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ARTICLE

Two dogmas of analytic historiography

Michael Beaney[a,b]

[a]Department of Philosophy, King's College London, London, UK; [b]Institut für Philosophie, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany

ABSTRACT
Starting from an analogy with Quine's two dogmas of empiricism, I offer a (neo-Kantian) critique of two dogmas of analytic historiography: the belief in a cleavage between the justification of a philosophical claim and an account of its genesis and the belief in rational reconstructionism. I take Russell's rational reconstruction of Leibniz's philosophy as my detailed example.

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Modern analytic historiography has been conditioned in large part by two dogmas. One is a belief in some fundamental cleavage between the *justification* of a philosophical claim, provided by giving reasons, and an account of its *genesis*, offered by telling some causal story. The other dogma is *reconstructionism*: the belief that any philosopher's views can be reconstructed as a rational system, based on certain fundamental assumptions. Both dogmas, I shall argue, are ill-founded. One effect of abandoning them is, as we shall see, a blurring of the supposed boundary between philosophy and history of philosophy. Another effect is a shift towards hermeneutics.

As anyone familiar with Quine's writings will recognize, this opening paragraph is a transformation of the famous opening paragraph of "Two Dogmas of Empiricism", one of the canonical texts of twentieth-century philosophy. The parallel between Quine's two dogmas of empiricism and what I here call the two dogmas of analytic historiography is striking, and just as Quine felt that a critique of the former was needed, so I shall be concerned with a critique of the latter. My conception of a 'critique', however, is more Kantian than Quine's, and I also consider how analytic historiography might be dedogmatized by appreciating its interaction with historical understanding.

Quine's first dogma is that there is a fundamental cleavage between analytic truths, grounded in meanings, and synthetic truths, grounded in facts.

CONTACT Michael Beaney michael.beaney@kcl.ac.uk; michael.beaney@hu-berlin.de

One of his targets was the view that the articulation and clarification of analytic truths is one of the main tasks of the (analytic) philosopher, and his objection was that an adequate (non-circular) explanation of analyticity cannot be given and hence that no cleavage exists. So too, one of my targets is the view that the main task of the analytic historiographer is to evaluate the justification for the claims that past philosophers have made, and my objection is that this concern with justification cannot be as neatly separated from concern with genetic questions as is often supposed. Nor can the distinction between justification and genesis itself be justified in an adequate (non-circular) way.

Quine's second dogma is reductionism, the view that "each meaningful statement is equivalent to some logical construct upon terms which refer to immediate experience" ("Two Dogmas of Empiricism", 20), and his objection was that this fails to respect the holistic character of empirical confirmation. Here, too, there is a parallel to a fundamental assumption of analytic historiography, which I call *reconstructionism*: that any philosopher's views can – and indeed should – be rationally reconstructed by showing how they follow from more basic claims; and my objection is that we should be more holistically minded in historiography as well. The two dogmas of analytic historiography are clearly connected: justification is seen as proceeding by rational reconstruction.

I will discuss and evaluate each dogma in turn, focusing on the account of Leibniz's philosophy that Russell published in 1900. Not only is this the first detailed example of rational reconstruction in analytic historiography but it also offered a model for subsequent analytic historians. The basic 2×2 structure of my critique of the two dogmas is exhibited in the following table.

1 The First Dogma	2 The Second Dogma
1 Justification and genesis	1 Rational reconstruction
2 The first dogma in analytic historiography	2 The second dogma in analytic historiography

I conclude by relocating the two dogmas in a healthier conception of philosophical historiography.

1. The first dogma

1.1. Justification and genesis

The first dogma of analytic historiography is the belief that there is a fundamental cleavage between the *justification* of a philosophical claim, provided by giving reasons, and an account of its *genesis*, offered by telling some causal story. The analytic historian of philosophy takes this to justify their own focus on justification. But what accounts – justificatory or genetic – might be given of this dogma and of its role in analytic historiography? I address the first question in this subsection, and the second in the next.

One of the roots of the dogma is the distinction that Kant drew between *quid juris* and *quid facti* questions – between questions of right or legitimation and questions of fact or origin.[1] Quite what Kant meant, and how he respected it in his work, is controversial, but it came to play a central role in neo-Kantianism and subsequent traditions such as phenomenology and, most notably, analytic philosophy. Even today it is rarely questioned. Failure to respect it, in the sense that questions about justification are answered by offering some story about origins, is often condemned as committing 'the genetic fallacy'.[2]

The distinction has an obvious appeal. That I have come to believe, say, that $13 \times 57 = 741$, or that God exists, or that murder is wrong, or that Russell was a logicist, by being told so, seems to provide no ground at all for the truth of what I have been told. What we want is a *reason* for holding that they are true. Of course, in the past, the authority of someone else (such as a priest) or of a text (such as the bible) may have been taken as a ground for holding a belief, but the repudiation of this view is generally seen as a key achievement of the Enlightenment.[3] '*Sapere aude!*', the motto that opens Kant's famous essay on enlightenment ("An Answer to the Question"), encouraged us to think for ourselves – and to use our reason to justify what we believe.

The distinction is nevertheless problematic. While there are clearly many cases in which how a belief came to be held provides no grounds for holding it to be true, there are other cases in which this is not so obvious. Perhaps I did indeed come to believe something – say, in mathematics – by working it out from first principles, in which case the origin of my belief would also seem to be the reason for holding it.[4] And if I am told something by someone reliable, then does that not give me a reason for believing it? We speak, for example, of knowing something on 'good authority', which suggests that the worry is not so much with 'authority' *per se* but with whether the authority is reliable. So can origins *sometimes* provide reasons? If so, then how do we identify the origins that do, and how are we to extract the reasons from what are typically very complex genetic processes? If not, then how are we to enter the space of reasons – the supposedly

[1]See especially Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, A84/B116. Kant was influenced by Alexander Baumgarten, who distinguished between *imputatio facti* and *imputatio legis* in discussing ethics and the law, e.g. in his *Initia Philosophiae Practicae Primae* of 1760. See Proops, "Kant's Legal Metaphor", 213. Baumgarten did not extend the distinction to metaphysics, however, which is where Kant's originality lies.

[2]The earliest use of this term that I have found occurs in Cohen and Nagel, *An Introduction to Logic and Scientific Method*, 388–90.

[3]Repudiation of this view goes back at least to the dawn of early modern philosophy. See, for example, Rule Three of Descartes' *Rules for the Direction of the Mind*; and for discussion, Scharff, *How History Matters to Philosophy*, chs. 1, 3.

[4]For discussion of these kinds of case, in particular, see Klement, "When Is Genetic Reasoning Not Fallacious?". As Klement suggests, causal theories of meaning and causal and reliabilist theories of belief and knowledge involve some form of genetic reasoning.

pure realm of reasoning? And even when we are operating in that space, we may well find genetic processes intruding. We know all too well how often the reasons that someone officially gives for believing or doing something may be just a smokescreen for what actually motivates them. If we are tempted to talk here of 'real' ('psychological' rather than 'logical') reasons, then that just shows how slippery this whole territory is: it may be far from easy to separate the wheat of reason from the genetic chaff.

A deeper worry is Wittgensteinian. At some point justification (if understood as derivation from something more fundamental) gives out, and then all we may feel inclined to say is "This is just how we see things" or "This is simply what we do". But if we were encouraged to say more, then we might offer a genetic story, to help someone appreciate when bedrock is reached. Any justificatory project has its limits and conditions.

The first dogma of analytic historiography is appropriately called a *dogma* and not just a principle, in my view, because its own justification is problematic. If the dogma is correct, then we cannot justify it by any genetic account (for example, by tracing it back to Kant and showing how it took root), since that would *ipso facto* falsify it. But how can we justify it without begging the question? If the principle is somehow constitutive of justification (to the extent that it excludes genetic explanation), then how can this be done without circularity? What kind of justification could there be? Without any justification, it would indeed count as a mere dogma.

Let us approach these questions by seeing if we can nevertheless find answers in some of the sources of the distinction – in particular, in the work of Kant himself and in what I regard as the most sophisticated discussion of the distinction in neo-Kantianism, namely, Windelband's essay, "Critical or Genetic Method?". In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant introduces the distinction between *quid juris* and *quid facti* questions at the beginning of the chapter "On the Deduction of the Pure Concepts of the Understanding":

> Jurists, when they speak of entitlements and claims, distinguish in a legal matter between the questions about what is lawful (*quid juris*) and that which concerns the fact (*quid facti*), and since they demand proof of both, they call the first, that which is to establish the entitlement or the legal claim, the **deduction**.
>
> (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A84–5/B116–7)

Leaving aside the controversial question as to what exactly is going on in this chapter, let us simply focus on the notion of a 'deduction', understood in a legal rather than logical sense.

What did Kant mean by a 'legal deduction'? An example will suffice to illustrate the idea. Consider the question as to who is the rightful heir to the throne: this is the *quid juris* question. Under a certain legal system, let us say, someone is the rightful heir to the throne if they are the oldest living child of the reigning monarch: this tells us what the law is. But to answer

the question as to whether a particular person is the rightful heir, we must also establish that they are indeed the oldest living child of the reigning monarch: this answers the *quid facti* question.

In his lectures on ethics, Kant set out such examples in the form of a syllogism.[5] In this case, we could do so as follows:

(A1) Whoever is the oldest living child of the reigning monarch is the rightful heir to the throne.
(A2) Iris is the oldest living child of the reigning monarch.

(A3) Iris is the rightful heir to the throne.

(A1) is the major premise, stating the relevant law, and (A2) is the minor premise, which Kant calls the *factum*. The conclusion – (A3) – follows by applying the law to the fact subsumed under it ("*applicatio legis ad factum sub lege sumptum*", as Kant puts it; *Vigilantius Ethics Lectures*, 562). This is the *legal deduction* of Iris' claim to be the rightful heir to the throne.

It is clear from this that (A2) provides the answer to the *quid facti* question: Who is the oldest living child of the reigning monarch? But what exactly is the *quid juris* question? This is how it was formulated above: Who is the rightful heir to the throne? But this is ambiguous between the following two questions:

(1) What property must someone have to be the rightful heir to the throne?
(2) Which particular person is the rightful heir to the throne?

(A1) answers (1), while (A3) answers (2). (1) is answered by giving a definite description ('the oldest living child of the reigning monarch'), while (2) is answered by giving a proper name ('Iris'). What connects them, and which validates the legal deduction, is that the definite description and the name have the same reference.

This suggests that we might distinguish *two* kinds of *quid juris* questions, those that can be answered simply by clarifying the law and those that require an answer to a *quid facti* question, to which the law is then applied in 'deducing' the answer. It is the latter which Kant had in mind in speaking of a 'legal deduction', although it is easy to think that *quid juris* questions are only of the first kind (they are just questions 'of the law'). And if we do, then it is tempting to see a *cleavage* between *quid juris* and *quid facti* questions. However, if we recognize the second kind, then the situation is more complex. Answers to *quid juris* questions in these cases depend on answers

[5]See especially the *Vigilantius Ethics Lectures* (Ak. 27, 562), dating from 1793. Kant also discussed the issue in lectures on ethics he gave around 1780 (Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, 58). For helpful discussion of all this, to which I am indebted here, see Proops, "Kant's Legal Metaphor", esp. §2.

to *quid facti* questions. As we shall see, it is the latter kind of case that is relevant for analytic historiography.

In both kinds of case, though, *quid juris* questions cannot be answered by simply answering *quid facti* questions. So the distinction remains. We have thus answered our own *quid facti* question: the distinction between justification and genesis, in the form of the *quid juris*/*quid facti* distinction, can indeed be found in Kant's work. So here is one source. But to say that he drew this distinction is not to say that he was justified in doing so, even if we can appreciate its role in the particular example we considered. We still need to answer the *quid juris* question: is it justified to distinguish between justification and genesis? So let us now turn to Windelband.

The distinction between justification and genesis was of fundamental importance in neo-Kantianism. Windelband called it Kant's *Grundgedanke*, and it received its fullest discussion and attempted defence in his 1883 essay, "Critical or Genetic Method?" It is in the distinction that Kant posited between 'grounding' and 'origin', as he puts it, that "insight into the possibility of a critical conception of philosophy is rooted" ("Methode", 272). Kant's critical method is then explained and motivated by contrast to the 'genetic method' that is seen as distinctive of the sciences.

Windelband's starting-point is the claim that all knowledge involves the subsumption of particulars under universals, which he takes to entail that deduction (from the universal to the particular) and induction (from the particular to the more general) are the only two kinds of proof. But both rely on *axioms*, which cannot themselves be proved. This raises the question of the 'validity' ('*Geltung*') of the axioms, and it is answering this question that he sees as the central task of philosophy. ("Methode", 272–4) How is this to be achieved? According to Windelband, the axioms are not *logically* necessary, precisely because they are not provable, which leaves us with either 'factual validity' or 'teleological necessity' ("Methode", 275). In the rest of the essay, he criticizes the former and advocates the latter. Factual validity can be sought in either empirical psychology, which tells us what principles (most) people actually hold, or history, which tells us what principles have come to be held in the historical process. But neither of these can *justify* the principles. Most – and even all – people can be wrong about something, and if appeal is made to historical 'progress', then this presupposes a norm by which to judge this progress. In general, the genetic method itself presupposes axioms that cannot themselves be factually validated on pain of circularity. ("Methode", 275–80)

This leaves 'teleological' validation. This consists in showing that the validity of axioms "must be recognized as unconditioned, if certain ends are to be achieved" ("Methode", 275). In the case of logic, Windelband argues, if our aim is *truth*, then we must accept the validity of the laws of logic. These include the 'axiom of consequence' (reflecting the rule of *modus ponens*), the

principle of non-contradiction, and the principle of sufficient reason ("Methode", 282). But we might also count as 'logical' here the very principle that there is a distinction between justification and genesis. This must also be "recognized as unconditioned", we can interpret Windelband as implicitly arguing, if we are to seek truth at all. It, too, can only be 'validated' teleologically – by appreciating the purposes it serves. This applies no less in historiography: "critical history, in the sense of a history that makes judgments, is only possible with a teleological mindset [*zweckbestimmtes Bewusstsein*]" ("Methode", 279).

As in the case of Kant, however, Windelband recognizes – and indeed stresses – the connection between the normative and the factual. Philosophy, he writes, can only "solve its task of searching for norms *with the aid* of experience" ("Methode", 282). He goes on:

> The genetic facts are never the grounds for a proof in philosophy, but they are the objects of critique: psychology and history must have elaborated the material for cognition out of its pre-scientific vagueness to such an extent that the problems of philosophy can be developed out of it in a conceptually determined and orderly way.
>
> ("Methode", 283)

What is involved here, I suggest, is a *deepening* of Kant's critical project by recognizing the importance of history.[6] In the final two paragraphs of his essay, Windelband talks of how the principles to be teleologically validated arise out of "the critical illumination of history", requiring an "historical orientation" to be fully recognized ("Methode", 284–5).

Let us then put together Kant's and Windelband's views in offering the following (neo-)Kantian account (a critique in the Kantian sense) of the distinction between justification and genesis. There is indeed a valid distinction, but it is not to be understood as implying that justification has nothing at all to do with genesis. So there is no *cleavage*, as stated in the first dogma. Making legal judgements, for example, requires both, and in the case of 'axioms', their 'justification' requires reflecting on genetic facts. This is 'justification', though, in the sense not of 'logical proof' but of 'teleological validation', the recognition of which emerges out of reflection on history. So philosophy and history cannot themselves be as sharply distinguished as is often supposed.

1.2. The first dogma in analytic historiography

Kant's account of the *quid juris*/*quid facti* distinction offers us a model for thinking through the role of the first dogma in analytic historiography.

[6]For an account of Kant's own deepening of his critical project in response to appreciating the issues raised by history of philosophy, see Reichl, "Making History Philosophical". Windelband, in my view, carries it further, as does Cassirer, on which see also Renz, "Cassirer's Enlightenment".

Analytic historians of philosophy stress that their main concern is with evaluating the claims made by past philosophers or found in philosophical texts. Corresponding to the syllogism set out above, we can offer the following syllogisms, representing in the simplest possible schematic form the two kinds of judgement that analytic historians of philosophy make:

(B1) Anyone who thinks X is right (or wrong) to do so.
(B2) P thinks X.

(B3) P is right (or wrong) to think X.

(C1) The statement that X is true (or false).
(C2) Text T states that X.

(C3) Text T expresses a truth (falsehood) in stating that X.

Analytic philosophers want to draw the conclusions schematized in (B3) and (C3). But with Kant's analysis of legal judgements in mind, it is important to appreciate that there are two premises. We must indeed assess the arguments and make certain evaluative judgements, as captured in the first premise of the relevant syllogism. But we must also establish that the philosopher or text does, in fact, make the relevant claim, as stated in the second premise. And this involves answering an *historical* question. The judgements we make in doing history of philosophy, then, are like legal judgements, which, in answering *quid juris* questions, also require answering *quid facti* questions.

Let us turn, then, to an example of analytic historiography: Russell's book, *A Critical Exposition of the Philosophy of Leibniz*, which was published in 1900. Russell wrote this in the middle of his rebellion – with G. E. Moore – against British idealism. Indeed, it played a crucial role in that rebellion, a fact that itself has historiographical significance. Engaging with past philosophy is typically an essential part of establishing a new philosophical approach or view. The book resulted from a course of lectures on Leibniz that Russell gave at Cambridge in Lent Term 1899, and was complete before his fateful meeting with Giuseppe Peano at the International Congress of Philosophy in Paris in August 1900, which resulted in his conversion to the new mathematical logic.

Russell's endorsement of the first dogma is made explicit in his preface. He begins by distinguishing two approaches to history of philosophy, one "mainly historical" and the other "mainly philosophical". The first addresses questions "concerning the influence of the times or of other philosophers, concerning the growth of a philosopher's system, and the causes which suggested his leading ideas". The second involves

> a purely philosophical attitude towards previous philosophers … in which, without regard to dates or influences, we seek simply to discover what are the great types of possible philosophies, and guide ourselves in the search by investigating the systems advocated by the great philosophers of the past.

There are only a few such types, he goes on to say, and by "examining the greatest representative of any type", we may learn what are the reasons for and against such philosophies (*Philosophy of Leibniz*, xv–xvi).

What is crucial here, then, is not simply the distinction between 'historical' and 'philosophical' questions, but the claim that the philosophical part of history of philosophy consists in identifying the 'great types' of philosophies and their 'greatest representatives', through which to assess those philosophies. He continues:

> in such enquiries the philosopher is no longer explained psychologically: he is examined as the advocate of what he holds to be a body of philosophic truth. By what process of development he came to this opinion, though in itself an important and interesting question, is logically irrelevant to the inquiry how far the opinion itself is correct; and among his opinions, when these have been ascertained, it becomes desirable to prune away such as seem inconsistent with his main doctrines, before those doctrines themselves are subjected to critical scrutiny. Philosophic truth and falsehood, in short, rather than historical fact, are what primarily demand our attention in this inquiry.
>
> (*Philosophy of Leibniz*, xvi)[7]

We have here a clear statement of the distinction – indeed *cleavage* – between psychological or causal explanation and logical or philosophical justification, the dogma that lies at the heart of analytic historiography.

I shall examine Russell's concern with 'types' of philosophies in the next section. But let us return here to the historiographical syllogisms schematized above. The analytic historian's aim is to make judgements of the form 'Philosopher P is right (or wrong) to think X' or 'Text T expresses a truth (falsehood) in stating that X'. But this requires establishing not just that X is indeed true (or false) but also that P or T actually makes the claim that X. In the case of texts, this might seem easy to establish: we just find the texts in which X is stated. But this can be less straightforward than it sounds. There may be problems of authenticity, translation, or interpretation, such as in deciding whether the claim is actually *stated* rather than merely supposed or hypothesized. When it comes to maintaining that a philosopher P made the claim that X, there are further problems. We need to know exactly when the claim was made, to recognize any changes in their views; whether it represents their considered opinion, and not just an impulsive reaction to a hostile critic, for example; what qualifications or restrictions are implicit in the broader

[7]See also the discarded preface that Russell wrote for the book, which elaborates on this theme (Russell, "Discarded Preface", which contains a helpful introduction by Nicholas Griffin). Cf. Moore's introduction to his 1898 dissertation, 129–31.

context; and so on. Serious historical work, then, needs to be done to substantiate any judgement that a philosopher or text was right or wrong in claiming that X.

What is Russell's view on all this? His book on Leibniz contains a lengthy (100-page) appendix which provides the texts on which his account relies. This draws mainly on the seven-volume collection of Leibniz's philosophical writings edited by C. J. Gerhardt (1875–90). So as far as the C-type syllogisms are concerned, Russell gave answers to the *quid facti* questions – *but only by depending on the work of others*. As far as the B-type syllogisms are concerned, this also depends on the texts Russell read and selected *but also on how he interpreted them to be expressing Leibniz's philosophy*. I will return to this in the next section, but let me stress one crucial point here. In both types of syllogisms, it is essential that 'X' means the same in the two premises for the conclusion to be drawn. One must be sure, in other words, that what one judges to be right or wrong (or true or false) is what philosopher P actually thinks (or text T actually states). This is obvious, of course, but it does require appreciation of exactly what the philosopher or text is saying. And this is also where historical understanding is needed.

An analytic historian of philosophy is only able to make their judgements, as schematized in the conclusions of the B- and C-type syllogisms, by presupposing or relying on historical facts. If the second premises on which their conclusions depend are false, then those conclusions are false. Russell may say that he is only concerned with "philosophic truth and falsehood … rather than historical fact", but that is only made possible by someone else establishing the latter. To the extent that the first dogma asserts a cleavage and not just a distinction between justification and genesis, it encourages someone like Russell to wrongly downplay the importance of historical investigations in history of philosophy. The judgements we make as historians of philosophy require answering both *quid juris* and *quid facti* questions. In history of philosophy, we demand historical justice and not just philosophical justification.[8]

2. The second dogma

2.1. Rational reconstruction

The second dogma of analytic historiography is reconstructionism: the belief that any philosopher's views can be reconstructed as a rational system, based

[8]In an analogous way, we might suggest, it is the supposed *cleavage* and not the (conceptual) distinction between analytic and synthetic truths to which Quine was objecting. Quine came to admit that a sentence could be characterized as analytic "if *everybody* learns that it is true by learning its words" (*Roots of Reference*, 79). But this is not enough to secure the key idea of analytic truths being "grounded in meanings independently of matters of fact", as Quine put it ("Two Dogmas of Empiricism", 20), which was the real target of his critique. For discussion of the development of Quine's views here, see Hylton, *Quine*, ch. 3.

on certain fundamental assumptions. The second dogma clearly depends on the first dogma, since the very idea of rational reconstruction presupposes the ability to distinguish questions of justification from questions of genesis, and the implied possibility of bracketing the latter. Any problems with the first dogma are thus likely to be reflected in the second dogma, so investigating the latter enables us to deepen the critique of the former.

The origins of the idea of rational reconstruction go back to the work of Johann Jacob Brucker, who first argued that the task of history of philosophy was to reconstruct 'systems' of philosophy, based on certain 'principles'.[9] The subsequent story runs through Kant and the neo-Kantians, among many others.[10] But since our concern here is with the genre of rational reconstruction in analytic historiography, let us (with all due disquiet) bracket the connecting history and return to the work that established this genre – Russell's 1900 book on Leibniz, which did indeed reconstruct Leibniz's philosophy as a system. If we are going to evaluate such a genre, then we need to answer another *quid facti* question: what is a paradigm example of a rational reconstruction?

We have seen that Russell claimed that the 'philosophical' approach to history of philosophy consists in the identification and assessment of the 'great types' of philosophies and their 'greatest representatives'. So what is the 'type' of philosophy of which Leibniz is the greatest representative, on Russell's view? The answer is not straightforward, since Russell thinks that Leibniz's actual philosophy is inconsistent, and hence – from what he said in his preface – needs to be pruned of those inconsistencies before it can constitute a 'type'. Russell claims, however, that "the system which Leibniz should have written" is based on five main premises, which he states as follows:

1 Every proposition has a subject and a predicate.
2 A subject may have predicates which are qualities existing at various times. (Such a subject is called a *substance*.)
3 True propositions not asserting existence at particular times are necessary and analytic, but such as assert existence at particular times are contingent and synthetic. The latter depend upon final causes.
4 The Ego is a substance.
5 Perception yields knowledge of an external world, i.e. of existents other than myself and my states. (*Philosophy of Leibniz*, 4)

II and III are seen as elaborations of I, while IV and V, according to Russell, are *inconsistent* with I. Since he clearly regards the first premise as fundamental,

[9]Brucker, *Historia critica philosophiae*. For discussion, see Catana, *The Historiographical Concept*, "The History of the History of Philosophy", "Philosophical Problems in the History of Philosophy"; Piaia and Santinello, *Models of the History of Philosophy*.
[10]I offer an account of some of the highlights in Beaney, "Analytic Philosophy and History of Philosophy".

then, the obvious suggestion is that the 'type' represented by Leibniz is any philosophy that is based on this.

All sound philosophy, Russell claims at the beginning of chapter II, begins with an analysis of propositions. He takes the first premise to encapsulate Leibniz's own starting-point: the analysis of a proposition into subject and predicate. What this entails, as Russell understands it, is that every proposition is *reducible* to one of subject–predicate form, and this is the claim that he rejects. For, on his view, (asymmetrical) relational propositions *cannot* be so reduced, so that any 'type' of philosophy that rests on this first premise is false.

In §8 of chapter II Russell sets out what he calls a "purely logical argument", based on this claim, for "the whole, or nearly the whole" of Leibniz's philosophy, proceeding from the idea that a true proposition is one where the predicate is contained in the subject (unless existence is being asserted) to his doctrine of monads (*Philosophy of Leibniz*, 8–11). This is radical reconstructionism: Leibniz's views are seen as derivable from a very small set of premises. The details of the argument are spelled out in the rest of the book; we will consider just some of them here.

What, more exactly, is the 'type' of philosophy that Leibniz's views represent, according to Russell? Let us focus on the basic claim that every proposition is reducible to one of subject–predicate form, which Russell attributes not just to Leibniz but also to many of Leibniz's predecessors and successors, including Descartes, Spinoza, Kant, Hegel, and Bradley. The issue of reducibility, he writes, "is one of fundamental importance to all philosophy" (*Philosophy of Leibniz*, 12), and he links it to the question of the reality of relations. Indeed, he regards the denial of the 'independent reality' of relations as grounded in the claim that every proposition has a subject and a predicate.

In §10 of chapter II Russell cites a passage from Leibniz in which an (asymmetrical) relational proposition is discussed. We can present Leibniz's argument as follows. Consider the proposition:

(L) Line L is longer than line M.

According to Leibniz, this can be 'conceived', i.e. analysed, in three ways. In the first, we can take 'line L' as the subject and 'longer than line M' as the predicate; and in the second, we can take 'line M' as the subject and 'shorter than line L' as the predicate. In both cases we are analysing it into subject–predicate form. We can also 'conceive' it, Leibniz suggests, as somehow asserting a *relation* that obtains between the two lines. But what is the 'subject' here? If we take the two lines together as the subject, then, Leibniz writes, "we should have an accident [i.e., what is attributed, in this case, the relation] in two subjects, with one leg in one, and the other in the other; which is contrary to the notion of accidents". On the other hand, to treat the relation itself as the subject goes against what can count as a subject. Leibniz writes:

> we must say that this relation, in this third way of considering it, is indeed *out of* the subjects; but being neither a substance, nor an accident, it must be a mere ideal thing, the consideration of which is nevertheless useful.
> (Leibniz, *The Philosophical Works of Leibnitz*, 266–7; cited by Russell, *Philosophy of Leibniz*, 13)

It is this conception of relations as 'mere ideal things' to which Russell objects. If Leibniz were pushed to explain this, Russell writes, "he would declare it to be an accident of the mind" (*Philosophy of Leibniz*, 13). To maintain the subject–predicate doctrine, Russell goes on, Leibniz is forced "to the Kantian theory that relations, though veritable, are the work of the mind" (*Philosophy of Leibniz*, 14). Leibniz is thus placed in the same 'type' of philosophy as Kant – and indeed anyone who treats relations as 'ideal', a view that Russell thinks follows from adherence to the doctrine that every proposition has a subject and a predicate, i.e. to the first premise that he identifies as generating Leibniz's philosophy. In short, the 'type' of philosophy that Leibniz's system is taken as exemplifying is a form of idealism.[11]

Why was the problem of relations so important to Russell? The answer lies in his concern with the foundations of mathematics, which was his main preoccupation from 1895 until the early 1910s, when *Principia Mathematica* was published. Russell's worry was that if relations were not 'real', then relational propositions could not be true and hence mathematics itself could not be true, since it is full of relational propositions. More specifically, asymmetrical relations are involved in all series, such as the series of natural numbers, so any attempt at understanding the nature of mathematics must offer an account of these. But it is propositions involving asymmetrical relations, such as (L) above, that are especially resistant to 'reduction' to simpler subject–predicate propositions (see Beaney, "Logic and Metaphysics", 270–1).

Russell began his work on the foundations of mathematics as a neo-Hegelian, influenced by British idealism, and what he saw as central to neo-Hegelianism was the doctrine of internal relations – the claim that "Every relation is grounded in the natures of the related terms", as he later put it (*My Philosophical Development*, 43). He found this doctrine in Leibniz's philosophy, too, expressed most notably in the Principle of the Identity of Indiscernibles, which is why his work on Leibniz became a testing ground in developing his own philosophical views.

Russell's main concern (as a good Hegelian) was with various contradictions that he saw in mathematics. One was what he called 'the antinomy of the point': all points are identical, yet each is distinct (*An Essay on the Foundations of Geometry*, § 196). This would seem to suggest that there can be no such thing as a geometrical point. Now the obvious response is to distinguish between qualitative and numerical identity: while points are

[11]For more on the appeal to 'types' in Russell's historiography, see Hunter, "Russell Making History".

qualitatively identical, they are numerically distinct. They differ merely in their (external) spatial relations to one another. But this response was ruled out by Russell's neo-Hegelianism, and in particular, by the doctrine of internal relations. For if points did indeed differ in their (external) relations, then there would be some corresponding difference in their intrinsic properties, which would mean that they were not after all qualitatively identical.

Russell thought that there were similar antinomies in arithmetic and elsewhere, and in 1898 he brought them together into a single general version which he called 'the contradiction of relativity'. He characterized this as "the contradiction of a difference between two terms, without a difference in the conceptions applicable to them", and saw it as pervading mathematics ("An Analysis of Mathematical Reasoning", 166). This characterization makes it clear how it depends on the neo-Hegelian doctrine of internal relations, for without this doctrine, there would be no contradiction. Two things can be qualitatively identical (relative to a set of concepts) yet distinguishable by means of their 'external' (e.g. spatial) relations. Expressing it in such a general form, however, with such stark consequences for the coherence of mathematics, seems finally to have impressed on Russell the seriousness of the problem. Within a few months he had abandoned the idea of contradictions pervading mathematics, in effect turning the argument on its head. It was because the doctrine of internal relations led to contradictions that it should be rejected.[12]

With the doctrine of internal relations abandoned, the way to a more satisfactory philosophy of mathematics was open, and this was the project that occupied Russell for the next fifteen years. It required the development of a logic of relations, embedded in quantificational theory. This, however, is another story.

2.2. The second dogma in analytic historiography

Russell lectured on Leibniz in the first three months of 1899. To prepare, he began reading Leibniz's writings the summer before, and the book was finished in the summer of 1900.[13] In *My Philosophical Development*, Russell claims that he "first realized the importance of the question of relations when I was working on Leibniz" (*My Philosophical Development*, 61). But this cannot be right: as we have just seen, Russell was preoccupied with the doctrine of internal relations *prior* to his work on Leibniz. However, his work on Leibniz undoubtedly *fed into* the development of his thinking: it helped him work his way out of neo-Hegelianism and articulate what was wrong with

[12]For fuller accounts of all this, see Griffin, *Russell's Idealist Apprenticeship*, chs. 4–5, § 8.6; "Russell's Philosophical Background", esp. 98–102; "What did Russell Learn from Leibniz?", esp. 1–3; Galaugher, *Russell's Philosophy of Logical Analysis*, ch. 2.

[13]The book closely follows the lectures, as Moore's notes on the lectures show; see Arthur and Griffin, "Moore's Notes on Russell's Leibniz Lectures".

the doctrine of internal relations, with realism about relations the result.[14] So the first historiographical moral to draw is that it was Russell's own philosophical concerns that led him to suggest what was fundamental in Leibniz's philosophy and hence offer the rational reconstruction that he did.

Alternative rational reconstructions are clearly possible. So argument is needed that Russell's reconstruction does justice to what Leibniz himself might 'really' have thought. And even if some texts can be found to support this, there are others that might suggest a different reconstruction.[15] Russell's claim that he was concerned with what Leibniz "should have written" begs the question in favour of his own philosophical concerns. Questions as to what Leibniz actually thought might be dismissed as 'merely historical', but to talk about 'the philosophy of Leibniz', 'Leibniz's views', 'what Leibniz meant', and so on, which Russell does throughout the book, would be disingenuous if his real concern was just with some 'type' of philosophy that some of what Leibniz writes might be seen as illustrating. So the second historiographical moral is that care and caution is needed in discussing the ideas that a commentator is reconstructing on behalf of the philosopher investigated.

This is not to say that there is no value in Russell's reconstruction. On the contrary, the book is instructive in spelling out the relationships between doctrines that can be found in Leibniz's writings. The clearer these are spelled out the easier it is to consider alternative reconstructions and to evaluate those doctrines and the reasons that are given. But this suggests that the value lies more in the connections than in the foundationalism. Here there is an obvious parallel with Quine's critique of the dogma of reductionism. To seek a *foundation* is misguided; to the extent that there is indeed a 'system' involved, then its strength lies in the holistic structure, not in the underpinning provided by a small set of supposed premises. Quine emphasized how truth values are distributed over a whole. So the third historiographical moral is that we should be more holistically minded in history of philosophy, too. The meaning of a doctrine must be asked for in the context of a philosophy, not in isolation.

Russell's claim, though, was not just that Leibniz's 'system' can be spelt out on the basis of the first premise but also that that premise is *inconsistent* with the fourth and fifth premises. Russell elaborates on this in later chapters, most notably, in chapter IX. He sees the inconsistency as a fundamental objection to

[14]For detailed discussion of just what Russell read of Leibniz's writings and when, see Griffin, "What did Russell Learn from Leibniz?". Griffin suggests, in particular, that Russell found the doctrine of internal relations in Leibniz's work very early in his reading (summer 1898), which supports the idea that this is what then shapes his rational reconstruction. For more on the genesis of Russell's book, see the various articles in *Russell: the Journal of Bertrand Russell Studies*, 37.1 (2017).

[15]Russell claimed to find support for his reconstruction in Leibniz's letters to Arnauld and the *Discourse on Metaphysics* (*Philosophy of Leibniz*, 8), while the *Monadology* might be offered as suggesting a different reconstruction. For one example of a different reading of Leibniz's philosophy, focusing on the theory of relations, see Mugnai, *Leibniz' Theory of Relations*.

Leibniz's monadism, but we might equally take it as a *reductio ad absurdum* of his reconstruction, if we happened to think that monadism was the central feature of Leibniz's philosophy, and hence the one around which we should attempt to reconstruct everything else – or as much as we can. So the fourth historiographical moral is that we need to be especially careful and cautious if we make allegations of inconsistency.

Russell, in fact, distinguished two kinds of inconsistency in Leibniz's philosophy. One is the inconsistency between Leibniz's main premises, as just mentioned, which forces us to decide which to reject. The other, he writes, "arises solely through the fear of admitting consequences shocking to the prevailing opinions of Leibniz's time" (*Philosophy of Leibniz*, 3). Examples he gives are Leibniz's views on sin and God's existence, which he discusses in the last two chapters. It is here that he is most scathing about Leibniz, who he accuses of being so concerned to avoid the perceived atheism and determinism of Spinoza that he was willing to knowingly contradict himself and succumb to insincerity and deceit. However, here we really do need to engage in more detailed historical investigations, taking into account the context of Leibniz's remarks, the periods in which Leibniz made those remarks, the views of his contemporaries, and so on, if we are to avoid the all-too-swift judgements that Russell makes. So the fifth historiographical moral is that justice can only be done to a philosopher's views if we pay far more attention to historical considerations than Russell allows.[16]

When Russell advocates investigating 'types' of philosophy, this is his way of 'justifying' his own concern with evaluating – and rejecting – idealism, a 'type' that he saw Hegelianism as exemplifying. This is not illegitimate in itself, but it is only one way – and indeed, only one *philosophical* way – of examining past philosophical texts. More modestly, we might simply be interested in particular doctrines, and the arguments for and against them, without wanting to typecast the author. However, putting together the various historiographical morals we have drawn, what is most problematic in Russell's account of Leibniz are the distortions his downplaying of historical considerations produce. Everything we said in criticizing the first dogma applies, a forteriori, to attempts such as Russell's to rationally reconstruct a philosopher's views. Any claim that a philosopher takes a particular doctrine as fundamental needs substantiation. It is not enough, as Russell does, just to show how certain other doctrines can be derived from it. Even less is it satisfactory to charge the philosopher with contradiction without proper consideration of the contexts in which the alleged inconsistent doctrines were stated.

In his review of Russell's book on Leibniz, Ernst Cassirer criticized Russell for his obsession with identifying contradictions in Leibniz's philosophy. What

[16]For an account that does greater historical justice to the relationship between Leibniz and Spinoza, see Laerke, *Leibniz Lecteur de Spinoza*.

might appear as contradictions, especially if we take claims made at different points in time, may instead reveal, more significantly, the *tensions* in Leibniz's thinking that drove his philosophical development. Cassirer's main example is Leibniz's conception of substance, which over time reworked the traditional Aristotelian conception by giving it a dynamic character. Cassirer writes that "It would be entirely one-sided and unhistorical to judge this opposition, on which, as it were, the whole inner tension of the system rests, as simply a contradiction" (*Leibniz' System*, 539). The tensions in someone's philosophical thinking are what the historian of philosophy should especially identify and explain, according to Cassirer, and this requires much more historical understanding than Russell was willing to seek.

Being sensitive to the inner dynamic of someone's philosophical thinking, in my view, is central to the work of the historian of philosophy. We are not simply picking out and adjudicating claims made in the history of philosophy. To just plunder texts for ideas and arguments to further one's own philosophical project is not to do history of philosophy. But nor are we simply *reporting* the views we find. As philosophers, we read philosophical texts with questions in mind to which we hope to find answers. This was something that Gadamer emphasized in *Truth and Method*, in elaborating his idea of interpretation as a 'fusion of horizons'. Finding answers prompts further questions as we engage in dialogue with the texts, where the aim is "always to go beyond mere reconstruction" (*Truth and Method*, 374). We are not doing history of *philosophy* if we are not continually asking and trying to answer philosophical questions, and we are not doing *history* of philosophy if we are not seeking to understand what a past philosopher or text actually said.[17] Combining both is the hallmark of hermeneutics.

Conclusion: analytic historiography dedogmatized

Russell's book on Leibniz was pioneering, not just for Leibniz scholarship but also for subsequent history of philosophy, especially analytic history of philosophy. It played a crucial role, too, in the development of analytic philosophy itself. In fact, the establishment of any philosophical tradition is partly achieved through a corresponding historiography, elaborated in self-justification.[18] So any historiography must itself be seen in historical context. I have highlighted this connection between analytic philosophy and analytic historiography by taking as my starting-point an analogy with Quine's two dogmas of empiricism. Much more could be said about this analogy, not least in making explicit what I have left implicit. But I do think analytic historiography

[17]On history of philosophy being both a kind of history and a kind of philosophy, see also Antognazza, "The Benefit to Philosophy".

[18]See Beaney, "The Historiography of Analytic Philosophy", "Analytic Philosophy and History of Philosophy", "Historiography, Philosophy of History", "Developments and Debates".

can be usefully characterized as governed by the two dogmas I have identified. Both dogmas have their own instructive history, at which I have only gestured, and both give rise to questions of justification, on which I have mainly focused (as a good analytic philosopher?). Let me conclude by making a few final comments about justification.

Dogmas are beliefs that are unjustified, and there are indeed problems in justifying the two dogmas of analytic historiography. This is certainly so if justification is a matter of derivation from something more fundamental, as reflected in the idea of rational reconstruction. But what about the most basic premises and principles themselves? Here we need a different view of justification. Russell appealed to 'intuition', understood as a kind of immediate acquaintance (see e.g. Russell, *The Principles of Mathematics*, preface). But what if someone else does not have our 'intuition'? Here we might try to show them how other things they believe may be derived from them or the role that such premises and principles play in a given practice or way of thinking. The first approach may be more 'philosophical', the second more 'historical', and either may help. But combining the two approaches may be best of all, encouraging that critical reflection of which Windelband spoke. Kant regarded fundamental principles as requiring a 'transcendental deduction'. Windelband talked of 'teleological validation', and in elaborating on this, of the "immanent necessity of the teleological nexus" ("Methode", 283). Putting these together, we might suggest that such basic premises and principles must be *immanently deduced* – not by somehow 'intuiting' their truth or validity but by recognizing their (normative) role in the relevant system of thinking as it develops both historically and philosophically.

A defence of analytic historiography might be mounted on these lines. As far as the first dogma is concerned, the distinction between justification and genesis is deeply rooted in contemporary philosophy. What is objectionable is the assumption that it represents a *cleavage* and that genetic and historical considerations can be downplayed. Appreciating the complex interaction between analytic and historical inquiries accords analytic historiography its proper place in philosophical historiography. As far as the second dogma is concerned, rational reconstructions can be teleological validated by recognizing the role that they play both in the reconstructor's own philosophical project (as I have illustrated in the case of Russell) and in expanding the hermeneutic space of interpretive possibilities. We can celebrate how rational reconstructions enrich this hermeneutic space, by opening up new ways to interrogate the texts, while resisting their claims to hegemony.

Such a defence, however, requires giving up the idea that one of the main aims of philosophy is to find fundamental premises or principles that are unconditionally true or valid – as opposed to simply what govern a particular way of seeing or thinking. Analytic historiography cannot be 'justified', in other words, in its own terms – from within its own resources. It requires a

broader perspective, which appreciates its role in wider practices of philosophical and historical understanding. When seen in context, it is clear that any project of rational reconstruction and justification both draws on and in turn encourages historical understanding: this insight lies at the core of hermeneutics.[19] This is an ongoing process which allows *reconceiving* past philosophy with the benefit of new ways of thinking, which can reveal fruitful and hitherto unrecognized connections. Revisiting analytic historiography through the lens of Quine's two dogmas, and thinking through Kant's *quid juris/quid facti* distinction and Windelband's attempt to validate it, affords one such illustration.[20]

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[19]For a marvellous recent elaboration of hermeneutics, see Makkreel, *Orientation and Judgment in Hermeneutics*. See also Beaney, "Developments and Debates".

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