Chapter 4

Edmund Husserl and Bertrand Russell, 1905-1918: The Not-So-Odd Couple

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1. INTRODUCTION

Why Husserl and Russell?

Historians of philosophy usually define phenomenology as a theory of intentionality and Husserl as a theorist of meaning. This explains why when students of phenomenology compare Husserl with analytic philosophers at all (indeed, for decades Husserl was considered antipodal to analytic philosophy) they usually turn to Frege. Typically, their comparative studies tend to concentrate on parallels between Frege's famed differentiation of "sense" from "meaning" and Husserl's distinction between *noema* and "object." One can trace an extended series of such studies beginning with Dagfinn Føllesdal and continuing through works of J. N. Mohanty, Michael Dummett, and others.

To be sure, this approach is not without its theoretical and historical value. However, we should not forget that "Husserl repeatedly states loud and clear that what he is trying to do is to find the basis of our conceptual world in *immediate experience*" (emphasis in original; Hintikka 1995, p. 82), while Frege is anything but a philosopher of immediate experience. That was what the Cambridge philosophers G. E. Moore and especially Bertrand Russell were. It is this point that motivates the venture here to examine the largely overlooked, yet historically and philosophically significant, relatedness of Husserl and Russell.

One reason why this topic has received little attention is that historians of phenomenology and early analytic philosophy by and large still lack substantive knowledge of the theoretical stance of their counterparts. This is particularly true in the case of phenomenologists, who generally persist in the view that: (i) Russell was nothing but a radical reductionist, and that (ii) his sense-data are nothing but Hume's impressions. Section 2.1, below, demonstrates (i) to be a fallacious judgement. As regards (ii), the reader may consult Milkov (2001), which establishes that Russell's sense-data feature logical elements, something we cannot say about Hume's impressions.

On the other hand, while over the last few years analytic philosophers have undertaken a number of comparative studies of their philosophical tradition and phenomenology (cf. Beaney 2008; Overgaard 2011), many still tend to believe that even Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (1900/1) is a work of continental philosophy.

Why Husserl and Russell from 1905–1918?

Perhaps the most immediate challenge one faces in undertaking a philosophically substantive and historically consequential comparative analysis of Russell's and Husserl's philosophy is the protean character of their thinking as it evolved over the course of their respective careers. Hence one needs first to specify which Russell one intends to compare to which Husserl. As for Russell, one cannot at any rate look at the period of his *Principles of Mathematics* (1903). In that work, he tentatively started to assimilate the logic of Peano and Frege—in particular, their technique of quantification. The important innovation of Russell's 1903 program was that it gave birth to a specific theory of logical forms as a part of exploring the philosophy of language. To be more precise, this theory held that denoting phrases cannot be decomposed in the same way in which complexes are decomposed to their simplest. The problem is that the meaning of the concepts in a denoting phrase depends on the way—the form—in which the denoting phrase is built up. In other words, the concepts in it do not have meaning in isolation. Russell concluded that there must be something beyond the concepts that unites them in the denoting phrase and this something is their logical form.

Only with the introduction of his Theory of Descriptions in 1905, however, did Russell clearly realize that the logical form of the propositions is quite different from their apparent forms. It was along these lines that he elaborated a consistent program for the logical analysis of language, the task of which is to reveal the true logical form of its propositions.

Russell's joint work with Wittgenstein in 1912 (cf. Milkov 2013) stimulated Russell further to spell out the role of logical forms in his philosophy.[1] Most notably, he introduced them also in the realm of epistemology (cf. § 3.1). What became his new philosophical program was most persuasively set forth in *Theory of Knowledge* (1913), *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1914), and in some papers written in 1913–14 but published only later, in *Mysticism and Logic* (1918).

Lamentably, Wittgenstein's criticism of Russell's *Theory of Knowledge* in May and June 1913 brought this important period of Russell's philosophical development to an end. In the lectures "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" (spring of 1918) he simply summarized his philosophy of 1911–14 but failed to develop it further. Attempting a new start, in "On Propositions" (1919), Russell embraced the philosophy of neutral monism. This was the beginning of a new phase in his philosophical thinking, one more naturalistic and closely tied to the achievements of science.

By the same token, the years 1905–18 saw major developments in Husserl's phenomenology. To make a long story short, the period marks Husserl's turn to so-called "transcendental phenomenology." Starting with discussions with his Munich pupils Johannes Daubert and Alexander Pfänder that produced Husserl's "Seefeld manuscripts" (1905), and through his lectures *The Idea of Phenomenology* (1907), Husserl advanced phenomenology as a "transcendental philosophy" whose task is to reveal the fundamental structure of consciousness. This project he initially presented in "Philosophy as Rigorous Science" (1911) and subsequently gave its classic form in *Ideas I* (1913), where he formulated the conception of eidetic reduction and introduced the concepts of *noema* and *noesis*.

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[1] In "Logical Atomism" (Russell 1924, p. 333), Russell remembered, "At the time when I wrote *The Principles of Mathematics*, I had not yet seen the necessity of logical types [forms]."

The new turn in Husserl's phenomenology meant that he systematically wrote out of his philosophy any form of naturalism, psychologism, or empiricism. Indeed, before the transcendental turn of 1905, Husserl simply attempted phenomenologically to explore the substantiation (the grounding) of logic and mathematics in consciousness. Transcendental phenomenology, in contrast, explores the structure of the pure Ego (*Ich*).

After 1918, however, Husserl's phenomenology developed along new lines. The leading concern shifted to elaborating the so-called "genetic transcendental phenomenology," which marked a break with the "static phenomenology" of 1905–1918.[2] The task of the genetic phenomenology is to investigate the development of the "Ego," analysing its genealogy. The Ego thus proves to be something constructed over time, as a series of succeeding constructed layers. In contrast, static phenomenology considers the unchanging "Ego" as given—as a pole from which the lines of intention start. So, whereas static phenomenology was descriptive (describing the structure of the "Ego"), genetic phenomenology was explanatory, in the sense that it undertook to elucidate how the present structure of the "Ego" is constituted.

The Tasks of This Paper

It should be clear that this paper pursues a path of inquiry that breaks with the trends of mainstream research in the area. Historians of philosophy currently tend to argue that if Husserl was in any sense an analytic philosopher, or did work related to analytic philosophy, one will find evidence of this in his *Logical Investigations* (1900–1). The generally accepted account is that Husserl strayed from the path that would have made him a player in the ascendancy of analytic philosophy by befriending the "wrong philosophers," among them Wilhelm Dilthey, under whose influence Husserl took his transcendental turn in 1905. The result according to the received view was that Husserl became a kind of continental philosopher (cf. Mulligan 1991, Sandmeyer 2008).

The story that follows in this paper is different. We shall see that Husserl's turn of 1905 made him closer than he had previously been to Bertrand Russell's philosophy. The evidence that substantiates

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[2] For alternative interpretation, see Lohmar (2011).

this conclusion emerges in the pages ahead as we explore some striking similarities between Husserl in his middle period and Russell in his. Specifically, we shall consider two orders of relatedness that obtained between Husserl and Russell in the years from 1905 through 1918: (i) One, which we take up in §2, has to do with the general striving of the two philosophers to fix the "fundamentals" of philosophy. (ii) The other, our focus in §3, concerns similarities in their epistemology and philosophy of mind (cf. n. 20). Beyond making explicit these two lines of correlation, we shall see how the second kind of similarities builds upon the first sort. As we pursue this comparative analysis, however, we shall remain alerted to some substantial differences between Husserl's and Russell's programs.

2. Husserl And Russell: Exploring Philosophical Fundamentals

Bertrand Russell saw as the defining characteristic of the new "analytic" philosophy its aim of discussing a "list of fundamentals" (1924, p. 328). He declared that, by contrast, the "speculative" philosopher—Henry Bergson, in particular—"never thinks about fundamentals, but just invents pretty fairy-tales" ([1912b] 1992, p. 318; see also Russell [1905] 1994). Husserl, for his part, spoke about "pre-given" phenomena as the fundamentals of both philosophy and science.

The first subsection follows highlights similarities in the way Russell and Husserl explored the fundamentals. The second makes explicit the dissimilarities on this score. The third critically examines the old story that Russell intended to write a review of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*.

Similarities between Husserl and Russell

The years from 1911 through 1918 found Russell championing the view that "analytic" philosophy investigates "logical forms." In this sense, he took analytic philosophy to be a kind of philosophical logic. Tellingly, Russell was unable to settle on a specific domain within which the investigation of logical forms ought properly to be pursued. In 1914, he often spoke of exploring the logical forms of propositions, while four years later he was mainly concerned with

the logical forms of facts and various fundamental ontological categories—of space, time, and number, for example.[3] More generally, Russell maintained that our contemplation of forms is a "direct vision of [an] abstract truth upon which the possibility of philosophical knowledge depends" (Russell [1914] 1926, p. 243).[4]

During roughly the same period, Husserl argued in his own way to a similar conclusion, namely that the task of philosophy is to describe phenomena's essences. Husserl maintained that we could achieve such descriptions through a process of "analysis of essences" (*Wesensanalyse*), which is to say, of *eide*, or forms (the Greek "εἶδος" translates as "form"); and this by way of "eidetic intuition" (*Wesensschau*), or "intuition of forms."[5] The ultimate aim is the contemplation of eide made evident by nothing but the immediate (unmediated, *unmittelbar*) apprehension of their formal truth. Michael Beaney correctly holds that "what Husserl called 'essential intuition' Russell famously dubbed '[knowledge by] acquaintance'" (2008a, p. 208). Beaney means here surely Russell's acquaintance with logical forms (cf. Russell 1984, pp. 129-31), as something distinct from his acquaintance with sense-data (cf. §3.1).

Like his teacher Franz Brentano, Husserl employed the method of description. His philosophy, at least till 1918, discovers, probes, and describes phenomena. It is "phenomenology" in just this sense. Interestingly enough, Husserl saw phenomenological description as related to the "zoological or botanical descriptions" in that we learn phenomena "in direct intuition" (1939, p. 336). In ways similar to the theoretical thrust of Husserl's thinking, Russell during these years saw "philosophical logic…as an inventory, or if you like a more humble word, a 'zoo' containing all the different forms that facts may have" (Russell 1918a, p. 216) It is clear here that in respect of logical forms, Russell was not, as many phenomenologists assume, a reductionist. He was a descriptivist.

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[3] Cf. Milkov (2003, p. 71 ff.). In §1.2 we have already noted that genealogically, the investigation of logical forms in language preceded that of logical form in epistemology.

[4] Later, in *Analysis of Mind*, he spoke of a "direct contemplation of facts [forms]" which discards language (Russell 1921, p. 212).

[5] In *Logical Investigations*, Husserl holds that essences can be both formal and material. In other words, there are essences that are not formal. (We owe this remark to Kevin Mulligan.) The middle Husserl, however, refused to speak about "formal eide."

Russell's theory of forms was married, moreover, to the conception that, properly speaking, the role of philosophy is nothing but logical analysis. Indeed, as he saw it, we discover logical forms only through a process of logical analysis.[6] Evidently, it was the theory of forms that inspired Russell to conceive the program for a 'piecemeal' approach to philosophical problems which he named *analytic*:

> By concentrating attention upon the investigation of logical forms it becomes possible at last for philosophy to deal with its problems piecemeal, and to obtain, as the sciences do, such partial and probably not wholly correct results as subsequent investigation can utilize even while it supplements and improves them (Russell 1918, p. 85).

Paralleling Russell's conception of logical analysis is Husserl's method of eidetic reduction or reduction to forms that Husserl systematically introduced in *Ideas I* (1913). In "Philosophy as Rigorous Science" (1911), he had spoken in a key similar to that of Russell about the analysis of essences as pursued by the "eidetic analyst."[7]

It is of interest, both historically and philosophically, to compare Husserl's *eide* with Russell's forms in more detail. Russell's logical forms inhabit not Euclidean but logical space, and hence they correspond only remotely to the objects of the real world. By the same token, Husserl's essences possess no real properties, no real parts, and no causality, and they undergo no change (Husserl [1911] 1965, §49). That explains why, in "Philosophy as Rigorous Science," Husserl explicitly rejected both naturalism and relativism generally,

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[6] The other type of analysis Russell practiced was the well-known decompositional analysis. It was connected with the mereological period of his philosophical development that Russell embraced in 1898 (cf. Griffin 2008). Despite the fact that with the introduction of his Theory of Denoting (1903) Russell realized that the decompositional analysis has its limitations, he tried to restore it in *PM* (Milkov 2003, 2013).

[7] Beaney (2008a, p. 208) maintains that Husserl's "reduction" (which, incidentally, includes not only the eidetic but also the phenomenological reduction) is virtually synonymous with "what Russell calls 'analysis.'"

as he did the more specific doctrines of historicism and psychologism.

On these points, Husserl's views were yet again in accord with those of Russell in the years from 1905 through 1918. That Russell stood opposed to relativism is plain given the fact that his thinking chiefly reflected his abiding interest in the philosophical fundamentals. What's more, at least in 1913 and 1914, he explicitly inveighed against naturalism, asserting that while philosophy presupposes a thorough grounding in scientific knowledge, it is a discipline that transcends the natural sciences. It has its own clearly defined subject, namely the analysis and description of logical forms.[8] Husserl likewise distinguished philosophy from the sciences. He argued, for example, that the philosopher must not describe consciousness in terms of psychology, which as he saw it would be to "thingify" (*verdinglichen*) consciousness.[9] Rather, the philosopher must analyse essences as the very currency of consciousness.

We find further correspondence between Russell's notion of analysis and Husserl's of eidetic reduction when we note that both proceeded in the same direction. Eidetic reduction, to start with it, moves from concrete (natural) phenomena to eidetic abstraction. The same applies to Russell's method of analysis, which takes as its point of departure data that are concrete, complex, and vague. Through the process of Russellian analysis, the data under consideration grow "at each stage more abstract, more refined, more difficult to apprehend," ultimately disclosing their purely logical form (Russell 1914, pp. 245, 190).[10]

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[8] "Philosophy does not become scientific by making use of other sciences…Philosophy is a study apart from the other sciences" (Russell [1914] 1926, p. 240; cf. Milkov 2013, § 5.2).

[9] It is important to note that this was also main thesis of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*. Cf. Milkov (2003, p. 71).

[10] The relatedness between Husserl and Russell on this point is to be explained with reference to the fact that the two philosophers worked in the context of the German post-Kantian philosophy (Milkov 2008). Kant was the first to maintain that in philosophy we start with the concrete and the vague ideas only to end with the clear and abstract ones. In mathematics, in contrast, we start with the clear and abstract ideas and end with the complex and vague. Russell called the second kind of analysis "regressive method," the first one "progressive" (cf. Russell [1907] 1973).

Husserl also introduced thought experiments that in his system enable the analyst to apprehend phenomena through a process he characterized as an *imaginative variation* (a notion originating with Bolzano). The process of imaginative variation leads one to find, for example, that thought without language is impossible.[11] It thus enables us to examine and correct our eidetic intuition by confronting its results with reality. In a similar vein, Russell used thought experiments to assess the cogency of alternative philosophical theories. His *modus operandi* was to evaluate them in light of applicable philosophical puzzles and paradoxes (cf. Ryle 1979, pp. 16-7). Russell sought by this means to disclose through logical analysis whether the theories subjected to critique were formally coherent.

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[11] Wittgenstein, too, used this technique, asking questions of the kind, "Can one play chess without the queen?" or "Are zebras without stripes zebras?" One of his acolytes in Cambridge, John Wisdom, deemed such questions to be "Wittgenstein's biggest contribution to philosophy" (Wisdom 1965, p. 88).

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Grounds of the Shared Pursuit of Philosophical Fundamentals

Like the other similarities in the thinking of Husserl and Russell, that which had to do with their preoccupation with fundamentals of philosophy had its "deep grammar." This took the form of their exploration of what Husserl had called "pure logic." In short, both Husserl and Russell believed that the new discoveries (the new inventions) in mathematics open new perspectives in philosophy. This conviction explains why the programs of the two philosophers had both a formal (mathematical) and a philosophical side.

A salient difference, however, divided the two thinkers at this point. This concerned their divergent approaches to mathematics and mathematical logic (to which Russell's logicist program reduced mathematics). Whereas Russell's philosophy closely followed his exposition of mathematical logic, addressing its philosophical problems in the process, Husserl categorically rejected the move to approach philosophy through mathematics or mathematical logic. He was convinced that mathematical symbols achieve no more than a mechanistic "economy of thinking."[17] At the same time, however, the theory of manifolds (or of "super-mathematics") supplied Husserl's phenomenology with its mathematically formal

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[17] Cf. Mayer (2008, p. 49). In this connection, Husserl severely criticized Andreas Voigt, a former student of Ernst Schröder, who defended the logical formalism in philosophy (Hamacher-Hermes 1994).

inspiration. To be more specific, Husserl's guide in this connection was the *n*-dimensional manifolds of Grassmann and Lie (cf. Milkov 2005).

Russell, on the other hand, was not a radical formalist in philosophy. He firmly believed that mathematical logic reveals its full theoretical significance only in conjunction with philosophy. In fact, such was the purport of his collaboration (as a philosopher) with A. N. Whitehead (as a professor of mathematics) in writing *Principia Mathematica* (1910–1913).

This conjunction of philosophy and mathematics obtains as well for Husserl, something reflected in his view of phenomenology as work in "pure logic." Husserl's pure logic has two components, both of which manifest philosophical as well as mathematical aspects. The first, "formal ontology," explores the grounding of numbers, sets, quantity, multitudes, aggregates, and so forth, as these are given in human consciousness. In short, Husserl's formal ontology, compellingly set forth in his *Logical Investigations,* focuses upon the epistemology of mathematical objects.

The second, higher-level part of Husserl's pure logic is his "theory of disciplinary forms" which he also refers to as "theory of theories," or *mathesis universalis.* It is a science of the forms of all possible theories, one that substantiates (grounds) not only mathematics but every science. Since they are the most general elements of our knowledge, the various disciplinary forms are similar to Kant's *a priori* ideas, laws and principles. What makes them different from Kant's *a priori* is that they are not invariant schemes. Indeed, we can even construct new forms of this sort; you can even play with them.[18]

If anything is clear, it is that the transcendental phenomenology Husserl developed after 1905 more effectively realizes the aims of his project for *mathesis universalis* than did his formal ontology of 1900–1. Indeed, it is in writings that postdate the *Logical Investigations* that he first characterizes the invariant elements that ground all possible sciences as essences.

Interestingly enough, in a manner similar to that of the early Husserl, Russell in his middle period saw the new logic as, in his words, "suggesting hypotheses as to the universe which science is

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[18] This conception is supported by David Hilbert's meta-mathematics. Hilbert's former student and philosopher of science and mathematics, Walter Dubislav, developed this idea in detail (Dubislav 1933).

not yet in a position to confirm or confute" (1924, p. 341). This position has two philosophically pregnant implications: (i) Mathematical logic "is a science prior to all others, which contains the ideas and principles underlying all sciences" (Gödel 1944, p. 123). (ii) Mathematical logic is not a canon but an organon—-as Russell put it, "the old logic put thought in fetters, while the new logic gives it wings" (Russell 1914, p. 68).

As with the Husserl of the *Logical Investigations*, the early Russell promulgated a lower-level theory of fundamentals or formal ontology. His express task in *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903, p. v), for example, is elucidating the "indefinable:" space, time, numbers, beliefs, and so on. Moreover, into his middle period, Russell continued in the hope of further developing this program. In 1912 he briefly undertook to advance his views on this head in "What is Logic?", a short paper in which he casts his formal ontology (which he misleadingly terms "logic") as "the study of the forms of complexes" ([1912a] 1992, p. 56).

Similarities notwithstanding, however, there was an important difference between Husserl's and Russell's higher-level theories of philosophical fundamentals. Husserl held the essences/forms to be the roots of our knowledge of all objects humans cognitively explore. Russell, by contrast, understood the fundamentals to be elements of the "universe of discourse." Moreover, whereas Husserl identified this program as a form of Leibniz's new *science* (*mathesis universalis*), which describes the grounds of the ultimate structure of the human world, Russell spoke about it in terms of a new, mathematical *logic*. This divergence of theoretical outlook between Husserl and Russell arguably follows from their different orientations to the previously remarked problematic of how exactly logic and mathematics relate to philosophy.

Did Russell Intend to Write a Review of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*?

An old story that originates with Herbert Spiegelberg's *The Phenomenological Movement: A Historical Introduction* (1960) and still circulates among the historians of analytic philosophy and phenomenology has it that while in Brixton Prison (May-November 1918), Russell had the idea of writing a review of the second edition

of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (1913-21) (*LI*).[19] Spiegelberg cited
by way of evidence a letter from Russell to Husserl dated April 19,
1920, in which he tells Husserl that *LI* was one of the books he had
with him while in Brixton Prison.

In fact, the only document that confirms Russell's intention to
prepare this review is his letter to his brother Frank from June 1918,
in which he wrote: "Please tell Professor Stout…that if he still wants
review of Husserl's *Logical Investigations*, I will do it in time for the
October *Mind*" (Varga 2016, p. 28). Unfortunately, Russell never
followed through this intent. Moreover, the reason for this is set out
in the same letter: "I have only 1st volume & half of 2nd. If the other
half of 2nd has appeared & he [Stout] has it, will he please send it?"
(*ibid.*) Unfortunately, part two of the second volume only appeared
in 1921.

The issue is made even more puzzling by the fact that the list of
the books and papers Russell read while in Brixton Prison (Russell
1986, pp. 315-28)—a list that Russell himself prepared—tells us that
he had on hand only the first volume of *LI*, which contains only the
Introduction (*Prolegomena*).[20] One possible explanation is that in
that list Russell was keeping track of what he had read. This means
that he hadn't read volume 2, part one, but merely had it in his
cell.[21]

We may surmise that Russell showed an interest in Husserl's *LI*
first in support of his own work on *Introduction to Mathematical
Philosophy* (*IMP*), which he drafted while incarcerated at Brixton.
Among other things, Russell intended in *IMP* finally to tackle the
problem of the nature of "logical forms;" and he clearly
remembered how many Germanic authors (Meinong, Frege) had in
the past helped him to clarify his views. Russell was evidently
already familiar with Husserl's work, especially the ideas presented
in Chapter 11 of the *Prolegomena* on the "pure theory of manifolds."
Intending to write on logic as a science of forms—he explicitly
addressed the question of the nature of logical forms in the
concluding, eighteenth chapter of *IMP*,—and having plenty of time
on his hands during his confinement, he also planned to revisit the
relevant sections (especially §§ 69 and 70) of the *Prolegomena*.

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[19] Gilbert Ryle also supported the rumour (1970, p. 9).

[20] Andreas Vrahimis (2012) mistakenly suggests that Russell had only volume
2 with him.

[21] This explanation was suggested by Kenneth Blackwell.

As it turned out, however, in the summer of 1918, Russell was preoccupied instead with the study of epistemological and psychological problems that related to his work on "On Propositions" (1919) and *The Analysis of Mind* (1921). Husserl's *LI* (volume 1 and apparently also volume 2, part one) was the only book on logic among forty-nine books and papers that Russell read in his cell. Almost all of the others were on psychology.

In fact, in 1918 Russell applied himself to the task of writing of *IMP* simply in order to finish what was a long-planned project that for years he hadn't had the opportunity to complete.[22] His real interest now, however, lay in problems of philosophy of mind. This partly explains why the discussion of logical forms in *IMP* is rather sketchy. Russell maintained simply that the perfect logical language has only syntax, no vocabulary; we know its propositions a priori. To be more exact, logic is the study of logical forms. It investigates the arrangement of variables (Russell 1919, p. 201).

This brings us to the second probable reason why Russell did agree with Stout's suggestion that he is to write a review of Husserl's *LI*. His intensive engagement with problems of philosophical psychology in 1918 made him eager to revisit those parts of Husserl's book (above all, *Logical Investigations* V and VI, which were printed, respectively, in the last segment of part one and part two of volume 2) that deal with this subject. This was, even more, the case because, as we are going to see in the next section (§ 3), Russell adopted elements of Husserl's philosophy of mind already in the years 1911–18.

3. Husserl And Russell Advanced Similar Philosophies Of Mind And Epistemology

Firmly as we substantiated the conclusion of the preceding section (§ 2), there remain points in Russell's development between 1911 and 1918 that supply still more unimpeachable grounds than we have so far adduced for maintaining that in these years there was a clear kinship between his philosophy and Husserl's thinking. For those seven years saw Russell thinking his way to the conviction that philosophical logic investigates the logical form not only of

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[22] Russell first mentioned the project to expose the ideas developed in *Principia Mathematica* in short form already in 1911–13. In these years he projected a book on "Advanced Logic" (Russell 1984, pp. xxiii, 183).

language but of the human mind and cognitive states (of perception, of judgment, and so on) as well (Russell 1918, p. 85; cf. n. 19).

Genealogically regarded, this can hardly come as a surprise. After all, Husserl's distinguished teacher, Franz Brentano, played a formative if indirect role in the education of Moore and Russell as well: one of their professors at Cambridge, G. F. Stout, was a Brentanist (van der Schaar 2013). Stout's *Analytic Psychology* (1886), in particular, "was the most accurate and detailed presentation in English of Brentano's contributions to psychology. The phrase 'Analytical Psychology' just is Stout's translation of Brentano's 'Descriptive Psychologie'" (Bell 1999, p. 201).[23]

Russell, however, did not develop his philosophy under Brentano's influence alone. The years 1899–1907 saw him immersed in the works of Alexius Meinong, yet another former student of Brentano. It was under Meinong's influence that Russell developed his famed concept of "knowledge by acquaintance" (cf. Milkov 2001). The Meinong connection reveals still further indirect grounds of the theoretical consanguinity between Husserl and Russell from 1905 through 1918.

Building on the foregoing evidence, the three subsections that follow present a triad of themes in light of which one finds the salient relation, hitherto unrecognized in the literature, that obtains between Husserl's and Russell's philosophy of mind and epistemology through most of the second decade of the twentieth century.

The Structure of Human Mind and Knowledge

Relative to this first theme, we first note an instance where Husserl exerted an indirect influence on Russell. This occurred mainly through August Messer's book *Empfindung und Denken* (1908), which Moore reviewed for *Mind* in 1910 (Milkov 2004, §2.3). Messer's book is essentially a summary of Husserl's *Logical Investigations* (Künne 1991). Above all, Moore lauded Messer's "attempt to classify [to describe] all the kinds of elements which may occur as constituents of mental phenomena" (Moore 1910, p.

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[23] Small wonder, then, that later Russell remembered, "I had originally accepted Brentano's view that in sensation there are three elements: act, content and object." (Russell 1959, p. 100)

395). This was precisely Husserl's approach not only in his *Logical Investigations* but also and even more so in *Ideas I*.

It comes as no surprise, then, that Moore advanced a similar classification in his lectures *Some Main Problems of Philosophy*, initially delivered in 1910-11. (In fact, Moore reviewed Messer's book while he was composing these lectures.) In them, he adopts Husserl's conception that there is a variety of mental phenomena—supposing, judging, fearing, hoping, desiring, liking, disliking—which constitute subdivisions of three general classes of mental acts which he posits as categorically discrete from their objects: cognitive acts, emotional acts, and acts of will.

Moore's lectures significantly influenced Russell's epistemological scheme in *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912),[24] a scheme that Russell continued to develop in *Theory of Knowledge* (1913), *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1914) and "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" (1918). Moore's Husserlian influence is particularly evident in *Theory of Knowledge*, where Russell argued that there are:

- different *mental acts*: judging, feeling, willing and desiring;
- different kinds of *propositional attitudes* (or understanding): assertion, suggestion, volition, doubting, dis/believing, analysing/synthesizing; and
- different forms of *acquaintance*: as regards *objects*, we are acquainted with logical forms, particulars or universals; as regards the *way we are acquainted* with objects, we are perceiving, dreaming, remembering, and imagining.

Moreover, Russell maintained that "the distinguishing mark of what is mental, or at any rate of what is cognitive,[25] is not to be found in the particulars involved, but only in the nature of the relations between them" (Russell 1984, p. 45). In other words, the

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[24] Russell explicitly underlined this in Russell ([1912] 1932, p. v).

[25] We see here that to Russell of that time epistemology is only a part of the philosophy of mind. It deserves notice here that Russell was one of the founding fathers of the discipline "philosophy of mind" as we know it today. His discussions of this subject were later explored by Wittgenstein under the title of "philosophical psychology" only to be summarized in Ryle's *The Concept of Mind* (1949), which today is considered the pioneering work of this philosophical discipline.

difference between sensation, dreaming, remembering, and imagining is not a function of their objects but of our cognitive attitudes to the same object. The objects in a dream, for example, are different from the objects we perceive when we are awake only because the relation between the "I" and the object is different. There is no difference in their objects *per se*.

Mental states of different types have each their idiosyncratic "logical form." The important task, for philosophy, is to describe these logical forms (Russell 1984, p. 129 ff.). Russell adduces the following as an example of such a description: "The logical form of perception will be different from the logical form of believing…Volition differs from desire logically, in a way strictly analogous to that in which perception differs from belief" (Russell 1918, p. 228).

As we have noted, Russell held that the difference between the various kinds of acquaintance depends upon the nature of the objects to which it is directed: particulars, universals and logical forms (Russell 1984, p. 97 ff.). These kinds of acquaintance he respectively terms apprehension, conceptualization, and "logical intuiting." The latter, in particular, exhibits a marked likeness to Husserl's concept of *noesis* as "experiencing [*erleben*] the truth" of *noemata*.

Indeed, by introducing the conception of "logical forms" into his philosophy of mind (into his epistemology), Russell came palpably close the Husserl of *Ideas I*. Both explored the forms/eide (the possible cognitive attitudes) of the mental events/phenomena.

The Structure of Perception

Even closer than their respective theories of mind and knowledge is the correlation between the theory of perception that Husserl advanced in his middle period and that of Russell at a similar point in his career.

Many general overviews of phenomenology (cf. Sokolowski 2000, pp. 17–21) elucidate Husserl's signature doctrine of eidetic analysis (or analysis of forms) of the immediate experience which he sought to articulate in 1913 by way of the example of the perception of a cube.[26] When we see a cube, what is given to us is an aspect of the

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[26] In his *Encyclopedia Britannica* article ([1929] 1971, p. 79), Husserl explores the example of the perception of a die.

cube in which its presently visible sides are "cointended" with a "halo" (*Hof*) of its potentially visible but actually absent sides: we apprehend the visible sides with the help of deliberative attention. The other sides are also given, but as absent. Perception, therefore, involves layers (*Schichten*) of presentation which can be both actual and potential.

To sketch this point of Husserl's phenomenology with schematic explicitness, when we see the cube:

> (i) We perceive some of the six *sides* of the cube.

> (ii) Each of these sides can be given in different ways—these are the different *aspects* of the cube. The aspects are objective, but I can perceive them only at specific points in time. Most of them are merely potentially perceivable.

> (iii) The same aspect can be seen in different *profiles* (*Abschattungen*), or sketches. A profile is temporally individuated—a momentary presentation of the object; it is private and subjective.

Russell defended in *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1914) and in "The Relation of the Sense-data to Physics" (1914) a theory of perception that closely resembles Husserl's in *Ideas I*. Instead of speaking about a die, or a cube, however, Russell's example is our perception of a penny. According to Russell:

> (i) The world features infinitely many perspectives, or *aspects*, of the penny. A common-sense object, such as a penny, is at any given moment a system (a series) of such objective aspects. Perspectives are objective and are mutually related (ordered). We may perceive them, or they may remain unperceived. (In Husserl's terms, the latter are merely potentially perceivable.)

> (ii) The actually perceived perspectives are *private* (Russell 1914, p. 94 ff.).

> (iii) The thing itself can be viewed as a *logical construction*[27] composed of such aspects.

The three kinds of perception determine three kinds of space.

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[27] See § 3.3, below.

Another, related factor evidencing the close correlation obtaining between Husserl's and Russell's theories of perception is the prominent role that "attention" played in them. As just noted, Husserl held that we perceive objects as situated in a "halo" of potentially perceived objects. The latter are perceived too, but not clearly. Our attention entertains only one of them, at any particular point in time—but it changes focus continually. In fact, consciousness is marked by incessant changes in the focus of attention.

Russell, on his side, maintained that we perceive complex objects, such as "*a*-in-the-relation-*R*-to-*b*," as singularities, even as attention may reveal them to be complex. We then judge—in the example—that *a* and *b* stand in a relation *R* (Russell and Whitehead 1910, p. 43). In *Theory of Knowledge* Russell held that "attention is a selection of objects that are 'before the mind,' and therefore presupposes a larger field, constituted in some less exclusive manner, out of which attention chooses what it wants" (Russell 1984, p. 9).

At a deeper level, the shared features that one discerns in these two thinkers' accounts of perception reflect the formative influence that Leibniz exerted on their views in this connection. However, whereas Russell explicitly constructed his new epistemology/ philosophy of mind on the model of the *Monadology* (Russell 1914, p. 94), Husserl merely alludes to the importance of Leibniz as an influence on his thought, and this only in passing (cf. Husserl [1923/4] 1956, p. 199).

Constructivism

Russell and Husserl were both philosophical constructivists. Epistemologically, the middle Russell regarded material objects as entities constructed of sense-data. He conceived logical constructions to be classes of particulars logically collected together "on account of some property" (1915, p. 97).

Husserl's middle-period constructivism was even more radical. Following Kant, he maintained that the Ego actively constructs (constitutes, makes) the phenomena and hence the world, including the world's principal categories—space and time, numbers, tones, colours, and so on. The genetic phenomenology Husserl would champion in his later period went a step further,

exploring the construction (the passive synthesis) of the Ego itself: its personal history as embedded in its environment.

Some commentators have tracked the complementarities in Russell's and Husserl's constructivism indirectly, and apparently unintendedly, from the angle of Husserl's supposed influence on the work of other, younger thinkers—among the most notable being Rudolf Carnap in his constructivist *Aufbau* (Carnap 1928; cf. Roy 2004, Ryckman 2008, and Rosado Haddock 2008). Mayer (1991), for example, has argued that Carnap, who attended Husserl's lectures in Freiburg in 1922, was directly influenced by him. In fact, however, all these authors could track down similarities between Husserl and Carnap not because Carnap was substantially influenced by Husserl but, above all, because he closely followed the constructivism of Russell's *Our Knowledge of the External World*. To be more explicit, Carnap's work can be easily interpreted as influenced by Husserl simply because of the clear relatedness between the middle Husserl and the middle Russell—in particular, between the forms of constructivism they followed.

4. A QUESTION IN PLACE OF AN EPILOGUE

In the foregoing sections, we considered several defining commonalities in the thinking of the middle-period Husserl and the middle Russell. At the same time, however, we took note of some manifest differences between their positions. We end this essay raising the question whether the differences between Husserl and Russell overshadow the common ground between them. Our answer will be a kind of summary of our investigation.

According to the received view, the most fundamental, orientational disparity in their views is that while the middle Husserl was an idealist philosopher, Russell was a philosophical realist. Russell was convinced that his "analytic philosophy" could help disclose, among other things, the logical forms of space and time that obtain in the external world. Of course, some elements of Russell's ontology, such as universals, are ideal. However, he understood them as given parts of the real world (as data), and not simply as constructed.

Husserl's idealism of the period, on this account, was just as unequivocal and explicit. His objective was to discover the logical forms of pure consciousness: the ways of its directedness to what he

has called noemata. Intentionality was consequently not, in Husserl's view, a relation between subject and a natural object. Rather, he took it as a consciousness about the ideal correlate of the intentional act.

But this received view simply does not hold up in light of the evidence adduced in the two preceding sections of the essay, which make it plain that there is another side to the story. For Husserl insisted that the phenomena are directed, with necessity, to objects (*noema*)—despite the fact that they are not *real* objects. At the same time, at least in some of his writings (e.g., Russell 1913, p. 45), Russell maintained that it is the cognitive (mental) relation to objects, not the objects alone, that determine the kind of knowledge (cognition) that we achieve.

If anything is certain, it is that the difference between the middle Husserl and the middle Russell on this head is far from what the "official story" has led most readers of these philosophers to assume. And the same is even more true about other forms of relatedness between them. The evidence we've sifted in this brief review of their thinking from 1905 and 1918 can leave little doubt but that for a well over a decade Husserl and Russell devoted themselves to closely related theoretical programs.

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