Textual Studies

A TRUER TEXT OF THE PROBLEMS OF PHILOSOPHY

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The text of *The Problems of Philosophy* is unsound. It was published first with minor typographical errors. Revision in 1913 resulted in serious errors. Resetting the type in 1946 corrected some but omitted a line and introduced other errors. Resetting the type in 1967—for the final time in Russell's life—repeated this history while he agreed to a substantive change. I distinguish alterations of sense and recommend seven restorations to build a sounder text, along with an historical register of variants.

The three typesettings of *The Problems of Philosophy* during Russell's lifetime are each untrue to the text as he surely intended it. It is not that he complained of shortcomings, but collating the editions against one another has revealed faults that ought to be repaired. In the process of collation, deliberate authorial revisions were exposed. We could repair and restore his text. For a book for which there are no known manuscripts, typescripts and proofs, revisions are all we have to document a study of the progress of his thinking in it.

A fair amount is known about the stages of the book's composition.¹ Russell's contract with Williams and Norgate, publishers of the Home University Library, is dated 10 October 1910.² It called for delivery of a 50,000-word typescript by July 1911. The author would have to pay for corrections exceeding 25% of the cost of composition. He was to get one English penny per copy sold in the English language, with thirteen copies being counted as twelve, one third of translation receipts, and an advance of £50 upon publication. He was obliged to revise the work when required. It was published in 1912. With only 2,000 of the printing of 15,000 copies remaining, the opportunity for revision

¹ PP's prehistory is covered more extensively in CLARK, *Life* (1975), MONK, *Bertrand Russell*, Vol. 1; SLATER, Introduction to *Papers* 6; WISHON AND LINSKY, "The Place of *The Problems of Philosophy in Philosophy*" (2015), calling it a "historical text" (p. 1).

² RAI 420, box 1.30. *PP* was number 40 in the Home University Library.

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came as early as September the same year. He made the changes quickly (*Papers* 6: xliii–iv); ominously, there is no record of his passing revised proofs.

Russell had made a false start on the book in June 1911, lasting nearly three weeks. Then, immediately upon reading Whitehead's "absolutely masterly" and "quite astonishingly good" *Introduction to Mathematics*, also in the Home University series, Russell found the style he wanted. (Presumably that included the use of dozens of images taken from ordinary life). He finished drafting the book by 12 August 1911.³ That summer he was writing another book, "Prisons", on his philosophy of religion. It is lost, but portions were copied into the final chapter of the *Problems*.⁴ The latter was his first attempt at writing a book intended to be popular. Whitehead sent him a long commentary, ⁵ but it arrived after Russell had sent the typescript to the publisher. He seems not to have altered the text as a result of Whitehead's reading, unless it was the passage on Kant. Proofs were corrected by early November.

Gilbert Murray was Russell's editor in the series. He read the typescript first, commenting on dreams, the disappearing cat, and use of theory of knowledge to cover both logic and metaphysics. (Russell was obliged to omit ethics and religion, although he didn't avoid them altogether.⁶) He printed in his autobiography Murray's faux complaint about the text's references to poisonous foods, earwigs, and not having met the Chinese emperor (*Auto*. I: 216–17). In later comments on the typescript Murray disliked Russell's "refutation of Hegel" in regard to a thing's "whole nature". He expanded his statements on Hegel, he tells Murray. Hegel confuses knowledge of things with knowledge of truths: "Acquaintance with a thing does not (theoretically) involve any knowledge of truths about the thing."

Murray seems to criticize a passage that contained the logical form "xRy". There is no "xRy" in the *Problems*, so if it was there Russell removed it.⁷ He told Murray that "Your point about what I know when xRy is true and R is unknowable, I forgot to go into because there was no note in the margin" (20

- ³ Letter to G. Murray, this date, RA3 Rec. Acq. 71d; original in Murray papers, Bodleian, Oxford. See WISHON AND LINSKY, "The Place of *The Problems of Philosophy* in Philosophy" (2015), and SCHWERIN, "A Lady, Her Philosopher and a Contradiction" (1999), for more history of the book's composition.
- ⁴ See the headnote to the surviving fragments of "Prisons", 7 in *Papers* 12.
- ⁵ See Lowe, "Whitehead's 1911 Criticism of *The Problems of Philosophy*" (1974).
- ⁶ Ethics is discussed on pp. 42–3 of the 1967 OUP edition; mysticism on p. 53; and religion without theology in Ch. 15, "The Value of Philosophy". He even devoted a page (85–6) to the foundations of mathematics, the subject of one of his Cambridge courses at the time. (Page numbers in red are to the 1967 edition.)
- ⁷ This must, if it happened, have been painful. Still, the logical form of acquaintance ("two different things in relation to each other") is found on p. 27. He never did include the formulae of mathematical logic in his popular writings, although he would, in arguments, "impartialize" the names of warring nations with *A*, *B*, *C*, etc.

Aug. 1911). "The answer is in the principle: Any prop. which can be known or even understood, must be composed entirely of constituents with which we are acquainted." This is almost identical to the fundamental principle of acquaintance on page 32 of the 1967 edition. Russell "extracted the island in the western ocean, reluctantly." This had been in a "passage about Plato's ideas "living in Atlantis until they were corrupted", most likely on page 53.

Finally, Russell complained about the copy-editing when he saw proofs. His long paragraphs were broken up. "I generally put quite a different sort of sentence at the end of a paragraph from any that I should put in the middle—I make the ones in the middle obviously incomplete" (9 Nov. 1911; *Papers* 6: xliv).⁸ Unlike Russell's other writings, philosophical terms that are defined or at least discussed are italicized. Whether the extensive use of this pedagogical feature was his own is unknown. He was pleased with the book's content: "I attained a simplicity beyond what I had thought possible" (19 Dec. 1912; *SLBR* 1). Writing it had given him a map, he said, of the theory of knowledge.⁹

The three editions (see B&R A10) are the first edition in the Home University Library, published in London by Williams and Norgate, with a dustjacket and optionally bound in leather, and in New York by Henry Holt and Company. Neither has a date. The London edition was published on or by 24 January 1912.¹⁰ The second impression (1913) was advertised as revised. Sixteen impressions followed; the plates became worn and were sometimes repaired when words became unclear. Oxford University Press acquired the Library about 1936 and, after Murray had asked Russell in vain for revisions,¹¹ reset the type in 1946. The widespread Galaxy paperback is a reprint of this typesetting. Finally, in 1967 OUP decided on a new format and again reset the type, checking with Russell the previous year about the text. It was then that he wrote the well-known instruction that on no account should the cover have a monkey that looked like him.¹² Russell had written an updating foreword to Paul Hertz's authorized German translation of 1926 (Erlangen: Weltkreis-Verlag). A retranslation of the foreword was added to the third edition in

⁸ E.g., the second and third paragraphs of Ch. I fit this description. It would appear the copyeditor lost the battle. On the other hand, paragraphs were twice run on to save space in revision; see 30: 39 and 83: 7 (both in n. 16). They lack Russell's art.

⁹ To Ottoline Morrell, no. 146 [12 July 1911], RA3 Rec. Acq. 69; original in Morrell papers, U. of Texas at Austin; quoted in CLARK, p. 153. TK was still two years away.

¹⁰ Russell reported to Lady Ottoline on that date that his book was "out" (no. 323.

¹¹ Russell to Murray, 18 March 1945. In the 1950s he provided P. Edwards, E. H. Madden and R. E. Egner with his reservations on the Induction chapter. See 14 in *Papers* 11; the lengthy note first appeared in *BW* after a reprint of Ch. 6. In a late note to a 1911 letter from Lucy Silcox, Russell quoted his passage on the chicken that lacked "more refined views" on induction, and asserted: "The chicken ran its course through German philosophical literature as '*das Russellsche Hünchen*'" (RAI 710).

¹² To OUP, 20 Sept. 1966 (quoted by MOOREHEAD, Bertrand Russell [1992], p. 170).

1980.¹³ The Galaxy paperback adopted the 1967 change at 62: 22–3. No posthumous reprints are relevant, as their variants don't carry Russell's authority.

Was the first edition perfect? No. All typos except for Swift's misspelled "Struldbrugs" were corrected in the revised impression, but others (some of them philosophical) were introduced. Some of these, in turn, were corrected in the new typesetting of 1946. In 1967 several of the remaining errors were corrected, but still others introduced; and a philosophical emendation was made with Russell's keen approval (see n. 21). In the following lists of variants, page and line numbers are given for the three settings of type in sequence from latest to earliest:

OUP, 1967, in red (OUP, 1946) Williams and Norgate/Henry Holt & Co., 1912

In the lists "12" is the first edition. ¹⁴ Superscript numbers denote the printings of an edition. The revised impression of 1913 ("12²") has Russell's revisions plus typographical shortcuts and errors. ¹⁵ There were eighteen printings in 1912–45. "46" is the reset text of 1946, which remains the OUP Galaxy typesetting. "67" is OUP's reset edition of 1967; it is still in print in the UK market. ¹⁶

The reading before the square bracket is that of 67. The fact is noted if it is the reading of other editions. On each line the reading in bold **blue** type should be restored or retained, as the case may be. Readings that are neither bold nor blue are indifferent. I had to collate using the second printings 46^2 and 67^2 (even 67^{11}). I have since found that the data apply to the first printing

- ¹³ It appeared first in *Russell*: NAJJAR AND KIRKCONNELL, "Russell's Foreword to the First German Translation of *The Problems of Philosophy*" (1975). The retranslation was revised by J. O. Urmson for the 1980 OUP impression. In 1959 Russell again updated his view of *PP* in *MPD*, pp. 102–3, and kept notes (RAI 210) keyed to his copy of 12².
- ¹⁴ The lists exclude trends in house-styling, e.g., spelling (except where inconsistent), number and order of quotation marks, roman vs. arabic chapter numbers, and order of preface and table of contents. Typographical errors in the first printing (12¹) were: 18: 21 (36: 10) 57: 1 ourprivate
 - 32: 28 (59: 6) 92: 7 Thusour

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4I: 16 (73: 26) 114: 23 Leibniz, [Closing dash omitted after insertion on Leibniz.]
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- 44: 13 (79: 1) 122: 22 Struldbugs [Misspelt until corrected to Struldbrugs in 67.] ¹⁵ Minor errors in the revised edition of 1913 were:
- 30: 39 (56: 5) 87: 15 For example, $12^{2,18}$, 46^1 , 67^2] **[For example,** 12^1 [To fit the next revision on the same page of 12, the lines were reset from an early point, and the paragraph concerned was run on with the one beginning "For example".] 41: 16 (73: 26) 114: 23 Leibniz— 46^1 , 67^2] Leibniz,— $12^{2,18}$] Leibniz, 12^1 83: 3 (142: 19) 222: 10 that if $12^{2,18}$, 46^1 , 67^2] that, if 12^1 [This saved a line.]
- 83: 7 (142: 24) 222: 18 This new idea 12², 46¹, 67²] **This new idea** [Saved a line.] 83: 24 (143: 15) 223: 20 **sublime**, 12^{2;18}, 46¹, 67¹¹] sublime: 12¹
- ¹⁶ The German foreword was replaced in 1998 by a "Further Reading" guide (including *Auto.*, *ML* and *TK*) by John Skorupski; the 1997 Galaxy edition has two pages of "Suggested Reading" by John Perry. Both men introduced their reprints at length.

of 46, but there *could* be changes in the second printings of either edition.

Revisions to the text at whatever stage often engendered errors affecting a philosophical understanding of the text. Russell was seldom concerned to correct his old publications, but in new writings he definitely preferred his own punctuation, to which he asserted a right.¹⁷ In 46 verbal as well as house-styling changes were made, but insufficient proofreading followed: eight words (on animals not knowing their own existence) were dropped at 27: 16, on which the next sentence (about animals not doubting their existence) depended. We have no record of Russell approving this text.¹⁸

Minor changes in 67 are noted here.¹⁹ Authorial scrutiny of the proofs is unsuspected; OUP "guaranteed" to "properly reproduce" the previous edition.

Following are the variants selected for their philosophical or other interest.

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<sup>17</sup> BLACKWELL, "'Perhaps You Will Think Me Fussy'" (1983), p. 113n.
<sup>18</sup> Minor errors in the reset edition of 1946 were:
   vii: 2 (6: 2) v: 2 pages 46^{I}, 67^{2} pages, 12^{I,2,I8}
   vii: 8-9 (6:11) v: 13 G. E. Moore ... J. M. Keynes 46<sup>1</sup>, 67<sup>2</sup>] Mr. ... Mr. ... 12<sup>1,2,18</sup>
   4: 14 (12: 16) 17: 24 but, 46<sup>1</sup>, 67<sup>2</sup>] but 12<sup>1,2,18</sup>
    31: 38-40 (57: 28) 90: 6-8 him; ... history; ... mask; 46<sup>1</sup>, 67<sup>2</sup>] him, ... history, ...
   mask, 12<sup>1,2,18</sup>
   36: 29 (66: 4) 102: 11 wrung. 12^{1,2,18}, 67^2] wrung 46^1
   38: 27 (69: 17-18) 107: 21 their truth and 46<sup>1</sup>, 67<sup>11</sup>] their truth, and 12<sup>1,2,18</sup> (In 46<sup>1</sup>
   space was left for an end-of-line comma.)
   44: 22 (79: 14) 123: 11 general to the general, or 46^{I}, 67^{9,II} general to the general
   or 12^{I}
   46: 4 (82: 5) 127: 5 Seven Years War 46<sup>1</sup>, 67<sup>11</sup>] Seven Years' War 12<sup>1,2,18</sup>
   47: 16 (83: 17) 129: 12 (1711–76) 46<sup>1</sup>, 67<sup>11</sup>] (1711–1776) 12<sup>1,2,18</sup>
    54: 27 (95: 9) 148: 17 Bradley 46<sup>1</sup>, 67<sup>2</sup>] Mr. Bradley 12<sup>1,2,18</sup>
    54: 33 (95: 18) 149: 3 anyone 67^2 any one 12^{1,2,18}, 46^1 [At 33: 23 (45: 4) 70: 17 it
   remains "any one".]
    65: 17 (113: 5) 177: 8 possible that 46<sup>1</sup>, 67<sup>11</sup>] possible, that 12<sup>1,2,18</sup>
    92: 5 (158: 8) 244: 24 beleaguered 12<sup>1,2</sup>, 67<sup>11</sup>] beleagured 46<sup>1</sup>
    92: 23 (159: I) 246: 4 and, like all self-assertion, 46^{T}, 67^{2}], and like all self-asser-
   tion, 121,2,18
   92: 36 (159: 20) 247: 1 Man 46<sup>1</sup>, 67<sup>11</sup>] man 12<sup>1,2,18</sup>
   93: 36 (161: 15) 249: 20 philosophy: 12<sup>1,2</sup>, 67<sup>11</sup>] philosophy; 46<sup>1</sup>
<sup>19</sup> Minor errors in the reset edition of 1967 are:
    2: 4 (8: 16) 11: 15 brown, 67<sup>2</sup>] brown 12<sup>1,2,18</sup>, 46<sup>1</sup>
   8: 17 (19: 4) 29: 11 today 67<sup>2</sup>] to-day 12<sup>1,2,18</sup>, 46<sup>1</sup> (67<sup>2</sup>, at 40: 3, has "to-day".)
    38: 30 (69: 21) 108: 1 experience, 12<sup>1,2,18</sup>, 67<sup>2</sup>] experience 46<sup>1</sup>
    39: 6 (70: 8) 109: 8 everyone 67<sup>2</sup>] every one 12<sup>1,2,18</sup>, 46<sup>1</sup>
    54: 33 (95: 18) 149: 3 anyone 67^2 any one 12^{1,2,18}, 46^1 [At 33: 23 (45: 4) 70: 17 it
   remains "any one".]
   65: 17 (113: 5) 177: 8 possible that 46^{I}, 67^{II} possible, that 12^{I,2,I8}
   69: 26 (120: 6) 187: 23 falsehood?", not 67<sup>11</sup>] falsehood?" not 12<sup>1,2,18</sup>, 46<sup>11</sup>
    81: 14 (139: 31) 217: 19 unhesitatingly 67<sup>2</sup>] unhesitatingly, 12<sup>1,2,18</sup>, 46<sup>1</sup>
   82: 13 (141: 18) 221: 2 , in virtue of the laws of logic 46^{1}, 67^{11}], in virtue of the laws
   of logic, 12<sup>1,2,18</sup> [In 46 an end-of-line space was left for the second comma.]
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Seven are suggested ("*") to make 67 true to Russell's documented intent. The lists of minor errors could be drawn on to restore his characteristic paragraphing and punctuation, and relevant correspondence put in an appendix.

- vii: 3 (6: 4) v: 4–5 I thought it 12^{2,18}, 46¹, 67²] it seemed to me 12¹ [The page was reset in 1943 (12¹⁷).]
- vii: 14–19 (6: 18–24) v–vi Note to Seventeenth Impression | ¶With reference to certain statements on pages 23, 42, 76, and 77, it should be remarked that this book was written in the early part of 1912 when China was still an Empire, and the name of the then late Prime Minister did begin with the letter B. | 1943 12^{17,18}, 46¹, 67²] Inserted. [46¹: "pages 44, 75, 131, and 132"; 12^{17,18}: "pages 70, 116, 205, and 206".]
- *2: 36 (9: 29) 13: 21 This colour 46^{I} , 67^{2}] Thus colour $12^{I,2,I8}$
- 8: 39–9: 2 (20: 3–8) 30: 25–31: 5 When we have enumerated all the sense-data which we should naturally regard as connected with the table, have we said all there is to say about the table, or is there still something else—something not a sense-datum, something which persists when we go out of the room? 12^{2–18}, 46¹, 67¹¹] sensations ... sensation 12¹
- *II: 17 (24: 12) 37: 17–18 ourselves 46¹, 67²] our selves 12^{1,2,18}
- ***I2: I5** (26: I) 40: 7 is most possible 46^{T} , 67^{2}] it is most possible $12^{1,18}$
- 16: 10–13 (32: 12–16) 50: 19–23 We can know the properties of the relations required to preserve the correspondence with sense-data, but we cannot know the nature of the terms between which the relations hold. 12^{2,18}, 46¹, 67²] We can know the relations... 12¹
- 23: 30 (44: 31–2) 70: 10–12 the Emperor of China, but I truly judge that he exists. 12¹, 12^{17,18}, 46¹, 67²]²⁰ Russia 12^{2–16} (Also at 42: 3 (75: 1) 116: 20

²⁰ On 10 March 1919 J. E. Littlewood wrote Russell: "I note that your new book dooms the British Monarchy to the fate of the Chinese and Russian Empires" (RAI 710). Littlewood took his cue from "the Kings of England", "the King of England" and "the present King of England" in *IMP*, pp. 35, 45, 176. It boded ill for an hereditary ruler to be mentioned by Russell. Although the Chinese emperor had abdicated on 12 February 1912, the republican Xinhai revolution was in control earlier.

In 1948 or 1949 Russell noted on the letter: "I had said in print that I was not acquainted with the Emperor of China, but I knew he existed. Before the book was published I knew he didn't. So in the next edition I altered "China" to "Russia". In the next after that, "Russia" became "Germany"; finally "Japan", which so far, thanks to MacArthur, I have not had to change." "Kaiser von Japan" was found only in the 1926 German translation, pp. 36, 64. No edition or printing was found with the German emperor, who on 9 November 1918 abdicated. On 31 January 1943 Russell wrote Murray: "I don't quite know what to say about the Emperor of Russia and kindred subjects. In the first edition it was the Emperor of China; I thought that after 1917 I altered it to the Emperor of Japan. But I hope that too may soon be out of date." He judged it best to say "This was written in 1912" (RA3 Rec. Acq. 71g).

the Emperor of China exists 12^{1} , $12^{17,18}$, 46^{1} , 67] Russia 12^{2-16} .)

- *27: 15–16 (49: 29–31) 77: 25–78: 4 animals, we may suppose, though they have acquaintance with sense-data, never become aware of this acquaintance. 46¹, 67²] ... this acquaintance, and thus never know of their own existence. 12^{1,2,18} [Consecutive partial lines in 12 were skipped.]
- *29: 9–10 (53: 3–4) 82: 23–8 ¶We shall say that an object is 'known by description' when we know that it is 'the so-and-so'.... 46¹, 67²] ... "*the* so-and-so".... 12^{1,2,18} [A typo in the resetting for 46.]
- 30: 39–40 (56: 5–7) 87: 15–17 'the most long-lived of men' is a description involving only universals, which must apply to some man, 12^{2,18}, 46¹, 67²] ... a description which must apply to some man, 12¹
- **36**: **26** (65: 32) **IO2**: 7 amount *almost* to certainty. $12^{2,18}$, 46^{1} , 67^{11} amount almost to certainty 12^{1}
- 48: 30, n. (86: 12–13, n.) 134: 2 'thing in itself', | 'Kant's 'thing in itself' is identical *in definition* with the physical object, namely, it is the cause of sensations. In the properties deduced from the definition it is not identical, since Kant held (in spite of some inconsistency as regards cause) that we can know that none of the categories are applicable to the 'thing in itself'. 12^{2,18}, 46¹, 67²] "thing in itself," 12¹
- 49: 16 (87: 15–16) 135: 13–14 It is true that this possibility, formally, 12¹, 46³⁻, 67²] It is true that this possibility, formality, 12^{2,15,18}, 46¹ [The typo "formality" came from resetting the page to accommodate the previous revision. It's corrected by at least 1959 (the 1st Galaxy printing of 46).]
- 54: 26-8 (95: 8-II) 148: 15-I9 The first of these views, advocated by Spinoza and held in our own day by Bradley and many other philosophers, is called *monism*; the second, advocated by Leibniz but not 46¹, 67²] ... views, which was advocated by Spinoza, and is held in our own day by Mr. Bradley and many other philosophers, is called *monism*; the second, which was advocated by Leibniz, but is not 12^{1,15,18}. [It is unknown if Russell approved condensing the grammar to save a line.]
- 60: 12 (104: 20) 163: 21 special case 12^{2,18}, 46¹, 67¹¹] particular case 12¹
- 62: 22–3 (108: 20–1) 170: 1–3 knowledge of physical objects, as opposed to sense-data, is only obtained by an inference, and that they are not 67²] physical objects, as opposed to sense-data, are only obtained by an inference, and are not 12^{1,18}, 46^{1,3,21}
- 82: 18–22 (141: 27–142: 3) 221: 12–17 Hegel's philosophy is very difficult, and commentators differ as to the true interpretation of it. According to the interpretation I shall adopt, which is that of many, if not most, of the commentators, and has the merit of giving an interesting and important type of philosophy, his main] 12², 12¹⁸, 46¹, 67²] ... difficult, and it is impossible here to do anything like justice to it. But we may, without going into details, obtain some

conception of the nature of his methods and his results. His main 121

- *89: 17 (153: 23) 238: 7 Thus utility 46¹, 67²] **This** utility 12^{1,2,15} [A deliberate typo? *Cf.* the "utility" of philosophy at 91 (157) 243.²¹]
- *90: 19–21 (155: 9–12) 240: 12–16 study of the human mind, which was_a part of philosophy, has now been separated from philosophy 46¹, 67²] ..., which was, **until very lately**, a part ... 12^{1,2,15,18} [It is unknown whether Russell approved the updating of his remark on psychology.]
- 95 (165) 251 Bibliographical Note

[Translation and publication data of the books recommended were removed in stages. Publication dates of editions of the *Meditations* and *The Monadology* were gone by 1945 (12¹⁸). For 67 Russell agreed to replace "every" with "any" in the title of Kant's *Prolegomena*.]

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Cantor, Georg 46¹, 67²] [Cantor was in the text of 12¹, p. 229, and perhaps was added after the index was compiled. First names were inserted in 46. Such entries as "Contemplation", "Judgment", "Microscope", and "Universals, not mental" were deleted then; "Criterion" was added.

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²¹ See WISHON AND LINSKY, p. 20. Another errant "This" for "Thus" is at 2: 36 above.