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University of Iowa
Abstracts (alphabetically by last name)

An Ontological Issue with the Theory of Quantum States
Howard Blair (EEECs, Syracuse University)

The ontological difficulties associated with quantum states are legion. The both alive and dead Schroedinger's cat is probably the most widely known example. A little less well-known are the ontological difficulties stemming from entanglement: pass a photon in a superposition of horizontal and vertical polarization, $\text{supn}(H,V)$ through a beam splitter to produce a pair of photons in the superposition $\text{supn}(\text{tens}(H1,V2), \text{tens}(V1,H2))$, known as a Bell state, and then send the pair flying apart so they are well-separated in space. Then regardless of how far apart, if someone measures the polarization of, say photon 1, and obtains, say, H1, the other photon will be instantaneously, relativity of simultaneity notwithstanding, in state V2.... Yet quantum states of composite systems either exhibit entanglement among components or don't, a physical property, regardless of which tensor product is in play. In practice, a single tensor product operation is settled on throughout an application to avoid the issue. The issue reappears however when more than one tensor product operation is in play, a circumstance that can positively help to optimize a system. We illustrate this with a straightforward example. (The paper presupposes only a familiarity with basic linear algebra.)

Social Reconstruction: Between Reformism and Revolution
David Blitz (Central Connecticut State University)

Russell produced few books with the word 'Principles' and all were pivotal to his philosophical and political thinking thereafter: *Principles of Mathematics* (1903) for the former – along with, of course, *Principia Mathematica* (1910-13) – and *Principles of Social Reconstruction* (1916) for the latter. In this presentation I will argue for the continuing importance of Russell's concept of social reconstruction as a 'via media' or golden-mean between reformism, which does too little to correct structural injustice, and revolution, which goes too far and leads to the dictatorship of former rebels, whether inspired by left, right, populist or religious ideology. The paper will examine Russell's efforts and key concepts for social reconstruction during 1915-16 through his article, course of lectures and book during that crucial period of his reflection on the causes and cure of war as the foremost manifestation of the structural defects in western society. I will focus on the basic concepts which are used in the "principles" Russell advances, with some additions to complete a table of categories. I conclude that more effort in political theory should be directed to the study of Russell's concept of social reconstruction, suitably updated to take into account the complexities of the world today.

Russell on Fundamental and Non-Fundamental Theories of Causation
Moises Macias Bustos (UMASS Amherst)

Bertrand Russell is well known for his causal eliminativism in his celebrated *On The Notion of Cause* (1912), a view he famously expressed by his claim that causation is retained as an important scientific notion only because, like the monarchy, people assume it to do no harm. On this view metaphysically fundamental scientific theories, such as mathematical physics, dispense with the notion of cause in their fundamental physical laws. However, years later in *The Analysis of Matter* (1927) and *Human Knowledge* (1948) Russell returned to the discussion

of causation and argues for the following two views, which are prima facie incompatible with each other and incompatible with his earlier claim. First, that there are separable causal lines which should be identified with physically distinguished geodesics in relativistic space-time (1927, 1948) and that, (2) causation is a fundamental postulate in non-demonstrative scientific inference (1948) in his epistemic structural realism. These two claims seem inconsistent with Russell's main claim in *On The Notion of Cause*, but in this talk I will argue, after elaborating on these theses, that these are compatible with each other and with Russell's earlier eliminativistic thesis. Furthermore I explain how these views result from the logical atomist research program (Landini, 2014; Klement, 2017; Elkind, 2019).

Reducibility and Extensionality in PM's Second Edition James Connelly (Trent University)

Between 1925 and 1927, a second edition of Whitehead and Russell's three volume *Principia Mathematica* was published (Linsky 2011, 1). To account for possible improvements to the system of the first edition, Russell added 66 pages of new material, including a new introduction, three appendices, along with a list of definitions. (Linsky 2011, 1) Within this material, Russell introduced and critically considered several proposed changes. Among them is use of the Scheffer stroke (\downarrow) as the sole fundamental logical connective, to replace disjunction and negation (ibid.). Another is the adoption of extensionalism, while a third, related proposal is to eliminate the axiom of reducibility (ibid.). As a significant source of influence for these proposals, Russell identifies Wittgenstein, and more specifically his recently published *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*. (PM vol. 1, xiv, xlvi) In this paper, I plan to critically expose and assess Russell implementation of Wittgenstein's proposals with respect to extensionalism and the axiom of reducibility within the second edition of PM. Doing so will reveal that, while Russell understood Wittgenstein's proposals reasonably well, he did not implement them in ways which strictly cohere with Wittgenstein's intentions, because he did not find the associated ideas plausible enough. The plan for the paper is as follows. To begin, I examine Russell's attempt to adopt Wittgenstein's proposed elimination of the axiom of reducibility, as well as to implement the associated principle of extensionality. Subsequently, I consider the question of why, in doing so, Russell ignored Wittgenstein's N-operator notation and opted instead to deploy the Scheffer stroke as his fundamental connective, used in consort with quantifiers. Finally, I consider Russell's critical appraisal of Wittgenstein's proposed analysis of the logical form of belief, and explore his assessment of it as holding significant merits but inconclusive prospects.

What has Philosophy to Say about the Relation between Man and Nature? Delineating Russell's Views Jahnabi Daka (Gauhati University, Guwahati, Assam, India)

In his *New Hopes for a Changing World*, Bertrand Russell argues that there are three kinds of conflict which have afflicted mankind. They are the conflicts of man with nature, with other men, and with himself. Of these three kinds of conflict, the first, Russell claims, is conducted by physical science and technical skill; the second is conducted by politics and war; and the third, which is an inner conflict, is the concern of religion and psychology. Among these three kinds of conflicts, Russell considers the contest with physical nature as the most fundamental since the victory in this contest is essential to survival. But by considering man's contest with nature as the most fundamental, Russell, however, does not say that man is omnipotent. He

claims that man is neither impotent nor omnipotent, and that his powers are surprisingly great, but they are not infinite and so great that one might wish. To overcome the conflict between man and nature, it is important for man to realize that his/her power is limited. It is at this backdrop of Russell's claim that man's power is limited, the present paper argues that philosophy, by making us know the ends of life, in fact, makes us aware that man's conflict with nature can be turned into harmony provided man learns the secrets of nature, and co-operates with her. Moreover, the paper is also in search of Russell's way of tackling with the conflict between man and nature to understand his role as an environmentalist.

Instantiation, the Paradox and Arithmetic
Dennis J. Darland (Independent)

I criticize Russell's knowledge by description, as his descriptions are only convenient abbreviations, and so cannot introduce any new knowledge. I propose there is only one predicate (instantiation), which I call "Q". $Q(F, x)$ indicates what would usually be written $F(x)$, where F is an universal. I follow Wittgenstein in permitting only one name for any individual. I propose universals that I call "R", "S" and "T" to analyze meaning. R being between words and ideas. S being between an idea and a unique object. T between an idea and zero or more objects. I also propose a belief relation that I call "B". It exists for a person at some time as a relation among that person's idea. I claim universals can only be known to exist empirically. I deny idealism. I also attempt a solution to Russell's paradox. Finally, I propose a development of arithmetic not using classes.

Russell's "Vagueness" Revisited
Landon D. C. Elkind (Western Kentucky University)

I argue that Bertrand Russell's 1923 "Vagueness" has wrongly endured long-standing criticism in the secondary literature on metaphysical vagueness. I divide the most common criticisms of Russell into three 'myths', as I call them. I then indicate why none of these three myths is justified by the light of a close reading of Russell's 1923 piece. The upshot of dispelling the myths is inviting work on $\text{\emph{representationalism}}$, the view that metaphysical vagueness is a feature of representations.

Possessive Impulses: A Russellian Evaluation of State and Property
Amartya Gupta (St. Stephen's College, University of Delhi)

The paper critically evaluates Bertrand Russell's argument in *Principles of Social Reconstruction* that state and property embody possessive impulses leading to war. I commence this paper with a thorough exploration of the intricate concept of impulses, examining its relationship with reason, beliefs, desires, and external factors in detail (§ I). In the second section, I defend Russell's stance against nationalism and patriotism, while also drawing comparisons with the arguments presented by others (Arendt, Irigaray, Hobbes and Foucault). Furthermore, I address critiques and counterarguments leveled against Russell's model to offer a comprehensive analysis of the State (§ II). In the final section, I undertake a comprehensive evaluation of Russell's concept of property and its underlying power dynamics. Additionally, I will engage in a study of his defense against industrialization, while critically analyzing the opposing views of Marxist and socialist theorists (§ III).

Revisiting Brodbeck's Defense of Russell's Theory of Definite Descriptions
Gregory Landini (University of Iowa)

It is little known that Brodbeck (1957) wrote a short paper defending Russell's theory of definite descriptions against a criticism by Hardin (1957) which argues that one cannot apply Russell's transcription rule for the elimination of the definite description in a sentence of the form: X intended to assert that the account of definite descriptions [Russell] published before 1956 was mistaken in maintaining a transcription rule. Hardin maintains that it cannot be eliminated by Russell's transcription rule simply because a person X in asserting this may well deny that she intended to assert: X intended to assert that there exists one and only one account of definite descriptions [Russell] published before 1956 and it was mistaken in maintaining a transcription rule. The denial is sufficient to undermine the transcription since the first could be true (since it was the clear intention of X) and not the second. Agvist (1958) wrote a rejoinder, criticizing both Hardin and Brodbeck. It is worth re-investigating the case and sorting out the dispute. Brodbeck argues that Hardin is caught in self-refutation. Agvist maintains that the assertion 'X intended', ascribed to X by Hardin does not catch Hardin in self-refutation even if it catches X. But Brodbeck's point may well stand. It is irrelevant to her point whether or not Hardin himself made such a first-person assertion (though likely he did). Is the first-person assertion self-refuting? May Brodbeck was a Carver Professor of Philosophy (1974-1981) and Dean of the Faculties at the University of Iowa. Among other initiatives such as faculty developmental leave, she oversaw the creation of one of the first woman's studies program. Early in life she worked as a high-school chemistry teacher before being recruited into the Manhattan Project. She studied philosophy at the University of Iowa under the mentorship of Gustav Bergmann, completing a Ph.D. on Dewey's Logic in 1947. Before her return to Iowa she held a professorship at the University of Minnesota (1947-1974) and became chair of the department and dean of the graduate school at Minnesota.

Tea and Bradbury
Tim Madigan (St. John Fisher University)

In 1954 Bertrand Russell wrote a letter to Ray Bradbury praising the recently published *Fahrenheit 451* and inviting Bradbury to tea if he should ever be in London. Bradbury, coincidentally, was in nearby Ireland working on the screenplay of John Huston's movie version of *Moby Dick* and on April 11, 1954 took Russell up on his kind offer. In my talk I'll describe Bradbury's visit to Lord and Lady Russell's flat in London, which he writes about in an essay entitled "Lord Russell and the Pipsqueak" (found in his book of essays published in 2005 entitled *Bradbury Speaks*) as well as Russell's "appearance" in *Fahrenheit 451*.

Reduction in the Propositional Logic Connectives and Axioms
Dan O'Leary (Independent)

Following the publication of *Principia Mathematica*, PM, a cottage industry arose to reduce the number of connectives and axioms for propositional logic. This paper follows two related trails. The Boolean Algebra Trail has a trailhead as Boole's *An Investigation of the Laws of Thought*, runs through Whitehead's Universal Algebra, through Sheffer, and ends with Wolfram. The Propositional Logic Trail has a trailhead at Russell's "The Theory of Implication", runs through PM, the works of Sheffer and Nicod, and ends with Łukasiewicz. Both trails result in one connective and one short axiom. The trails are intertwined since, for example, both trails pass through Sheffer's work. Along the trails there are some scenic vistas. The Boolean Algebra

Trail includes the Robbins Axioms which neither Robbins, Huntington, nor Tarski could prove. In 1996, McCune provided a proof using the automated theorem prover EQP. The Propositional Logic Trail gives prominence to the work of Sheffer and Nicod among "the contributions to mathematical logic" cited in PM's second edition. Another vista on this trail relates Wittgenstein's N-operator and Sheffer's stroke.

**Thomas Kuhn and Incommensurability, Or How to Do Philosophy as a Social Science
John Ongley (Lehman College, CUNY)**

In his 1962 classic, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Thomas Kuhn claims that when a new scientific theory emerges, those trained in the old theory have difficulty understanding the new one or seeing how it could be true. He calls this "incommensurability." But what in detail is this like, and how does it work? Scholarly discussion of the subject is extensive but remains unsettled. This essay aims to clarify Kuhn's idea and resolve some misconceptions about it, especially the charge that it is "relativism," by examining his comments about incommensurability in *Structure* and its 1970 Postscript, then comparing these to his later remarks on the subject. Some developments of the idea after Kuhn, in what I think it is fair to call a Kuhnian tradition of the idea in philosophy, are sketched, along with developments in cognitive psychology, which eventually overtake the idea's philosophical developments. Finally, on the basis of this examination of incommensurability, Kuhn's general approach to philosophy of science is considered. In his approach to philosophy of science, Kuhn is now recognized as having been a naturalist. But there are types of naturalism. Three types will be described here, with Kuhn's being an especially strong type – in fact, it is social science, with analyses of scientific practice and prescriptions for it being based on history, sociology, and psychology, rather than on more abstract traditional philosophical analysis. Some aspects of this approach are discussed. Others are left for later discussions.

**Carn Voel in the 1920s and 2020s
Tony Simpson (Atlantic Peace Foundation/Bertrand Russell Peace Foundation)**

In 1922, several months after returning from China, Bertrand and Dora Russell and their infant son, John, moved into a remote house near Land's End in Cornwall, some 300 miles from London. During the next decade, much happened there. Russell wrote a string of new books and reworked others. There was a succession of visitors, including Wittgenstein, Ottoline, Colette, and the miners' leader, A J Cook, who led the General Strike in 1926. The family grew. What was Carn Voel like then, and what's happening there now?

**"Russell in the Age of Jazz: Volume 17 of the Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell"
Michael D. Stevenson (Lakehead University)**

This paper will examine Russell's writings from 1925 to 1927 that will appear in Volume 17 of the Collected Papers. This is a period when Russell enjoyed perhaps the greatest calm of his adult life. The First World War and trips to Russia and China were behind him, he enjoyed a stable home life with Dora Russell and his two young children, and the onerous time and financial commitments of Beacon Hill School were not in evidence. Yet he remained a keen observer of international and domestic events and provided astute commentary on an array of political, social, economic and cultural topics. Russell wrote extensively on the decline of British influence in China and the nature of capitalism and communism being practiced in the United States and the Soviet Union. Furthermore, he remained actively involved in promoting

the campaign for birth control in England and provided important analysis of major events in interwar Britain such as the 1926 General Strike. Finally, Russell published some of his most cogent considerations of science and religion at this time, including "What I Believe", that remain influential in the study of Russell's personal ethos. Taken together, the contents of this Collected Papers volume provide a fascinating insight into Russell's life and thought in the heart of the turbulent 1920s.

The Bertrand Russell Society Facebook Group
Peter Stone (Trinity College Dublin)

Created in 2009, the Bertrand Russell Society's Facebook Group currently boasts over 17,000 members. Peter Stone, the group's creator and administrator, will provide an overview of the group – its history, its membership, its activity, and its future. He will particularly comment upon the diverse crowd the group has attracted a group united only, it seems, by a common interest in Russell.

"The Last Survivor of a Dead Epoch", Or the First Theorist of the New?
Adam Stromme (Independent)

This paper is about Bertrand Russell's relationship with the British Empiricists and Kant. It draws especially on the work of his middle period, including works like *Analysis of Matter*, *Analysis of Mind*, and *An Outline of Philosophy*. It argues that Russell's ontology and epistemology can be fruitfully read as a dialogue with these thinkers, superseding them where modern science had rendered their thinking outmoded.

Russell's Narcoleptic Kant
Chad Trainer (Independent)

Immanuel Kant famously credited David Hume with having awakened him from his dogmatic slumber. But Bertrand Russell claimed Kant was awakened from his dogmatic slumber only to devise a new soporific. But what exactly did Russell see this soporific as being? There are several plausible candidates. The first candidate for what Russell saw as Kant's soporific is Kant's belief that our moral experience mandates belief in God, immortality, and free will. The second candidate is Kant's view of causality as at once both a mere category of our understanding and yet as that which explains the relationship between the world of "things-in-themselves" and the world of appearances. The third candidate is his belief that there are propositions universal and necessary but not simply tautological, namely, synthetic a priori propositions. This paper surveys the candidates for what Russell deemed Kant's soporific with a view to clarifying the soporific's exact nature.

Logic and Intuition in the Russell-Poincaré Debate
Russell Wahl (Idaho State University)

From 1905 to 1912, Russell and Poincaré engaged in a debate over the relation between logic and mathematics. Discussion of the debate has focused on Poincaré's criticism of logicism and his influence on Russell's acceptance of the vicious circle principle. Poincaré argued that intuition was required for mathematical knowledge and so logicism must be mistaken. Russell agreed that intuition in some sense is necessary in logic, but rejected that Kantian account of the role of intuition. I examine Poincaré's various remarks on intuition and his reasons for holding

that logic is not enough to account for mathematical reasoning. Russell had a very different view of logic from Poincaré's, and so it isn't clear Poincaré's criticisms were germane to Russell's logicism. On the other hand, Russell perhaps thought Poincaré closer to Kant than he was. I attempt to sort out some of the issues in the debate.

Russell's Failed Prediction
David E. White (St. John Fisher University)

In 1923 Russell predicted that without socialism and internationalism industrialism "may be expected within the next hundred years to destroy both itself and our civilization." Prophecies of gloom and doom are not new to philosophy, what is of special interest in Russell is his proposal for a world government (internationalism). Russell valued both peace and justice, but he gave priority to peace. He was willing to tolerate unjust governments in the ruling order, up to a point. Those who follow Russell's thought must consider both the urgency and the elasticity of the question of what we are to do in the present crisis. Russell charges those who believe in reason and possess a vigorous intellect to replace the passion and propaganda which determines public opinion with a public profession of faith in reason and courageous proclamations of what reason shows to be true. How seriously have professional philosophers followed up on Russell's injunction? How urgent is it that we take Russell's charge seriously?