

Response to Mr. Perkins

by Elizabeth Ramsden Eames

THE CASE THAT Mr. Perkins makes for changes in Russell's treatment of mental objects between the writing of the manuscript of *Theory of Knowledge* in May-June of 1913, and the publication of the third and subsequent chapters as articles in the *Monist* between July of 1914 and April of 1915, rests on a mistaken interpretation of Russell's theory of acquaintance, and of his distinction between mental and non-mental objects. This is not to say that there were no revisions between the writing of the manuscript and the publication of the third and subsequent articles. There is internal and external evidence relating to the estimated length of the manuscript compared with that of the articles, to the time intervals available for revision, to the contemporary correspondence, and to notes of the Harvard seminar taught by Russell on theory of knowledge in the spring of 1914 which suggests such revisions in the fourth and possibly the third, fifth, and sixth chapters. But it is unlikely, it seems to me, that those revisions were those argued for by Mr. Perkins.

My chief objection to his thesis has to do with the interpretation of the passages to which he refers and from which he quotes in the third and fourth *Monist* articles and from the seventh manuscript chapter. Mr. Perkins seems to see Russell's description of mental objects as premised on the position that a subject can be an object of acquaintance to itself. Perkins finds the view of self-acquaintance rejected in the third and fourth articles and affirmed in the seventh chapter. But I think that Russell's reasons for identifying objects as mental are not dependent on the view that a subject can be acquainted with itself—a view I find nowhere expressed in *Theory of Knowledge*. Rather Russell identified the subject as one term of the dual relation of acquaintance, the other term of which is the object. Since the relation of acquaintance is immediate knowledge or awareness, this relation can be identified as mental. Since the subject is the knower, or the

psychological pole of the relation, it too can be identified as mental. This is not to deny that the subject may have other non-mental attributes apart from this relation.

The object term of the relation of acquaintance may be non-mental or mental: when the subject is acquainted with physical objects such as tables or stars the object is non-mental; when the subject is acquainted with its own experiencing, or with logical objects such as are discussed in the seventh and subsequent chapters, the object of acquaintance is mental. The dualism of mental and physical, the dualism of subject and object, and the contrast between two kinds of objects of acquaintance are fundamental divergences between Russell's view and that of neutral monism. This dualism is argued for in the second *Monist* article (one that is unlikely to have been revised), and appears in connection with the dual relation of acquaintance throughout both published and unpublished parts of *Theory of Knowledge*.

The possible shift from objects to facts is a different and more puzzling matter which is connected with the issue Mr. Perkins raises, but which needs to be distinguished from the issue of self-acquaintance.

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