

The Bertrand Russell Society

Spring 2016

Bulletin

Inside this issue ...

Our columnists;

Feature articles by Bruneau, Doubleday, and Landini

And much more.

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Information for New and Renewing Members

Membership in the Society is \$45 per year for individuals, \$30 for students, and \$25 for those with limited incomes. Add \$10.00 to each for couples. A lifetime membership is \$1,000. In addition to the BRS *Bulletin*, membership includes a subscription to the peer-reviewed, scholarly journal, *Russell: The Journal of Bertrand Russell Studies* (published semi-annually by McMaster University), as well as other Society privileges, such as participation in the on-line BRS Forum, the BRS email list, access to a host of Russell-related, multi-media resources, eligibility to run for the board and serve on committees, and eligibility to attend the Annual Meeting.

Renewal dues should be paid by or on January 1st of each year. One's membership status can be determined by going to russell.mcmaster.ca/brsmembers.htm. There one will also find convenient links to join or renew via PayPal and our information form.

New and renewing members can also send a check or money order via traditional post to the treasurer (make it out to The Bertrand Russell Society). Send it to Michael Berumen, Treasurer, Bertrand Russell Society, 37155 Dickerson Run, Windsor, CO 80550. If a new member, please tell us a little about yourself beyond just your name (interests in Russell, profession, etc.). Include your postal address and email address, as well as your member status (i.e., regular, couple, student, limited income). If a renewing member, please let us know of any relevant changes to your contact information.

The BRS is a non-profit organization, and we greatly appreciate any extra donations or bequests that members choose to give. Donations may be tax-deductible in certain jurisdictions. Please check with your tax or legal advisor.

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Letters to the editor may be submitted to the editor's email address. Please reference the issue, author, and title of the article to which the letter relates. Letters should be concise. Publication will be at the discretion of the editor, and predicated upon available space. The editor reserves the right to truncate letters.

Manuscripts may be submitted to the editor at his email address in Microsoft Word. Feature articles and book reviews should be Russell-centric, dealing with Russell's life or works, and they should be written in either a scholarly or journalistic style. Articles generally should not exceed 7 single-spaced pages, and book reviews should not exceed 2 single-spaced pages. Mathematical, logical, and scientific symbols are fine, but please ensure that they are essential. Footnotes/endnotes should be used sparingly and primarily for citations; the editor reserves the right to convert footnotes to endnotes and vice versa, depending on layout needs. Parenthetical citations and page numbers, with standard reference descriptions at the end of the article, are also fine; but no abbreviations for works, please. Submissions should be made no later than August 31st and December 31st for the fall and spring issues, respectively. The editor will collaborate with the authors, as required, and authors will have the opportunity to review any suggested changes prior to publication. There are no guarantees of publication, and articles submitted may be held for future editions.

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(de)Notations

- The BRS board of directors was elected by acclamation for the 2016–2018 three-year term. It includes Ken Blackwell, David Blitz, William Bruneau, Landon D. C. Elkind, Jolen Galaugher, Kevin Klement, Michael Stevenson, and Russell Wahl. Landon and Michael are new directors, replacing retiring directors Tom Stanley and Bernie Linsky, and the other directors were re-elected. Michael teaches history at Lakehead University in Orillia, Ontario—and he is also actively involved as an editor of the *Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell* series. Landon is a PhD student in philosophy at the University of Iowa, and he is the student columnist for the *Bulletin*. Thank you, Tom and Bernie, for your years of faithful service to the BRS, and congrats to both Landon and Michael.
- The BRS does not endorse specific political candidates or political parties. However, its board has taken special note of the political climate in the United States, and it has expressed concern over unfolding, untoward events. As a consequence, and with the wisdom of Bertrand Russell in mind, we went on record with a press release denouncing the disregard for the US Constitution and international law, along with the outright jingoism, hucksterism, bigotry, incivility, and hate-filled speech that has taken hold in certain quarters—rhetoric and behavior that is not altogether dissimilar to things one might have witnessed earlier in the last century in Germany and Italy. The release was picked-up by news outlets throughout the world.
- Billy Joe Lucus won the renewal incentive draw for Vol. 7 of the *Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*. With a retail value of over \$350, he made a good gamble by renewing early. Billy Joe recently retired from Manhattanville College, where he taught philosophy and logic. Now he has time to catch up on Russell and listen to “the boss,” Bruce Springsteen, his musical hero. Congratulations, Billy Joe!
- As a reminder, President Tim Madigan has called for papers for the 2016 Annual Meeting, which he will host at St. John Fisher College in Rochester, New York, on June 24-26. If you are interested in

presenting a paper on any aspect of Russell’s life, thought, or legacy—or if you wish to propose activities appropriate for the meeting (e.g., a master class)—forward an abstract or proposal to Tim at tmadigan@rochester.rr.com no later than April 30, 2016.

- Speaking of this year’s Annual Meeting in Rochester, more details on registration and arrangements can be found near the back of this issue.
- Members are encouraged to submit formal, scholarly papers to be considered for the *Bulletin* or to author a guest column in “Members’ Corner” of up to two single-spaced pages. The editor is glad to work with members who have something they’d like to say about Russell’s views or life—or on a topic in a Russellian vein. Simply write the editor at opinealot@gmail.com for more information.
- The fall issue of the *Bulletin* will be a digital-only issue. It is a sign of the times, for many publications already have or are moving in that direction. We will continue to have a spring hard-copy edition for the foreseeable future. The digital version will enable us to save a considerable amount of money, printing and postage being very expensive, and, thereby, it will likely prevent a dues increase in the near term. It also will give us more flexibility in terms of length and the use of color pictures and graphics.
- The future of the BRS depends upon two things: renewals and new members. It doesn’t cost much to join, or sponsor someone. Please help us to recruit new members when the opportunity arises.
- There have been 1674 Posts on 673 topics on our online Forum. The most popular threads measured by total views are on a critique of Steven Pinker’s book, *Better Angels of our Nature: Why Violence has Declined*, with 4,669 views, followed by one on the Largest Cardinal Number, with 3,822 views. The top three posters are Jack Clontz, Dennis Darland, and Ken Blackwell.
- 2015 Annual Report Summary:

Beginning Balance (1-1):	\$12,311.55
Revenue:	4,897.99
Expenses:	6,759.94
Ending Balance (12-31):	\$10,449.60



Not Necessarily Trivial

Bertrand Russell's uncle on his mother's side was Henry Edward John Stanley, 3rd Baron Stanley of Alderley and 2nd Baron Eddisbury (11 July 1827–11 December 1903). He was a historian who wrote of famous explorations and voyages, and, among other things, he translated *The first voyage round the world by Magellan*. Perhaps most notable, however, is that Lord Stanley occupies a unique place in British history. What is that? (Answer on page 12.)

The BRS in Russia



Приятного аппетита! [Or as we say in English: bon appétit!]

Last November, a group of friends who are BRS members visited Russia. It was a happy circumstance that while they were there they were able to meet with one of our newest members, and our only Russian member, Daria Gorlova, a student interested in Russell. Shown above at a Saint Petersburg eatery, left to right, are Daria's friend Anastasia Malahova, Daria, President Tim Madigan, Robert Zack—who we are glad recently rejoined the Society—longtime members, Linda and David White, and another new member, Tim Delaney, a sociologist who has co-authored books with Tim Madigan, including: *The Sociology of Sports* (2nd Ed., 2015).

Daria first became aware of the BRS when she contacted Dennis Darland by email about accessing some materials on Russell. That began a correspondence with Tim, who reports, "Daria's knowledge of and interest in Russell is deep and sincere." Russell would be

very pleased, indeed, that he has capable representation in Russia.

Russell: 50 Years Ago

The Russell Tribunal, also known as the International War Crimes Tribunal, was formally constituted in London by Bertrand Russell in November 1966, followed by two hearings in 1967 in Sweden and Denmark. The tribunal investigated and evaluated American foreign policy and military intervention in Vietnam following the 1954 defeat of French forces at Diên Biên Phu and the ensuing establishment of North and South Vietnam. The Tribunal committee consisted of notable persons from all over the world, and it heard testimony from more than 30 witnesses.

Among other things, the Tribunal found that the United States committed acts of aggression against Vietnam in violation of international law; bombed civilian targets and treated civilians inhumanely; and committed genocide against the Vietnamese people. Although the Tribunal had no "official" international standing, it was a catalyzing event for broader attention and activism worldwide, and, most notably, in the US, and it led to other tribunals, including the Winter Soldier Investigation in 1971, which was sponsored by the Vietnam Veterans Against the War, and focused on war crimes and atrocities committed by the military primarily as told through the testimony of US soldiers.

The Tribunal was not without controversy or its critics (for example, see the report commissioned by Rand by H.A. DeWeerd: <http://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/papers/2008/P3561.pdf>). Philosopher, former communist transformed to anti-communist, and erstwhile friend of Russell's—Sidney Hook, is quoted in the Rand report as saying Russell possessed "pathological anti-Americanism." The report concludes by saying the Russell Tribunal "seems to be more interested in condemning the United States than contributing to the restoration of peace." Defenders might well argue, in fact, that is *precisely* what the tribunal helped to hasten.

In his opening remarks in 1966, Russell said this about the plight of the Vietnamese: "As I reflect on this work, I cannot help thinking of the events of my life, because of the crimes I have seen and the hopes I have nurtured. I have lived through the Dreyfus Case and been



party to the investigation of the crimes committed by King Leopold in the Congo. I can recall many wars. Much injustice has been recorded quietly during these decades. In my own experience I cannot discover a situation quite comparable. I cannot recall a people so tormented, yet so devoid of the failings of their tormentors. I do not know any other conflict in which the disparity in physical power was so vast. I have no memory of any people so enduring or of any nation with a spirit of resistance so unquenchable.”

Logicbyte: Russell and Incompleteness

Few things are as abused in the realm of mathematics as Gödel’s Incompleteness Theorem(s). These abuses range from misunderstandings about what the theorem actually entails, usually consisting of overstating the case as to its mathematical and logical



Kurt Gödel

implications (e.g., it spells the end of logicism), to (mis)applying it to the physical world, cosmology, and even theology. Philosophers and others are often guilty, but even mathematicians make mistaken judgments about it. Gödel is one of those people whose name is known by many, but whose work is little read, much less widely understood.

Years ago at a lecture in San Diego, California given by our own Nick Griffin (where your editor was present), a University of California mathematician piped up and preposterously announced that Gödel’s theorem had made *Principia Mathematica* obsolete and unimportant other than from a historical standpoint. Gödel would have surely blushed at such an absurd overstatement. But the uninformed professor was hardly alone in his view, for it has been said by many others.

Consider two common misunderstandings about his first theorem dealing with completeness and decidability. Keeping in mind that a non-mathematical rendering is necessarily rough and not altogether satisfactory—it states that any consistent and *purportedly* complete (formal) axiomatizable system where

a certain amount of elementary arithmetic can be performed is, in fact, *incomplete*, because there will always be a true statement within that system that can neither be proved nor disproved by using its own language. This is often misconstrued to apply to *all* mathematical or logical systems. It doesn’t! It only applies to a particular kind of axiomatic system, and of particular importance to us, to *effective*, recursively enumerable, first-order systems such as parts of *Principia Mathematica*. Moreover, the theorem is often misunderstood to mean an undecidable statement can *never* be proved to be ultimately true, which is not what Gödel showed at all, for such a statement might well be proved true in another, different system and language.

Gödel—who was a Platonist and believed that mathematical concepts can be known intuitively—made it very clear that in the larger scheme of things his famous 1931 paper dealt with *provability* and not with truth. In fact he took special pains to avoid quandaries of truth, such as one finds with The Liar’s Paradox and Richard’s Paradox. Indeed, we know there are examples of undecidable statements that we cannot prove in one first-order arithmetic system—for example, a certain statement within Peano arithmetic, which can be proved in another, more comprehensive second-order system. Thus, what is undecidable but true in one system might well be decided in another.

All well and good—many of our readers already know this. But here is a nugget for Russellians, one that is surely not unknown, but one that I think might be little noticed—and one that bears on this subject. Several years before Gödel was on the scene, Russell himself wrote about incompleteness, after a fashion, and he hinted at its ultimate, possible solution in the last paragraph of his “Introduction” to Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus* (1922). There he wrote this prescient rejoinder to Wittgenstein’s famous conclusion about the limits of what can be said: “These difficulties suggest to my mind some such possibility as this: that every language has, as Mr. Wittgenstein says, a structure concerning which, in the language, nothing can be said, but that there may be another language dealing with the structure of the first language, and having itself a new structure, and that to this hierarchy of languages there may be no limit.” That sounds eerily familiar. Russell goes on to say, “Mr. Wittgenstein would of course reply that his whole theory is applicable unchanged to the totality of such



language.” Wittgenstein deplored Russell’s introduction for several reasons. An interesting sidelight: many believe that Wittgenstein completely misunderstood Gödel’s proofs, as even Gödel himself said, and as is evident at least from the former’s *Remarks on the Foundations of Mathematics* (1956). He has had his defenders on this, though (e.g., Hilary Putnam). We digress.

Russell would say decades later—long after he gave up working on mathematics—that the very thing that he suggested in 1922, quoted above, serves to solve some of Gödel’s “puzzles”—and even dispense with Wittgenstein’s mysticism. Somehow this writer missed that, before, as I suspect many have. Imagining what might be possible, both with regard to incompleteness and its solutions, is not the same as what Gödel did, from whom we take nothing away—but it must be admitted: Russell’s fertile and powerful mind never ceases to amaze.

Russelliana

By Tim Madigan

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Note to readers: Those of us who recall the wonderful Bertrand Russell Society newsletters edited by Lee Eisler will remember how he would lovingly photocopy articles from various journals that made mention of Russell, no matter how fleeting or obscure the reference might be. In honor of Lee, the *Bulletin* includes a column called “Russelliana” that continues his practice of alerting us to references to Russell, often found in the most startling of contexts. I encourage readers to send me any such appearances they come across for use in future “Russelliana” columns.

A student of mine this semester is taking a Psychology of Personality course and told me that one of his textbooks is entitled *The Positive Power of Negative Thinking: Using Defensive Pessimism to Harness Anxiety and Perform at Your Peak*, by Julie K. Norem, Ph.D. (Basic Books, 2002). Intrigued by this title, I just had to buy the book. Imagine my surprise when, on page one, the first thing I saw was this quote from Bertrand Russell: “In all affairs it’s a healthy thing now and then to hang a question mark on the things you have long taken for granted.” Sadly, though, no reference is given for the

quote and it is never referred to in the text itself. When I googled the phrase it appeared on dozens of quotation websites (some which list the author as “Bertrand Russel”), but none with a proper citation of where or when he said this. Somehow that doesn’t make me feel very positive about the current state of academic scholarship. After consulting with Kenneth Blackwell, one of our foremost authorities on Russell’s writings, it’s clear that this is a spurious quote which deserves to have a question mark hung upon *it*, and yet it refuses to die so long as unsourced websites thrive on the internet. That makes me positively pessimistic.

In the NB section of the October 16, 2015 *Times Literary Supplement* (p. 32), the mysterious “J.C.” writes this about the investigative journalist, Svetlana Alexievich, and winner of the 2015 Nobel Prize for literature: “Victory for the author of *Zinky Boys: Soviet Voices from the Afghanistan War* (1990) and *Voices from Chernobyl* (1997) is also a rare victory for non-fiction. Alexievich’s few Nobel-winning predecessors in this respect include the classicist Theodor Mommsen, the philosopher Bertrand Russell, and the little-known historian of the Second World War, Winston Churchill” (J.C., *Times Literary Supplement*, October 16, 2015, page 32). Speaking of that, I’ve often wondered if the Nobel Prize Committee didn’t actually mean to give the award to the American novelist Winston Churchill (1871-1947) and made a mistake—I demand a recount! At any rate, I suspect Lord Russell would have been proud to be associated with the courageous Alexievich, who continues to speak truth to power at great personal risk.

The London Review of Books has a joint review of two works (*Brief Lives* with *An Apparatus for the Lives of Our English Mathematical Writers* by John Aubrey, edited by Kate Bennett, and *John Aubrey: My Own Life* by Ruth Scurr) written by Adam Smyth (love the name!) that begins with the following and intriguing “six degrees of separation” paragraph: “A friend who teaches in New York told me that the histo-



rian Peter Lake told him that J.G.A. Pocock told him that Conrad Russell told him that Lord John Russell told him that his grandfather the sixth Duke of Bedford,* told him that he had heard William Pitt the Younger speak in Parliament during the Napoleonic Wars, and that Pitt had this curious way of talking, a particular mannerism that the sixth Duke of Bedford had imitated to Bertrand Russell who imitated it to Conrad Russell who imitated it to J.G.A. Pocock, who could not imitate it to Peter Lake and so my friend never heard it. But all the way down to Pocock was a chain of people who in some sense had actually heard Pitt the Younger's voice. Or at least that's how the story goes" (Adam Smyth, "I Have Written as I Rode", *London Review of Books*, October 8, 2015, page 17).

Pocock himself then chimed in, writing to the LRB's "Letters" page: "Adam Smyth's piece on John Aubrey reminded me of sharing, many years ago, a hotel dinner table with the late Conrad Russell. We were talking about Harold Wilson, then lately prime minister, and Conrad began to tell me of a conversation he had had with his father, Bertrand Russell, about Wilson's personality. However, he said, Bertie was then very old, and Conrad came to realise that they were no longer talking about Wilson, but about what Bertie remembered his grandfather Lord John remembered about his grandfather the duke telling him about the personality of the Younger Pitt. I do not remember the latter's way of speaking being mentioned in our conversation. I decided, then or thereafter, that there are some stories it would be churlish to disbelieve, and I have several times repeated this reminiscence since Conrad's death. I am now 91 and memory is unreliable, in what it says you have forgotten no less than in what it says you remember. However, since I seem to be a key figure in the chain of transmitters Adam Smyth has rehearsed, I would like to limit my contribution to what I wish to say now and believe is all I have ever said or claimed to remember. Specifically, I do not remember being told anything about Wil-

liam Pitt's way of speaking" (J.G.A. Pocock, "Cross-Generational Vaulting", *London Review of Books*, November 5, 2015, page 4). I just hope that somewhere out there a professional William Pitt the Younger imitator can finally solve the conundrum of just what he sounded like.

In another *LRB* piece, Ferdinand Mount, in reviewing several books by and about Margot Asquith, the vivacious wife of yet another British prime minister, Herbert Asquith (whose voice *has* luckily been captured for posterity—and for those who have a fetish for such things see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=19W5l5ANfuc>), makes mention of Russell's opposition to England's entry into the First World War. Asquith presided over this disastrous event, and Mount explores the beguiling scenario that just a few small adjustments by the diplomats involved at the time could have prevented the entire fiasco from ever beginning: "Suppose Prince Lichnowsky had secured from Grey the guarantee he sought on Saturday, 1 August: that Britain would undertake to remain neutral if Germany gave a promise not to violate Belgian neutrality. This was the conversation reported by Grey to the British ambassador in Berlin in the famous Document 123, which non-interventionists such as Bertrand Russell made much of when it was first published and which is still made much of today. Grey refused to give any such promise: 'I could only say that we must keep our hands free.'" (Ferdinand Mount, "Easy-Going Procrastinators", *London Review of Books*, January 8, 2015, page 17). Mount then criticizes such exercises in alternative history, and points out that there were many in Asquith's cabinet who positively welcomed the prospect of war, including Russell's later fellow Nobel Laureate Winston Churchill, who wrote to his wife on July 28, 1914 that "everything tends towards catastrophe and collapse. I am interested, geared-up and happy." Indeed, even after the war began Churchill remained enthusiastic. "Churchill's joie de vivre was undiminished as the slaughter intensified. Sitting next to Margot



at dinner on 10 January 1915, he could not help saying: 'I would not be out of this glorious, delicious war for anything the world could give me . . . I say, don't repeat that I said the word 'delicious'—but she did, and probably imitated him in doing so. Churchill is one British prime minister whose voice everyone knows.

Jim Holt, in a review of Michael Harris' *Mathematics Without Apologies: Portrait of a Problematic Vocation*, discusses, amongst other things, Russell and Whitehead's attempt "to show in their massive *Principia Mathematica* that mathematics was really logic in disguise," but that Gödel's "incompleteness theorems" showed—roughly speaking—that a logical system like that of Russell and Whitehead could never capture all mathematical truths." Holt goes on to say that "Here, then, is the pathos of mathematics. Unlike theoretical physics, which can aspire to a 'final theory' that would account for all the forces and particles in the universe, pure mathematics must concede the futility of its own quest for ultimate truth" (Jim Holt, "In the Mountains of Mathematics", *New York Review of Books*, December 3, 2015, pages 50-52). For some, those are still fightin' words!

Getting back to fiction, one of the most highly acclaimed contemporary novels is Marlon James' *A Brief History of Seven Killings*, which gives a fictionalized depiction of the violence in Jamaica during the latter years of reggae singer Bob Marley's life. In his review of the book, Paul Genders discusses the character Weeper, a homosexual gangster and murderer who waxes contemplatively about his personal life: "Weeper lies back and ruminates: 'In bed and so soft we feel like two faggots. So what? Then we must be faggots.' In the end he seems comfortable with the blurred boundaries: there's no real contradictions in being a bad man from the ghetto and being a faggot too. A bad man can also, it happens, be a reader of Allen Ginsberg and Bertrand Russell (the latter is 'the most top of the top ranking', in Weeper's opinion): we only see an incongruity if we

have a very narrow view of gangsters or, for that matter, Jamaicans" (Paul Genders, "Is This Love?", *Times Literary Supplement*, August 14, 2015, page 19). Or, for that matter, philosophers.

In a letter to the editor to the *Times Literary Supplement*, John Rich writes the following: "Sir,—Alan Weir, in his review of Ian Hacking's *Why is There Philosophy of Mathematics at All?* (December 12), calls attention to Hacking's suggestion that, when in his famous 1905 paper 'On Denoting', Bertrand Russell chose as his example the phrase 'the present king of France', he was making a joking allusion to its use in Archbishop Whatley's *Elements of Logic*, which continued to be republished as a standard textbook into the 1870s, long after France had ceased to have a king. Both Hacking and Weir claim that France was already without a king when Whatley's fourth edition was published in 1831, and Weir (unlike Hacking) implies that there was no king of France when Whatley composed the passage. In fact, of course, France was ruled by the successive kings Louis XVIII, Charles X and Louis Philippe from 1815 until 1848, the year in which Whatley's ninth edition was published. Later editions of his treatise appear to have been merely reprints of the ninth edition" (John Rich, *Times Literary Supplement*, December 19, 2014, page 6). But that still leaves us with the question, was the present king of France when Whatley penned this example bald or not? Perhaps Russell's grandfather John Russell, 1st Earl Russell, had knowledge by acquaintance of this fact.

Roger Beeson in a follow-up letter to the *TLS*, states that "John Rich points out correctly that France was ruled by kings from 1815 to 1848. However, Louis Philippe (reigned 1830-1848) was styled 'King of the French', not "King of France", so Alan Weir and Ian Hacking are also not wrong in asserting that there was 'no King of France in 1831'. Could this linguistic and constitutional nicety have been a consideration for Archbishop Whatley in 1831 and Bertrand Russell in 1905?" (Roger



Beeson, *Times Literary Supplement*, January 2, 2015, page 6). But Timothy Smiley weighs in with an objection to the thesis that Whatley was the source of Russell's example (and points out as well that Sir Peter Strawson, "who deplored Russell's levity, silently changed 'bald' to 'wise' throughout his celebrated reply to Russell"). Smiley writes that "In 2001, however, my late friend Denis Paul came up with a more likely source: *Huckleberry Finn* and the old baldhead's revelation in chapter 19, 'Your eyes is lookin' at this very moment on the pore disappeared Dauphin, Loooy the Seventeen, son of Loooy the Sixteen and Marry Antonette . . . trouble has brung these gray hairs and this premature balditude. Yes, gentlemen, you see before you, in blue jeans and misery, the wanderin', exiled, trampled-on and sufferin' rightful King of France" (Timothy Smiley, *TLS*, January 2, 2015, page 6). Frankly, this whole controversy strikes me as a case of splitting hairs.

In a Question and Answer feature in *Details* magazine, the outspoken comedian Ricky Gervais, creator of such British TV series as *The Office*, *Extras*, and *Derek*, is asked "You studied philosophy in college—do you have a favorite philosopher?", to which he replies: "Bertrand Russell. He said a great thing, which resonated with me so much more when I became famous: 'People never gossip about the secret virtues of others.' In this world of Schadenfreude and trolls and hate, it's lovely that he said that 50 years ago" ("Q & A with Ricky Gervais, Interview by Rob Tannenbaum", *Details*, December 2014/January 2015, page. 56). That, by the way, is a quote that can be documented. It comes from Russell's *On Education* (the complete quote being "The widespread interest in gossip is inspired, not by a love of knowledge but by malice: no one gossips about other people's secret virtues, but only about their secret vices. Accordingly most gossip is untrue, but care is taken not to verify it. Our neighbour's sins, like the consolations of religion, are so agreeable that we do not stop to scrutinise

the evidence closely" (*On Education, Especially in Early Childhood*, George Allen & Unwin, Ltd, 1926, page 50). Gervais, it should be pointed out, would also concur with Russell's point about religion in the quote above, as on his Twitter account he is, among other things, a vociferous defender of freethought and atheism. The interviewer goes on to say that, "Bertrand Russell would not have liked Twitter", to which Gervais responds, "I think he would have avoided it. But Oscar Wilde would have loved it." Given the many pithy quotations by Russell of 140 characters or less—many of them genuine—I suspect that he too would have loved Twitter, but who am I to quibble with Gervais?

The New York Times Book Review's "By the Book" column asked Hayden Planetarium director and author Neil deGrasse Tyson what book he plans to read in the near future. "Four books that I just acquired from an antiquarian bookseller—short monographs by the philosopher, mathematician and social activist Bertrand Russell: 'Justice in War-Time' (the 1924 printing), 'Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays' (1932 edition), 'Common Sense and Nuclear Warfare' (1959) and 'Has Man a Future?' (1961). It's always refreshing to see what a deep-thinking, smart and worldly person (who is not a politician) has to say about the social and geopolitical challenges of the day" ("By the Book", *New York Times Book Review*, December 22, 2013, page 6). Astrophysicist Tyson, the host of *Cosmos*—the revived TV series originated by the late Carl Sagan—is one of the best-known modern day popularizers of science, and his interest in Russell would surely have pleased the author of *The ABC of Atoms* and *The ABC of Relativity*.

The aforementioned Kenneth Blackwell, upon hearing of the death of Oliver Sacks (July 9, 1933-August 30, 2015) shared the following anecdote he'd once read, in which Sacks had a rather unnerving Russellian hallucination: "I went back into the house and put on the kettle for another cup of tea, when my attention was



caught by a spider on the wall. As I drew nearer to look at it, the spider called out, 'Hello!' It did not seem at all strange to me that a spider should say hello (any more than it seemed strange to Alice when the White Rabbit spoke). I said 'Hello, yourself,' and with this we started a conversation, mostly on rather technical matters of analytic philosophy. Perhaps this direction was suggested by the spider's opening comment: did I think Bertrand Russell had exploded Frege's paradox? Or perhaps it was its voice—pointed, incisive, and just like Russell's voice, which I had heard on the radio. (Decades later, I mentioned the spider's Russellian tendencies to my friend Tom Eisner, an entomologist; he nodded sagely and said, 'Yes, I know the species.')

(Oliver Sacks, "Altered States: Self-Experiments in Chemistry", *The New Yorker*, August 27, 2012.) That was indeed a nightmare of an eminent person.

*Russellians know that Lord John Russell's *father* was, in fact, the 6th Duke of Bedford, and not his grandfather.

Russell and Society

The Pope and Nukes

By Ray Perkins
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I was pleasantly surprised by Pope Francis' September visit to the US, especially his appearances before the United Nations General Assembly and the United States Congress. I was, of course, expecting him to remind all of our duty to address the problems of climate change and global poverty—which he did quite eloquently. But I was not expecting him to tell his UN audience of the need to abolish all nuclear weapons in accordance with the Nonproliferation Treaty—a treaty to which, I discovered, the Vatican is a party. There was heavy applause, although I doubt the reps of the "big five" (UK, US, Russia, China, France), were up and cheering at that moment.

And I was at least equally amazed by his courageous address to the US Congress, reminding them of "our duty" to take

action against the greedy and bloody arms trade. He didn't mention the US by name, and by the volume of the applause one might have thought that his audience assumed he was talking about Russia or Iran. But of course the leading merchant in that immoral business of death is by far, and has been since the end of the Cold War, the United States.

The Pope's reproval is well worth quoting:

Why are deadly weapons being sold to those who plan to inflict untold suffering on individuals and society? Sadly, the answer, as we all know, is simply for money: money that is drenched in blood, often innocent blood. In the face of this shameful and culpable silence, it is our duty to confront the problem and to stop the arms trade.

At the time, I thought to myself "Good heavens, wouldn't Bertie, were he here, have been surprised and pleased with this newly found ally against the military mania that he spent his last decade and a half opposing—and an ally with as much potential international anti-nuclear clout as the grand old gadfly himself!"

Well, to my additional delight, I soon learned (Thanks to Ken Blackwell) that in April 1963—six months after the Cuban Missile Crisis and during the second ongoing Berlin Crisis—Pope John XXIII issued his remarkable Cold War encyclical, *Pacem in Terris*. It was quite a welcome event for Bertrand Russell who, having spent nearly a decade opposing the nuclear threat, promptly wrote a short piece praising the Pontiff's encyclical in the Dutch publication, *Die Linie*. It's high praise indeed:

... [It] is immensely valuable and immensely important. It places the whole authority of the Catholic Church on the side of sane statesmanship and of human solution of the world's troubles. In reading it I



have had the great and somewhat unexpected pleasure of being able to applaud almost everything that the Pope has said.

He goes on to praise the encyclical for its political philosophy of individual liberty (much like the 18th Century liberal doctrine “The Rights of Man”, influential in both the American and French revolutions), and he says with obvious satisfaction, “This doctrine justifies those who employ civil disobedience in protest against preparations for nuclear war.”

The encyclical explicitly calls for the need to work to prevent nuclear war, and emphasizes that the task will require the cooperation of *all* Christians and, surprisingly, the cooperation of Christians and *non*-Christians. A call for such cooperation at this time was especially courageous inasmuch as it could invite the charge, as Russell knew only too well, of being soft on Communism—something, Russell assures us, the Pope’s doctrine on human rights rules out.

The Pope also reminds the world of the danger of *unintended* nuclear war through accident or misunderstanding, and insists that “humanity and justice urgently demand that the arms race should cease ... that stockpiles should be reduced ..., that nuclear weapons should be banned, and that a general agreement should eventually be reached about progressive disarmament and an effective method of control.”*

And that’s not all. Russell was especially pleased to see that, in order to carry out these objectives, the encyclical urges the creation of a world authority with the allegiance of all nations in matters of armaments and war and suggests that the UN could become such an authority. Russell is of course hopeful but has his doubts for the near future owing to the radical UN changes needed before it would be up to such a task—viz. the inclusion of many countries then excluded (e.g., mainland China, not then even recognized by the

West) and the abolition of the “big five” veto power in the Security Council.

The end of the Cold War was still a quarter century away, but nuclear arms control was coming quickly to life and would make some very significant advances before the end of Russell’s life: the Partial Test Ban Treaty was then on the verge of agreement and would be open for signing in a few months (Aug. 1963). Its original signatories proclaimed “as their principal aim”:

...the speediest possible achievement of an agreement on general and complete disarmament under strict international control ... [and] an end to the armaments race and ... to the production and testing of all kinds of weapons, including nuclear weapons.

And the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty—which holds an international promise for “general and complete disarmament under strict and effective international controls”—was concluded five years later (1968). (It now has 189 members, including the five permanent members of the Security Council.) Russell was witness to these encouraging breakthroughs due, in no small measure, to the ground work that he had been instrumental in laying.

Russell, were he with us today, would almost certainly find the current Pope’s message equally worthy of praise, and his concluding words of hope in his little message in *Die Linie* still appropriate now in our time of crisis. Russell said then:

I hope that the Pope will be listened to and that there will be an end to the silly and murderous game of negotiating with a view to *not* reaching agreement.

*At this time Russell was actively engaged in bringing the danger of accidental nuclear war and the scores of serious nuclear mishaps, largely unknown or downplayed by the mainstream media, to public attention. See my “Accidental Nuclear War and Russell’s ‘Early Warning’” (a review of Eric Schlosser’s *Command and Control*) in *Russell* (Summer 2014).



From the Student Desk
A Partial Defense of Russell
 By Landon D. C. Elkind
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In the fall 2015 *Bulletin*, I criticized Russell's treatment of Euclid. Russell was opposed to the continued use of Euclid's *Elements* as a geometry textbook. I responded that the *Elements* has aesthetic, mathematical, and historical value that merits its inclusion as a textbook, much as Plato's and Aristotle's writings do. But there I went on to say, "There is not here space sufficient to fully consider, much less to fully state, Russell's criticisms, despite the interesting questions such criticisms raise about the nature of mathematical proof."

I consider Russell's side more thoroughly, here. Russell's remarks raise the question, "What is a mathematical proof?" An alternative rendering of my earlier defense of Euclid would be to note that Euclid's concept of a mathematical proof differs tremendously from Russell's conception. A proof for Russell is a series of symbolic replacements, all of which follow from previously specified formal rules, at least ultimately. A quibble may be raised as to whether a formal proof might be rendered for any given informal proof. The rise of computer-assisted proofs could end that controversy soon, and *Principia* showed no theoretical barriers prevent rendering a given informal proof in a formal language.

Euclid's notion of proof is different. For Euclid, a proof is not given in a formal system using symbolic replacements all done according to previously specified rules. Ian Mueller's description is helpful here; he writes that the Euclidean proof is "an experiment performed [in thought] on idealised physical objects" (Mueller, 295). Euclid's mode of procedure is to specify the objects of discourse sufficiently for another mathematician to grasp the objects under discussion and follow the thought experiment performed on those objects. That is, a proof for Euclid is a specification

of a thought experiment on an idealized object within an abstract space.

Now the modern conception of proof that Russell defended in print won the day, and for good reason. For Euclid's notion of proof falls short of establishing an immutable truth. An informal specification of the objects of discourse, and a description of a thought experiment on those objects, fails to rigorously shed light upon many points that would be rigorously known on the modern notion. Take for, example, a Euclidean description of the continuum as a "continuously-drawn straight line". This description likely suggests the image below:

You may feel like the description suffices for intelligibility. Your feeling would mislead you. Try to define, for example, the product of two irrational numbers under this description, as Richard Dedekind complained to Rudolf Lipshitz (Cooke, 524). Does the product of $\sqrt{2} \times \sqrt{3}$ even exist? How might the product be understood using continuously drawn lines? One could try. Suppose we understand the metaphor of real numbers as extended magnitudes as follows:

$$\sqrt{2} = \text{—————} \ominus$$

$$\sqrt{3} = \text{—————} \ominus$$

Then one could say that the product is just the result of laying $\sqrt{3}$ at the end of $\sqrt{2}$. This is problematic. For there is no greatest rational less than $\sqrt{2}$. So I cannot lay $\sqrt{3}$ at the 'end' of the series of rational numbers less than $\sqrt{2}$. Unless I choose $\sqrt{2}$ itself, I have no way of choosing precisely where I place the extended magnitude for $\sqrt{3}$. The product of two irrational numbers remains ill-defined. Similarly for other operations on the continuum.

Continuity fares just as poorly as irrational products. We might offer that functions are continuous if they are representable by "continuously drawn lines". But consider Peter Dirichlet's real-valued function f defined piecewise by $f(x) = 1$ if x is



rational and $f(x) = 0$ if x is irrational. The graph of Dirichlet's function looks like a pair of continuously drawn lines, one at $y=1$ and another at $y=0$, as below:

$f(x)=1$: _____

$f(x)=0$: _____

Despite this appearance, which completely satisfies the strictures of our guiding metaphor, Dirichlet's function is provably discontinuous at every point x . For any real number x , there is a sequence $\{s_n\}$ of rationals and a sequence $\{t_n\}$ of irrationals both of which converge to x . Now if Dirichlet's function is continuous at x , then $f(x)$ must be the limit of the sequences $\{f(s_i)\}$ and $\{f(t_i)\}$, where s_i is in $\{s_n\}$ and t_i is in $\{t_n\}$. But $\{f(s_i)\}$ and $\{f(t_i)\}$ are constant and unequal, so the limits of $\{f(s_i)\}$ and $\{f(t_i)\}$ are unequal. So $f(x)$ cannot be the limit of both sequences. Thus, Dirichlet's function must be discontinuous at the arbitrarily given real number x .

In short, informal intelligibility sufficient for Euclidean proofs gives no rigorous definitions of standard operations. Likewise, continuity is not rigorously comprehensible by informal specifications. And questions about the convergence of sequences and series, of the utmost importance to calculus, become matters of controversy rather than of understanding.

Even more troubling than unintelligibility is inconsistency. Informal intelligibility does not preclude contradictions like Russell's paradox. We may feel perfectly well that we understand what a "collection of objects" is. But as Russell showed, we would be wrong to trust our feelings on this score. An informal metaphor may inspire some naïve confidence, but it is not a proof.

Russell's objections to the 19th-century practice of using Euclid's *Elements* as a textbook, then, are well-founded in that Euclid's notion of proof is barren. Russell is right to write that "[Euclid's] definitions do not always define, his axioms are not always indemonstrable, his demonstra-

tions require many axioms of which he is quite unconscious (Russell, 165)." As such, we should not use the book to teach children how to prove things rigorously, for that is not how prove things rigorously—period. (One might argue for teaching children how to prove things non-rigorously on the basis of child psychology—I ignore that complication.) This we can, and should, acknowledge. So keep Euclid's *Elements* in the classrooms, but in the history of mathematics and classics classrooms. And I like to think that if we brought Euclid to our day, and taught him Russell's *Principia*, he would agree in our assessment.

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Answer to Not Necessarily Trivial Question (page 3)

Lord Stanley, Bertrand Russell's uncle, converted to Islam in 1862. Then in 1869 he became the first Muslim member of the House of Lords. He inherited the title upon the death of his father—and Bertrand Russell's (maternal) grandfather—Edward John Stanley, 2nd Baron Stanley of Alderley.

Alcohol is forbidden in Islam, and it is said that as a consequence of Lord Stanley's faith, he ordered the closure of all public houses on his estate in Nether Alderley, south of Alderley Edge (then called Chorley). Nonetheless, though he was a Muslim, he also funded the restoration of several Christian churches.

Lord Stanley did not make a big deal about his faith, and apparently not many even knew. But many Muslims certainly did, and they took pride in it as is evident from his obituary in Islamic news releases.



Meet the BRS

By Mandeep Kaur

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I am citizen of India, a single woman, and I belong to a spiritual Sikh family.

I'm from the Punjab region, which is in the northern part of India, and where roughly 58% of the population belongs to the Sikh faith. My father is a retired government officer, my mother is a homemaker, and my brother is presently in Australia pursuing his studies in account-



ing. I am currently an Assistant Professor in Jasdev Singh Sandhu College of Education, Kauli, Patiala, where I teach subjects ranging from educational philosophy to commerce.

I attended Punjabi University where I received a doctorate in education with an emphasis on the analytic philosophy of Bertrand Russell and its educational implications. My chief philosophical interests are how the use of language and logic and, ultimately, Russell's principles of simplification, help us to understand the nature of reality. My formal education has not stood still with education and philosophy, however, as I also have started working on another doctorate in commerce.

I have authored publications on banking, finance, corporate environmental responsibility, and management education. In the course of my studies, I recently authored a book, *Plato to Russell: Western Schools of Educational Philosophy* (2014).

My personal outlook is to cultivate humbleness and kindness towards humanity. India is a poor country, and life is difficult for large numbers of people. Many here operate on blind faith and see omens as their reality and in every aspect of life. I am very active in social work in my spare time, exercising both my legal rights and

my responsibilities as a citizen of my country.

I have been a member of the Bertrand Russell Society since 2013. It is my privilege to have founded and to be the current director of our chapter in Punjab, India. I originally came across the Bertrand Russell Society while pursuing my research on Russell, and I have been fortunate to have attended two Annual Meetings thus far, one in 2013 at the University of Iowa in the U.S., and another in 2014 at the University of Windsor in Canada. It has been my good fortune to interact and learn from members such as Gregory Landini, Michael Berumen, Ken Blackwell, John Ongley, Alan Schwerin, Michael Potter and many others so that I might better understand Russell and more effectively communicate his ideas and ideals to my countrymen. One of my principal goals is to integrate Russell's approach to philosophy in the curricula of the Indian university system.

This and That

A Movie Review: *Platoon*

By Michael E. Berumen

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For several years prior to 11 August 1969, my chief interests were sex, drugs, and rock & roll—and mathematics and physics—and in about that order. I was then just past my 17th birthday by less than a month. I had started college too young, a year and a half earlier—well, that's an overstatement; though enrolled, the truth is I was absent most of the time. I was miserable, with no friends there, so I hung out with people closer to my own age and got into various kinds of trouble, which among other things, included a sojourn at the Haight Ashbury district of San Francisco as a runaway during the so-called "summer of love" and hopping trains to Arkansas, punctuated by other mischief, and several months in juvenile hall—



fortunately, that was expunged from my record. My father had died a few years before of cirrhosis, and, in retrospect, I suppose I was “acting out.” I couldn’t decide if I wanted to be a professional beach bum or a scientist, but I thought one of those things might suit me, though the part of having to get serious about school for science was problematic. Fortunately, I was very good at exams.

Anyway, being impulsive, then, and wanting to leave home, I joined the Army that month with my mother’s permission. I had given little thought to the war raging in Vietnam, then near its height. I was pretty oblivious. Adventure is what I had in mind. My mother apparently thought the Army would do me some good (one could enlist at 17 only with parental permission, and at 18 the government could seize one through the draft if he lacked a deferment). Before judging her too harshly, though, you would have to know just what a handful and screw-up I had become.

I was very lucky, for I avoided the horrors of war, and because I impressed someone on some tests, I ended-up being trained in cryptography, and was kept out of harm’s way. Achilles’ reputation was safe. It is good my juvenile record was sealed, or I likely would have been in the jungle. Some friends I made in the military were not so lucky, though, and some would lose their lives. It was a transformational experience for me in a number of ways, not least of which was becoming more politically aware and even discovering philosophy—specifically, *The Problems of Philosophy*—at the base library. More than anything, I suppose, I had several older mentors—I learned more from them than anyone before about right and wrong and discipline. I also became an adult. I was out before I even turned 20, and ready to return to college. This is all by way of background, for it will explain some things, and it brings me now to my subject.

The other evening my wife, Carol, and I came across the movie *Platoon* on the television, and we watched it, more or less glued to our seats. It had been many

years since I saw the movie, which was released in 1986. It must be counted as one of the best war pictures—and certainly one of the best anti-war pictures—ever made, along with *Full Metal Jacket*, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, *The Deer Hunter*, and *Apocalypse Now*. Oliver Stone has his limits as a historian (to wit: his *JFK*) and as an analyst of current affairs; however, no one could deny his brilliance at directing, screenwriting, and storytelling, and he has a long list of fine movies to prove it. *Platoon*, however, is perhaps his most personal story, for he is a Vietnam combat veteran, and the lead character, played by a young Charlie Sheen, is partly autobiographical. The movie has many others who would become big movie stars—including Tom Berenger, Willem Dafoe, Forest Whitaker, and a very young Johnny Depp.

From beginning to end, *Platoon* keeps a tight grip on one’s emotions, and it is perhaps as close as one can come to witnessing the horror of war in the jungles of Vietnam without actually being there. Torture, rape, terror, indiscriminate killing, unspeakable pain, blood, guts, maiming, sweat, heat, mud, drugs, heroism, and even moments of humanity: *it’s all there*. The acting is marvelous, and the portrayals of the soldiers, from the military jargon (which I well remember)—and the gallows humor—to the kind of camaraderie and interpersonal fealty that only soldiers can truly understand, even the juvenile swagger and testosterone-driven inanities of young men—all are realistically depicted.

The movie’s musical score is taken from Samuel Barber’s appropriately dark and haunting *Adagio for Strings*, and it is interspersed expertly with various songs emblematic of the era, including Jefferson Airplane’s “White Rabbit” and Otis Redding’s “Dock of the Bay.” The music adds to the very visceral effect it will have on those of us who came of age in that time.

Platoon is much more than a war movie or anti-war movie, though. Its overarching theme, or at least my take on it, is to examine man’s capacity for evil—but



also for good, and in even the most extreme circumstances, where it sets apart those who are able to overcome extraordinary pressures to do the *wrong* thing, the bad things we philosophically-minded folk might like to eschew when it's easy to do so from a distance, and when there's no real choice to be made. Morality, you see, is not simply about *saying* things or *believing* things. Pious, polite, churchgoing, and ostensibly upstanding, literate people who said and believed in good things *stood by* while others were being marched into gas chambers. And others have stood by while people were beaten or raped or witness to all manner of depravity. Or worse, they succumb to peer pressure or orders to participate. War crimes are often precisely a result of the latter phenomenon. Morality is about what we *do* ... or what we *don't do*. It is about how we *act* towards others, and not merely about what we say, feel, or believe. *Those are easy*. And the true test is when one is actually faced with difficult choices, not when they are merely part of a case study or a hypothetical circumstance. This movie brings that point home better than most.

Stone uses as the overarching theme the contrast and struggle between two sergeants, each a capable and experienced warrior. One is played by Berenger, who is at once fearless and evil, and the other is played by Dafoe, equally skilled at war, but also compassionate and good. There is a particularly riveting scene when things get out of hand in a village and civilians thought to be harboring weapons for the Viet Cong (the insurgents in South Vietnam) are being mistreated by some of the soldiers, which leads to a confrontation between the good sergeant and the evil sergeant. One sees the sergeants' varying influences over the young, naïve soldier portrayed by Sheen, who comes to Vietnam as a patriotic college drop-out—with his growing skepticism and, finally, revulsion and disdain towards Berenger's character, whom he initially admired—and his increasing admiration and respect for Dafoe's character who, despite everything,

manages to preserve some humanity and personal virtue amidst the carnage. Sheen's character is the narrator, and towards the end of the movie—and we might imagine that this is in some sense Stone himself speaking—he confesses that he is torn and haunted by these two larger than life characters, men whose very different personalities—which, in effect, are allegories for good and evil—both continue to dwell in his own soul.

After the movie was over I had to spend some time in silence simply to gather myself, for it took its toll on my emotions, and it reminded me of many things from long ago. And it also caused me to reflect on today's attitudes toward war.

I joined the Vietnam Veterans Against the War soon after being discharged from the Army. I did what I could to speak out against the war, then, and I became the political education officer of our local VVAW chapter in the Bay Area. While I had by then acquired some knowledge about Russell the philosopher and logician, who had only recently died, it was at this time that I first became familiar with his peace work. While I look back at some of our youthful idealism and antics as being not altogether practical or sound, those of us who protested the war were certainly right to stand against it. It was an unnecessary and immoral war, one that needlessly cost tens of thousands of American lives and, by most estimates, well over a million Southeast Asian lives. For years afterwards we all heard of the "lessons of Vietnam." I wonder exactly what it is that we have learned, though. Or what we have forgotten. It is not clear to me that we have learned all that much.

I recommend *Platoon* to anyone who has not seen it, but also to those who, like me, saw it long ago—just as a reminder. Some very good and critically-acclaimed war movies have been made in recent years: *Saving Private Ryan*, *Hurt Locker*, and *Lone Survivor*, and the television productions of *Band of Brothers* and *The Pacific*, just to name some. But there is also a patriotic subtext to these movies, even



some gratuitous jingoism, and I fear the terrible, wider, and more pervasively tragic consequences of war are obscured or understated by portrayals of individual valor in narrow contexts, and where the good guys and bad guys are drawn so sharply and simplistically to evoke interpretations of a righteous cause, thereby arousing a kind of martial spirit, perhaps *especially* with those who know little of war first hand. *This is unsettling.* Let me hasten to add, I am no pacifist, far from it—but very few wars are just, all are costly, most have unintended consequences, *and none are entertaining.*

In any case, it is an understatement to say that *Platoon* is not the best date movie; however, it is very well done, instructive, and a useful reminder of the price of war. It comes at a cost we ought to pay *only* as a last resort. In particular, though, I wish that those who have never worn a uniform, but who too often see military conflict as the solution to problems, and who relish bellicose talk of carpet bombing and the annihilation of others, would watch this particular movie. I especially wish the boorish babblers of talk radio and cable television who took proactive steps to avoid military service when they were of an age to do so—the O'Reilly and Limbaugh types—and who now counsel military action for others so easily; or those chest-thumping political candidates who never served and who speak with bravado when they are personally out of harm's way—the Trump, Cruz, Rubio, Giuliani, Cheney, and Christie crowd; and those intrepid armchair warriors, latter day Dr. Strangeloves who have never tied a combat boot—typified by Wolfowitz, Kristol, and the Kagan brothers—would all watch this movie. Perhaps it would cause them to think a bit more carefully about the price of war—and maybe, *just maybe*, they'd be just a little less glib and not so zealous about sending someone else's child into battle to kill yet another's.

Politicians in the US often prattle on about taking care of veterans. It sells well to everyone, nowadays—which, of course,

is why they say it. However, the *very best* way to take care of future vets is preventive, namely, by doing everything practicable to keep them out of war in the first place. And if a politician is willing to send others to war, he should be sure to offer himself up, too—or, if too old, his sons and daughters, and their sons and daughters. That will quell the ardor for it. I once opposed the draft; now I'm not so sure. Mostly poor and working-class kids carry a disproportionate burden fighting our wars, as it was in Vietnam (75% were volunteers vs. 34% in WWII), and as it is today (all volunteers). I agree with Congressman Charlie Rangel, who was wounded in the Korean War and decorated for valor, and who also once opposed the draft. If there is to be war, let there be a draft (conscientious objectors and mildly disabled can do another public service) with no deferments or waivers for sons *and* daughters. I would add: *all* congressmen of a certain age and/or their progeny should be *first* on the list, including the President's and all cabinet members' kids. *I can guarantee that will result in a very big change in attitude.*

ANALYTICS

Temporary Intrinsic

By Katarina Perovic

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Recently, while considering the metaphysical problem of temporary intrinsic, I was struck by a Russell-inspired objection which targets all four-dimensionalists, including Russell. The problem of temporary intrinsic was famously stated by David Lewis in his *On the Plurality of Worlds* as follows: "Persisting things change their intrinsic properties. For instance shape: when I sit, I have a bent shape; when I stand, I have a straightened shape. Both shapes are temporary intrinsic properties. I have them only some of the time. How is such change possible?" (1986, p.202)

The problem is about accounting for genuine change. But what do philosophers



mean by “genuine change”? If I change location from being in my office to being outside, despite the change in my relational (or extrinsic) properties, no genuine change seems to occur in me. Extrinsic/relational properties do not seem to track change in things themselves. If, on the other hand, I change from being seated to standing up, my body undergoes a change in shape, which, on the face of it, seems to be a more substantial kind of change. *Being straight* and *being bent* are also examples of *temporary properties*, i.e., they are properties that one has just some of the time, as opposed to properties that one has throughout one’s existence (such as *being human*). Thus, Lewis’s request for an account of change in *intrinsic temporary properties* is nothing more than an appeal for an account of what most of us already think of as ordinary change.

According to Lewis, there are three available solutions to the problem. The first one is to argue that temporary intrinsic properties are not intrinsic after all. My being straight at a time t_1 is to be understood as my having of a relational property, *being straight-at- t_1* . Thus my change in shape is to be understood as follows: K is B -at- t_1 and then K is S -at- t_2 . “ K ” is the enduring object that changes properties, whereas B -at- t_1 and S -at- t_2 are the intrinsic properties turned extrinsic; they are properties had in relation to times.

Lewis’s criticism of this solution is twofold: i) the bearer of properties— K in our example—is left without any intrinsic properties; that is, “in itself, considered apart from its relations to other things, it has no shape at all” (Lewis, p.204); ii) all other temporary intrinsics “must be reinterpreted as relations that something with an absolutely unchanging intrinsic nature bears to different times”; that is, all of the properties previously thought to be intrinsic turn out to be extrinsic/relational.

The second solution, according to Lewis, is to argue that the only genuine properties are the ones that a thing has at a present moment. According to this presentist approach, the only real times are

the present time, and the only real properties of an object are the ones that it has at a present moment.

For Lewis, this solution is even worse than the first one because it rejects change altogether. There is no enduring object/thing to speak of.

Finally, Lewis concludes that the best solution to the problem of temporary intrinsics is to embrace his four dimensional theory of temporal parts. On this theory, all things are made up of temporal parts and different temporary intrinsics are intrinsic properties of these distinct parts. My change in shape is thus simply to be viewed as different temporal parts of me having different intrinsic properties— K -at- t_1 is B and then K -at- t_2 is S . Here, K -at- t_1 should be substituted by K_1 and K -at- t_2 is to be substituted by K_2 , where K is to be understood as an aggregate of all of K ’s temporal parts: $K = K_1 + K_2 + K_3 + \dots + K_n$.

Lewis’s argument from temporary intrinsics has always struck me as too quick and not very compelling. On the one hand, Lewis seems to underestimate the endurantist’s various possibilities for reply; and, on the other, he seems to vastly overestimate the four-dimensionalist advantage. For example, an endurantist might take the adverbialist route advocated by Lowe and Haslanger, and proceed to treat the *having* of a property as relative to times. Thus, the correct understanding of K is B at t_1 would be: K is-at- t_1 B . According to this view, rather than making things and properties relative to times, it is the *having* of them that would receive such treatment. Another possibility for an endurantist might be to embrace the accusation of turning intrinsic properties relational/extrinsic by making them relative to times, but insist that the relevant distinction between intrinsic and extrinsic properties still remains. (Namely, the extrinsic properties hold in relation to times and at least one other thing, whereas intrinsic properties hold just in relation to times.)

As to Lewis’s advocacy of four-dimensionalism, one can object that his insistence on preserving the intuitive ap-



peal of *temporary intrinsic properties* is at odds with his repudiation of the common-sense understanding of both the notions of change and ordinary things. That is, if the answer to the problem of change is to state that it consists in *different* objects having different intrinsic properties, then hasn't change been essentially given up on? Furthermore, if the object that has the intrinsic properties is now to be viewed as merely a temporal part of a four-dimensional whole, then hasn't the ordinary notion of the object been given up as well? In the light of all this, it is rather baffling that Lewis insists that the *having of a temporary intrinsic property simpliciter* (i.e. without qualification) is some great advantage of four-dimensionalism over rival theories.

But there is one further worry for a four-dimensionalist, which is brought out by considerations that Russell makes in his *Theory of Knowledge* (1913). Therein, Russell states explicitly that we ought not to identify mind with a subject: "A mind is something which persists through a certain period of time, but it must not be assumed that the subject persists" (1913, p.35). Thus, roughly, a subject for Russell is something of a momentary experiencer, whereas the mind is—perhaps—a series of all those momentary experiencers. What is puzzling, however, for both Russell's and Lewis's types of four-dimensionalism, is how to account for holding of cognitive relations and having of cognitive properties. Namely, such properties and relations would seem to require time to be instantiated. Understanding a proposition, thinking about temporary intrinsics, being excited about a puzzle, etc. all seem to happen *through time*, rather than at a time. If this is indeed so, then who or what is the *relatum* of such cognitive relations and a property bearer of such mental properties? While Russell might be correct to claim that a momentary subject S is the subject of acquaintance, it seems wrong to say that such a "thin" subject can understand or be the bearer of other substantial cognitive properties and relations.

In the face of this difficulty, the four-dimensionalist might opt to make the subject more temporally robust. Rather than have it be instantaneous, he might want to have it occupy some chunk of time. But how much time would be sufficient and wouldn't any choice on the matter have to be somewhat arbitrary? Perhaps, the four-dimensionalist might wish to claim that cognitive properties and relations are held by not one subject S, but by a small series $S_1, S_2, S_3 \dots S_{10}$. If this was the preferred option, Russell's very distinction between mind and subject would get blurred and it would after all be minds or "mini-minds" that have thoughts and stand in cognitive relations, rather than subjects. But perhaps there is one more option: instead of making the subject more temporally extended, the four-dimensionalist may need to make the properties and relations, or rather the having of properties and relations temporally extended. What sense, if any, can be made of this is still a mystery to me, but it does strike me as a question worth exploring.

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Principia Follies

A logician amending Principia
 Repented his cardinal insipia
 With numbers descending
 And emendments offending
 He never quite solved it atypia.

If you want to learn about types
 The rules, ambiguity: yipes!
 In confronting a shriek
 Recall Kant's *Kritik*
 And e'er you'll feel its delights.

By G. Landini

{Ed. note: if you have a limerick or poem or cartoon in a Russellian vein, please submit it!}

Substitution's 'Insolubilia' Solved

By Gregory Landini

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Substitution's 'Insolubilia' concern the difficulties that Russell faced when he was advancing his substitutional "no-classes" theories, according to which logic is the synthetic *a priori* science of the structure of propositions. These theories date from Russell's 1903 *Principles of Mathematics* itself and they extend, in one form or another, all the way until finally they were abandoned by 1910 with the publication of *Principia Mathematica*. As is well known, *Principles* was originally to have had a second volume written with the collaboration of Whitehead. In the second volume, the substitutional theory would be featured prominently as a solution of contradictions such as Cantor's paradox of the greatest cardinal, the Burali-Forti paradox of the greatest ordinal, and Russell's paradoxes of classes and

In Russell's view, mathematicians are doing cpLogic when they do mathematics. No demand of axiomatization, no demand of the deducibility of mathematic theorems, are essential to Russell's Logicism.

attributes. In his 1907 paper "Mathematical Logic as Based on the Theory of Types" (*ML*), Russell imagined a translation from the technically convenient language of what would be *Principia's* simple type indexed predicate variables (suppressed under conventions of typical ambiguity) into the language of substitution where the more philosophical explanations would be found. Substitution is entirely type free, but emulates types of attributes (properties and relations) by multiple substitutions of entities in propositions. In a June 1907 manuscript entitled "On Types", Russell reminded himself that "Types won't work without no-classes," and notes that the substitutional theory might belong in an appendix to *Principia*. It never happened. *Principles* never had a second volume, the propositions of the substitutional theory were abandoned, and *Principia* (first edition) has no appendices.

What happened? As Jolen Galaugher¹ has recently put it, Russell had to face up to substitutional 'insolubilia'. But what were they? Following the work of Cocchiarella², I argued that they were due *solely* to Cantorian diagonal difficulties arising because the ontology of propositions enables one-to-one functions violating Cantor's power theorem. Cantor's theorem states that there can be no function from objects onto properties of those objects. In this short piece, I want to reveal something exciting that has recently emerged. There is a very easy way to solve the 'insolubilia'. And Russell himself was on the cusp of seeing it.

1. Background

Russell's Logicism is the thesis that all of the branches of pure mathematics (including non-Euclidean geometry) are branches of the general study of ^{cp}Logic—the logic of relations. To understand his position, it is central to understand that Russell viewed Cantor's work as revolutionary. It set the stage for the discovery that mathematics is the study of structure. Russell viewed Frege's work as no less revolutionary. He discovered that logic embraces impredicative comprehension. I call it "^{cp}Logic" to mark its distinctness from Boolean algebras and quantification theory. Russell maintains that ^{cp}Logic is the synthetic *a priori* science of structure. It studies all the kinds of structures that there are by studying the way relations bring about structure (order). Relations can be studied independently of whether, in fact, the relations in question are exemplified. It is this new



^{cp}Logic, and not the new polyadic quantification theory (with identity), that Russell meant by the “logic of relations.”

In Russell’s view, mathematicians are doing ^{cp}Logic when they do mathematics. No demand of axiomatization, no demand of the deducibility of mathematical theorems, are essential to Russell’s Logicism. Russell offers no proscriptions constraining the practice of mathematics—Poincaré’s fears notwithstanding. Simple type theory in no way jeopardizes Russell’s thesis that ^{cp}Logic is capable of studying all the kinds of structures that there are. That is because Russell correctly realized that all the kinds of structures that there are may be studied within simple type theory. For example, the Von Neumann natural numbers and the Zermelo natural numbers (should sets exist) violate simple types. But mathematics is not concerned with the abstract particulars that are the creatures of metaphysical reverie. Mathematics concerns only the kind of structure involved—the *Progression*—and this can be fully studied within simple type theory. The theory of simple types of attributes does *not* jeopardize ^{cp}Logic as the general study of kinds of structures.

A simple type theory of attributes is technically sufficient to block the paradoxes and it paves the way for Russell’s Logicism. Impredicative comprehension of attributes in such a system is captured with axiom schemas such as the following:

$$\begin{aligned} &(\exists f^{(o)})(x^o)(f^{(o)}(x^o) \equiv \varphi(x^o)), \\ &(\exists f^{((o))})(\psi^{(o)})(f^{((o))}(\psi^{(o)}) \equiv \varphi(\psi^{(o)}). \end{aligned}$$

(What makes these “impredicative” is that the *wffs* φ that are allowed in instances of these schemas may contain quantifiers of any simple type whatever.) But many today object that such a metaphysics of simple types of attributes is not part of pure logic and thus fares no better than a rival non-logical metaphysics of abstract particulars such as Zermelo’s sets. Russell knew this perfectly well. The difference, he thought, is that unlike Zermelo’s sets, the language of simple types can be *emulated* from within a simple type free theory with an ontology that is of pure logic. By embracing an ontology of propositions in pure logic, Russell’s substitutional theory attempted to emulate the scaffolding of a simple-type theory of attributes *without* the ontological commitments of its comprehension axiom schemas.

The substitutional theory sketched in *Principles* floundered because it involved substituting *denoting concepts*—and this proved to be a quagmire. In 1905, however, Russell abandoned denoting concepts and adopted his theory of definite descriptions. Substitution became viable. The expression “ $(\iota q)(p \frac{x}{a} !q)$ ” is a definite description for the outcome of a substitution, where “ $p \frac{x}{a} !q$ ” says that q is structurally exactly like p *except* at most for containing x wherever p contains a . By a clever series of such substitutions, Russell defines the simultaneous substitution “ $s \frac{p,a}{t,w} !q$ ” and the definitions for any finite number of substitutions. Simple type comprehension of attributes in intension is then emulated by means of theorems such as the following:

$$\begin{aligned} &(\exists p, a)(x)(\iota q)(p \frac{x}{a} !q) \equiv \varphi(x) \\ &(\exists s, t, w)(p, a)(\iota q)(s \frac{p,a}{t,w} !q) \equiv \varphi(p, a). \end{aligned}$$

These become obvious once we accept that for any *wffs* φx and $\varphi(p, a)$, there are propositions $\{\varphi x\}$ and $\{\varphi(p, a)\}$. After all, substitution has the following:

$$\begin{aligned} &(\exists p, a)(x)(p \frac{x}{a} !\{\varphi x\}) \\ &(\exists s, t, w)(p, a)(s \frac{p,a}{t,w} !\{\varphi(p, a)\}). \end{aligned}$$



The expression $F(F)$ and its negation are wholly ungrammatical, since $p \frac{p,a}{a} !q$ is ungrammatical.

Russell's 1905 theory of definite descriptions offered what Russell took to be the "complete solution to all the hoary difficulties of the one and the many" (see "On the Substitutional Theory of Classes and Relations", 1906). The way to execute the planned second volume of *Principles* was clear to him. In his *Autobiography*, he says that in 1906 he felt that all that was left was to write the book out.

In *ML*, Russell reveals that he had fully developed the contextual definitions of class and relation-in-extension expressions later found in *Principia*. It seems clear that by this time the second volume of *Principles* was aborted and *Principia* was designed to stand alone. All the same, substitution is still the foundation. In *ML*, Russell explicitly endorses his substitutional theory and a translation plan. It is technically convenient, he explains, to work directly in the language simple type scaffolded predicate variables (bound and free). The language of *Principia*'s predicate variables makes it convenient to introduce contextual definitions eliminating class notations. Moreover, one can drop simple type indices under a convention of typical ambiguity. To do this, one must distinguish genuine object-language predicate variables from schematic letters for *wffs*. In *Principia*, Whitehead and Russell do this by adopting the exclamation notation (the shriek) to mark the difference between object-language predicate variables such as $f!$, $\phi!$ and $\psi!$ and schematic letters such as f , ϕ and ψ for *wffs*. The convention of simple typical ambiguity allows impredicative comprehension to look like this:

$$\begin{aligned} &(\exists f)(f!x \equiv_x \phi x) \\ &(\exists f)(f!xy \equiv_{x,y} \phi xy). \end{aligned}$$

And this is essentially what is found in *Principia*'s section *12. Thus, we can finally come to understand how Russell's substitutional theory was *originally* to have been part of *Principia*. Russell's translation plan endorses the substitutional theory while, at the same time, embracing *Principia*'s convenient notations of predicate variables and class expressions. Whitehead was elated.

2. The Insolubilia

The appearance of *Principia* seemed to obviate the study of most all of Russell's earlier work on the paradoxes. Russell's abandonment of propositions, however, perplexed historians. Unaware of Russell's hidden substitutional theory, many sought to find some *Liar* paradox in Russell's theory of propositions. But *Liar* paradoxes are not diagonal paradoxes and they cannot occur in Russell's formal substitutional theory. They are formed by adopting contingent psychological theories of belief and assertion. They have no place in logic. Russell's quantification theory of propositions is consistent. The search for a substitutional *Liar* is a dead end. Others hoped to revive, in spite of Russell's explicit objections in *Principles*, some Bradley-like problems with propositional unity. This, together with the conflation of *Principia*'s facts with true propositions, fueled a wild-goose chase. Russell's 1910 facts and his earlier theory of propositions are like men and dinosaurs; they never coexisted. In *Principia*, the notion of a *fact* is a technical notion. The unity (and the very existence) of the fact (if there is such) of Othello's loving Desdemona, lies in the relation 'loves' relating the two. But the relation 'loves' *unifies* the proposition 'Othello loves Desdemona', Russell tells us, by occurring in it *as concept*. This kind of occurrence is *indefinable* and it doesn't *relate* the two. It unifies *without* relating Othello to Desdemona by love. The two are related by love only if the proposition is true. Now, I find it doubtful that Othello loves Desdemona. After all, he murders her out of mad jealousy. But it is the very same unified proposition, Russell maintains, whether it is true or false. The search for a problem of unity is a dead end.



Happily, the search is (or should be) over. Russell's work on substitution makes it clear exactly why he sought philosophical grounds for abandoning propositions. In April/May of 1906, he discovered a *diagonal* paradox unique to the axioms of his substitutional theory. I have called it his "*p_o/a_o* paradox". There are variants of Russell's *p_o/a_o* paradox, but all of them are *diagonal* paradoxes that parallel the diagonal methods of Cantor's power theorem—the theorem that assures that there can be no function from objects onto attributes (or classes) of those objects. Russell's substitutional theory emulates the simple type theory of attributes of objects by using pairs of objects. But there is quite readily many one-one functions from objects (propositions) onto pairs (attributes) of those objects. Russell's substitutional theory violates Cantor's work

In his 1906 paper "On 'Insolubilia' and their Solution by Symbolic Logic," (*InS*), Russell tried to block the *p_o/a_o* paradox by abandoning general propositions. This required developing a quantification theory without general propositions. Let us call it "sub*9" because it parallels what would be section *9 of *Principia*. This dissolves the *p_o/a_o* paradox because the paradox requires general propositions to generate the diagonal functions that violate Cantor's results. In the 1905 theory, any *wff* φ can be transformed into a term $\{\varphi\}$ for a proposition. In *InS*, only a quantifier-free *wff* φ can be transformed into a term $\{\varphi\}$ for a proposition. The system is consistent, but too weak to emulate the instances of the comprehension principles of the simple type theory of attributes in intension. Accordingly, Russell imagined mitigating axioms to emulate comprehension. It didn't work. At some point Russell must have realized that his mitigating axioms bring back the paradox. Naturally, we want to know precisely when Russell knew *InS* was a failure. But the relevant manuscripts seem to be lost.

In *ML*, Russell tried to save his substitutional theory by introducing *orders* of propositions. But he knew it was philosophically unacceptable, apologizing for it in the paper. He could not reconcile himself to reducibility axioms such as the following:

$$(p_n, b_o)(\exists p_1, a_o)(p_1 \frac{x_o}{a_o} \equiv_{x_o} p_n \frac{x_o}{b_o}).$$

Orders of propositions in substitution emulate a theory of ramified types of attributes. Russell concluded that there must be no orders of propositions. Substitution was abandoned and *Principia* became a no-propositions theory.

3. An Answer Plain as the Nose on Your Face

An amusing anecdote in *ML* characterizes the situation. In *InS*, Russell had pointed out that the 'Insolubilia' facing logic must be dissolved by a theory of the variable which preserves the thesis that the only genuine variables are the individual variables. There is no way to state restrictions on variables. The very statement of restriction would require the use of variables not restricted by the statements of restriction. In *ML*, Russell writes:

It is impossible to avoid mentioning a thing by mentioning that we won't mention it. One might as well, in talking to a man with a long nose, say: 'When I speak of noses, I except such as are inordinately long', which would not be a very successful effort to avoid a painful topic.³

The only escape from this argument, Russell went on to say, is a *semantic* thesis according to which special styles of variables are introduced under "limitations" that constrain their significance conditions. In 1910, this semantic approach won the day and appears in the no-propositions theory of the Introduction to *Principia*. It accepts the grammar of simple type theory of attributes in inten-



sion. It offers an informal nominalistic semantics (i.e., modern substitutional semantics) for its simple type scaffolded predicate variables, and it adopts recursive definitions of “truth” and “falsehood” in terms of correspondence with fact. The base case of the recursion involves Russell’s infamous multiple-relation theory of judgment. This new semantic approach to “limits from within significance conditions” proved to itself be a disaster. The nominalistic semantics fails to validate *Principia*’s impredicative comprehension principles.

The way to answer Russell’s troubles over substitution’s ‘Insolubilia’ was, however, as plain as the inordinately large nose that he hoped he would not have to mention that it ought not to be mentioned. The answer is a return to *InS*. There must be no orders of propositions. But how? The answer is to be found by using Russell’s own translation program to single out which *wffs* of the language of substitution can be nominalized to form terms for propositions. It is all quite simple and Russell, himself, showed the way. The *wffs* of the language of substitution that may be nominalized to form terms for propositions are exactly those that are translations of *wffs* of the simple type language of predicate variables. We emulate comprehension with these:

$$(\exists p, a)(x)(\iota q)(p \frac{x}{a} \iota q) \equiv \phi(x),$$

$$(\exists s, t, w)(p, a)(\iota q)(s \frac{p, a}{t, w} \iota q) \equiv \phi(p, a),$$

where ϕ is the translation into the language of substitution of any *wff* from *Principia*’s primitive language of simple types. Quite obviously, this assures that any results of *Principia*’s mathematical logic can be recovered within substitution. Moreover, the p_0/a_0 paradox cannot arise since *any* diagonal that generates it in the substitutional theory *requires* the nominalization of a substitutional *wff* that is *not* the translation of a *wff* of *Principia*’s simple type language.

Let us call this theory *InS+ML*. The theory requires that we have *both* the quantification theory of sub*9 together with a version of Russell’s early quantification theory of general propositions. But this poses no problem. The two quantification theories—one for general *wffs* and one for the nominalization (where allowed) of general *wffs*—get along perfectly well. In spite of this technicality, we get a proof of the infinity of propositions. The beauty of the substitutional theory of *InS+ML* is compelling. It is compelling because it is precisely the order free theory of propositions that Russell was looking for after the collapse of *InS*. Indeed, if we prefer to get along without general propositions, we can adopt sub*9 as in *InS* and can take the above as precisely the mitigating axioms Russell was seeking in *InS*. We have, at last, found the solution of Substitution’s ‘Insolubilia.’

Endnotes

¹ Jolen Galaugher, “Substitution’s Unsolved ‘Insolubilia,’” *Russell* 33 (2013), pp. 5-30.

² Nino Cocchiarella, “On the Development of the Theory of Logical Types and the Notion of a Logical Subject in Russell’s Early Philosophy,” *Synthese* 45 (1980), pp. 71-115.

³ Bertrand Russell, “Mathematical Logic as Based on the Theory of Types,” *American Journal of Mathematics*, Vol. 30 (1908) p. 226.

**In the next issue, feature articles from
Gülberk Koc Maclean, Anssi Korhonen, and
Sheila Turcon. And look for some color, too!**



What Did Russell Think of Eton and Why?

By William “Bill” Bruneau

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In a long life, Bertrand Russell changed his philosophical mind more than once. Enthusiastic critics were apt to say his views of language and logic differed altogether too much from one time to another. But Russell thought a philosopher was a scientist of sorts: if new and pertinent evidence came in, then surely one must revise one’s premises and conclusions.

If intellectual evolution characterized Russell as a philosopher, there was an intriguing contrast in another branch of his work, namely, his writing on education. By the time he wrote *Freedom and Organization* (1934) and his *History of Western Philosophy* (1945), Russell would say that some institutions must be reformed or jettisoned just because they impede free inquiry. Where social arrangements interfere with the operations of reason and “science” (using the term in Russell’s broad sense), reform is called for; no, it is *essential* to survival. This was one driving reason for radical reform of the independent schools.

On these positions, and on his reasons for holding them, Russell rarely changed his mind little and knowledge might not be in 1910; but his views on not fervently consistent. His theory of quite the same in 1920 as schooling were firmly, if Russell thought education often resisted reform. The stubborn as that of the es-governing classes. Established schools fell into this category. College was an especially

Now, Russell usually one, independent school about education. He was

agreements with individual headmasters and teachers. He was willing to debate headmasters and conservatives, face-to-face, in large meetings or in print or on the air, but apparently thought it unfair to attack them in their absence. A clear exception to Russell’s rule was Thomas Arnold, the “re-forming” schoolmaster of Rugby, inventor of the prefect system of internal moral discipline in large schools,³ and educational godfather of places like Eton, Harrow, Shrewsbury, St. Paul’s, Winchester, and so on. Russell typically painted education with a broad brush, even when talking about progressive schools he liked (for instance, the Montessori schools after 1920, and Margaret and Rachel McMillan’s schools in London). By contrast, he was always precise and pointed about Thomas Arnold. And when it came to Eton, all bets were off. Russell named names.

As the most famous of English boarding and/or day schools, Eton bothered Russell: it was expensive and exclusive, backward in curriculum,⁴ and invoked religion to justify discipline in daily school life. Its headmasters had since time immemorial been men of the cloth or their analogues.

For Russell, it was depressing to have to admit the popularity of the Great Public Schools (meaning independent, private schools in the rest of the world), Eton among them. Wealthy, powerful parents loved these places. So did the aristocracy. So did any number of families from the highest reaches of the British and, later, the international bourgeoisie.

A further complication was that public schools (Eton, Winchester, Harrow, and so on) sometimes produced matriculants who did well in university and in life—including scientific life. H.G.J. Moseley (1887-1915), later responsible for foundational work in spectrographic analysis, was a

As the most famous of English private boarding and/or day schools, Eton bothered Russell: it was expensive and exclusive, backward in curriculum, and invoked religion to justify discipline in daily school life.

established churches or the lished independent gory.¹ In that class, Eton succulent instance.²

avoided mentioning any in his writing or speeches similarly discreet in disa-

King's Scholar at Eton (fees paid on the College Foundation). G.H. Hardy (1877-1947)—a mathematician and, significantly, a colleague of Russell at Trinity College, Cambridge—had been well prepared for mathematical work at Winchester, the oldest (founded 1382) of all English public schools. Russell was just as closely associated with J.M. Keynes (1883-1946), a capable performer in mathematics, philosophy, and economics—and a satisfied Etonian.⁵ Russell knew these and other capable academics with public school pedigrees.

Despite all Russell heard and knew about the public schools and about Eton, he held to his negative view all through from 1902 to 1950 and beyond. He was a model of consistency.

To judge by the archives, Russell first wrote of Eton in a letter of 1902 to Gilbert Murray. Murray (1866-1957) was between academic jobs, and soon to take the chair of Greek at Oxford (1905-1936). The two knew one another because Murray was married to Russell's cousin, Lady Mary Howard, and partly on account of Russell's having heard Murray talk at Newnham College, Cambridge in 1901.⁶ Here is Russell in a note to Murray with my italics:⁷

Dear Gilbert,

I have been staying at Wallington, and I met there a man...whose acquaintance you and Mary ought to make....The Education Bill⁸ horrified him, chiefly (I think) because he is strongly anticlerical; so he turned Liberal, his father cut off his [financial] supplies, and he is left with only just enough to live on....*He got what in England we call an education at Eton and Oxford, and went afterwards to Jena;*⁹ but he seems to know few intelligent people, having given much of his time to cricket.

The sarcasm in Russell's remark about Eton should be set against the argument of a 1902 essay on the education of the emotions, probably intended for an early book on education, and first printed in *Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell* 12. Russell writes there:

The most important part of the training of emotions belongs to the very early years of childhood....To foster good emotions and eradicate such as are evil, is the principal task of those who have the care of infancy.

He goes on to say:

It is one of the main defects of an ascetic morality, and perhaps of Christian morals in general, that too much attention is directed to the avoidance of sin, too little to the fostering of impulses that tend of themselves to right action....The parent [should try] to foster in the child the love of those things that enlarge the bounds of the Self, until all mankind and all that mankind ought to be are included in the realm of habitual desire.¹⁰

The difficulty with Eton was that it took in adolescents, not young children—it had the wrong customers. Furthermore, it paid a great deal of attention to sin and its avoidance. It aimed to prepare boys who would one day run the British Empire. The empire was plainly an outfit that considered outsiders to be barbarians and savages. In short, Eton failed every test Russell set in 1902.

But Russell was not yet ready to say outright that Eton had failed. Perhaps he hesitated because he had so little direct experience of schooling, never having attended school apart from a few months in a "crammer" that prepared him for the Cambridge entrance examination.¹¹

Turning to 1915, Russell was giving lectures on *The Principles of Social Reconstruction*, to be published in 1916. In the *Principles*, Russell stuck closely to the educational prescription he laid out in 1902. When it came to the matter of Eton, however, he was tougher:¹²



Eton and Oxford set a certain stamp upon a man's mind, just as a Jesuit College does. It can hardly be said that Eton and Oxford have a conscious purpose, but they have a purpose which is nonetheless strong and effective for not being formulated. To almost all who have been through them they produce a worship of "good form," which is as destructive to life and thought as the Mediaeval Church. "Good form" is quite compatible with a superficial open-mindedness, a readiness to hear all sides, and a certain urbanity towards opponents. But it is not compatible with fundamental open-mindedness, or with the any inward readiness to give weight to the other side.

A type of behaviour was more important at Eton and Oxford than open-mindedness, because (Russell thought) it "minimizes friction between equals and delicately impresses inferiors with a conviction of their own crudity." There's no mention of Cambridge, mind you, just Oxford...and Eton!

Russell meant "behaviour" found mainly on rugby pitches and football fields and other places similarly devoted to competitive athletics at public schools. But there was more. Clive Dewey's fine 1995 paper on Eton says this about "good form":

Even success at sport was only admired [at Eton and by extension at other public schools] if it was accompanied by 'a certain conventional polish, a glacial air of doing what everyone else did, only doing it a little better'. The slightest hint of a different standard, and a cynosure's prestige was gone. Boys left school 'the slaves of the angle of a hat or the cut of a trouser' because they never learned to think for themselves; never developed the discriminating intelligence which would have enabled them to form judgement of their own.¹³

Russell's politics presumed that fellow citizens would indeed be politically discriminating. Russell's books and speeches on German workingmen's politics and co-operatives (from 1896 on), his post-1900 attention to working conditions in the distant Empire (South Africa's Boers, Indian worker-migrants from Durban to Pretoria), and his work in the suffragist movement: in every case, Russell hoped for a readership and a citizenry whose energy, intelligence, and discrimination were of a high order. Russell was realistic enough to see that these hopes could not be realized in the short term. His point in 1919 was that public schools and their boards of governors would offer an education that would produce discrimination, *but* discrimination of exactly the wrong kind.

Russell continued to push a rationalist-humanist line, salted with democratic-socialist policy, replete with recommendations for free schooling from birth onward, for free and frank sex education, for a lively education in the scientific outlook, and so on. Proponents of the status quo were upset if not outraged by his views, but compelled to develop similarly persuasive arguments.

In the *Principles of Social Reconstruction* Russell treated Eton as a place-holder, as a symbol of the entire endowed school sector, as an embodiment of social structures and cultural practices that would do harm to individuals and to the wider international comity. After all, these people were in the business of *discouraging* individualism and thereby denying the possibility of universal empathy.

Two years later, writing a blurb for the first dust-jacket for the first edition of his *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*, Russell moved from implicit to explicit assessment:¹⁴

This book is intended for those who have no previous acquaintance with the topics of which it treats, and no more knowledge of mathematics than can be acquired at primary school or even at Eton. It sets forth in elementary form the logical definition of number, the analysis of the notion of order, the modern doctrine of the infinite, and the theory of descriptions and classes as symbolic fictions.

Slater writes (p. x), "Russell's malicious reference to Eton probably made Stanley Unwin uneasy and he took the first opportunity presented to discontinue use of the statement."



Russell wanted to highlight the inadequate emphasis in public schools on mathematics and science, modern languages, and recent history and literature. Public school curricula still gave pride of place to Latin and Greek in 1918, when the *Introduction* was written. Apart from questions about the classics and language teaching, Russell wanted to attract readers' attention to the weakness of mathematical teaching *of a certain kind*. Geoffrey Howson, the historian of mathematics education, shows how popular Euclid—the original or “first” Euclid—was in public school programmes before 1939.¹⁵ Landon Elkind adds a contemporary twist to this point in his recent article in this *Bulletin*.¹⁶

We come next to Russell's book-length treatments of education, published 1926 and 1932.

About the time Russell was correcting proof for *On Education Especially in Early Childhood* (the 1926 book), Russell heard from a relatively young friend, the rising novelist and left-leaning activist, Naomi Mitchison (1897-1999). She had learned of the forthcoming book and seen Russell's advertisement for Beacon Hill School. She was delighted by the prospect of Dora and Bertie organizing a school for young children and wrote:

You would be a good Sokrates [*sic*]. I don't believe laboratories and things matter much; most school science has to be unlearnt later, and all one wants for gym are a few bars and ropes and to feel that one's being a Spartan boy.

I'm trying to make my boys sceptical and rational about sex...[b]ut goodness knows what they'll learn at school. Failing a good non-conventional education, they're going to Eton, where at least they'll get a chance of doing things on their own, and making friends with new sorts of people, and—probably—of learning to hate all the end part of it. I believe it's the best, because the most marked for both good and bad, of the big schools, and they've got really good teachers now.¹⁷

Russell must have hoped Dora and he would do a better job of science education than Mitchison thought possible. He may also have wondered if his new book on education was quite right in its strictures on Eton and the public schools. Here is what he finally said in print in 1926:¹⁸

Dr. Arnold's system...was to train men for positions of authority and power...at school. The product was to be energetic, stoical, physically fit, possessed of certain unalterable beliefs, with high standards of rectitude, and convinced that it had an important mission in the world....To this objective, sympathy, kindness, and imagination were sacrificedThe administrator of the future must be the servant of free citizens, not the benevolent ruler of admiring subjects. The aristocratic tradition embedded in British higher education is its bane.

Until now the general strategy of headmasters and headmistresses had been to ignore “progressively minded” critics like Russell. But this time the system struck back. In 1930 Cyril Norwood, headmaster of Harrow School and sometime chairman of the Headmasters' Conference, published *The English Tradition of Education*. It was an urbane defence of the public schools that included several pages with point-by-point responses to Russell's attack on Eton.¹⁹

Norwood's book sold well enough. It may (or may not)²⁰ have influenced two later government reports on public schooling in England. It made a nicely written attack on Russell's humanistic individualism. Norwood thought the “English tradition” meant nothing less or more than a commitment to the orderly English society that had wielded imperial power for more than a century, and which had made life in India and Africa tolerably civil for the first time in recorded history. Like Thomas Arnold before him, Norwood paid little attention to Russell's criticism of aristocratic power, and simply denied that public schools were unable to teach in an open-minded way. In short, Norwood wrote of a colonialist Britain teetering at the edge of extinction, about to be replaced by a culturally quite different, post-war Britain. Other than to professional historians and professional headmasters and

headmistresses, it is unlikely that Norwood's name means much now. His criticism did not worry Russell, who may have hoped it would lead to higher bookstore sales.

With this possible outcome in mind, Russell in 1932 could redouble his attack. Here is Russell on Eton in *Education and the Social Order*²¹

Every social system has its appropriate educational instrument, which in the case of the British oligarchy was the public school—Eton first and foremost, but also, although in a lesser degree, such schools as Harrow, Winchester, and Rugby.

Now, with five years' experience of running Beacon Hill School under his belt, his own two children having been among the pupils, Russell felt justified in directly confronting the psychologically unhealthy features of Eton and the rest.

Removed from home and from maternal influence, Russell thought Eton boys were defenceless when confronted by older pupils, and as liable to learn callousness as to acquire expertise in any subject matter (p. 79). The Eton objective was power and glory in world affairs, and boys had already experienced it in school sports. The public schools showed contempt for intelligence and commitment to a "code." Removed from feminine influence, they saw any relation with women as weak or even depraved. Boys were tempted to be cruel, a result of England's having been dominated by a "self-perpetuating aristocratic class." He goes on to write:

Aristocracy is now out of date, and England, by maintaining it, is coming to be viewed as a curious survival, like the marsupials. For this reason, rather than from an error of detail, Eton no longer has the importance that it had a hundred years ago. (82-3)

In a characteristic turn of argument, Russell added that he did not favour unadulterated democracy in education. It was all right to say "I am as good as you," but not "you are no better than I am," for that was "oppressive and an obstacle to the development of exceptional merit."

Democracy is good when it inspires self-respect, "bad when it inspires persecution of exceptional individuals by the herd." Exceptional boys may be mistreated in public or democratic schools—but a democratic system may turn mistreatment into a permanent policy, discouraging "clever children." The error of the public schools was to pretend that cleverness was hereditary; similarly the error of democrats is to allow the "herd's resentment of talent."

Russell gets in a last dig at Latin and Greek; French and German would "be more useful and of more cultural value....We want citizens of the universe, not masters of arbitrary fragments of it...an essential part of wisdom is a comprehensive mind."

Russell makes a final public mention of Eton in his *History of Western Philosophy* (1946). Russell speaks of Alexander the Great:²²

He [Alexander] survived as a legendary hero in the Muhammadan religion, and to this day petty chieftains in the Himalays (*sic*) claim to be descended from him.

Russell then introduces a footnote:

Perhaps this is no longer true, as the sons of those who held this belief have been educated at Eton.

Russell's ingenious (and funny) epithet raises questions to which he gives no good answer. After all, there were and are statistical studies to tell us where Eton boys end their days (we know, for instance, that David Cameron is the 19th British prime minister to have attended Eton). As an aside, there is also a delicious irony about all of this, for in 1950, Russell's youngest son, Conrad,

enrolled at Eton, where he had a generally good experience punctuated by the usual hiccups one would expect in an adolescent boy.

But nobody is entirely sure that single-sex schooling is the necessary cause of Eton boys' success (or failure) in life. We have a hundred years of research to show that a curriculum with a literary bias, as Eton and the rest used to have, will—however paradoxically—produce capable researchers, and not just literary researchers—but scientists or administrators.

Rather, when Eton's classroom teachers succeed it may be because of their pedagogical excellence, or the school's balanced attitude to intellectual and moral discipline, or the huge advantage conferred by small class sizes and fine equipment. Russell only rarely pronounced on matters of pedagogy or syllabi, and the lack of practical educational content in his argument takes away some of the sting in his attacks on Eton.

These weaknesses should not take away from two larger points. To these points Russell returned many times. First, as Alan Ryan has remarked:

When he [Russell] wrote about the place of science in education or the place of history in education, he was concerned with what one might call the spiritual benefits of abstract thought or of a concentration on the concrete fact, not with potential A-level syllabuses.²³

Second, Russell was surely right to say that Eton and the public schools were engines of social reproduction. Their form and function had and still have to do with the assertion of privilege.

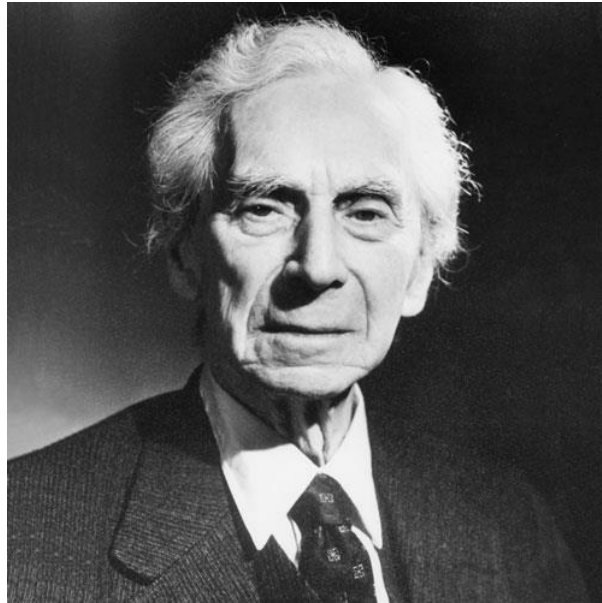
Russell would say their contributions have been to piety more than to progress. He might have added that these schools reward competitive and aggressive politics, the kinds that have got us into such trouble these past 150 years. Still, intellectual discipline of a high order is possible in such places, with benefits to the larger society (I think of H.G.J. Moseley). Alas! these good things are limited to boys (and only more recently to girls) who can afford the fees.

ENDNOTES

1. For a straightforward historical survey of the "public" schools (meaning private, independent schools) of the United Kingdom, see Brian Gardner, *The Public Schools: An Historical Survey* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1973), with convenient appendices and notes. For a more argumentative treatment, see Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, *The Old School Tie: The Phenomenon of the English Public School* (New York: Viking Press, 1977). Four Penguin/Pelican volumes deserve more attention: James Kenward, *Prep School* (Harmondsworth, Mddx.: Penguin 1961); Robin Davis, *The Grammar School* (Harmondsworth, Mddx.: Penguin 1967); M. Hutchinson and C. Young, *Educating the Intelligent* (Harmondsworth, Mddx.: Penguin 1962); Tyrrell Burgess, *A Guide to English Schools* (Harmondsworth, Mddx.: Penguin 1964).
2. On Eton, few sources are as helpful and revealing as a two-part essay from 1995 by Clive Dewey. It claims to deal with a narrow question, the dispute between Socratic teachers (interested in teaching critical thinking and transforming pupils' character through friendship) and the "jocks" (as North Americans would call teachers who see competitive sport as the primary driver of a good schooling and character formation). But Dewey's paper is about much more than this dispute: Clive Dewey, "'Socratic Teachers': Part I—The Opposition to the Cult of Athletics at Eton, 1870-1914," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 12, 1 (1995 April): 51-80, and "'Socratic Teachers': Part II—The Counter-Attack," *International Journal of the History of Sport* 12, 3 (1995 December): 18-47.
3. Vivian Ogilvie, *The English Public School* (London: B.T. Batsford, 1957), ch. X, "Arnold and the Modern Public School," 139-168.
4. "Backward" meant, in Russell's perspective, a school devoted to the ancient classical languages more than to anything else. A reliable, although dated discussion of this point is Flann Campbell's "Latin and the Elite Tradition in Education," *British Journal of Sociology*, 19, 3 (1968 September): 308-325.
5. Robert Skidelsky, *John Maynard Keynes: I: Hopes Betrayed, 1883-1920* (New York: Viking Penguin, 1986), Ch. IV, "Eton," 74-105.
6. William Bruneau, "Gilbert Murray, Bertrand Russell, and the Theory and Practice of Politics," in Christopher Stray, ed., *Gilbert Murray Reconsidered: Hellenism, Theatre, and International Politics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007), 201-216.
7. Russell to Murray [Mill House, Westcott, Dorking/to/Fernhurst, Churt, Hindhead], 9 September 1902, Russell Archives shelfmark 710.053457, f. 1.
8. Arthur Balfour introduced the Education Bill of 1902 to unify the British educational system, offering state financial support to elementary and secondary schools (including schools of the Church of England) under newly created Local Education Authorities. For a reliable survey of the politics and consequences of the Bill, see G.R. Searle, *A New England? Peace and War, 1886-1918* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2004), 329-34.
9. The Friedrich Schiller University of Jena, in the German federal state of Thuringia.
10. Bertrand Russell, "The Education of the Emotions," in R. Rempel, A. Brink, and M. Moran, eds., *Contemplation and Action, 1902-14* (London: George Allen and Unwin, 1985—*Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, vol. 12), pp. 56-61.
11. For Russell's experience at the crammer, see his *Autobiography: I: 1872-1914* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1967), 42-47.



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12. Bertrand Russell, *Principles of Social Reconstruction* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1916), 152-3.
 13. Clive Dewey, *op. cit.*, Part I, p. 52.
 14. Bertrand Russell, *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (London: Routledge, 1993; first publication London: Allen and Unwin, 1919), introduction (1993) by John Slater, p. x.
 15. A.G. Howson, "Euclid: a very English subject," *Sciences et techniques en perspective*, 5 (1984): 60-102. Cf. Howson's and Leo Rogers's "Mathematics Education in the United Kingdom," in A. Karp and G. Schubring, eds., *Handbook on the History of Mathematics Education* (New York: Springer Science, 2014), 257-282.
 16. Landon D.C. Elkind, "A Partial Defense of Euclid," *Bulletin* [Bertrand Russell Society], 152 (Fall 2015): 13-14.
 17. Letter, ms., 1926, N. Mitchison to B. Russell, Cloan, Auchterarder, Perthshire / London.
 18. Bertrand Russell, *On Education, Especially in Early Childhood* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1926), 43-44.
 19. Cyril Norwood, *The English Tradition of Education* (New York: Dutton, 1930), 217-224.
 20. Gary McColloch, *Cyril Norwood and the Origins of Secondary Education* (Gordonsville, VA: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2007), Ch. 7, "The English Tradition of Education," 101-116, but esp. p. 111, dealing with Norwood's rejoinder to Russell.
 21. Bertrand Russell, *Education and the Social Order* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1932), 78.
 22. Bertrand Russell. *History of Western Philosophy* (London: The Folio Society, 2004; 1st ed. London: George Allen & Unwin, 1946; revised 1961), 214.
 23. Alan Ryan, *Bertrand Russell: A Political Life* (New York: Farrar Strauss and Giroux, 1988), 101.



“Human imagination long ago pictured Hell, but it is only through recent skill that men have been able to give reality to what they imagined.”

(Bertrand Russell, *Human Society in Ethics and Politics*, 1952)



Russell's Social Theory: Hope from Creativity

By Nancy Doubleday

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Writing a series of lectures in 1917 that were to be published in a physically small, yet intellectually influential book as *Political Ideals* in 1963¹, Russell attempted to sort out the forces influencing social and political organizations. He addressed capitalism and communism, the role of the economy, wage labour, property, and the concentration of wealth and power, as well as education, military and bureaucratic activities. Against the hegemony of elites holding power and wealth, Russell positioned the individual, whether labourer or professional, as one without capital, who must then sell himself or herself, in order to survive. This view of the human dilemma was basic, but not simplistic. It took several other volumes, including: *Principles of Social Reconstruction* (1921), *On Education* (1926), *Power* (1938), *Human Society in Ethics and Politics* (1954), and others (arguably including even *A History of Western Philosophy*, in 1945), and *Human Society and Ethics and Politics* (1954), for Russell to round out this writing done much earlier under the rubric of *Political Ideals*.

Clearly as both a process and a topic, social investigation was of continuing interest to Russell, and here we ask, perhaps naively, what it was that continued to draw Russell back to social questions? Was it because Russell was not satisfied with his original framing of the problem? Did he question the adequacy of his own proposals for resolution? Or perhaps the seeds of his subsequent dissatisfaction were embedded in something as minor as a realization that a human preference for excitement might make large-scale disaster inevitable? Perhaps some of Russell's books were inspired by the issues and events that he also engaged in his political campaigns.

While the likelihood of obtaining a definitive answer may be small, the question is interesting, and may at least lead to fruitful contestation and debate. Russell continued to be concerned to the end of his life with human potential for good and for evil, for ways and means of influencing events. It is in this spirit of curiosity, and with an appreciation that "man's peril" may have been transformed, but is by no means disarmed at present, that we explore his efforts to address social organization here.

Russell makes the following statement in summing up the crux of his concerns:

The war (WW I) has come as a challenge to all who desire a better world. The system which cannot save mankind from such appalling disaster is at fault somewhere, and cannot be amended in any lasting way unless the danger of great wars can be made very small.... But war is only the final flower of an evil tree. Even in times of peace, most men live lives of monotonous labour, most women are condemned to a drudgery which almost kills the possibility of happiness before youth is past, most children are allowed to grow up in ignorance of all that would enlarge their thoughts or simulate their imagination. The few who are more fortu-

Russell's concerns are evidently timeless: one might reasonably think (somewhat darkly) of current actors in the context of our own troubled times, as forcefully articulated recently by the Bertrand Russell Society.



nate are rendered illiberal by their unjust privileges, and oppressive through fear of the awakening indignation of the masses.²

Clearly Russell has a perception of the systemic nature of this problem (one that would later be shared by Galtung and many others), and of the fundamental role of economy in creating strife:

From the highest to the lowest, almost all men are absorbed in the economic struggle: the struggle to acquire what is their due or to retain what is not their due. Material possessions, in fact or in desire, dominate our outlook, usually to the exclusion of all generous and creative impulses.³

From this perspective, the link to war is obvious to Russell:

Possessiveness—the passion to have and to hold—is the ultimate source of war, and the foundation of all the ills from which the political world is suffering. Only by diminishing the strength of this passion and its hold upon our daily lives can new institutions bring permanent benefit to mankind.⁴

In order to have a “better world”, and to avoid “appalling disaster”, the economic system must be transformed, in Russell’s words:

Institutions which will diminish the sway of greed are possible, but only through a complete reconstruction of our whole economic system. Capitalism and the wage system must be abolished; they are twin monsters which are eating up the life of the world.⁵

The OXFAM Davos Report⁶ has just been released. It says that 62 people—individuals—possess as much of the world’s wealth as does the poorer half of the global population. Nothing has fundamentally changed it seems: our contemporary situation offers further evidence for the legitimacy of Russell’s concern about the consequences of the concentration of wealth and power. One suspects that Naomi Klein—and others—perhaps 99% of others—would agree.

This would likely not have surprised Russell, who saw so clearly the consequences of the confluence of ever more concentrated wealth and power. More importantly, Russell also discerned its origin in the limitations in contemporary models of democratic governance that left states, nations and regimes unfettered, in order to further the interests of the few over the many, and of capital, as against everything else. There are still no effective plans to address a just, global (re)distribution of wealth, although Russell identified distribution, together with production, as legitimate tasks of an economy.

Russell writes of the necessity of considering political and social institutions, together, because of the influence of power upon each, and the interactions between the two; but also because of the difficulties inherent in reining in the economic forces that, in his view, encourage inequalities:

The present economic system concentrates initiative in the hands of a small number of very rich men. Those who are not capitalists have, almost always, very little choice, as to their activities when once they have selected a trade or profession; they are not part of the power that moves the mechanism, but only a passive portion of the machinery.⁷

...The hope of possessing more wealth and power than any man ought to have, which is the corresponding motive of the rich, is quite as bad in its effects; it compels men to close their minds against justice, and to prevent themselves from thinking honestly on social questions....The injustice of destitution and wealth alike ought to be rendered impossible.⁸



Russell's concerns are evidently timeless: one might reasonably think (somewhat darkly) of current actors in the context of our own troubled times, as forcefully articulated recently by the Bertrand Russell Society.⁹

While details may diverge in current situations from those scenarios anticipated by Russell in his contemporaneous instances, he persuasively articulated large scale scenarios for change. For example, Russell speculated:

Perhaps it will become possible, sooner or later, to melt the Polar ice and so totally change the climate of Northern countries.¹⁰

However, he thought that this would be by atomic, or other advanced technical means, rather than suspecting that human-initiated combustion activity, continuing over time, at rates accelerated by increasing consumption and population growth, would be sufficient to bring about such changes.

The degree to which Russell is prepared to credit human innovation, whether expressed as science, or in expressions of ideals of individual freedom, as a primary "impulse", is central to his view that the creative life must be privileged over the possessive life, for justice, for peace and for the future of humans and earth.

Writing in the *Preface to A History of Western Philosophy* in 1945, Russell asserts that:

My purpose is to exhibit philosophy as an integral part of social and political life: not as the isolated speculations of remarkable individuals, but as both an effect and a cause of the character of the various communities in which different systems flourished.

This view of Russell's of the interactions of events and ideas—with human agency to assist change, sometimes evolutionary, and at other times, revolutionary in nature—suggests a possible parallel between Russell's approach to the history of social and political thought, and the interpretation that Alan Wood makes of Russell's process of philosophical thought, presented in the appendix to Russell's volume *My Philosophical Development* (1959). Wood notes that he takes Russell's description of his "philosophical procedure" from the 1913 article on the "Philosophical Importance of Mathematical Logic", where Russell says:

Every truly philosophical problem is a problem of analysis; and in problems of analysis the best method is that which sets out from results and arrives at the premises."

Wood takes a subtle meaning from this, based in part on his examination of a broad body of Russell's work over more than four decades of productivity, and detecting resonance in Russell's articulation and procedure that serves to highlight parallels in reasoning amongst quite distinct works by Russell, suggests that the more precise and appropriate understanding would be that the consideration of the consequences and inferring the premisses would have preceded analysis.¹¹

We find a parallel to this suggested approach by Russell to philosophical analysis in his *Preface to A History of Western Philosophy* where Russell says:

Without some knowledge of the centuries between the fall of Rome and the rise of the mediæval Papacy, the intellectual atmosphere of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries can hardly be understood. In dealing with this period as with others, I have aimed at giving only so much general history as I thought necessary for a sympathetic comprehension of philosophers in relation to the times that formed them and the times that they helped to form.

In terms of offering his approach to social and political thought, Russell moves readily across the specifics of time and place, and is well aware of his reliance on an expectation of a reliable con-

tinuity amongst actors and actions, in terms of conveying consequences and possible explanations. Yet, as Wood notes:

I believe that Russell was right, as a method of increasing knowledge, in pushing the philosophy of analysis as far as it will go; in his case he came up against furthest present-day limits, and could not really feel satisfied with his conclusions, when he came to ethical theory.¹²

There is a sense near the end of *A History of Western Philosophy* that Russell's perception of the prevailing conditions was effectively that they were of a different order than those of preceding periods, and that this could account for his recurrent treatment of social and political themes:

There thus arises, among those who direct affairs or are in touch with those who do so, a new belief in power: first, the power of man in his conflicts with nature, and then the power of rulers as against the human beings whose beliefs and aspirations they seek to control by scientific propaganda, especially education.... Nature is raw material; so is that part of the human race which does not effectively participate in government.... This whole outlook is new and it is impossible to say how mankind will adapt itself to it. It has already produced immense cataclysms, and will no doubt produce others in the future. To frame a philosophy capable of coping with men intoxicated with the prospect of almost unlimited power and also with the apathy of the powerless is the most pressing task of our time.¹³

One of the consequences of a society where inequalities of wealth and power prevail, leading to deep divides within, and the "sharp opposition between the interests of the many and those of the few" has been the potential for the rise of Fascism. "To formulate any satisfactory modern ethic of human relationships it will be essential to recognize the necessary limitations of men's power over the non-human environment, and the desirable limitations of their power over each other."¹⁴

Among the contributions that Russell has already made to this pursuit, we find that he identifies some significant features, including:

- the promotion of "security, liberty and creativity" as conditions produced by "good political institutions."¹⁵
- democratization of the governance structures of all organizations, including businesses and industries, where "the men who do the work in a business also control its management."¹⁶
- measures to increase liberty, such as "an increase of self-government for subordinate groups, whether geographical or economic, or defined by some common belief, like religious sects.... By a share in the control of smaller bodies, a man might regain some of that sense of personal opportunity and responsibility which belonged to the citizen of a city-state in ancient Greece or medieval Italy."¹⁷

From this one might infer a positive duty to enhance such conditions on the part of all.

In terms of social theory, Russell cites Westermarck's writing on *The Origin and Development of the Moral Ideas* (1912) 2nd edition, (v.1, 119), repeatedly, in *Political Ideals* (Chapter 4). The interaction of what Wood identified as Russell's empirical method, with the need for facts from domains with which Russell was not personally acquainted, evidently caused him to rely in this instance on Westermarck (one of the founders of sociobiology and of sociology). The consequence for Russell, in this case, was a detrimental reliance on secondary sources of information that ought, given Rus-



sell's skeptical persuasion, to have been at least as closely questioned by Russell as was his Aunt Agatha, when Russell asked "Do limpets think?"¹⁸

For the modest purposes of the present article, the key point that Russell makes is that:

There can be no final goal for human institutions; the best are those that most encourage progress toward others still better. Without effort and change human life cannot remain good. It is not a finished Utopia that we ought to desire, but a world where imagination and hope are alive and active.

If we accept Wood's case for Russell's empiricism and analytic approach as an empirical methodology, and also Russell's own assertion that, as a method, it ought to be applied to all fields of endeavour, we might be expected to arrive— eventually— at sympathetic understanding of Russell when he writes in *Political Ideals* in 1917 that:

(t)he injustice of destitution and wealth alike ought to be rendered impossible. Then a great fear would be removed from the lives of the many, and hope would have to take on a better form in the lives of the few.¹⁹

Otherwise, in any event, and keeping with the spirit of the five-year old Russell's words to his Aunt concerning her lack of knowledge of the thought processes of limpets: *we must learn*.

Endnotes

¹Bertrand Russell, *Political Ideals*. New York: Simon & Schuster, Inc., 1963, 27.

²Ibid., 27.

³Ibid., 27.

⁴Ibid., 27.

⁵Ibid., 28.

⁶<http://www.theguardian.com/business/2016/jan/18/richest-62-billionaires-wealthy-half-world-population-combined>.

Accessed January 26, 2016.

⁷Russell, *Political Ideals*, 17.

⁸Ibid., 18.

⁹<http://www.onlineprnews.com/news/650709-1450636313-international-society-of-scholars-condemns-fascistic-trends-in-the-united-states.html>, accessed January 27, 2016.

¹⁰Bertrand Russell, *Human Society in Ethics and Politics*, London: George Allan & Unwin, 1954, 208.

¹¹Alan Wood in: Russell, Bertrand. *My Philosophical Development*, London: George Allan & Unwin, 1959, 265.

¹²Alan Wood in: Russell. 1959, 271.

¹³Russell, 1945, 729.

¹⁴Ibid., 729.

¹⁵Ibid., 18.

¹⁶Ibid., 20.

¹⁷Ibid., 21.

¹⁸Wood, Alan. *Bertrand Russell: The Passionate Skeptic*. London Unwin Books, 1963, 18.

¹⁹Ibid., 18.

¹⁹ I am grateful to Nick Griffin for discussions of Westermarck's influence, the assessment of Russell's position by Wood, and for editorial recommendations. I am also grateful to Michael Berumen for editorial advice. Responsibility for all errors is my own.

2016 Annual Meeting Information

Host: Tim Madigan, President of the BRS and Associate Professor of Philosophy, St. John Fisher College

When: Friday, June 24th–Sunday, June 26th

Where: St. John Fisher College, 3690 East Avenue, Rochester, New York 14618. For general information: (585) 385-8000. Website: <http://www.sjfc.edu/home/index.dot>

About: Listed in U.S. News & World Report's America's Best Colleges, SJFC was founded as a men's college in 1948 by the Basilian Fathers and with the aid of James E. Kearney, then the Bishop of the Roman Catholic Diocese of Rochester. The College became independent in 1968 and coeducational in 1971. Today, SJFC is an independent, liberal arts institution in the Catholic tradition of higher education.

Meeting Facility: Wilson Formal Room

Rough Agenda (more in due course)

- Friday—Registration, Meet and Greet, Dinner, Board Meeting
- Saturday—Breakfast, Papers, Lunch, More Papers, and Banquet
- Sunday—Breakfast, Papers, Members' Meeting, Lunch, Departure

No-host, cash bar on Saturday. Several after-dinner pubs are nearby for the hale and hearty!

Dormitories: \$40.00 per night for single and \$60 per night for double (includes linen). Bathrooms shared by two rooms. It's within easy walking distance.

Registration Fee (includes dinner Fri. and Sat., Cont. Breakfast Sat and Sun, Lunch Sat and Sun, and non-alcoholic beverages and snacks. No-host bar Sat. Sat banquet includes wine.): **\$90.00 for all.**

\$40.00 for Banquet Only. \$25.00 for Papers Only (includes coffee breaks). Registration deadline: May 31st. Payment deadline: June 24th (by start of meeting, though we prefer that payments be sent in advance if possible).

To Register: Complete enclosed registration form (enclosed with *Bulletin*) and mail it to Tim Madigan at 136 Penn Lane, Rochester NY, 14625 USA. **Send a check** made to Bertrand Russell Society to Mike Berumen at 37155 Dickerson Run, Windsor, CO 80550 or pay through PayPal <https://www.paypal.com/home> by using the identifying email: brs-pp@hotmail.com

Nearest Airport: Greater Rochester International Airport <http://www2.monroecounty.gov/airport-index.php>

Driving Distance: from Buffalo, NY the college is 76 miles and from JFK International, NYC it is 380 miles. From Hamilton, ON (McMaster) the college is 135 miles and from Chicago, Ill. it is 603 miles.

Recommended offsite hotel: We have arranged for a special conference rate of \$149.00 plus tax at 199 Woodcliff Hotel & Spa, Fairport, New York 14450. The rates will be available from Thursday, June 23rd 46 through Sunday, June 26th. You must make your reservation BEFORE May 25th to assure receiving the \$149 special rate. The hotel is 8 minutes and a 7 mile drive from the St. John Fisher College campus. Complimentary shuttle service to/from the Greater Rochester International Airport is provided. To make a reservation, call 1-800-365-3065 and be sure to ask for the "Bertrand Russell Society Meeting" rate. The hotel's website is www.woodcliffhotelspa.com

Nearby Hotels: <http://www.sjfc.edu/about/visit/accommodations.dot>



Contributors

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Last but not Least

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