



# **Bradley and the Problematic Status of Metaphysics: In search of an adequate ontology of appearance**

*Damian Ilodigwe*

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Bradley is a much neglected philosopher. The neglect is hardly justifiable, considering what Bradley actually wrote. However, the situation has improved in the last couple of decades, as there are signs of renewed interest in Bradley. Indeed, a basic consensus among Bradley scholars is the need for a reassessment of his philosophy and his place in the history of philosophy. In this interpretive and critical work, Ilodigwe undertakes an appraisal of Bradley's philosophy. He argues that Bradley's metaphysics of the absolute is the core of his philosophical system. This means that we cannot understand Bradley's philosophy unless we do justice to this aspect of his thought. Nor would it be possible to gain a full conspectus of the varied ramification of his thought if dissociated from the larger milieu relative to which they subsist and have their being. Unfortunately, much of the contemporary rejection of Bradley's metaphysics is predicted on this sort of fragmentary appreciation, as evidenced by Russell and James's reception of Bradley. *Bradley and the Problematic Status of Metaphysics* tries to redress this imbalance. Ilodigwe here makes a case for a fundamental reassessment of Bradley's philosophy by taking his account of the Absolute as point of reference for receiving other aspects of his thought. In keeping with this strategy, Part 1 and 2 focuses on a number of themes in Bradley's philosophy such as his account of immediate experience, his theory of Judgement, his analysis of the essence of thought and his account of truth as appearance. In each case Ilodigwe shows how the themes illustrate a two-fold thesis that permeate Bradley's thought: the claim as to the immanence of the Absolute in its appearances, and the further claim that the Absolute is irreducible to any of its appearances. Part 3 relates Bradley's philosophy to the situation of contemporary philosophy by assessing Russell and James's appraisal of Bradley. Praise for the book: This is a fine work which shows admirable knowledge of Bradley's philosophy as well as displaying its own philosophical excellences. Written with fluent intelligence, it is a sympathetic reconstruction of Bradley's philosophy which addresses the entire range of his work, taking the measure of it in the full. It displays significant familiarity with Bradley's place in the history of philosophy, and is judicious in its assessments of both those directly influential on him, and major figures in the tradition of philosophy. It is marked by a very inclusive horizon, more inclusive than the great majority of commentators who tend to see Bradley in the British context, with now and then some ritual references to German idealism and Hegel. The work also contains very illuminating discussion of significant contemporaries such as William James and Bertrand Russell. It does sterling service in trying to bring Bradley into dialogue with contemporary thought. It affirms his continued relevance for the practice of metaphysics, not quite as surpassed as some of its critics claim. I recommend it very highly. William Desmond Institute of Philosophy Katholieke Universiteit Leuven Belgium

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