

## Russell's "Essays in Analysis"

It is always a pleasure to notice a new book by Bertrand Russell, and to be asked to review it for Russell is an added pleasure. His latest title, Essays in Analysis, edited with introductions by Mr. Douglas Lackey, was published late in 1973 by George Allen & Unwin in Britain and by George Braziller in the U.S.A. As but the latest example of the dramatic reversal in book prices between Britain and the U.S.A. in the last few years, the price in Britain (5 pounds and 50 pence or \$13.75) is 53% higher than the price in the U.S.A. (\$8.95). For those content with paperbacks, Braziller published one (at \$3.95) simultaneously with the hardback. Canadian purchasers, I am sorry to have to report, unless they order a copy from abroad, must pay \$21.95 for a copy of the British edition. The price of books in England, and the fact that most of his philosophy titles are not published in paperback there, lead one to fear that his reading public in his own country will continue to shrink.

The book contains fifteen papers by Russell grouped under four headings: "RUSSELL'S CRITIQUE OF MEINONG", "DESCRIPTIONS AND EXISTENCE", "CLASSES AND THE PARADOXES", and "PHILOSOPHY OF LOGIC AND MATHEMATICS".

In addition, there is an Appendix, "FOUR PAPERS BY HUGH MACCOLL", reprinted to make intelligible Russell's essay called "The Existential Import of Propositions", which was critical of MacColl. Three of the essays are published here for the first time, and three more, originally published in French, receive their first publication in English.

In his general introduction and his briefer introductions to the four sections, the editor tells us that he selected the essays he did because of their relevance to contemporary philosophical concerns, like presupposition-free logics, modal logics, and realism. The discussions linking the contents to these concerns are very brief and serve as little more than suggestions for further study. Of more value in these introductions is the context they provide for the genesis of the various essays; Mr. Lackey does an economical and good job of it.

But the real value of the book is to be found in Russell's essays. It is especially good to have his work on Meinong available in book form. It seems incredible, but it is true, that this is their first reprinting. The other essays that I found especially welcome were those in the philosophy of mathematics in which Russell patiently takes up one theory after another, examines it as a possible solution to some difficult problem, and then discards it when it is found wanting. During the years covered by this book (1904-1913) this was his great strength — an endlessly fertile mind able to judge its products with detachment — and the surest evidence of his genius.

Three bibliographies of varying usefulness are included. The most useful, since it is both new and complete, is the one called "RUSSELL'S WRITINGS ON LOGIC". Compiled by Mr. Kenneth Blackwell, it lists Russell's unpublished as well as his published writings on logic. For the published articles Mr. Blackwell has noted those which were later reprinted in one of Russell's books. This will prove a boon to readers whose library facilities lack the journals in which the articles first appeared.

The other two bibliographies are selective. One, entitled "HISTORICAL BACKGROUND", limits itself to books and articles published between 1847 and 1911, both inclusive. Most of the important works in formal logic and the foundations of mathematics are listed, although I noticed that De Morgan's Formal Logic (1847) is unaccountably omitted. This list is less useful to the reader than the one of Russell's writings, since only the briefest bibliographical details of the first edition are mentioned; thus, for instance, we learn of Frege's Begriffsschrift only that it was published in Halle in 1879 and nothing about later editions or translations. The bibliography called "SECONDARY MATERIAL" is even more highly selective. The principle of selection, we are told, is to include only writings on Russell's views which related to the topics in Essays in Analysis. Being,

therefore, a selection of a selection of critical writings on Russell's philosophy, it is least useful to the reader. It is made even less useful than it might have been by the fact that only the original place and date of publication of the entries are given. For the books in English that much information is sufficient for tracking them down, but for any article later published in a book, this way of listing shows little concern for the reader. For example, we learn on page 16 that "... F.P. Ramsey published two brilliant papers criticising various doctrines of the Principia", and when we look them up in the bibliography we find where each was first published but no mention is made of the fact that both are available in his book, The Foundations of Mathematics, which R.B. Braithwaite edited after Ramsey's death. Such examples violate the principle that bibliographies ought to lead their users to the most accessible locations of their listings.

The book does have an index for which we must be grateful in this new age of corner-cutting in publishing while increasing the price of the "product". Unfortunately, the very first use I made of the index turned up an error. I was reading "On Some Difficulties in the Theory of Transfinite Numbers and Order Types", which Russell wrote in reply to an earlier article by E.W. Hobson, and I wondered whether the editor had listed Hobson's reply to it in his bibliography, so I looked up Hobson's name in the index. The first reference was to pages 33 through 36 where I found one mention of Hobbes but none of Hobson. I then noticed that page 135, the page I had been reading and on which Hobson is mentioned four times, is not indexed under his name. My curiosity aroused, I decided to check further into its accuracy. I picked Plato's name and found that he is not mentioned on either of the two pages indexed. Some others I tried did check out, so the proper conclusion seems to be that the index is sometimes reliable. But why weren't the authors (other than Russell) named in the bibliographies indexed? To determine whether or not the Appendix to E.W. Hobson's The Theory of Functions of a Real Variable and the Theory of Fourier's Series (London, 1907), in which he replies to Russell was listed in one of the bibliographies, I had to go through them looking for Hobson's name. This proved tedious (Why, I kept asking myself, wasn't a different type used for the names of author's and why those damnable double columns?), but I finally satisfied myself that it was not listed.

Despite these imperfections it seems to me that, because it makes some inaccessible Russell essays accessible, this book is to be welcomed, and every serious student of Russell's philosophy will want to add it to his library.

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