

Reviews

RUSSELL'S LIFE, LEGACY AND WORK

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Peter Stone, ed. *Bertrand Russell's Life and Legacy*. Foreword by Tony Simpson. (Vernon Series in Philosophy.) Wilmington, DE: Vernon P., 2017. Pp. xvii, 195. ISBN: 978-1-62273-191-6. US\$60 (hb), US\$52 (pb), e-book \$47.

Peter Stone has been a member of the Bertrand Russell Society for over twenty years and recently served as its Vice President. His latest contribution to Russell studies, *Bertrand Russell's Life and Legacy*, is an interesting collection of essays that consists of nine articles divided into four parts plus a foreword by Tony Simpson, who is the current head of the Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation.

In his foreword Simpson quotes from Russell's statement on the Middle East dated 31 January 1970, which was read on 3 February, the day after Bertrand Russell's death, to an International Conference of Parliamentarians meeting in Cairo. Since I came to know and befriend International Law jurist Richard Falk, who served as the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the situation in Palestine between 2008 and 2014 and have since read many of his books and articles plus sat in on several courses at Lund University on the conflict between the Israeli Government and the Palestinians, I am glad that Simpson brought up this topic. I am impressed by how sharp-sighted Russell was up to the end of a long life committed to political activism for peace and justice.

When Russell said: "The tragedy of the people of Palestine is that their country was 'given' by a foreign Power to another people for the creation of a new State",¹ he pointed to the root of the problem. If Russell had been alive today, he would have condemned the recent killing of Jews in Pittsburgh, but even more lamented the murder of hundreds of unarmed young Palestinians protesting the Israeli's Government's policy and its Defence Forces' enforcement of that policy. All his life Russell was a supporter of the underdog, and it is good to be able to listen to his cries for justice beyond the grave.

¹ *The Spokesman*, no. 2 (April 1970): 5.

The title of *Life and Legacy* is so encompassing that it is hard to exclude Russell's work itself. This is particularly true for the articles in the second part, "Russell's Philosophical World", but also for the editor's own contribution "Philosophical Biography Reconsidered". I will return to this in dealing with Stone's essay.

The first part, "Russell the Man", consists of two articles. The first "An Affair Remembered: Bertrand Russell and Joan Follwell, 1927–1929", which is by Eileen O'Mara Walsh and deals with her mother's—Joan Follwell O'Mara's—brief affair with Russell. Walsh published her own memoirs, *The Third Daughter*, in 2016.

In light of what has been revealed by the #MeToo movement, it is not more than fair that Russell's many "affairs" should be scrutinized and evaluated. Although I have no reason to believe that Russell ever forced himself on any woman, there is still room for some unbiased reflections regarding the difference between *using* one's position as a famous and influential person to help others in their careers and liberate them from outdated moral standards, and *misusing* it, even according to one's own moral principles, which might create a painful sense of guilt and shame, which is often eased by equal portions of forgetting, repression, denial and inventing "alternative facts".

Russell's relationship with women, and how he documented his experiences of them and talked about them, have always interested me. I include his two grandmothers, his mother, sister and paternal aunt plus his daughter, Katharine, who had four boys and one daughter,² and his other three granddaughters that his first son, John, "blessed" him with, although one of them

² During my year at Harvard Divinity School in 1976–77, I met Katharine alone a couple of times, since she lived close by the school in a house owned by the Signet Society. The Society was, at first, dedicated to the production of literary work only, going so far as to exclude debate and even theatrical productions. Besides being a cook for the Society, she was reading German journals.

One evening the Swedish Dean, Krister Stendahl, and his wife, Brita, invited Katharine, three of her sons and the Swedish literary critic and writer Olof Lagercrantz for dinner at the Dean's house. Olof was editor of *Dagens Nyheter*, in which Russell published several articles. Her oldest son, the late David Tait (1951–2013), was a student at the school, but he was transferring to a more pious school in the south to become a Baptist minister, if I'm not mistaken.

It didn't take long after my arrival to Harvard Divinity School, staying in the Dean's House, before someone whispered in my ear that Russell's grandson was a student at HDS. David had followed in his mother's footsteps, who had married a State department employee and linguist who became a Christian missionary, and embraced some form of Christianity.

HDS is a small school and word got around that I was hoping to meet David, which I did briefly. He told me about how he used to read the newspapers to his grandfather and what a kind person Russell was. I didn't ask David why he was changing schools, but the rumour had it that he thought the school lacked the right

had another father. Except for her, they are all genetically related and belong to Russell's family history in a wide sense.

If we use two parameters—romantic and sexual—we get four possible combinations: romantic and sexual, romantic but not sexual, and sexual but not romantic, and finally: neither. The women I just mentioned fall into the neither category, but so do some other women with whom he established mutually rewarding *friendships*.

There were periods in Russell's life when the last thing he wished for was creating a "scandal" and ending up in the press, which might hamper the success of all his noble projects. How "scandalous" the revelation of the "real facts" would be, depends, of course, on how conservative, liberal or indifferent one is when it comes to these sensitive issues. One has to keep in mind the great difference between how divorce, infidelity and casual sexual affairs were viewed in Great Britain and the United States when Russell was most sexually active and how things look from a modern Swedish perspective.

That Lady Russell had a great influence on his life and the shaping of his ideas and values is something which Russell himself often brings up in his autobiographical writings. The influence of the absence of his mother and sister is harder to access, since they both died when Russell turned two. Their absence, however, seems to have left a lacuna in Russell's soul that created a feeling of loneliness and separation from the rest of the world, a feeling that he struggled to combat all his life. This might be worthwhile to have in mind when we evaluate the morality of his romantic and sexual relationships in his adult life.

Russell's first marriage, to the American Quaker Alys Pearsall Smith, was a happy one until one day in the autumn of 1901, when he had a revelation. In his *Autobiography* he writes: "I went out bicycling one afternoon, and suddenly, as I was riding along a country road, I realized that I no longer loved Alys" (1: 150). During the following ten years he continued to live a loveless marriage with Alys. Things would change in 1911, when he fell in love with and started a sexual relationship with Lady Ottoline Morrell, who was married to MP Philip Morrell and had no plans of leaving him and their daughter, although she could not have been unaware of that he was unfaithful to her and even had children outside their marriage. She also had other lovers that Russell did not seem to have been aware of.³

atmosphere. As far as I was concerned, the spirit of the school was pious enough. I went with David to a class by George Rupp, who was giving a course on nineteenth-century theology. David spoke more than anyone else. My impression was that David, and his mother, had turned against atheism, because they wanted to be independent minded and not just echo the views of their famous father and grandfather, the same way that children of alcoholics often become teetotalers.

³ See MONK, *Bertrand Russell: the Spirit of Solitude* (1996).

Russell stopped living with Alys and found a place of his own. This started a period when he advocated and practised the philosophy of free love and open relationships that would last until he fell in love with and married Edith Finch in 1952.

So was Russell's relationship with Lady Ottoline immoral? According to Victorian mores at the time many would no doubt have condemned it, but from a contemporary point of view I see nothing wrong. But Russell wanted more than sex and since Lady Ottoline was not prepared to divorce her husband and did not wish to have children with him, he always had an eye open for new relationships and possible suppliers of aristocratic offspring.

An opportunity showed up when he was lecturing in the United States, where he visited a young American woman named Helen Dudley, whom he had met in Oxford the year before. During his visit Russell talked about marriage and asked her to join him in England.

However, when Russell returned to England, he resumed his affair with Lady Ottoline. When Helen arrived in England with suitcases full of pretty clothes she fondly imagined to be her trousseau, he eventually refused to see her. Russell did, somewhat tactlessly, find Helen a place to stay—with Lady Ottoline. Dudley told Lady Ottoline about the relationship and showed her Russell's letters, which caused that relationship to cool as well. The end of the affair with Russell was a shock from which Dudley apparently never recovered. She returned to America, amid fears that she might commit suicide. She developed an illness, becoming paralyzed and then insane. "I broke her heart," Russell wrote of her in his *Autobiography* (I: 214).

My first publication was a review in this journal of Carl-Göran Ekerwald's *Bertrand Russell's Himmelsfärd* [Bertrand Russell's Ascension], in which the author describes how Russell makes love to Helen in her parents' house in Chicago, while her sisters keep watch so their parents wouldn't catch the lovers. Was this immoral? Was Russell *misusing* his position? Can he be blamed for Helen's mental illness? These are questions that he himself struggled with.

In 1916 Russell met and fell in love with Lady Constance Malleon. They were both involved in the pacifist movement. This love affair lasted for four years and was maintained at the same time as his relationship with Vivien Eliot, the wife of T. S. Eliot.

Lady Constance ("Colette") was married to an actor but it was an open relationship. Russell broke up his sexual and romantic relationship with Colette, mostly because she didn't want children, but they remained friends until his death and she always sent him flowers on his birthday.

His affair with Vivien has been the object of interest by several commentators. Since her mental state was instable, of which Russell was very much aware, his relation with her, which was meant to help an unfortunate marriage, in fact might have made things worse (see Monk, pp. 509–16).

Then enters Dora Black, but I won't get into all the problems their open marriage caused them and their children, but only say that Dora had, on top of her two children with Russell, two children with another man; so Russell got more than he had asked for. During his time with Dora, he had several affairs during his lecture tours in the United States, which I will not bring up here. Neither will I here say anything about the difficulties he had to face, when he married his third wife, Patricia ("Peter") Spence, with whom he had a son, Conrad, who was forced to choose between seeing his father or never have contact with his mother again.⁴

Twenty-three of Russell's letters to Joan Follwell are now in the Bertrand Russell Archives, and anyone interested can read them.⁵ Russell was in his mid-50s and Joan was about twenty-one years old. Her daughter's article starts with a page her mother wrote in 1971 about the first time she met Russell, who was staying a night in Joan's parents' house. More than 40 years later she tells her story:

... I was dismayed, and my parents were quite nonplussed, when he asked after supper if we might be left alone together so that I could show him some of my "work!" This work was practically non-existent—two chapters of an autobiographical novel, but he asked me to read it aloud to him. I had not proceeded very far when it became clear to me that he was far more interested in my mouth than in the words I was reading. So I said, with genuine feeling but with quite false naïveté: "You are just like all the others!" And he admitted with the utmost gravity that he was. (P. 4)

It sounds like Russell was looking for an opportunity to have sex with a 35-years younger woman in her parents' home, which is not as much immoral as a sign of poor judgment by a man with a strong sexual drive.

There are two extreme ways of seeing Russell's many sexual affairs. The upholders of a conventional sexual and moral code will see Russell as an immoral womanizer and philanderer with only one thing on his mind. The other is to see Russell as a progressive thinker wanting to liberate society from a narrow-minded sexual morality. In the famous prologue to his *Autobiography*, "What I Have Lived For", he says that there are three strong passions that have governed his life: the longing for love, the search for knowledge, and unbearable pity for the suffering of mankind. He continues: "I have sought

⁴ STEVENSON has published an interesting article "In Solitude I Brood on War" (2013), in which he describes and documents an important American lecture tour. It also shows what kind of difficulties his and Dora's philosophy of free love created. See also Stevenson's other very interesting articles about Russell's tours abroad. See also Nicholas Griffin's second selection of Russell's letters with the editor's knowledgeable and interesting comments: *SLBR* 2.

⁵ They are published unannotated in the appendix to WALSH's *The Third Daughter*.

love, first, because it brings ecstasy—ecstasy so great that I would often have sacrificed all the rest of life for a few hours of this joy” (1: 13). It is quite obvious that he is not talking about sexual pleasure during a one night stand. Russell was, in my eyes, a romantic fool idealizing the virtues of the opposite sex, the durability of infatuation, and underestimating the havoc jealousy can bring to an open relationship.

If I may psychologize for a moment, I think that Andrew Brink is on to something when he points out that Russell as an early orphan missed his mother’s love and as an adult tried to compensate for the wound it left by easily falling in love, particularly with young, beautiful and talented women.⁶

Turning to the editor’s own contribution, “Philosophical Biography Reconsidered”, Stone starts with an introduction pointing out that new material has been disembargoed relating to Patricia Spence, which means that none of the existing biographies of Russell were written with the benefit of Russell’s private papers and letters concerning his third wife (pp. 21–2). He then raises the question why philosophers should want more Russellian biography. “What does philosophy stand to gain from an improved knowledge of the great names associated with it [i.e. Russell’s life]? This paper will offer an answer to this question” (p. 22).

Stone draws a distinction between a *biography of a philosopher* and a *philosophical biography*. To make this distinction clearer he distinguishes between three kinds of biographies: philosophical, literary, and philosophical gossip. He then says that philosophers need only concern themselves with the first kind. “This form of biography relies heavily on the idea of philosophy as ‘love of wisdom’ and so it will be more or less appropriate the more or less the work of a philosopher speaks to that ideal” (p. 22). He adds that “These three categories are of course not mutually exclusive. Many biographies serve all three functions effectively. (Russell’s *Autobiography* is a perfect example.)” (p. 23). (I thought *auto*-biographies belonged to a different genus, not only a different species.) He also says, “In distinguishing between these three forms of biography, I am not implying any rank ordering among them. Any such ordering would be superfluous to my purpose here. In particular I have no brief against philosophical gossip” (p. 23).

The purpose here is to “... examine philosophical biography proper. Under what circumstances will a biography shed light upon a philosopher’s ideas? (p. 24). We have to remember that by now the denotation of “philosophical biography” is restricted to:

⁶ See BRINK, *Bertrand Russell* (1989), particularly chs. 6 and 8, “Romantic Attachments and Illusions: Love Letters” and “Bertrand Russell’s Sexual Politics”.

... when the philosopher in question treats of matters of an ethical, moral, or political nature. Philosophers who deal with such matters are practicing philosophy in its original sense; they are professing a 'love of wisdom', and expressing opinions as how we, as human beings, to live our lives. When a philosopher offers guidance with regard to how we ought to live, her own personal life becomes fair game for criticism. In part, this is because philosophers may fail to practice what they preach. (P. 25)

Stone takes as an example a philosopher who argues for vegetarianism "even while continuing to eat meat" (p. 25). He is like the Dalai Lama, who says that he lives at such a high altitude that no vegetables can grow there and that he therefore is forced to eat meat, if he wants to survive. Can Russell be accused of similar inconsistencies, like a Christian minister advocating pacifism and asking God to bless the soldiers' ammunition? Russell was good at pointing out inconsistencies among followers of Jesus, but what about himself—did he preach anything that he did not practise? The reader can decide that.

In his third section Stone uses the recent Russell-related biography—*A Man of Small Importance* (2005) about Griffin Barry by his daughter, Harriet Ward, whose mother was Dora Russell—to illustrate the nature and importance of philosophical biography. Stone claims that "Harriet Ward had a front-row seat to the marriage and subsequent divorce of Bertie and Dora" (p. 30). Harriet was born on 8 July 1930, but still she is "... well-placed to offer some insights into Russell's personal life at exactly this period [when Russell moved from Dora Russell to Peter Spence]" (p. 31). Harriet must have been an exceptionally precocious child! The essay concludes by saying that Ward's book "... does much more than providing an entertaining piece of history. It also demonstrates the value of philosophical biography. To have accomplished this task while devoting an entire book to a 'man of small importance' is no small feat indeed" (p. 39). No Swedish library has Ward's book, so I have to trust Stone's judgment, although it sounds strange.

Then follow three very interesting and tightly argued articles which involve Russell's arguments for or against certain positions when it comes to his theory of knowledge, metaphysics, philosophy of mind, philosophies of logic and mathematics, and philosophy of language, and how these different branches of philosophy hang together. Questions of morality, ethics and political philosophy belonged to a different branch of philosophy, according to Russell. Expressions of morality and ethics do not state facts but express emotions; as such they are neither true nor false, and therefore beyond the domains of scientific philosophy and science.

But it's good to remember that when Russell starts his *Problems of Philosophy* (1912) by asking "Is there any knowledge in the world which is so certain

that no reasonable man could doubt it?”, we already know his tentative answer: “Yes, in pure mathematics, because its truths can be deduced from more primitive and self-evident logical truths.”

This is a short version of a theory regarding the relationship between mathematics and logic called “logicism”. But before we get into *exactly* what this theory comes down to, there are certain fundamental distinctions regarding the formulation of human knowledge that have to be introduced. According to Kant sentences or propositions are either analytical or synthetic, and our knowledge of the world is either *a priori* or *a posteriori*. So we get four possible combinations: analytical/*a priori*, analytical/*a posteriori*, synthetic *a priori* and neither. I’m pretty sure that all bachelors are unmarried men, because that’s what “bachelor” means. But I’m not equally sure that bachelors are richer or happier than their married colleagues—that’s an empirical question. Empirical questions are settled by empirical observations. Conceptual questions are settled by conceptual analyses.

So in which group did Russell put mathematical and logical truths, when he started as a young man to think about these things, and which group did they belong to at the end of this long process? A related question is: are mathematical and logical theorems *discoveries* or *innovations*? Is $2 + 2 = 4$ true because we have discovered that it is true, or is it true because we can say so without contradicting ourselves. This is a fundamental rule that no logical system can sin against. Another question concerns the ontological status of numbers, sets, points, etc. Do these abstract objects really exist? Depending on the answer given to this question, philosophers are divided into realists, conceptualists and different versions of nominalists.

To explain this problem, I would like to remind the reader of the Ogden and Richards triangle⁷ which distinguishes between Symbol (language), Thought or Reference (mind) and Referent (world). How would Russell’s terminology fit this matrix?

Much depends on where you start your analysis of the meaning of a particular word or sign. If you’re a Platonic realist, numbers in different forms are truly existing objects, although not empirical objects. If you want to know more about numbers and their relationship to one another, you have to embark on an investigation. If you’re a nominalist, you’re likely to start with the words; and if you’re a conceptualist, you start with an idea that is independent of language and reality. The only interpretation of mathematics that Russell never embraced was J. S. Mill’s empirical point of view. Otherwise one can find traces in Russell of different meta-mathematical interpretations.

⁷ See OGDEN AND RICHARDS, *The Meaning of Meaning* (1923). The idea is also expressed in 1810 by Bernard Bolzano. However, the triangle can be traced back to Aristotle’s second book of his *Organon*.

Russell is often referred to as the father or grandfather of “Analytical Philosophy” but is also credited with having influenced the “Vienna Circle”, not least by Rudolf Carnap. Members of this group were often referred to as “Logical Positivists” or “Logical Empiricists”. But when Russell, in the last chapter of his *History of Western Philosophy*, presents his own recommended method or approach, it’s not “Analytic Philosophy” or even “Logical Atomism”; he calls it “The Philosophy of Logical Analysis”. He starts by distinguishing between philosophers who have been mainly inspired by mathematics (like himself) and those who are more influenced by the empirical sciences. He then goes on to say:

In our days a school of philosophy has arisen which sets to work to eliminate Pythagoreanism from the principles of mathematics, and to combine empiricism with an interest in the deductive parts of human knowledge. The aims of this school are less spectacular than those of most philosophers in the past, but some of its achievements⁸ are as solid as those of the men of science.

The origin of this philosophy is in the achievements of mathematicians who set to work to purge their subject of fallacies and slipshod reasoning. (*HWP*₃, p. 783)

That’s exactly how Russell got hooked by the promise given by mathematicians that they could *prove* that their conclusions were true.

He then goes through the results of Leibniz, Weierstrass and not least Cantor, and then Frege and finally puts his roses outside the door of Carnap. Then he gives a brief illustration of his theory of definite descriptions, which leads him to conclude: “Thus mathematical knowledge ceases to be mysterious. It is all of the same nature as the ‘great truth’ that there are three feet in a yard” (p. 786). This sounds like the linguistic interpretation of mathematics that Russell supposedly inherited from Wittgenstein⁹ and reluctantly embraced, but still later expressed in an essay “Is Mathematics Purely Linguistic?”, which wasn’t published until Russell had passed on to the platonic world of former human beings.¹⁰

⁸ Like Russell’s own theory of description, his discovery of the paradox and his attempts to solve it, or at least get around it, with different type theories.

⁹ Wittgenstein’s theories “... undermined the entire approach to logic that had inspired Russell’s great contributions to the philosophy of mathematics. It persuaded Russell that there were no ‘truths’ of logic at all, that logic consisted entirely of tautologies, the truth of which was not guaranteed by eternal facts in the Platonic realm of ideas but lay, rather, simply in the nature of language. This was to be the final step in the retreat from Pythagoras and a further incentive for Russell to abandon technical philosophy in favour of other pursuits.” See www.britannica.com/biography/Bertrand-Russell, written by Ray Monk.

¹⁰ The manuscript is dated 1950 but was not published until 1973 in *EA* and then in *Papers* 11. The two final sentences read: “All the propositions of mathematics and

His praise of the “chief merits of the philosophical school of which I am a member” ends:

The habit of careful veracity acquired in the practice of this philosophical method can be extended to the whole sphere of human activity, producing, wherever it exists, a lessening of fanaticism with an increasing capacity of sympathy and mutual understanding. In abandoning a part of its dogmatic pretensions, philosophy does not cease to suggest and inspire a way of life. (HWP₃, p. 789)

If anyone followed this philosophical method, it was Carnap. Ádam Tamás Tuboly’s article is about “The Limits and Basis of Logical Tolerance: Carnap’s Combination of Russell and Wittgenstein”. Tuboly claims that “... Carnap’s writings about logic and philosophy in the 1930s could be seen and reconstructed as a *synthesis* (intended or unintended) or special *combination* of Russell’s inductive/practical considerations on logic and Wittgenstein’s idea of an empty logic” (p. 46).

Tuboly makes a strong case for his main thesis, but he also convinced me that “... both Russell and Wittgenstein played a more important role in the [Vienna] Circle than Frege.” Sections 2 and 3 discuss the main points and concerns of Russell and Wittgenstein regarding the nature of logic. It is all very well argued. In section 4 he introduces Carnap’s principle of tolerance and considers its significance and immediate context. The final section connects all the dots about Carnap’s possible synthesis of Russell and Wittgenstein. In the 1937 edition of *The Logical Syntax of Language*, Carnap writes:

In general terms, the main goal of the book is to: ... provide a system of concepts, a language, by the help of which the results of logical analysis will be exactly formulable. Philosophy is to be replaced by the logic of science—that is to say, by the logical analysis of the concepts and sentences of the sciences, for the logic of science is nothing other than the logical syntax of the language of science.

(CARNAP, p. viii)

In other words, Carnap believes that every logical language is correct only if this language is supported by exact definitions and not by philosophical presumptions. And, I would like to add, if it is not based on self-contradictions and does not lead to self-contradictions within the system. Tuboly has done

logic are assertions as to the correct use of a certain small number of words. This conclusion, if valid, may be regarded as an epitaph on Pythagoras.” In a chapter “The Retreat from Pythagoras” published in *MPD*, Russell writes: “Mathematics has ceased to seem to me non-human in its subject-matter. I have come to believe, though very reluctantly, that it consists of tautologies. I fear that, to a mind of sufficient intellectual power, the whole of mathematics would appear trivial, as trivial as the statement that a four-footed animal is an animal” (pp. 211–12).

a good scholarly job in proving his main thesis.

The next article is by Nikolay Milkov, who has published several important books and translations in the last twenty-five years. The title of his article is “Edmund Husserl and Bertrand Russell, 1905–1918: the Not-So-Odd Couple”. Anyone with an interest in Russell’s developing philosophy of logic and mathematics from around the turn of the century until the end of the Great War, knows that Russell was no stranger to what was going on about the foundations of mathematics on the Continent. Russell could read articles in German, French and Italian. The interesting question is what Russell and Husserl read of each other and to what degree they felt they were trying to solve similar problems but using different terminologies. They were both trying to find the basis of our conceptual world in *immediate experience*.

Milkov does a good job in bringing out differences and similarities between Russell and Husserl. I can agree when he says: “The evidence we’ve sifted in this brief review of their thinking from 1905 and 1918 can leave little doubt but that for a well over a decade Husserl and Russell devoted themselves to closely related theoretical programs” (p. 92). There are no traces of Husserl in the manuscript to and the published version of *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903), but there are several positive references to Alexius Meinong (1853–1920), who had Franz Brentano as a teacher.

In the last chapter, “Russell’s Views on Definitions and a Discussion of Central Concepts”, of my doctoral thesis, *In Quest of Certainty*, I question Russell’s usage of definitions and axioms and how they relate to each other. I conclude that sometimes he sounds like a realist and sometimes more like a nominalist. So it’s not only the case that Russell changed his views regarding the ontological status of numbers and sets that varies over time, he seems to be sitting on two chairs in the same book. As for the Introduction to the second edition of *Principia Mathematica* (1925), what he says there about definitions is interesting, but you can still ask if Russell at this time saw himself as a realist or a nominalist and not get a short, straightforward answer. It all depends on what meaning you give to certain words.¹¹

Alan Schwerin served as president of the Bertrand Russell Society for fifteen years. He’s particularly keen on the relationship between David Hume and Bertrand Russell. The title of his essay is “Is Russell’s Conclusion about the Table Coherent?”. The table is, of course, the famous table Russell is staring at in the beginning of *The Problems of Philosophy*.

¹¹ Sometimes I’m inclined to agree with the Swedish writer August Strindberg, who in *Inferno* said: “‘How are you going to explain these phenomena?’ ‘Explain it?’ Has anyone ever explained anything except by paraphrasing one set of words by another set?” (see STRINDBERG, *Inferno* [1962], p. 63; the original was written in French). In many cases an explanation only makes things worse, like trying to explain the existence of the universe, the meaning of life or the nature of the feminine mystic.

In the introduction Schwerin gives the reader some general thoughts on Russell's conclusion, and his paper is "... an attempt to show that the conclusion that Russell reaches in his argument for representative realism is counterintuitive and incoherent." And what's worse: "The philosophical statement that he presents on the table ... is fundamentally misconstrued, *and as it stands*, it is logically unacceptable" (p. 98).

In the first section, "Russell's Concerns about Accessible Philosophy", we follow the history of the composition of the manuscript of *The Problems of Philosophy* through the letters between Russell and his main editor, Gilbert Murray, who wanted a simple introduction to philosophy that everyone, including "stupid shop-assistants" (p. 124), can understand. In the second and last section, "On the Incoherency of the Conclusion", Schwerin does what he promised to do. There isn't much left of Russell's analysis of our knowledge of the table, when Schwerin is done with it. That's ok, because students of philosophy will continue to wonder about that table long after we are gone.

The title of Chad Trainer's essay is "'Waking Up' to Bertrand Russell's Anticipation of Sam Harris' 'Spirituality' without Religion", in which Trainer shows that Russell had realized this long before Harris. Trainer argues that "... Russell developed a philosophy effectively incorporating the best of both atheism and spirituality" (p. 130). After reviewing the defects of mysticism according to Russell, he discusses what Russell saw as the merits of *metaphorical spirit*. He then contrasts Harris's technique of "waking up" (mainly through meditation) with Russell's technique of attaining strength and calm. He concludes that the most significant difference between the two is that, while Harris cherishes meditation as the highest form of consciousness, Russell disparages it as egocentric (p. 130).

I have no objections to Trainer's analysis and conclusion, but two things surprise me. Since Russell had a profound mystical experience in February 1901, which had a great influence on him, why doesn't Trainer bring this up? And since Russell's views on mysticism developed over time, it would have been good to have the original dates and titles of Russell's writings on mysticism.¹² Twice he refers to "Russell 1932" (p. 132), but it's not listed in the bibliography.

Raymond Aaron Younis's article is "Russell on Religion and Science". It is mainly how his ideas are expressed in the book *Religion and Science* of 1935. In the second section he describes Russell's position and points out some ambiguities. In the third he raises the question: what is "Science"? and in the fourth: what is "Religion"? according to Russell. He then distinguishes between two kinds of conflicts, one concerning simple facts and the other

¹² I have published an article in this journal where I discuss two major forms of mysticism. See "The History of Russell's Pythagorean Mysticism" (1998).

involving deeper theological, philosophical and ethical considerations. Younis explains the grounds of (Non-)Conflict. According to Russell “In so far as religion consists in a way of feeling ... science cannot touch it” (p. 151; omission in original). Younis has a few words to say about Russell’s metaethical views, often described as “Emotivism”, before he ends by saying that more discussion will “... help to clarify further Russell’s thought-provoking, nuanced, and complex understanding of the question of the nature of science and the nature of religion, as well as the question of the relationship between science and religion” (p. 154).

The fourth and last part, “Peace, Protest, and Politics”, contains two articles. The first one is by Tim Madigan, who among other things is Director of the Irish Studies Program at St. John Fisher College. His essay is “Lord John Russell and Crimes against Humanity: the Great Famine Tribunal”, a subject that I knew nothing about, but it ties in well with my interest in the Russell Tribunal on American War Crimes in Vietnam and the later Civil Society Tribunals that it inspired.

The Irish Famine Tribunal was held at Fordham Law School in 2013. It considered the question whether the actions—or the deliberate inactions—of Lord Russell’s government of 1846–52 amounted to either genocide or a crime against humanity. Madigan looks at the arguments made by both the prosecution and the defence as well as how this tribunal relates to various Bertrand Russell-connected efforts to hold individuals accountable for their abuses of basic human rights (p. 159). Madigan has written a knowledgeable and interesting essay about Russell’s grandfather and brings in the Klinghoffers’ groundbreaking book about International Citizens’ Tribunals. He ends the essay with a query: “... which side Bertrand Russell would have been on in the Citizens’ Tribunal trying his grandfather for crimes against humanity—the prosecution or the defense” (p. 168). In this case I think Russell would have sided with the prosecution.

The last essay is by Nancy C. Doubleday, who holds the Hope Chair in Peace and Health at McMaster. In her essay “Engaged Learning: Paths to Peace Praxis through the Russell Archives” she recounts how being interested in “engaged scholarship” in Peace Studies, she, together with some colleagues, formulated a framework to apply some of Russell’s views on educational ideas to the development of a pilot course at McMaster University. This essay reviews the framework they draw from Russell’s work, and then reports in some detail the responses of the undergraduate to the course. The student comments allowed them to draw their own conclusions and create a hope that those who read them will agree that Russell’s insights are still fertile and that this account creates opportunities for intellectual freedom in education, which offers the persuasive fruit of Russell’s relevance today (p. 171).

A very encouraging essay ... and a good collection of essays as a whole.

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