacMillan 1967, pp 246-274).

4. The close of Ryle's counter-reply to E.E. Harris ("Back to the Ontological Argument" in *Mind* (New Series, Vol. 46, No. 181, Jan., 1937, pp. 53-57), who had replied to Ryle in Collingwood's defense ("Mr. Ryle and the Ontological Argument" in *Mind*), voices this attitude most unrestrainedly: "It is to me rather shocking that there should exist a large school of thought which treats as a well-established principle a doctrine which has been for a century and a half accused of formal fallaciousness."

5. JN Findlay inventively extended the argument a decade later in "Can God's Existence Be Disproved?" *Mind*, New Series 57 n.226, pp. 176-83.

6. Both arguments received narrative justification in divergent pictures of the then-recent philosophical past: whereas Ryle insisted that Collingwood had overlooked "the whole movement in logic that could be characterized as Russellian" (142) Collingwood proclaimed that the Hegelian versions of the argument had never met with adequate refutation by anyone who understood the central issues (126).

7. Ryle and AJ Ayer are two philosophers who, drawing from Russell's own self-serving reminiscences, aggressively propagated the Russellian version of twentieth-century philosophy. See, for instance, Ayer's 1971 *Russell and Moore: The Analytical Heritage* (Macmillan 1971) and *Philosophy in the Twentieth Century* (Weidenfeld 1982); or Ryle's Introduction to *Revolution in Philosophy* (1960) and his "Fifty Years of Philosophy and Philosophers" (*Philosophy* 51-198, 1976, 381-9). These have formed the basic narrative that histories of 'analytic philosophy' have followed, and the new subdiscipline of 'history of early analytic philosophy' has not yet emerged from the yoke of these stories.

8. Dozens of articles belong to the complex literature in this area, but the one that most clearly relates the relevance of Royce's ontological argument is "Idealism, Essence, and Existence" by R. A. Schermerhorn in *The Journal of Philosophy* 32 (15), 1935, pp. 408-414.

9. The mediate textual background would be the third book of Hegel's *Science of Logic*. See especially the introductory section to "objectivity." (English translation by AV Miller, humanities Press 1969, pp. 705-10; Surhkamp edition v. 6, pp. 402-9).

10. On page 671 of *Mikrokosmos*—(English translation by George T Ladd, 1883), Lotze says that all such arguments are (necessarily) invalid but that they express an ineliminable conviction. Two pages later he discusses how there "arose attempts to find more satisfying forms of existence for the Highest Good in ideas of an External world order, an infinite substance, a self-developing idea." In the context

of Lotze's argument in this section, these metaphysical subjects of ontological arguments represent only depreciations of the notion of personality in philosophical theology—a context that is not of much relevance for the subsequent discussions of ontological arguments. For a review of exactly how popular these texts were among English-speaking philosophers, see TM Lindsay's review in the first ever volume of *Mind* (1(3), 1876, pp. 363-82.

11. The English translation by George T. Ladd (Boston 1885) appeared within two years of the German publication.

12. "But although *logically this attempt at proof is quite invalid*, it is nevertheless of interest in other respects. For that which induces it to regard existence as a necessary attribute of the total content of the conception of a most perfect Being, is not, as it is in the case of the other conception (that of the animal), the mere circumstance that the rest of the predicates would admit of formal attachment to what is existent only, and not to what is non-existent. *This is obviously rather a case where an altogether immediate conviction breaks into consciousness, to wit, the conviction that the totality of all that has value, all that is perfect, fair, and good, cannot possible be homeless in the world or in the realm of actuality, but has the very best claim to be regarded by us as imperishable reality. This assurance (Zuversicht), which properly has no need of proof, has sought to formulate itself*, after a scholastic fashion, in the above-mention awkward argument." My emphases, pp. 9-10.

13. This extremely learned piece of scholarship, which was published in the third volume (1896) of the *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, recounted medieval debates among a deep cast of characters including Anselm, Boethius, Aquinas, Albertus Magnus, Duns Scotus, and many others.

14. Webb, 33.

15. "The point, however, of the Kantian criticism lies elsewhere . . . If Kant is right: if the world of experience, wrought by the understanding out of the matter given in sensation, remains forever confronted by the thing-in-itself, unknown and unknowable, in the presence of which it can lay no claim to a transcendental, but merely to an empirical reality; if reason, in its inevitable pursuit of ideas . . . is doomed, as it were, to the fate of the mythical Ixion, whose presumptuous attempt to embrace a goddess was mocked by an airy phantom in her shape; then, no doubt, the supreme expression of the reason's confidence in itself, the Ontological Argument, is altogether vain." Pg. 33

16. Pp. 185-6.

17. Ibid.

18. Albert. Cock's essay "The Ontological Argument for the Existence of God" (*Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* 18, 1918, 363-384) offers the most thorough and convincing dismissal of Kantian predication objections in the literature of this time.

19. To give just a few examples of how philosophical theology was pursued in these decades: George Galloway's *Philosophy of Religion* (Scribner's, 1916, 382-6) offers an account that relies heavily on Webb, whereas Georg Wobbermin's *Der christliche Gotteglaube* (Berlin 1907) gives a more skeptical view.

20. Some of the more notable of these, among those not otherwise discussed in this article, are: William Ernest Hocking's *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*, Yale 1912 Chapter XXII, 301-16; John M. Mecklin's "The Revival of the Ontological Argument" in the *Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific*

Methods 14(5) 1917, 124-35; and Scott Buchanan's "Ontological Argument Redivivus" in *The Journal of Philosophy* 21 (19) 1924, 505-7.

21. From "The Ontological Argument in Royce and Others" in *Contemporary Idealism in America* (ed. Clifford Barrett, Macmillan 1932), p. 50.

22. The quoted reference is by Cock (367), and refers to Schiller. Schiller's 1907 *Studies in Humanism* (Macmillan), on the other hand, offers a powerful criticism of ontological arguments as interpreted by Lotze and revived by Webb: "The 'proof' involves reiterating that the meaning of the conception involves the same claim to reality. But what we still want to know is whether this claim can be sustained, whether reality will conform to our conceptions, whether the meaning we attribute to them is actually true. And, to assure us of this, we are given nothing but the Absolute's own assurance! This may be rationalism, but it does not look rational." (Pg. 252). In an earlier review called "Lotze's Monism" (*The Philosophical Review* 5(3) 1896, 225-45) Schiller had seemed more amenable to the idea that an idealist interpretation of ontological arguments could have some value.

23. "A Review of the Ontological Argument" in *The American Journal of Theology* 10(1) 53-71

24. Paulin 56.

25. These lectures were delivered in 1911-13, but unfortunately were not published until after the war (Oxford 1920).

26. This is the view that there are distinct individual persons (hence 'personalism') but that such are "organic to the world." This paradoxical position represents a compromise of Seth's early, more thoroughgoing personalism.

27. *The Idea of God*, p. 236.

28. *Ibid.*, p. 239.

29. *Ibid.*, p. 240.

30. *Enquiry* VII (1): "We are got into fairy land long ere we reach the last steps of our theory; and there we have no reason to trust our common methods of argument, or to think that our usual analogies and probabilities have any authority. Our line is too short to fathom such immense abysses."

31. *The Idea of God*, p. 240.

32. In *The World and the Individual Royce* (vol. 1, pg. 228) uses this title to refer to Augustine's truth argument. In 1912 Hocking, a close friend and student, (pg. 307) numbered Royce among the proponents of ontological arguments, though this apparently was not based on published evidence.

33. *The World and the Individual* (vol. 1, pp 100, 114).

34. *The World and the Individual* (vol. 1, pp 119, 338).

35. These lectures were published as *Metaphysics* in 1988 by SUNY Press, edited by Richard Hocking and Frank Oppenheim.

36. A secondary literature has begun to develop around Royce's work in logic. See the recent number of *Transactions of the Charles S. Peirce Society* (46-2, 2011)

37. *Metaphysics*, p.118; a second example is equally amusing: "A Maine farmer traveling west was induced by confidence men to exchange his greenbacks for worthless counterfeit "gold." The farmer had never seen any gold money and had said pathetically, "I thought gold was so precious that it couldn't be counterfeited." In a way he had taken the essence for the existence. That which appeared as gold, in view of the preciousness, must have that character. . . . You can say that that is the pathetic situation of Anselm: God is so perfect that he cannot not exist . . . That seems to be Anselm's position."

38. Although Royce in all probability was acquainted with Seth, he could not have read the 1912 Gifford lectures, since those were not published until after Royce's death. Royce was aware of several similar discussions, including of course Hocking's chapter on the ontological argument from *The Meaning of God in Human Experience*.

39. *Metaphysics*, p. 119.

40. On the concept of the past, for instance, see Lecture X of *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*; the concept of order is discussed throughout *The World and the Individual*, as well as in *Principles of Logic*

41. Moore's essays had yet to be published at the time of Royce's lecture. "A defence of Common Sense" is from 1925 (*Contemporary British Philosophy*, ed. Muirhead), and "Proof of an External World" is a decade newer.

42. *Metaphysics*, p. 119

43. *Ibid.*, p. 119.

44. *Ibid.*, p. 126ff.

45. As Webb rightly explained, this line of reply had been commonplace since Hegel published the first volume of his *Science of Logic*.

46. Leibniz offers the prominent historical example, although Royce does not seem to be posing objections to the monadology here.

47. *Metaphysics*, p. 126. This point is strengthened by Russell's own acknowledgement that "identification of a physical object has to be ideal identification which one doesn't actually accomplish in one's own case." (127)

48. *Metaphysics*, p. 125; Randall Auxier has suggested to me a further application of this example, since the brother's experience serves as the subject of O statements in Royce's logic.

49. Russell's acknowledgement that identification is ideal did not lead him to deny the mind-independence of individuals. Royce acknowledged this in the *Metaphysics* course, and had given a more extended analysis of the Russell-Frege position in the third chapter of *Principles of Logic*.

50. See especially Chapter 3 of *Principles of Logic*, on logical primitives.

51. Holt and Co. New York, 1902. See especially Chapter VI on relations and Chapter VII on existence assertions.

52. *Metaphysics*, p. 139.

53. Royce made his own contribution to this historiography in the 1893 book *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*. He did not focus heavily on empiricism in that work, however.

54. On this see especially Part 1 of *Metaphysics*.

55. *Metaphysics*, p. 127: "I am not wishing to raise any doubts in your minds with regard to that evidence on the basis of which you are confident that your account of your past has its well-recognized grade of correctness. But there is no moment when this is experienced. Experience is illustrated by the sound of my voice as you now hear it; evidence by your confidence that it is the same lecturer [this last clause refers to the audience's identification of Royce as an individual person; NB Lotze's term 'confidence' as contrasted with 'evidence']."

56. *Ibid.*, p. 130.

57. *Ibid.*, p. 131.

58. For a recent argument that logical systems are metaphysically loaded, see Achille C. Varzi's "On the Interplay between Logic and Metaphysics" in *Linguistic and Philosophical Investigations* 8 (2009), pp. 13-36

59. Royce's own efforts in adapting Pierce's work in the logic of relations offer a legitimate alternative to the Russellian logic that later became entrenched in textbooks and curricula.

60. This is the line that Graham Oppy takes in *Ontological Arguments and Belief in God* (Cambridge 1995), p 100.

61. In his more tendentious moods, Royce would likely see insist that a methodological realism is a version of idealism, since in this case the grounds for realism include need.

62. William J. Mander ("Idealism and the Ontological Argument" in *British Journal for the History of Philosophy* 20-5, 2012, 993-1014) makes a detailed case for including Collingwood among the idealists.

63. In Chapter VI of his *Autobiography*, Collingwood helpfully summarizes his opposition to both the realist logic of Russell and the idealist logic of his predecessors.

64. The notes from these lectures are in the Bodleian library, and available upon permission from the Collingwood family.

65. Ryle objects (140) that "The Plato-Kant point is different from the Aristotle-Hegel point."

66. He seems to qualify the Thomistic opposition

67. *Essay on Philosophical Method* (EPM), p. 124ff.

68. In any case, Collingwood was familiar with Webb, who was an Oxford colleague and not very much older than Collingwood himself.

69. Chapters IX and X of EPM seem, at least, to allow for a kind of historical pluralism.

70. EPM, p. 125.

71. Guuseppina D'oro emphasized Collingwood's non-traditional approach to metaphysics in "On Collingwood's rehabilitation of the ontological argument" in *Idealistic studies* 30, 2000, 173-88.

72. EPM, p. 122-3: "It is a reasonable presumption that whatever is true of science is true of philosophy, and merely as a presumption it deserves all respect; but every one admits that there are differences between them, and the subject of this essay is the general question what these differences are."

73. *Ibid.*, p. 27-91.

74. *Ibid.*, p. 141.

75. See especially the *Idea of History* (Oxford 1946) and *Essay on Metaphysics* (Oxford, 1940)

76. EPM, p. 250.

77. *Ibid.*, p. 254-5.

78. I refer of course to Norman Malcolm and Charles Hartshorne. A number of their publications on the topic are reproduced in *The Many-Faced Argument* (MacMillan 1967).

79. On the first point, some illustrative passages appear in *The Spirit of Modern Philosophy*: "There is in truth no experience without theory, and philosophy is simply theory brought to consciousness of itself" (294). On the second point, I have in mind the concepts of individuality and order as these are developed in *The Principles of Logic*.

80. In addition to the Findlay debates discussed in the following sentences, see the treatments of ontological arguments in *Analysis*, for instance in the debates

between Hardin and Resnick in 1961-2 (Clyde Hardin, "An Empirical Refutation of the Ontological Argument" *Analysis* 22.1 1961; Lawrence Resnick, "A Logical Refutation of Mr. Hardin's Argument," *Analysis* 22 .4 1962; Hardin, "Cows and Unicorns: Two Replies to Mr. Resnick" *Analysis* 23.1 1962)

81. Findlay's argument initially appeared in "Can God's Existence be Disproved?" in *Mind*, New Series, 57 (226), 1948, pp. 176-18. His reply to Hughes the following year ("God's Non-Existence: A Reply to Mr. Rainer and Mr. Hughes," *Mind*, New Series 58, 231 pp. 352-354) was, as is usually the case, much more judicious.

82. "Has God's Existence Been Disproved?" *Mind*, New Series 58 (229) 1949, pp. 67-74

83. Oppy's work is the best critical assessment of ontological arguments in recent decades, yet his criticism nonetheless relies on the premise that any ontological argument can be rephrased in a (re; Fregean) propositional logic.