

BERTRAND RUSSELL AND HAROLD JOACHIM

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The paper is partly biographical and partly philosophical. It traces Russell's philosophical interactions with the British neo-Hegelian philosopher, Harold Joachim, from Russell's days as an undergraduate in the 1890s to his scathing review of Joachim's inaugural lecture as Wykeham Professor of Logic at Oxford in 1920. The philosophical part attempts to evaluate Russell's main argument against Joachim's coherence theory of truth, that it is equivalent to the doctrine of internal relations. The paper makes use of Russell's recently discovered letters to Joachim.

I. PROLOGUE

The British neo-Hegelian philosopher Harold Joachim (1868–1938) is not now widely remembered, but in his day he was well respected as one of the leading exponents of Bradley's philosophy. He spent much of his philosophical career (1897–1919) at Merton College, Bradley's own college at Oxford, where apparently he occupied rooms opposite Bradley's.¹ Despite this proximity there seems to have been less personal contact between Bradley and Joachim than might have

¹ Cf. Russell to Alys Russell, 22 Oct. 1895 (*SLBR* 1: 171). It is said that he used to shut the windows if his students started to criticize Bradley. The best sources of biographical information on Joachim are H. W. B. Joseph, "Harold Henry Joachim, 1868–1938", *Proceedings of the British Academy* 24 (1938): 396–422, and an unpublished paper by Paul Rabin, "Harold Henry Joachim (1868–1938)", presented at the Anglo-Idealism Conference, Oxford, July 1997. In 1919 Joachim moved to New College in consequence of his appointment to the Wykeham Chair of Logic, a position he held until his retirement in 1935.

been expected, for Joachim was diffident and Bradley overbearing.² Bradley himself did no teaching, which meant that when students, who included T. S. Eliot³ and Brand Blanshard, went to Oxford to learn Bradley's philosophy they usually learnt it from Joachim. Joachim edited Bradley's posthumously published *Collected Essays* and was responsible for completing the famous final essay on relations which was included in that collection. His contributions to Bradleian philosophy were mainly in the area of logic, and his best-known book, *The Nature of Truth*,⁴ which defended a coherence theory of truth, was often thought of as an elaboration of Bradley's position. Joachim was eminent enough in this area to be appointed to the Wykeham Chair of Logic in Oxford, though even in 1919 this appointment could accurately be described as anachronistic.

With the exception of *The Nature of Truth* and the posthumously published *Logical Studies* (1948), the latter based on his lectures as Wykeham professor, Joachim's main works were scholarly studies of specific works of other philosophers: an important study of Spinoza's *Ethics* (1901), a commentary on Spinoza's *Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione* (1940), a study of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* (1951) and a study of Descartes' *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* (1957); works which were renowned for their carefulness.⁵ Most of these were posthumously published and based on the meticulously written out lecture courses he gave at Oxford over many years. With the passage of time, Joachim's reputation as Bradley's leading acolyte, which initially had served to get him noticed, became a reason for his being overlooked. Now, nearly 70 years after his death, he is mainly known as the translator of Aristotle's

² Some letters (all but one from Bradley) have survived and are published in *The Collected Works of F. H. Bradley*, Vols. 4 and 5, ed. Carol A. Keene (Bristol: Thoemmes, 1999). Paul Rabin, *op. cit.*, mentions reports that Joachim's letters were destroyed after Bradley's death.

³ Eliot's letters contain much information about Joachim's classes, especially his letters to his former Harvard professor, J. H. Woods. Cf. *The Letters of T. S. Eliot*, Vol. 1: 1898–1922, ed. Valerie Eliot (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1988).

⁴ Oxford: Clarendon P., 1906. The second edition (1939) is used here and cited as *JNT*. The second edition was seen through the press with some minor alterations by R. G. Collingwood, whose collaboration with Joachim on the project began shortly before Joachim's death.

⁵ In 1951 Stuart Hampshire cited Joachim's two books on Spinoza as two of the three "most careful studies of Spinoza in English" (*Spinoza* [Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1951], pp. 9–10).

De generatione et corruptione in the Oxford translation of Aristotle,⁶ and, somewhat ironically, as the immediate object of Russell's attack on what he called the monistic conception of truth.

Russell had a personal connection with Joachim which predated their philosophical relationship, for Russell's favourite uncle, Rollo, was a neighbour of the Joachim family in Haslemere in Surrey and in 1891 married Joachim's sister, Gertrude.⁷ Joachim himself did not marry until 1907, and at least until that time he seems to have spent his summers at Haslemere where he and Russell had plenty of opportunity to meet when Russell was visiting his uncle. In 1891 Russell was unhappily studying mathematics at Cambridge and eagerly looking forward to the day when he could switch to philosophy. Although Joachim was only four years older than Russell, Russell evidently regarded him as something of a mentor as far as philosophy was concerned, for in September 1892, as Russell was about to enter the final year of his mathematical studies, he asked Joachim's advice about philosophical reading. Joachim replied with a substantial reading list,⁸ which, as Russell told Brand Blanshard in 1942, "started me on philosophy".⁹ In *My Philosophical Development* Russell recalled the list, but remembered only two books on it: "one was Bradley's *Logic* which, he said, was good but hard; the other was Bosanquet's *Logic* which, he said, was better but harder."¹⁰ Russell quickly started to read the books on the list, but did not get far before James Ward, his director of studies, stopped him because he was neglecting his mathematical work. Russell's philosophical reading broke off in January 1893 and did not resume until July, immediately after the examinations of the mathematical trips.¹¹

⁶ This work stood the test of time well, being superseded only in the 1980s by C. J. F. Williams' translation in the Clarendon Aristotle Series. I'm grateful to David Hitchcock for bringing this to my attention.

⁷ Michael Walsh pointed out to me that this made Russell a relative of Ludwig Wittgenstein, for the sister of one of Wittgenstein's great-grandfathers was Joachim's grandmother.

⁸ Joachim's letter is undated, but from internal evidence must have been written on 23 September 1892. It is published in Nicholas Griffin, "Joachim's Early Advice to Russell on Studying Philosophy", *Russell* n.s. 7 (1987): 119–23.

⁹ Russell to Brand Blanshard, 16 May 1942, RA REC. ACQ. 235.

¹⁰ *MPD*, p. 37. In fact, Joachim recommended Bradley's *Logic* as "First rate—but very hard" and Bosanquet's as "Good, but still harder".

¹¹ Russell at this time kept a list of the books he read, "What Shall I Read?", *Papers* 1: 347–65. Details of his philosophical reading for 1892–93 can be found at pp. 350–2.

Joachim's letter of September 1892—remembered fondly decades afterwards—was obviously an event of some importance to Russell's first steps in philosophy, and it seems quite likely that over the next couple of years at least, Russell would have sought Joachim's opinion on philosophical issues. But quite what influence Joachim had on Russell's early study of philosophy is not clear. He evidently did not impart to Russell any of his love of Aristotle; and though Russell read his first book, *A Study of the Ethics of Spinoza* (1901) when it came out, it seems to have had little visible effect on Russell's admiration for Spinoza.¹² Certainly Russell shared Joachim's veneration of Bradley: in 1895 he stayed with Joachim in Oxford and saw Bradley's name on his door with "the true emotion of a hero-worshipper" (*SLBR* 1: 171). Bradley himself was away at that time and it was not until 1902 that Russell met him, when they were introduced by G. F. Stout, Russell still feeling some of the emotion of a hero-worshipper, despite all their philosophical differences (*Papers* 12: 13). But in the 1890s admiration of Bradley could be obtained from almost anywhere, and there is no reason to suppose that Joachim was especially influential in imparting it to Russell.

2. THE DEBATE ON TRUTH

2.1 Background

The story gets more interesting, however, when Russell and Joachim have serious philosophical differences to negotiate; that is, after Russell rejected neo-Hegelianism in 1898. Nineteen of their letters from the period 1900–06 have survived—ten from Joachim and nine from Russell. Unfortunately, the balance in the numbers of letters on each side does not mean that we have the full correspondence: many of the extant letters were replies to letters which are now missing.¹³ All but the first

¹² Russell's copy of it is in the library of the University of York and contains a few brief marginal comments, but nothing to indicate Russell's overall assessment of the book. Later on Russell described Joachim's exegesis as "admirabl[e] ... for the technical reader" (*Papers* 6: 252), but beyond that left no comment. Kenneth Blackwell, in *The Spinozistic Ethics of Bertrand Russell* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1985), pp. 121–3, suggests that Joachim's interpretation of Spinoza's intellectual love of God would have been sympathetic to Russell.

¹³ This correspondence has been published by James Connelly and Paul Rabin in "The Correspondence between Bertrand Russell and Harold Joachim", *Bradley Studies* 2 (1996): 131–60 (cited as "RJC"). Regrettably, they provide virtually no commentary on

three of these letters arose out of Joachim's publication of *The Nature of Truth* in 1906, an event which resulted in an intense exchange over a two-year period which spilled over into the journals.¹⁴

There is a fairly widespread view that the coherence theory of truth that Joachim defended in *The Nature of Truth* was an elaboration of Bradley's theory. Russell may have contributed to this view by calling his main critique of Joachim's theory "The Monistic Theory of Truth" (my emphasis), when he reprinted it a few years later in *Philosophical Essays*, thereby suggesting that there were no others. It seems to me very doubtful whether Bradley held a coherence theory of truth, indeed it may be doubted whether Bradley at this time had a theory of truth at all.¹⁵ There are two schools of thought here: one (Manser's) is that Bradley never had a theory of truth (and there was no shame in this because semantics is not part of the business of logic); the other is that he did develop a theory of truth, but rather late in the day, around the time he wrote the main papers in *Essays on Truth and Reality* (1914). Either way, it is generally conceded that, if Bradley did have a theory of truth, one is hard pressed to say what it is.¹⁶ A corollary of this is that we should not assume that Joachim's theory is identical with it; nor should we assume that Bradley welcomed Joachim's theory as a clarification or even as an extension of his own position. It is notable that in the whole of *Essays on Truth and Reality* there is only one reference to Joachim.¹⁷ Russell, by

the letters; a promised second article of commentary never materialized. The originals of Russell's letters are in the Bodleian Library, MS ENG C20.26 fols. 43–101 (copies in the Russell Archives). The originals of Joachim's letters are in the Russell Archives.

¹⁴ The first letter (7 May 1900) is a response to Russell's "Is Position in Time Absolute or Relative?" (*Papers* 3: 222–33, where almost the whole letter is quoted in the headnote); the next two (dated 5 September 1904 and 13 September, both by Joachim) deal among other things with G. E. Moore's interpretation of Kant. Russell has dated the second one "1903?", but I'm inclined to think that it, too, is from 1904.

¹⁵ Cf. Anthony Manser, *Bradley's Logic* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), p. 106.

¹⁶ All options (except pragmatism) have been canvassed: Haig Khatchadourian, *The Coherence Theory of Truth: a Critical Evaluation* (Beirut: American U., 1961), and S. R. Saxena, *Studies in the Metaphysics of Bradley* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967), p. 200, maintain he had a coherence theory; Ralph Walker, "Bradley's Theory of Truth", in G. Stock, ed., *Appearance versus Reality: New Essays on the Philosophy of F. H. Bradley* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1993), pp. 93–109, that it was a correspondence theory; and Stewart Candlish, "The Truth about F. H. Bradley", *Mind* 98 (1989): 331–41, and Thomas Baldwin, "The Identity Theory of Truth", *Mind* 100 (1991): 35, hold that it was an identity theory.

¹⁷ F. H. Bradley, *Essays on Truth and Reality* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1914), p. 107. All

contrast, discussed Joachim's theory repeatedly and regarded it as the best, and perhaps the only, neo-Hegelian theory available.

The reasons for Russell's interest are not hard to find. Joachim's book had four chapters: the first was a critique of the correspondence theory of truth; the second a critique of Russell's and Moore's theory of truth "as a quality of independent entities"; the third put forward Joachim's own coherence theory; and the fourth (which significantly undermined the theory put forward in the third) dealt with error. Joachim's second chapter was the most extensive and the most fundamental critique that had yet appeared of the new philosophy that Russell and Moore were promulgating. Moreover, it was a critique that came from the neo-Hegelian camp which was then still dominant in British philosophy. Finally, it exhibited Joachim's considerable talents as a commentator on other people's philosophy. It was a counterattack that could not be ignored.

Joachim had evidently sent Russell the first two chapters of his book, although Russell refers to them as "two papers" in his reply of 1 February 1905, the first of their extant letters on the subject of truth. On the first chapter Russell comments only briefly in his letter: "I agree of course that the correspondence-theory is absurd, but your arguments are not those which I should use" ("RJC", p. 136). This is hardly sufficient for a unequivocal identification of the "paper" as a draft of the first chapter of the book, but Joachim was not a prolific author and it seems unlikely that he had a second paper on the correspondence theory in circulation at this time. On the second chapter Russell enclosed several pages of detailed comments. In this case, we can be quite certain that the second of the papers Joachim sent Russell was a draft of Chapter 2, since in the published version Joachim refers to Russell's notes (*JNT*, p. 47n.) and in the preface to the book thanks Russell for commenting on it. (He also notes, however, that he has not made "any substantial alterations" in the light of Russell's comments, since his "primary object was to examine a typical theory of truth, and not to attack Mr. Russell".¹⁸) Russell said in

that Bradley says there is that Joachim's book is "interesting" and that Joachim "did ... well to discuss once more that view [which both of them rejected] for which truth consists in copying reality." This is surely damning by faint praise.

¹⁸ Early in Chapter 2 there is a similar disclaimer (*JNT*, pp. 32–3). The page numbers that Russell cites in his notes are identical to the page numbers of the *first* edition of Joachim's book. This strongly suggests that Russell was reading the page proofs, though it makes his exhortation to Joachim to "persevere and publish" rather odd.

his letter that if Joachim published the second paper he would probably reply. In fact, when the book was published, he responded to it publicly three times: reviewing it in *The Independent Review* and commenting on it at greater length in both *Mind* and *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*.¹⁹ Only the second of these was a reply to Joachim's second chapter; the third attacked Joachim's coherence theory of truth as presented in the third chapter of *The Nature of Truth*.

Ironically, the theory of truth which Russell defended at the start of his debate with Joachim was not the theory of truth he was defending at the end. But this had *nothing* to do with Joachim's criticisms.²⁰ The change in Russell's theory of truth can be completely explained by considerations internal to his own philosophy, and, moreover, all of the main objections that Joachim brought against the first theory would hold equally against the second. In his letter of 1 February 1905 Russell told Joachim that the third of his 1904 articles on Meinong²¹ was his "most serious attempt to state my views on Truth". It was this 1904 theory that Russell defended in "The Nature of Truth", which, though it appeared in the October 1906 issue of *Mind*, was written probably in May of that year. (We have Joachim's notes on it dated 21 May 1906 ["RJC", pp. 153–5].) On the 1904 theory, an identity theory of truth which Russell had held since 1899, truth and falsehood were indefinable properties of propositions, considered as complex, mind-independent constituents of the world. The reality of propositions as complex terms was an essential part of Russell's substitutional theory of classes and relations with which he hoped to free logic from the paradoxes. This endeavour occupied him through 1905 and most of 1906.²² But, late in 1906, the discovery of propositional paradoxes in the substitutional theory led Russell to aban-

¹⁹ Respectively: "What Is Truth?", *The Independent Review* 9 (June, 1906): 349–53; "The Nature of Truth", *Mind* n.s. 15 (1906): 528–33 (cited as "RNT"); "On the Nature of Truth", *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* n.s. 7 (1907): 28–49 (cited as "ONT"). Parts I and II of "On the Nature of Truth" were reprinted with slight omissions as "The Monistic Theory of Truth" in Russell's *Philosophical Essays* (London: Longmans, Green, 1910). The book's new edition (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966) is cited here as *PE*₂.

²⁰ Contrary to what Ralph Walker suggests in "Joachim on the Nature of Truth" in W. J. Mander, ed., *Anglo-American Idealism, 1865–1927* (Westport, Ct.: Greenwood P., 2000), p. 184.

²¹ "Meinong's Theory of Complexes and Assumptions, III", *Papers* 4: 461–74 (*cf.*, especially, pp. 471–4).

²² For details see Gregory Landini, *Russell's Hidden Substitutional Theory* (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 1998).

don the theory and to look for ways to eliminate propositions from his ontology, something eventually achieved with his multiple-relation theory of judgment (a form of the correspondence theory of truth), first advocated in print in *Principia Mathematica*. At the end of 1906 Russell was more certain that propositions had to go than he was of the means of getting rid of them. In the third and final section of “On the Nature of Truth”, which was published around July 1907 but was probably written in October the previous year (it was read to the Cambridge Moral Sciences Club early in November), Russell tentatively formulated the multiple-relation theory, but did not yet definitely advocate it.²³ Ironically, therefore, just as “The Nature of Truth” was being published, Russell was abandoning the theory it defended. His new proposals, as set out in “On the Nature of Truth”, were sent in advance to Joachim, who (in sending notes on the paper to Russell on 21 November 1906) jumped on the change, reiterated his objection to the correspondence theory (namely the difficulty of defining the correspondence relation), and invited him to “become a ‘Hegelian’” (“RJC”, p. 158).²⁴

2.2 Strategy

By 1905 Russell and Joachim were so far apart in their philosophical positions that they were having a good deal of difficulty understanding one another. Joachim opens his discussion in Chapter 2 by saying that the theory of truth he is about to discuss is “so different from any of the prevailing views” that he is worried his account of it might be a “crude and ridiculous travesty” (*JNT*, p. 31); while Russell, though surer of understanding the neo-Hegelian tradition having been raised in it, is, nonetheless, often reduced to listing multiple interpretations of Joachim’s claims and trying to refute each of them. Each philosopher thought the

²³ When Russell reprinted “On the Nature of Truth” in *Philosophical Essays* he eliminated the third section and replaced it by a new paper, “On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood”, now explicitly advocating the multiple-relation theory, though in a different form to the theory sketched in 1906.

²⁴ Russell replied (24 November) that his *main* objection to the correspondence theory had always been that it seemed to make false belief belief in nothing (*cf.* “Meinong’s Theory”, *Papers* 4: 471–2), but that this no longer seemed to him compelling. (The multiple-relation theory very neatly solved it.) By contrast, the problem of defining the correspondence relation, he thought, was “a difficulty of detail, which might be solved by further reflection. It has never been my reason against correspondence-theories” (“RJC”, p. 159).

other was ensnared in problems that the other simply did not recognize as existing, and, inevitably, both spent a great deal of time correcting each other's misinterpretations.

Russell, in particular, thought that a great many of Joachim's objections arose from unconsciously assuming that Russell embraced neo-Hegelian doctrines that he in fact rejected. For example, apropos Joachim's attempt to base an argument on a distinction between truth *per se* and truth as known, he told Joachim: "Here, as in many other places, you produce your result by unconsciously attributing to me the view that relations modify their terms" ("RJC", pp. 139–40). Given what he took to be Joachim's propensity for begging the question against him, Russell was anxious to identify the fundamental assumptions that each side made. Such a proceeding, however, was very unlikely in this case to reveal any significant area of agreement from which either side could persuade the other; indeed, the more fundamental the level of analysis, the further apart the two sides appeared and the less chance there was of finding any decisive argument which didn't beg the question.

Russell found this "curious and discouraging" ("RNT", p. 532). He was also driven to reflect on what sort of arguments could be effective in such a situation:

I think the only possible argument ..., on all *fundamental* questions, is some form or other of the *reductio ad absurdum*. That is to say, a position can be refuted in the eyes of one who previously held it if, assuming it to be true, and using only inferences of a kind which it admits to be valid, the falsehood of some essential part of the position can be deduced.

("RNT", p. 532; emphasis added)

Russell notes that even this sort of *reductio* argument rests on an assumption, namely that whatever implies its own falsity is false. But this, Russell says, does not impede a refutation since it is an assumption made by all philosophers (*ibid.*). Whether this is so or not, he can at least argue convincingly that it is made by neo-Hegelian philosophers, for *reductio* arguments are used constantly throughout the first part of Bradley's *Appearance and Reality*; and as Russell points out, in the Hegelian dialectic, "the inadequacy of the thesis is shown by the fact that it implies the anti-thesis" (*ibid.*).

Interestingly, Moore, who made his own reply to Joachim's second chapter, thought that Russell's method was unduly restrictive: "But sure-

ly,” he wrote, “if you can find any proposition whatever, which your opponent will admit to be true, and with regard to which he will also admit that, *if* it is true, the view you wish to refute must be false, then you have a good chance of convincing him, whether the proposition in question already forms part of his system or not.”²⁵ Moore then, very much in his “Proof of the External World” mode, proposes three such propositions for Joachim’s consideration.²⁶ Russell, fairly clearly, would be much more pessimistic than Moore about the possibility of finding such propositions, unless they are already an *essential* part of the position to be refuted. Without the last condition, it is obviously available to the defender of the position to convert the proposed *modus tollens* argument into a *modus ponens* one and deny the falsity of the proposition in question. A good many of the differences between Russell’s and Moore’s approaches to philosophy, which became more evident later on, are pre-figured in this apparently slight divergence in their responses to Joachim.

2.3 *The attack*

Whatever the merits of Moore’s approach, Russell’s attack on Joachim’s theory of truth is a spectacular example of his *reductio* methodology in action. As Ramsey wrote in his posthumously published manuscript “On Truth”: the coherence theory of truth is “very easy to reduce to absurdity and after Mr Russell’s amusing essay [“ONT”] it is difficult to see how anyone can still cling to it.”²⁷ Against Joachim’s theory Russell deploys four *reductio* arguments:

(1) On Joachim’s theory only the whole truth is wholly true, so no partial truth can be quite true. Thus, as Russell points out, it cannot be quite true that no partial truth is quite true; “unless indeed the whole of truth is contained in the proposition ‘no partial truth is quite true’” (“ONT”, p. 30; *PE*₂, p. 133). And thus, in general, the partial truths of idealist philosophy itself cannot be quite true. But then, as Russell goes on to point out, the deductions we make from idealist philosophy may all be erroneous, for they may depend upon the false aspect of idealism

²⁵ “Mr. Joachim’s *Nature of Truth*”, *Mind* n.s. 16 (1907): 229.

²⁶ To no avail. Joachim in his reply denies them all, though with his ubiquitous “neither Absolutely true nor Absolutely false” caveat: “A Reply to Mr. Moore”, *Mind* n.s. 16 (1907): 411.

²⁷ *On Truth*, ed. Nicholas Rescher and Ulrich Majer (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1991), p. 25.

rather than the true (“ONT”, p. 36; *PE₂*, p. 139).

(2) The central contention of Joachim’s theory is that truth forms a significant whole, that is, a whole all of the elements of which “reciprocally involve one another, or reciprocally determine one another’s being as contributory features in a single concrete meaning” (*JNT*, p. 66). Against this Russell argues that, on this view, it follows that each part of a significant whole is as complex as any other—since each reciprocally involves the others—and each part is as complex as the whole itself—for the whole reciprocally involves each of its parts. Moreover, the whole is then as constitutive of the parts as the parts are of the whole. It is thus arbitrary which we describe as the whole and which the part (“ONT”, p. 31; *PE₂*, p. 134).

(3) Every proposition on the coherence theory is partially true—none is quite true and none is quite false. What then constitutes error? According to Joachim it is the “erring subject’s confident belief in the truth of his knowledge ... [that] converts a partial apprehension of the truth into falsity” (*JNT*, p. 162). Russell pounces on this:

Now this view has one great merit, namely, that it makes error consist wholly and solely in rejection of the monistic theory of truth. As long as this theory is accepted, no judgment is an error; as soon as it is rejected, every judgment is an error.... If I affirm, with a “confident belief in the truth of my knowledge”, that Bishop Stubbs used to wear episcopal gaiters, that is an error; if a monistic philosopher, remembering that all finite truth is only partially true, affirms that Bishop Stubbs was hanged for murder, that is not an error.

(“ONT”, p. 32; *PE₂*, p. 135)

The coherence theory can escape this problem only by presupposing “a more usual meaning of truth and falsehood ... [which], though indispensable for the theory, cannot be explained by means of the theory” (“ONT”, pp. 32–3; *PE₂*, p. 136).

(4) Without appealing to this more usual meaning of “truth”, we have no guarantee that only one coherent system of propositions will be possible. Joachim tries to block this by imposing stronger conditions on significant wholes. A significant whole, he says, is “an ideally complete experience”. Moreover, he insists that

there can be one *and only one* such experience: or *only one* significant whole, the significance of which is self-contained in the sense required. For it is *absolute* self-fulfilment, *absolutely* self-contained significance, that is postulated; and

nothing short of *absolute* individuality—nothing short of *the* completely whole experience—can satisfy this postulate. (JNT, pp. 78–9)

But it's hard to see how this little rhapsody can be certain of achieving its effect—nothing has actually been done to show that two distinct wholes cannot both be absolutely self-fulfilled: a conclusion is not established by the use of italics. As Russell notes, it is the appeal to “experience” that has to do all the work here. But, as Russell goes on to point out, in the sense in which it is needed to block the creation of additional coherent wholes, “experience” has to be understood as “apprehension of *truth*” (“ONT”, p. 35; PE₂, p. 138), which brings us back to the more usual meaning of “truth”.

More could be said about all four arguments—some of it even in defence of the coherence theory. The second argument, for example, seems to depend upon doctrines that are not strictly part of the coherence theory itself, which might be equipped with a more tractable notion of a coherent whole. Similarly, Joachim's account of error might be replaced by something more plausible. Nonetheless, two of Russell's arguments—the argument from a plurality of significant wholes and the argument that the theory presupposes a non-coherentist notion of truth which it cannot explain—now constitute the standard objections to the coherence theory.²⁸

2.4 *Internal and external relations*

“[T]he defect of all refutations by *reductio ad absurdum*”, Ramsey said, “is that they do not reveal where the line of thought which leads to the absurdity first goes astray” (*On Truth*, p. 25). This was hardly the situation here, however, for Russell and Joachim were each agreed that the point on which the other started to fall into error was his theory of relations. It was on this point, however, that they had the greatest difficulty understanding each other: Russell couldn't understand what Joachim meant by internal relations; and Joachim couldn't understand what Russell meant by external ones. The discussion of relations pervades

²⁸ Cf., for example, Richard L. Kirkham, *Theories of Truth: a Critical Introduction* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT P., 1992), pp. 107–9; Michael Williams, *Problems of Knowledge* (Oxford: Oxford U. P., 2001), pp. 118–23; Alan R. White, “Coherence Theory of Truth”, *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Paul Edwards (New York: Macmillan, 1967), 2: 131; none of them cites Russell.

their entire interaction through 1905 and 1906. “I do not think you quite understand the sense in which I hold that relations are external”, Russell told Joachim in his letter of 1 February 1905 (“RJC”, p. 136). And on 21 May 1906, after more than a year’s intense discussion, Joachim could only reply: “I despair of making you see my point about relations” (“RJC”, p. 154).

Despite this mutual incomprehension, both Joachim (*JNT*, p. 39) and Russell (“RNT”, p. 37) each claimed that the other’s theory of truth could be derived from his theory of relations. Before we get to details it will help to try and identify the general issues involved here. The key here is to notice Joachim’s claim that Russell and Moore made truth a property of “independent entities”. What this meant, in modern terms, is that truth on their theory was recognition-transcendent; on Joachim’s theory, by contrast, it was not recognition-transcendent.²⁹ As far as the theory of truth itself went, this was their most fundamental difference. Russell and Joachim’s debate follows very much the same pattern as modern debates in truth theory on the same issue: Joachim maintained that the idea of recognition-transcendent truth was incoherent; Russell, that a concept of truth that was not recognition-transcendent was not, properly speaking, truth at all. In the Russell–Joachim debate, however, each side found the basis for the other’s theory of truth in the fact that he held an untenable (in fact, an incoherent) theory of relations.

Joachim led the charge. In effect, he argued that if truth is recognition-transcendent, then whether a truth is recognized as such or not makes no difference to it. Russell’s theory was built upon the fundamental assumption that “experiencing makes no difference to the facts” (*JNT*, pp. 39, 55). On Russell’s theory, he claimed, sensation, “the sentient apprehension of a sensible quality”, is a “peculiar, distinctive relation which obtains between ‘subject’ and ‘object’ in an experience; and its character is such that it holds the related factors together, and yet also leaves them completely untouched and unaffected by the union” (*JNT*, p. 34). On this view, he continued, the facts and the experiencing of them form “no genuine whole, but a mere external adjustment. The

²⁹ At least this is true of the partial wholes which constitute the partial truths with which we always deal. The “ideally complete experience” which for Joachim constitutes the whole truth is clearly recognition-transcendent, as Joachim acknowledges (*JNT*, pp. 79–83). Joachim discusses the two kinds of truth in “‘Absolute’ and ‘Relative’ Truth”, *Mind* n.s. 14 (1905): 1–14.

two factors are, or may be, related; but the relation when, or as, it obtains, leaves each precisely what it was, viz. absolutely in itself and independent" (*JNT*, p. 41).³⁰ Joachim was unable to conceive how this was possible. He could admit that truth was independent of a particular individual's recognition of it or of the way in which it came to be recognized, or of the time at which it was recognized (*JNT*, p. 21), but "[t]ruth *in itself*, truth neither known nor recognized, may be anything you please ... for it remains beyond all and any knowledge, and is a mere name for nothing" (*JNT*, p. 51). Knowledge on such a theory became miraculous, Joachim alleged. If qualities like *greenness* were entities only externally related to a mind, as Russell claimed, the fact that I perceived them, and not others, when they were present became "a miraculous *de facto* coincidence" and made Russell's philosophy like "an extreme Occasionalism, without the *Deus ex machina* to render Occasionalism plausible" (*JNT*, p. 44).³¹ This is essentially the so-called "access objection" urged by modern anti-realists who claim that if truth is recognition-transcendent then there is no ground for thinking we ever have reliable access to it, so such a concept of truth leaves no effective defence against scepticism. From Joachim's day to this, the language of the dispute has changed much more than the underlying issues.

Russell's reply in his notes on Joachim's draft acknowledged "some force" in the "accusation of a new occasionalism", "except that I do not think perception always trustworthy." The theory of perception, he went on, "is not fundamental; one must decide one's logic without considering whether its consequences for theory of knowledge are convenient or inconvenient—at least, so it seems to me" ("RJC", p. 138). This, of course, begs the question, as Russell, by his last remark, seems to acknowledge. If truth is not independent of knowledge, and logic depends upon truth, then how one decides one's logic will be constrained by one's theory of knowledge.³² As for the view that "experiencing makes no

³⁰ On this remark, Russell commented that the facts and the experiencing of them form "as much a genuine whole as any that this theory [i.e. Russell's theory] will admit" ("RNT", p. 529).

³¹ For criticism of these sorts of arguments see Khatchadourian, *Coherence Theory of Truth*, pp. 43–6, 47–50.

³² A point which Russell recognized years later in *Inquiry into Meaning and Truth*, chs. 20, 21, where he anticipates by 30 years the debate Dummett is supposed to have launched which links acceptance or rejection of the law of excluded middle to the realism/anti-realism dispute.

difference to the facts”, Russell pointed out that this was just a special case of his more general doctrine that “relations do not modify their terms” (“RJC”, p. 136). But how should this be understood? Russell acknowledged that it was not “strictly correct” to say, as he sometimes did, that “ a and b would be unchanged if they did not have the relation R ” for “[i]f a and b have the relation R , it is of course obvious that any entities which do *not* have the relation R are not a and b ” (“RJC”, pp. 136–7).³³ Russell’s preferred statement of his position was: “When the relation R holds between a and b , then it is between a and b that the relation R holds.” “I should have supposed this a tautology,” he says, “if it were not denied by all who are in any way affiliated to Hegel” (“RJC”, p. 136).

In these terms, it is difficult to get at the issue that divided them. Joachim did not wish to deny a tautology. What he wanted to do was to maintain that, when a and b were related by R , they were changed by more than merely the fact that they now had the relation. As his occasionalism objection indicates, without such a change he had difficulty in imagining that the terms were related at all. According to Joachim “every relation at least qualifies its terms, and is so far an adjective of them, even if it be also something else” (*JNT*, pp. 11–12). But he also sometimes adopted a different formulation, which Russell (with some misgivings) went along with, namely, that in order for R to relate a and b it had to enter into their “natures”, and that a and b must form “a whole such that the determinate natures of its constituents reciprocally involve one another” (*JNT*, p. 42).³⁴ The two formulations are not

³³ Russell, rather curiously, uses the paradoxes of material implication to make his point. Since a and b do have the relation R , then “all consequences follow equally from the supposition that they do not” (“RJC”, p. 137; cf. also “ONT”, p. 41; *PE*₂, p. 143). Less sophistically, he could argue that, given that a and b do have the relation R , they would indeed be changed if they did not have it, for they would not be a and b . An item is identical with a just in case it shares all a ’s properties, including relational ones.

³⁴ One consequence of this, which Joachim explicitly draws, is that relations cannot hold between simple terms because they had no complex natures in which the relation could be grounded (*JNT*, pp. 11–12, 43). Cf. also Bradley’s *Principles of Logic*, 2nd edn. (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1922; 1st edn. 1883), 1: 289n. The point had been of considerable importance to Russell a few years earlier as he fought his way clear of neo-Hegelianism, for many of the problems he found as he attempted to construct his neo-Hegelian encyclopedia of the sciences arose from the need to relate simple elements (e.g. the paradox of the point). Embracing, as he did at the time, the doctrine of internal relations, he found there was no way that this could be done. This was the pivotal point on which

obviously incompatible (though they are not obviously identical either), and the second raises unanswered questions about the “nature” of a thing. Russell said derisively that it seemed to be “the ghost of the scholastic essence” (“RNT”, p. 530). In his notes to Joachim he tried to get clear about it, though he noted it was “a phrase which I should not use except in following an opponent” (“RJC”, p. 137).

On pain of infinite regress, a term’s relations cannot be part of its nature. So it would seem that the nature of a term must include only adjectives (i.e. intrinsic properties) of the term—perhaps all of them or maybe only some (a point to which we will return). But what is puzzling now about Joachim’s second account of internal relations is what he says about “reciprocal involvement”. His position is that if a and b are related they must form a whole the natures of the constituents of which “reciprocally involve” one another. What could this mean? If a and b form a whole, then the constituents of that whole are a and b , and so it is the natures of a and b that reciprocally involve one another. So far so good, but what is reciprocal involvement? It surely sounds like a relation: a relation between the natures of a and b , which makes the original relation between a and b possible. But then the natures of a and b form a whole the natures of whose constituents (i.e. the natures of the natures of a and b) must reciprocally involve one another, and we are embarked on an infinite regress. But if reciprocal involvement is not a relation, what on earth could it be?

2.5 *The main argument*

Not surprisingly, Russell evades these difficulties and formulates what he calls “the axiom of internal relations”, combining Joachim’s notion of a “nature” with his other view that a relation qualifies its terms. Russell states it thus:

IR Every relation is grounded in the natures of the related terms.
 (“ONT”, p. 37; *PE*₂, p. 139)

Russell claims that IR entails two important theses characteristic of much neo-Hegelian philosophy: that there is only one thing (monism) and that there are no relations (NR). Now, it is easy to show that NR implies

on which his rejection of neo-Hegelianism in 1898 turned. Cf. Nicholas Griffin, *Russell’s Idealist Apprenticeship* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1991), pp. 360–9.

monism. Suppose that monism is false. Then there are at least two diverse things, *a* and *b*, the diversity of which cannot ultimately be reduced to their non-relational properties (or adjectives). For if we try to express the diversity of *a* and *b* by means of their adjectives, we must assume that their adjectives are diverse; and if we try to express this diversity by means of further diverse adjectives, we start an infinite regress (“ONT”, pp. 38–9; *PE*₂, p. 141). So if monism is false, there must be relations; so NR implies monism. The converse implication does not hold, since even if there were just one thing, it would have the relation of identity to itself.³⁵

But nothing Russell has said so far shows that IR implies either NR or monism. The fact that relations are grounded in the intrinsic properties of their terms obviously does not on its own imply that there are no relations; it would only do so if relations were not merely grounded in, but entirely reducible to, the intrinsic properties of their terms. Russell blurs this distinction at the conclusion of his argument: “if there is to be any diversity, there must be diversity not reducible to difference of adjectives, i.e., not grounded in the ‘natures’ of the diverse terms” (“ONT”, p. 39; *PE*₂, pp. 141–2). It may well be that, as an account of the neo-Hegelian position, Russell was warranted in running these two things together; the neo-Hegelians themselves did not often make the necessary distinction between grounding relations in intrinsic properties and eliminating them in favour of intrinsic properties. But the curious thing is that Russell himself had noted at the start of his argument that there were two possible readings of IR, one which holds that “every relation is really *constituted* by the natures of the terms or of the whole which they compose” and another which holds “merely that every relation has a *ground* in these natures” (“ONT”, p. 38; *PE*₂, p. 141). He maintained, however, that the distinction is not very important since “both meanings lead ... to the view that there are no relations at all” (*ibid.*).³⁶ We shall see shortly in what sense this is true.

A similar problem affects Russell’s claim that IR both entails and is

³⁵ Neo-Hegelians often reject this possibility, because they presuppose that any relation must have at least two distinct terms, a view that Russell continued to hold for a short time after he abandoned neo-Hegelianism (*cf. Papers* 2: 142, 278). Obviously, on that assumption monism and NR are equivalent.

³⁶ Elsewhere I have criticized him for not making this distinction in his earliest criticisms of neo-Hegelian theories of relations. *Cf. Griffin, Russell’s Idealist Apprenticeship*, pp. 323–4.

entailed by Joachim's theory of truth. By this he means that IR entails and is entailed by the claim that truth forms a "significant whole"; that there are not multifarious particular truths, but only one big truth whose constituent elements, to repeat Joachim's definition, "reciprocally involve one another, or reciprocally determine one another's being as contributory features in a single concrete meaning" (*JNT*, p. 66). This brings us back, unfortunately, to reciprocal involvement. I shall assume, if only to lessen my exegetic labours, that the "or" is not a disjunction, but means merely "in other words". And I shall assume that when Joachim talks of a part's being, he means the part as it is in itself and not as it is in relation to other parts. Simplifying, but I hope not grotesquely travestying, Joachim's position, I take it that he is claiming at least this: truth forms a whole, the intrinsic properties of each part of which determine the intrinsic properties of every other part. And I take it that one reasonable test for the intrinsic properties of one part of truth's determining those of another is that from a full knowledge of the first it would in principle be possible (for an ideal ratiocinator) to infer the second.³⁷ There may well be more to significant wholes than this, but this is, I think, all that is needed to understand Russell's argument that IR and the claim that truth is a significant whole are logically equivalent.

Russell's argument for the equivalence is swift:

It follows at once from [IR] that the whole of reality or of truth must be a significant whole in Mr. Joachim's sense. For each part will have a nature which exhibits its relations to every other part and to the whole; hence, if the nature of any one part were completely known, the nature of the whole and of every other part would also be completely known; while conversely, if the nature of the whole were completely known, that would involve knowledge of its relations to each part, and therefore of the relations of each part to each other part, and therefore of the nature of each part. It is also evident that, if reality or truth is a significant whole in Mr. Joachim's sense, the axiom of internal relations must be true. Hence the axiom is equivalent to the monistic theory of truth.

("ONT", p. 37; *PE*₂, p. 140)

The second part of this argument seems straightforward, indeed it seemed so straightforward to Russell that he didn't provide even an outline of it; he just said it is "evident that, if reality or truth is a sig-

³⁷ This is rather different from Bradley's position. Bradley's Absolute is a relationless unity of *feeling*. It would be improper to talk of logical relations between its parts.

nificant whole ... the axiom of internal relations must be true.” The argument, I think, runs as follows: If truth is a significant whole then, from a complete knowledge of any part of truth (i.e. of any particular partial truth), it would be possible to infer a complete knowledge of any other. For example, if aRb is true, then from a complete knowledge of this truth it will be possible to infer all other truths, and so *a fortiori* all truths about the terms of the relation, including all truths about the natures of a and b and their intrinsic properties. Thus R is grounded in the natures of a and b . Suppose, on the contrary, that there were even one external relation R holding between two terms a and b . Then, by hypothesis, it would be impossible to infer all truths about the natures of a and b from the fact that aRb . But then aRb is not part of the significant whole that constitutes truth. Thus I think Russell is right in claiming that IR follows from Joachim’s claim that truth is a significant whole—at least if we have understood that claim correctly.³⁸

The other part of Russell’s argument seems more problematic. Russell offers a number of steps to his conclusion. From IR, Russell claims to get the result that each part of reality or each part of the truth “will have a nature which exhibits its relations to every other part and to the whole.” But just because the relations of all the parts are “grounded in their natures”, I don’t think we can simply assume that the natures of the parts “*exhibit*” their relations. This is exactly to miss the point made earlier that there is a distinction to be made between a relation’s being *reducible* to the natures of its terms and its merely being *grounded* in those natures. Assuming IR, if R relates a and b , then R is grounded in the natures of a and b , which means that a and b each have some intrinsic property, not necessarily the same in each case, on which R is grounded. From the fact that a and b are related by R , it would be possible to infer that they each have the requisite grounding properties; but so far as I can see there is nothing in the grounding properties which would enable one to infer that aRb from even a complete knowledge of the natures of a and b . *A fortiori*, there is nothing in the grounding properties of a and b that would enable one to infer all the other relations of each term. The

³⁸ The claim that a neo-Hegelian coherence theory of truth entails a doctrine of internal relations is argued in great detail in Khatchadourian’s little known and hard to find book, *The Coherence Theory of Truth*, Chs. 2 and 3. He deals with many different forms of the doctrine of internal relations but, curiously, makes no reference to Russell’s argument.

grounding properties are a necessary condition for the relation, but not, at least as IR is so far stated, a sufficient condition.

On the other hand, if we take IR to be asserting that relations are reducible to the natures of the related terms, we get only a little further. In that case, complete knowledge of the nature of any term *will* exhibit *all* the relations of the term, for *all* its relations supervene on its nature. So we get the first step of Russell's argument: all the relations of a term are "exhibited" by its nature. But from this, we cannot get the next step: namely that, from a knowledge of all the relations of a term, we can infer the nature of all other terms and of the whole of which they are part,³⁹ despite the fact that every term is related to every other term (and to the whole) and that, in the case of at least one term, we know all these relations. We start from complete knowledge of the nature of some term, *a*, and from this we can infer *all* the relations which *a* has to every other term, since these relations supervene on *a*'s nature. Each of these relations will tell us something about the nature of the term(s) to which *a* is related, namely that it includes the properties necessary to ground that relation to *a*. But we cannot suppose that we can acquire in this way complete knowledge of the natures of the other terms. There may well be other aspects of their natures which are not implied by the fact that they have some relation to *a*.

There are two ways in which Russell's argument can be rescued. The first requires us to look more closely at what the nature of a term is. We decided above that the nature of a term contains only adjectives (i.e. intrinsic properties) of the term. But does it contain all of them or only some? Joachim is no help here. Neither in his book, nor in his discussion with Russell, does he expand on this crucial notion. Russell, however, suggests two meanings: it could mean "all the prop[osition]s which are true of the thing" or it could mean "the adequate analysis of the thing". A definition, he explains, should give an adequate analysis, but would not give all the propositions that are true of the thing defined. "Hegelians", he goes on, "consider ... that these two notions are indistinguishable. *They* give no reason for this view; but it follows from the principle

³⁹ It might be thought that this begs the question. Aren't we supposed to be proving that there is a whole in which all the parts cohere? But since everything is related to everything else, the sum total of all things forms a whole, in the only sense Russell will admit. The question to be decided is whether it forms a significant whole in Joachim's sense.

that every proposition consists in the attribution of a predicate to a subject. I deny this principle, and maintain my distinction" ("RJC", p. 137). The remark about the Hegelians is significant, for it implies that *all* the properties of a thing (but *not* its relations) should be included in an adequate analysis of the thing.⁴⁰ And, since the analysis of a thing means an analysis into its constituents, it follows that *all* a thing's properties (but not its relations) are among its constituent parts. We, of course, expect that Russell is not going to endorse a distinction between essential properties and accidental ones, and we also expect him to endorse a major metaphysical distinction between properties and relations; but I am not aware of anywhere else where he is quite so clear that all a thing's properties are among its parts.

If we take seriously Russell's claim that Hegelians don't distinguish between the set of propositions true of a term and the set of propositions needed for its adequate analysis, we can identify the nature of a thing with the former. Now recall Joachim's claim that if two terms are related, their natures "reciprocally involve" each other. If this means what we decided it did a few pages back, then it follows that from a complete knowledge of one nature one could infer a complete knowledge of the other. It follows then, since everything is related to everything else, that from a complete knowledge of the nature of any one term, it will be possible to infer a complete knowledge of the nature of any other, and that will include all true propositions about either, including, of course, all relational propositions. Thus all true relational propositions can be reduced to propositions about the natures of their terms, and since the natures of the terms include only intrinsic properties, relations can be completely eliminated. And if all relations can be eliminated, *a fortiori* all external relations can be eliminated. Suppose, indeed, that there were some external relation R holding between two terms, a and b . By definition, it would not be grounded in the natures of a or b . But since the natures of a and b include *all* truths about a and b , it follows,

⁴⁰ The proof is by transitivity of identity. Let A be the set of propositions which give an adequate analysis of a thing; let P be the set of true propositions attributing properties to it; and let T be the set of true propositions about it. If every proposition attributes a property to a thing, then $T = P$. From this, Russell can show that $T = A$, only if he assumes $P = A$. I have discussed the implications of this remark for Russell's concept of analysis in "Some Remarks on Russell's Early Decompositional Style of Analysis", in M. Beaney, ed., *The Analytic Turn: Analysis in Early Analytic Philosophy and Phenomenology* (New York and London: Routledge, 2007), pp. 75–90.

contrary to our assumption, that “ aRb ” is not a truth. Thus there can be no external relations. It is in this sense that it is unimportant whether neo-Hegelians claim that relations are constituted by the natures of their terms or merely grounded in them.

The weakness of this line of argument, however, is that it does not yield the conclusion as Russell stated it: namely, that IR entails Joachim’s theory of truth. On the present argument it does so only if supplemented by what Russell identified as the Hegelian view of the nature of a term. It is open to proponents of IR to reject this additional view, whether or not Joachim himself would do so. The second rescue for Russell’s argument requires taking a closer look at the gap in it. On the assumption that all a term’s relations can be inferred from a complete knowledge of its nature, it follows that a complete knowledge of the nature of one term would enable one to infer all the relations of that term, and, since everything is related to everything else and all relations are grounded in the natures of the related terms, from that to infer something about the nature of every term. The gap in the argument is that, from this knowledge of *part* of the nature of every term, there is no way to arrive at a complete knowledge of the nature of every term as required by Joachim’s theory of truth. The gap, however, can be bridged on minimal (perhaps necessary) assumptions if we apply IR at a different level of analysis. Suppose that aRb and that we have a complete knowledge of the nature of a . From that knowledge we can infer both that aRb and that there is some aspect of the nature of b necessary to ground R . Call that aspect of b ’s nature, β_1 . We have not so far been able to show that there is not some other aspect of b ’s nature, β_2 say, which cannot be inferred from our knowledge of β_1 . But now suppose that there is such a β_2 . Since everything is related to everything else, β_2 must be related to β_1 , and, by IR, this relation (call it r) must be internal. Then from our knowledge of β_1 we can infer $\beta_1 r \beta_2$ and also something about the nature of β_2 , namely that it has to be such as can ground the relation r . At this point it looks as if the argument has merely been repeated with a new gap; and indeed it is capable of being repeated *ad infinitum*, with a new gap at each level. However, β_2 is itself part of the nature of b , and it might well be charitable to assume that natures do not themselves have natures, for otherwise an infinite regress will result and (arguably) no relations will

ever be grounded.⁴¹ If we take this line and assume that natures go only one level down, as it were, then it seems reasonable to assume that β_1 grounds not only the relation R that a has to b , but also the relation r that β_1 has to β_2 . On this view, a complete knowledge of the nature of a will give us a complete knowledge of b . For from a complete knowledge of the nature of a we can infer that aRb , and thence infer β_1 as part of the nature of b . From that we can infer $\beta_1 r \beta_2$, for any other part, β_2 , of b 's nature. Thus we can achieve complete knowledge of b 's nature from a complete knowledge of a 's nature. Thus the doctrine of internal relations implies Joachim's theory of truth.

3. EPILOGUE

Russell's public debate with Joachim about the nature of truth was quite surprisingly polemical. There was, on both sides, a degree of sarcasm and ragging which modern authors would be begged to tone down by respectable journal editors. Part of this was the unmistakable stylistic legacy of Bradley, who used it to enormous effect throughout his writings. Though Russell has a reputation for sarcasm, it was not all on Russell's side. Nor did Russell initiate the tone of the debate. Joachim gave as good as he got, and his chapter on Russell's theory of truth is fiercely polemical. Despite the public tone of the debate, Russell and Joachim's correspondence remained cordial. Russell was concerned enough about preserving the civility of the exchange to send Joachim the manuscript of his reply in *Mind* ("RNT") and to ask him whether it contained anything he considered offensive. (Russell's letter is missing, but Joachim's reply on 21 May 1906 makes it clear that the question was explicitly asked—and that the answer was no.)

There was one very curious exception to this. It concerned a passage Joachim quoted (*JNT*, p. 44n.) from Russell's 1904 paper on Meinong (*Papers* 4: 469) to the effect that the discovery of simples required a mind with a "high degree of philosophical capacity". Russell, rather surprisingly, took umbrage at this, thinking he had been accused of arrogance, which, Joachim assured him, he had not. However, it was not easy to soothe his ruffled feathers: no less than five of the extant letters (two from Russell and three from Joachim) mention the matter. But with this ex-

⁴¹ This looks like a parallel to the famous Bradleian regress about relations, but applied this time to terms.

ception, they evidently took each other's public jibes in good part.

I'm not sure whether this remained true after their final public exchanges in 1920, because there is no extant correspondence between them after 1906. In 1920 there were two concluding salvoes, one from each philosopher. First, in the pages of *The Athenaeum* Russell reviewed Joachim's inaugural lecture, *Immediate Experience and Mediation*, as Wykeham Professor of Logic at Oxford. Then there was a symposium on "The Meaning of 'Meaning'" in *Mind*, between F. C. S. Schiller, Russell, and Joachim, devoted mainly to the new philosophical position that Russell had put forward the previous year in "On Propositions: What They Are and How They Mean".⁴² Joachim's contribution was devoted to criticizing Russell's views on images which figure largely in his early neutral monism; it was entirely, and indeed carpingly, critical. There was an evident lack of the good humour that appeared in their earlier polemics. The reason, very likely, was Russell's earlier review of Joachim's inaugural lecture.

Joachim's appointment to the Wykeham chair was evidently controversial, some at the university having hoped for the appointment of someone with expertise in modern logic. The battle was part of several different wars: between the established idealistic logics of the nineteenth century and modern formal logic; between neo-Hegelianism and analytic philosophy; and most generally, it was part of the great cultural battle after the First World War between the old order trying to reassert itself and a new order struggling to be born and to remake everything afresh. Appointing Joachim to a chair of logic, 40 years after Frege's *Begriffsschrift* and ten years after *Principia Mathematica*, tended to confirm Oxford's reputation as the home of lost causes.

John Middleton Murry, the editor of the *Athenaeum*, an Oxford man himself and a radical modernist from his pre-war undergraduate days, invited Russell to review Joachim's inaugural lecture and put Joachim "in his place right at the beginning".⁴³ Russell obliged in a review called tellingly "The Wisdom of Our Ancestors" (*Papers* 9: 403–6). In it, Russell complained of Joachim's deference to Hegel and (once more) of his use of the doctrine of internal relations. He ended with a brief survey of the

⁴² *Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volume 2* (1919), reprinted in *Papers* 8: 278–306. The *Mind* symposium appeared in n.s. 29: 385–414; Russell's contribution is reprinted in *Papers* 9: 88–93.

⁴³ Middleton Murry to Russell, 8 December 1919, quoted in *Papers* 9: 398.

advances recently made in mathematical logic, physics and psychology, all of which, he said, had been “opposed or ignored by orthodox philosophers” (*Papers* 9: 405). Joachim, alas, gave him ample ammunition, for he had been rash enough to assert that Euclid’s parallel axiom was an assumption without which reasoning would become impossible.⁴⁴ “It is probable”, Russell replied, “that (with the exception of Lhasa) there is no other university in the world where these words could have been written by a Professor of Logic” (*Papers* 9: 405). The sarcasm was perhaps no fiercer than had appeared elsewhere in their public debates, but coming in a review of Joachim’s inaugural lecture, and balanced by no countervailing acknowledgement of Joachim’s virtues, it can only be read as an attack on his competence for the job.⁴⁵ Whether Joachim took offence we may never know for sure, but the griping, sarcastic tone of his reply to Russell’s “On Propositions” in *Mind* a few months later suggests that he did.⁴⁶

⁴⁴ Joachim, *Immediate Experience and Mediation* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1919), p. 19.

⁴⁵ Joachim got his revenge in the lectures he gave at Oxford, published posthumously as *Logical Studies* (Oxford: Clarendon P., 1948), where in two sweeping footnotes (pp. 244 n. 1 and 247 n. 2) he manages to treat three of Russell’s theories of propositions—the ones in *The Principles of Mathematics*, *The Problems of Philosophy*, and “On Propositions”—as one theory. Not surprisingly, he finds it inconsistent.

⁴⁶ An earlier version of this paper was read at the PHIER conference, “Bradley et sa Réception”, at the Université Blaise Pascal, Clermont-Ferrand in June 2006 and will appear in a French translation in *Philosophiques*. In revising it, I am indebted to the comments of participants at the conference and, especially, to one of the anonymous referees for *Russell* whose friendly suggestions provoked a marked improvement in §2.5.
