

**Bertrand Russell's visit to China**  
Selected texts on the centenary of  
intercultural dialogues in logic and  
epistemology

Edited by Jan Vrhovski and Jana S. Rošker

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## Bertrand Russell's visit to China

Selected texts on the centenary of intercultural dialogues in logic and epistemology

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Book series editor in chief: *Jana S. Rošker*

This book edited by: *Jan Vrhovski, Jana S. Rošker*

Reviewers: *Sebastjan Vörös, Andrej Ule*

Proofreading: *Paul Steed*

Translated by: *Jan Vrhovski, Maja Marija Kosec and Urška Grad*

Design: *Nana Martinčič*

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# EDITORS' PREFACE



*Jana S. ROŠKER and Jan VRHOVSKI*

## About this Book

The present book has been published in the series *Studia Humanitatis Asiatica*, produced by the Scientific Press of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities of the Ljubljana University. The series was initiated in 2015 by its current editor-in-chief Jana S. Rošker, from the Department of Asian Studies. With the establishment of the new Ljubljana University Press, into which the Scientific Press of the Faculty of Arts was integrated, we decided to expand the scope of our publications, which were previously limited to books in Slovenian, to include those in English.

The main goal of the series is to publish books that can bridge the gap between Asian (mainly East Asian) languages and cultures and Slovenia. In the first years, the editors focused mainly on the transfer of knowledge and information on East Asia by publishing Slovenian translations of some of the most important classical and modern East Asian social, linguistic and philosophical theories, as well as some original works written by Slovenian experts in different fields of Asian studies.

To date seven books have been published in Slovene in this series, presented below with the English translations of their titles:

1. *Wang Hui and the Question of Modernity and Democracy in China* (2015)
2. *Virtue as the Basis of a Good Neighbourhood: Confucianism in Modern East Asia* (2016)
3. *Li Zehou and Contemporary Chinese Philosophy: Historical Ontology, Aesthetics, and the Revaluation of Marxism* (2016)
4. *Selected Works of Cai Yuanpei: Art, Aesthetics and Culture* (2018)
5. *Philosophy in Taiwan: Characteristics, Role and Significance* (2019)
6. *Processes and Relations in East Asia: The EARL Collection* (2019)
7. *Covid-19 in Asia: Traditional Humanisms, Modern Alienation and the Rhetorics of Contemporary Ideologies* (2021)

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In this way, we have also tried to develop appropriate terminology in Slovene and preserve the academic vocabulary in this field of research in our home country and culture. We strongly believe that in this way the series can, on the one hand, build a bridge between different languages, traditions, histories and cultures and, on the other, encourage fruitful academic interactions. This goal is all the more important given that Slovenia is a very small country with only about two million inhabitants. In the age of globalization, however, this delicate language is under threat, similar to many other small and medium-sized languages. As with many species, many of these small languages now seem to be heading towards extinction. Our world is becoming increasingly impoverished in this way, with its colour and richness diminishing with each passing decade, year or even day. The same is true for the human mind. Each language represents a unique way of seeing and expressing reality. The fewer languages there are, the poorer our shared world. Therefore, every single way of understanding and communicating the multiple truths of our world is extremely valuable, because it preserves our human complexity and increases the possibilities for our fruitful transcultural interaction and communication.

As such, our aim to maintain and develop the academic terminology in Slovene is of particular importance in today's world. And this is the main reason why we have so far only published works in Slovene.

However, as we all know, every rule has an exception, and this book is the first exception that confirms the rule. This year, the members of the editorial board of the *Studia Humanitatis Asiatica* have decided to enrich the series with special editions that will be published on special occasions related to the field of Asian Studies. The books published in these editions will be among those works that are important not only for Asian Studies in Slovenia, but also at the international level and worldwide.



The present book on the centenary of Bertrand Russell's visit to China is the first of these special editions. The reasons for the publication of this work exactly one hundred years after the visit is clear, for the centenary undoubtedly belongs to such special occasions: Russell's visit to China and his guest lecture tour have had a profound influence not only on the intercultural academic exchanges between China and Europe, but also on the Chinese development of mathematical logic and thus, in a broader sense, on the entire development of the intellectual and educational aspects of Chinese modernization. Therefore, the book is unique and significant – not only in Slovenia, but also internationally. Our decision to publish it in English, the *lingua franca* of academia, is therefore related to the fact that it certainly deserves to be read by a wider circle of international students and experts working in the field of Asian, and especially Chinese, Studies.

Shortly after we decided to publish this book, we were also given the opportunity to publish a special issue of the renewed international academic journal *Contemporary Chinese Thought* on the same topic. In that special issue, we will publish the views of contemporary Chinese scholars on this important visit, focusing on the humanistic spirit of this cross-cultural encounter. Thus, both publications complement each other in a meaningful way, reflecting the significance of this visit through different perspectives and worldviews, each at the edges of the 20th and 21st centuries.

This first special edition of the series *Studia Humanitatis Asiatica* opens with a foreword written by Vera Schwarcz, one of the most important contributors to both contemporary Chinese and anglophone sinological studies of Zhang Shenfu and the Chinese intellectual world in the 1920s and 1930s.

The broader historical context given in the preface is followed by a general introduction to Russell's visit to China written by Jan Vrhovski. In his general introduction, Vrhovski outlines the main milestones of both the developments leading to the invitation in May 1920, as well as the subsequent course of Russell's visit in China. Apart from highlighting the complexity of the web of personal influences which gave rise to the idea of inviting Russell to China, the introduction gives a general overview of the content of Russell's lectures, delivered at various Chinese institutes, from the Jiangsu Educational Association in Shanghai to National Peking University. Significant attention has also been given to the most visible formal aspects of Chinese reception of Russell and his ideas, from the main welcome speeches to the establishment of the Russell Study Society, *Russell Monthly* journal, and so on.

The main body of the book consists of six parts, the central three of which revolve around Chinese interpretations of Russell's logic and philosophy during the time of his visit in China and the years immediately following his departure. All the translated texts which have been selected for this anthology date back to Russell's time in China. The main focal point of the present anthology is thus set within the temporal framework of Russell's visit. From the more than 700 newspaper and journal articles on Russell published between the years 1920 and 1921, we have selected a dozen of what we deem most representative and reflective of the overall reception of Russell in China, and the seminal impact of his ideas on the conception of modern China and logic. Most importantly, despite their substantial significance for our understanding of this pivotal moment in Chinese intellectual history, the majority of these texts have not yet been translated into English, so their ideas will thus be presented in this language for the first time.

The first part contains translations related to two main welcome receptions, which were organized for Russell in Shanghai and Beijing. While the translation of a newspaper report on the speeches given at the welcome banquet in Shanghai reveals how, in the days immediately following his arrival, Russell was received by the leading members of the Chinese intelligentsia gathered in the city, the second translation sheds some light on his subsequent reception in Beijing by the society which had been originally responsible for inviting the philosopher and sponsoring his visit, the Chinese Lecture Society. The content of the first reception speeches in Shanghai takes us back to one of the first mentions of the well-known description of Russell as a modern Confucius. On the other hand, the content of Liang Qichao's welcome speech at the Lecture Society's reception in Beijing sheds some light on the ideas and motives held by the main agents behind Russell's visit in China.

The second part contains a selection of reports on the meetings of the Russell Study Society, which was established by a group of students and professors from Peking University at the end of November 1920. By and large, the translations offer a general insight into the organization and the activities of the Chinese and English sections of the society, from the inaugural meeting in late November to the start of the new academic term in early 1921.

The third part provides translations of two among the few Chinese attempts at interpreting Russell's philosophy and logic from the time. The first text attempts to outline the main tenets of Russell's relation-centred theory of logic in relation to his epistemological and ontological work. One of the earliest attempts at the systematic introduction of Russell's philosophical system was

composed by Wang Xinggong, a member of the Department of Philosophy at Peking University, who was also responsible for the extensive introductions of topics related to the philosophy of science in general and Russell's philosophy of logic into the curriculum of the department. The second text represents an attempt to highlight the main aspects of Russell's methodological approaches as embodied in the "spirit of his philosophy." The text was written by Zhao Yuanren, one of China's first students of mathematical logic at Harvard University, and one of Russell's official interpreters during his stay in China.

The subsequent part is devoted to one of the central topics of this anthology, an important fragment of the positive path of the establishment of Russell's theoretical philosophy and mathematical logic in the Chinese academic world. It gives a general introduction to the invaluable contributions of China's most fervent proponent and popularizer of Russell's philosophical ideas at the time, Zhang Shenfu. As a junior member of Peking University and one of the earliest adherents of Russell's ideas in China, Zhang was likely an important motivating force behind the decision of Cai Yuanpei, the then president of Peking University, to initiate the process of inviting the philosopher to China. As an important intellectual and political activist from the period, Zhang not only contributed significantly to the emergence of the notion of mathematical logic within Chinese academic discourse, but later also took a central role in its formation as a discipline that was taught and researched at Chinese universities. On the other hand, as one of the cofounders of the Communist Party of China, Zhang was also the main driving force behind the furtherance of Russell's ideas in the country's political discourse. This part of the anthology opens with Jan Vrhovski's study on Zhang's early encounters with Russell's philosophy and his notion of mathematical logic in the 1920s. Vrhovski's general introduction to Zhang's life and work in the 1920s is followed by an essay composed by Vera Schwarcz, the first scholar to have (re-)introduced Zhang Shenfu to Western scholarship in intellectual history of Modern China. In her meditations, based on a series of interviews with Zhang between 1979 and 1983, Schwarcz attempts to disentangle the threads of Zhang's veritable reminiscences of the sometimes too distant past from the thick fabric of Zhang's retrospective reimagination and cognitive re-adaptation to new ideological tides of the turbulent period of the first three decades of the People's Republic (PRC).

In contrast to Zhang Shenfu's idealized image of Russell, an incomparably more critical reading of Russell's philosophical work was advanced by Zhang Dongsun. The penultimate section of the anthology is devoted to Zhang Dongsun's critical evaluation of Russell on the one hand, and his inadvertent

proximity to aspects of the Englishman's philosophy on the other. The translation of Zhang's article "Logicism of New Realism" represents one of his earliest criticisms of Russell's logicist epistemology, which was centred around the concept of relation, in which Zhang expressed his dissent with Russell's philosophy. Since both Zhang and Russell composed theories of relational structural epistemologies, a comparison of them can offer us some new insights into their respective strengths and weaknesses, and into the general possibilities of constructing a relational model of human perception and comprehension. The next chapter, written by Jana S. Rošker, offers such a contrastive analysis, which contributes some additional dimensions to our knowledge about Russell's epistemology.

The final part of the anthology is reserved for a collection of short meditations upon Russell's arrival, period of illness, and departure from China. It starts with a translation of some words of hope, written by the young Chinese Marxist Li Zhenying on the occasion of Russell's arrival in China. Li's early aspirations are followed by a newspaper article written by an anonymous author in the early weeks of Russell's severe illness in April 1921. Although the identity of the author is not known, the text offers a valuable insight into the circumstances of Russell's stay in Beijing immediately before his protracted illness. The third text was written by Qu Shiyong, the editor-in-chief of the *Russell Monthly* journal. Qu's meditation was produced on the occasion of Russell's departure from Beijing and attempted to summarize the main point of influence of the philosopher's time and lectures in China.

The book concludes with some of our general reflections on the significance of Russell's visit in China. In our *Epilogue* we wanted to raise awareness of the unceasing meaning of intercultural dialogues and spirit of humanness as something more needed in the present time than it was ever before.

As a whole, the book aims to provide the reader with a general insight into the key-aspects of Russell's stay in China, with a special focus on the Chinese reception of his philosophical ideas and science-based worldview. Being one of the first such anthologies published in the West, we hope that it will prove to be a valuable source for Western studies, sinological as well as non-sinological, of the intellectual foundations of modern China. Last but not least, we also hope that the present anthology will serve as a source of inspiration for all those who are interested in the intellectual history of today's China, encouraging them to conduct more specialized research into the various aspects and topics which are related to Russell visit and its influence on later intellectual developments in China.

# PROLOGUE



*Vera SCHWARCZ*

# Atoms of Logic Across Space and Time: How Bertrand Russell's visit to China changed history both East and West

*Must one who holds to expansive objectivity  
Dwell in the abode of impartiality all alone?*

Zhang Shenfu, "Random Thoughts on Russell," 1932

One hundred years may just be enough time to piece together what history has torn asunder: In this case, a unique moment of cultural connection between China and the West which had been fought over and forgotten without due attention to seeds which continue to nourish freedom of thought even today. The scholarly community and the public at large are indebted to the pioneering efforts of Jana S. Rošker and Jan Vrhovski, two Central European sinologists, ideally situated to excavate the significance of this pivotal encounter in world history.

Both Bertrand Russell and his Chinese interlocutors in 1920-21 would be delighted to know that their meeting became the focus of *Studia Humanitas Asiatica*—a series coming out of the small and broadly-cultured nation of

Slovenia. There has been much writing in English and Chinese about John Dewey and Rabindranath Tagore—two other important philosophers who visited Beijing around Russell’s sojourn. Retrospectively, one might argue that the British mathematician and logician had a more enduring impact upon questions of mind, matter and human freedom than the other two “sages” lionized by young Chinese intellectuals during late 1910s.

Jana S. Rošker and Jan Vrhovski have provided a new historical context for understanding the Russell visit by careful analysis of the events that preceded and followed the lectures of 1920-21. Those familiar with the May 4<sup>th</sup> Movement and its New Culture aspirations will find a shift in paradigm here, which honors the complexity of thought and ideologies of that crucial time. While “Mr. Science” and “Mr. Democracy” were strongly admired by students and faculty who took part in the movement, the foundation for reasoning about these key concepts remained flimsy indeed.

Enter Bertrand Russell (accompanied by his outspoken feminist lover Dora Black), who for nearly a year gave talks, held meetings, wrote essays attended dinners—all in the hope of placing China’s radical changes upon a more solid philosophical, scientific footing. As Rošker and Vrhovski document so well, Russell was learning as much as he was teaching. He called himself a “Communist” yet spoke out against the atrocities of the nascent Soviet regime. He called himself an objectivist, yet he was just learning to incorporate the theories of psychology and psychoanalysis into a rigorous analysis of mind. He called himself a mathematician who had probed atoms of logic with new symbolism while also grappling with Einstein’s theory of gravity and quantum mechanics.

The encounter between this renowned-yet-still-questing philosopher and the seasoned heirs of Confucius upon China’s changing political landscape provides a marvelous example of mutual influence, cross cultural respect and the birth of a new lexicon for science and human freedom. To be sure, the ceaseless and brutal revolutions which followed Russell’s visit to China left little time or space for thinking about the utility of mathematical logic for the advancement of critical thought. Mindless loyalty became the required diet for intellectuals during the long Mao regime.

All along, Bertrand Russell’s ideas continued to ferment beneath the surface. Now, the time is ripe to acknowledge the formative impact of the 1920-21 visit and how it continues to vitalize philosophy both in China and in the West. During the New Cultural Movement of 1916-1921, there were only three special issues published by the flagship journal entitled *Xin Qing Nian—La*



*Jeunesse—New Youth*. The first was on Ibsen, edited by Hu Shi; the second on Karl Marx, edited by Li Dazhao; and the last on Bertrand Russell edited by Zhang Shenfu. When I first met Zhang on November 12th, 1979, he made sure that I (and all the Chinese Party officials who surrounded us in the reception room of the Peking National Library) understood that Russell was the most important thinker for China in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Over the course of the following five years (during which I wrote an oral history of Zhang Shenfu), I came to grasp more deeply the loneliness of intellectuals who had sought to reform their country with the aid of critical reflection.

Unappreciated at first, and later actively persecuted by Communist authorities, thinkers like Zhang Shenfu longed for companions in the abode of “expansive objectivity.”

Now a century later, they have been found. Jana S. Rožker and Jan Vrhovski are two trailblazers in a global effort to reconstruct the genuine complexity of history in a way that opens pathways for political hope and further scholarly research both in China, and abroad. Rožker and Vrhovski are our guides in a journey that calls to mind T.S. Eliot’s words in the last of his “Four Quartets:”

And the end of all our exploring  
Will be to arrive where we started  
And know the place for the first time.

A century after Bertrand Russell arrived in Shanghai, we are finally hearing the original voices, qualms and debates that help us understand this unique moment in intellectual and world history, truly for the first time.



# INTRODUCTION



*Jan VRHOVSKI*

## Mr. Luosu and “China’s Road to Freedom” – A General Introduction to Russell’s Visit to China (1920-1921)

**O**ne hundred years after the visit of the preminent British philosopher Bertrand Russell to China, studies in modern Chinese intellectual history are still directly or indirectly concerned with the consequences this trip had for the Chinese scientific, philosophical and socio-political discourse in the Republican era and thereafter. With his personal and scholarly integrity, his polymathic erudition, progressive social ideas, and unbending fervour in his endeavours for freedom of thought and personal choice, Russell left an enduring imprint on numerous aspects of Chinese modern thought and society.

Russell arrived in China at a pivotal moment in history, when the fogs of war which obscured the illuminating and bright rays of progress in the Western sky had finally begun to clear, and the dormant reformatory and emancipatory potential of Chinese intellectuals, to import and implement the knowledge and experience from the rest of the world, was finally able to reveal

itself. By the year 1919, the progressive intellectuals, social theoreticians and educated youth who gathered around Chinese academic centres and in metropolitan cities were at the same time brimming with patriotic sentiments and national awareness and on the other hand yearning for modern ideas and social reforms coming from the West. When the winds of the May Fourth movement rose from the streets of Beijing and swept through most significant Chinese urban centres, the main intellectual currents in Chinese intellectuals' search for modernity had started to consolidate as many found their adherences or objections to one or the other school of thought from the West. For a brief period of time, the various factions which had formed in the recent years were unified under one single banner of liberty, reform and progress. Through constant engagement with the objectivist worldviews coming from the West, a common belief in the potency and utmost importance of two symbolic figures from contemporary Western thought was gradually established: the first was the paragon of liberty, called "Mr. Democracy" (*De xiansheng* 德先生) and the other personified a profound knowledge about the universe and the ability to wield control over nature, called "Mr. Science" (*Sai xiansheng* 賽先生). The unextinguishable desire for progress and the new, which manifested in the New Culture Movement (*Xin wenhua yundong* 新文化運動), which reached its apex in the early 1920s, had inadvertently pushed the Chinese intellectual world towards the reality of the cultural and intellectual rifts which underpinned the Chinese, as it were, expropriation or adoption of Western ideas. From the chasm which the Chinese intellectuals thus found underneath their feet, a deep sense of cognitive dissonance ensued, which revealed that the majority of them were still deeply immersed in what they referred to as traditional thinking. The dilemmas which arose from the internal ideological schisms were experienced as a deep spiritual crisis. It could be argued that the intensity of the crisis emanated from the fact that the majority of Chinese intellectuals who professed their break with the Confucian past and determination to replace the outdated tradition with modern alternatives, could not avoid using the "traditional" perception and manner of thinking (epistemology and ethics) as the compass and the traditional cosmologies (ontology) as the map used in their mental travels to the West.

Hence, while they dreamt about advancing Chinese culture onto a higher "evolutionary" plane (Darwin's theory of evolution was extremely popular in Chinese modernist discourse from late 19<sup>th</sup> century on), at the same time the very concept of evolution was probably understood in a profoundly holistic, traditional way. The same holism underlay the Chinese scholars' understanding of the nature and value of philosophical and scientific theories, where the

universality of the principles (*li* 理) they postulated and, more importantly, the universality of their beneficial practical effects, was understood as the main criterion of their truth. In that way, as with the sages of old, the true knowledge of the universe would necessarily manifest itself in human ethical disposition. A natural corollary to that was that the scientific method, social theory, philosophy, ethics, economy and so on, were all different manifestations of one single principle. Consequently, although the Chinese intellectuals believed that they took part in a meta-cultural reformation of the identity of the Chinese scholar, what they were still clinging to was an image deeply rooted in the Chinese past. Or, in the words of Charlotte Furth:

When faced with fundamental questions about nature, the average Chinese intellectual of the early twentieth century, whether sympathetic toward science or not, thought that some form of speculative cosmology supplied the kind of answer required. Moreover, he believed that a philosophical question at some point had to involve a question about ethics, and he remained insensitive to the internal guidelines to thought provided by Western logical forms, unless these forms were interpretable in a strictly empirical fashion. This being the case, he tended to make the theories of science into systems of belief, using the concepts suggested by those theories – he came to social Darwinism before he came to the science of biology, and he talked of the mechanistic universe before he examined the laws of mechanics. (Furth 1970, 133)

Although such descriptions cannot be accepted at face value and assumed to have been generally true, the above excerpt still represents a good approximation of a specific re-emerging and thus average segment of Chinese intellectual discourse of the 1910s. Furth’s characterization would also explain the special fascination of Chinese intellectuals for the most profoundly methodological aspects of Western science, such as logic, as well as a widely held notion of logic in the 1920s, which attributed to its most advanced branches the ability to solve all problems of humanity (see Zhang Shenfu 1919a-c).

Thus, in 1919, when a spirit of optimism permeated the Chinese intellectual climate and a promise of impending change endowed young intellectuals with fresh energy to invest in their pursuit of new knowledge, some of the most notable members of the intellectual elite, such as Liang Qichao (梁啟超, 1873-1929), Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培, courtesy name Zhongshen 仲申, 1868-1940), and others, recognized the necessity of the systematic import of Western knowledge to China. Apart from promoting the recruitment of Western-educated scholars to Chinese universities and stimulating

the translation of Western scholarly literature, they also started inviting the most influential Western scholars to China, hoping that a closer view of their teachings might shed some light on which path Chinese society should take on its way towards a modern existence. An important orientational force behind the introductions of the philosophical worldviews of choice were the young Chinese scholars who in the previous two decades had had the chance to study at, first, Japanese and, later, Western universities and whose scholarly formation took place within the intellectual environment of the West. Thus in 1919, owing to the influence of a few professors at Peking University, who had obtained their training at Columbia University in New York, the first person invited to lecture in China was the American pragmatist John Dewey (1859-1952). Shortly afterwards, a few prominent members of the Peking University and Chinese Progressive Party (*Jinbudang* 進步黨) issued an invitation to Bertrand Russell.

The following text aims at giving a general overview of Russell's visit in China: from the general circumstances and influences leading to his invitation in May 1920, to the main aspects of his stay and the content of his lectures in China, from October 1920 to July 1921.

## 1 The Background: From the Idea to Invitation and Organization

Although the reasons why the Lecture Society invited Russell to China might have been more complex than appears at the first sight, Suzanne P. Ogden's relatively early attempt at re-evaluating the impact of Russell's visit on Chinese intellectual developments in the early 1920s states that a direct impetus for inviting him to China might have been given by Dewey himself in his lectures at Peking University in March 1920 (Ogden 1982, 532). In a series of lectures on modern trends in Western philosophy, Dewey mentioned Russell as one of "three great philosophers of our day" (*ibid.*), the other two being James and Bergson. According to Ogden, these lectures influenced the subsequent decision by Liang Qichao – who in this was assisted by Zhang Shenfu – to invite both Bergson and Russell to come to lecture in China (*ibid.*).

Below the surface of the periodical publications from the time, the twists and turns of intellectual trends and the webs of personal influences formed a more complex pattern. Combined with a critically collated retrospective accounts, given by the members of the key circle of Chinese intellectuals, the written documents from the time (from articles to official papers) suggest



that the main reasons behind Russell’s invitation to China must be sought at many different levels and places at the same time. On the one hand, the decision to invite Russell to China was a product of the views of particular senior intellectuals such as Liang Qichao and Cai Yuanpei on the current needs of Chinese intellectual world, while on the other hand the main impetus or affirmation for the invitation emanated from internal developments in the Chinese intellectual world, where, following the May Fourth events in 1919, the tensions between different intellectual currents and ideological factions started to gradually intensify. In other words, the reasons why Russell was invited to China can be found both in the internal Chinese intellectual discourse as well as the external developmental trends in science and philosophy in the West. Observed from another perspective, apart from particular worldview-related divisions, at the time the major divisions between Chinese intellectuals were related to the exact degree and manner to which these internal and external factors should interact in China’s quest for its modern identity.

### 1.1 National Peking University – Cai Yuanpei and Zhang Shenfu

By the year 1919, an important platform which some of the most popular intellectual currents of the time took as their stage was the prestigious National Peking University. Under Cai Yuanpei, who was appointed its president in December 1916, the university became a paragon of a modern institute of higher education, which followed the principles of universal academic inclusiveness, in the framework of which all disciplines and theories of science were to enjoy unconditional “toleration and inclusion” (*jianrong bingbao* 兼容並包) (see Lin 2005; 2012, 131-138). Although Cai’s policy opened the door to a variety of social and philosophical theories and worldviews, which would otherwise not necessarily survive the political trials of the time, such as most notably socialism or Marxism, at the same time departments such as that of philosophy could not avoid succumbing to the influence of most strongly represented philosophical theories or more general theoretical tendencies, such as, for example, American pragmatism. It was exactly the abovementioned openness to the knowledge of the entire world, embodied in Cai Yuanpei’s policy of the increasing recruitment of Western educated scholars, which, by 1919, led to a wave of pragmatism at the department of philosophy. Under the influence of Hu Shi (胡適, courtesy name 適之, 1891-1962) and Jiang Menglin (蔣夢麟, original name Mengxiong 蒙熊, courtesy name Zhaoxian 兆賢, 1886-1964), both of whom earned their doctoral degrees from Columbia University in New York, the transtemporal and trans-discursive balance

endeavoured for by Cai was heavily disrupted in favour of pragmatism. As a result, in early 1919 the renowned American pragmatist John Dewey was invited to China, to assume the post of a visiting professor at the Department of Philosophy at Peking University.

The initial enthusiasm for Dewey's pragmatism, which filled the atmosphere at the university during the initial months following his arrival, was soon replaced by open disappointment and criticism coming from the lines of more progressive students and adherents of contesting schools of Western philosophy at the university, most notably the more leftist members of the New Culture Movement (*Xin wenhua yundong* 新文化運動) at the university gathered around Li Dazhao (李大釗, 1889-1927), Chen Duxiu (陳獨秀, 1879-1942), Zhang Shenfu (張申府, original name Songnian 崧年, 1893-1986) and others. On the other hand, amongst the senior members of Chinese intelligentsia, the excessive "Americanization" or "pragmatization" of the Peking University as the central stage of Chinese intellectual progress was also critically received by the proponents of the balanced expropriation of Western knowledge to serve the cause of Chinese modernity, which also included a few the members of the Progressive Party (*Jinbudang* 進步黨) headed by Liang Qichao and others.

Consequently, through the gradual introduction of formal logic on one side and empiricist philosophy and scientific method on the other, the leftist intellectuals at Peking University received a potential philosophical foundation for their opposition against the strong pragmatist current building up at the Department of Philosophy. This rise of the significance of science-based philosophy coincided with the overall popularization of the general notion of science and its practical applications in Chinese public discourse, which was spearheaded by the members of the China Science Society (*Kexueshe* 科學社) and their journal *Kexue* 科學 (*Science*). The significance of the scientization of the philosophical discourse was also the underlying reason for the general disappointment with the solutions offered by the pragmatist worldview of Dewey, which came along with his experimentalist logical method which only slightly resembled the refined machinery and scientific (mathematical) form of symbolic logic. At the same time, the same idea of scientific foundations was also adopted by the original Marxist intellectuals at Peking University, amongst whom both Russell's philosophy as well as his extremely modern version of formal logic (mathematical logic) had first gained popularity. The credit for the initial introduction of Russell's philosophy and mathematical logic amongst the leftist circles of philosophers goes to Zhang Shenfu (張申府, original name Songnian 崧年, 1893-1986), and indirectly and to a

much lesser degree also to his professor of logic at Peking University, Zhang Shizhao (章士釗, courtesy name Xingyan 行巖, 1881-1973). Zhang allegedly already discovered Russell back in 1916, when he was still a student of mathematics at the university (Zhang Shenfu 1993, 85-7). Subsequently, Zhang changed his subject to philosophy and started studying logic and Western philosophy.<sup>1</sup> In 1918, Zhang became a close colleague of Li Dazhao, under whom he worked at the Peking University Library and with whom he co-founded the Communist cell in Beijing. Between 1918 and 1919 Zhang delivered regular lectures on modern logic and probably also on Russell’s philosophy of logic at the university’s Red Building (*Honglou* 紅樓), a gathering place of progressive leftist students (Zhang 1993, 92). Later, in 1918, Zhang also assumed the post of a lecturer in mathematics and logic at Peking University’s preparatory school. His strong advocacy of Russell’s philosophy and the notion of mathematical logic earned Zhang the reputation of the foremost expert and adherent of Russell at the university, as well as in China. Thus, when in late 1919 and first half of 1920 Dewey and his adherents started openly criticizing Russell, Zhang was the person who defended his foreign “idol’s” position against these attacks. Probably the most important domain in which Zhang advanced both Russell’s thought and the notion of mathematical logic as the indispensable components of a modern worldview was within the circle of his friends and close colleagues, who included many important intellectual figures of Republican China, such as Liang Shuming (梁漱溟, 1893-1988), Luo Jialun (羅家倫, 1897-1969), Fu Sinian (傅斯年, 1896-1950), Gu Jiegang (顧頡剛, 1893-1980), Chen Duxiu, Zhang Shizhao and, last but not least, Cai Yuanpei. It is highly probable that Zhang Shenfu’s spreading of Russell’s ideas made a deep impression on Cai, who seems to have been the first person who started actively working on the idea of inviting Russell to come to lecture at the university.

## 1.2 Fu Tong, Liang Qichao and the Lecture Society

Following the end of the “Great War” (World War I), Cai Yuanpei made a few important moves which set in motion the entire undertaking of inviting Russell to China, the first of which was inviting the young Chinese philosopher Fu Tong (傅銅, courtesy name Peiqing 佩青, 1886-1970) to join the university as a member of the Department of Philosophy. Fu was one of the few young Chinese scholars to have obtained their undergraduate training

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1 In the framework of his postgraduate studies of mathematics, Zhang focused on the Cantorian set theory. (Zhang Shenfu 1918a/b; Guoli Beijing daxue 1917)

in philosophy from British universities, having studied at those of Oxford and Birmingham. Finally, in 1917, Fu was awarded a master's degree in philosophy from the University of Birmingham for a thesis entitled "A Criticism of Pragmatism", which was allegedly co-supervised by Russell himself<sup>2</sup> (see Shi Yong 2012, 96-7; Fang & Wang 1994, 139-140). Although the exact time and circumstances of the abovementioned invitation are still rather unclear,<sup>3</sup> what can be confirmed is that by early 1920 Fu was at Peking University and fully engaged in organizing Russell's visit in China. Apart from fact that the incentive to invite Russell apparently came from Cai Yuanpei himself, Fu's educational philosophical orientation – in addition to having been a follower of the New Realist school of philosophy and an advocate of scientific objectivism, Fu was also a fervent critic of pragmatism, probably also reveals Cai attempt to restore balance and address the issue theoretical favouritism at Peking University's Department of Philosophy. This tendency and intention is further confirmed by the fact that, following Russell's visit to China, Fu continued teaching Western philosophy at the university.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, it was Fu Tong who on behalf of Peking University, in April 1920, shortly upon his return from one year in Europe, visited Liang Qichao at his residence

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- 2 The sources do not agree on this part. While Shi Yong (2012, 96) writes that Fu's thesis was supervised by Russell, the *Biographical Dictionary of Higher Education in Modern China* (2012, 621), on the other hand, states that Fu studied under Russell only upon his graduation from University of Birmingham. Finally, Ding Zijiang (2016, 167) and others (Guo Lanfang and Zhang Xiulong 2006 etc.) claim that in 1913 Fu wrote a letter to Russell, in which he expressed his wish to study philosophy under him.
  - 3 Fang Keli and Wang Qishui (1994, 140), for example, mistakenly claim that Fu graduated in 1913 and returned to China soon afterwards – the date of Fu's thesis (1917), which can be found in the archives of University of Birmingham, confirms otherwise. On the other hand, Shi Yong (2012, 96) mistakenly claims that in 1918 Cai Yuanpei travelled to England where he personally extended the invitation to both Fu and Russell. But from biographies we learn that in 1918 Cai was not in Europe at all (see Gao 1980; Sun 1986; Xiao 1999). What is attested is that Fu was invited to assume the post of lecturer in history of modern Western philosophy at Peking University, which he was to assume in the academic year 1919/20. Nevertheless, it seems that he arrived in Beijing only at the beginning of the year 1920 (see Guoli Beijing daxue, 1919). Fu probably worked at the university until 1924, when he became the dean of the Northwestern University. He returned to Peking University in 1929 (Fang & Wang 1994, 98).
  - 4 Shi Yong 2012, 97. Following the year 1921, the curriculum at the department was also reorganized in favour of science-based philosophical worldviews and modern logic, including the philosophy of Bertrand Russell. At the level of the basic curriculum, this temporary curricular turnover was carried out by Wang Xinggong (王星拱, 1888-1949), another advocate of "scientization" of modern Chinese philosophy and proponent of the use of science-based analytical method at the department. Wang was also one of the key translators of Russell's work in the 1920s China.

in Tianjin to discuss the question of inviting Russell to China (Zhang Yuzheng 2014, 113). At that time, Liang was already not only familiar with the "great three philosophers" of the West, but was probably also greatly interested in the pacifistic social theory and scientific philosophy of Russell (cf. Chang Hao 1971). It is almost certain that Liang became familiar with the current philosophical discourse in the West, which included the work and thought of such prominent figures as Russell and Bergson, during his year in Europe. In contrast with his interest and admiration of Russell, Liang was not so much in favour of pragmatism, which he saw as the root cause of the extensive Americanization of Chinese academia, which greatly undermined the idea of the unbiased and balanced Chinese adoption of Western knowledge as envisaged by Liang.<sup>5</sup> In that way, one of the main positive effects Liang recognized in the idea of Russell's visit in China was to set it as a counterbalance against the excessive Americanization of Chinese philosophy (Levenson 1953, 201). Most importantly, by the request of Liang and his close associate Zhang Junmai (張君勱, 1887-1969), as early as in 1919, when both were still on their travels in Europe, their junior associate Zhang Dongsun (張東蓀), who took over the editorship of their journal *Liberation and Reform* (*Jiefang yu gaizao* 解放與改造) in their absence, started extensively introducing the thought of Russell and Bergson in the publication (Zhang Yuzheng 2014, 113; Zuo Yuhe 1998, 101). Thus in 1919, in Liang Qichao's absence Zhang Dongsun wrote or commissioned a number of articles introducing mainly Russell's (*Luoseer* 羅塞爾) political philosophy, which also included translations from Russell's critically acclaimed work *Proposed Roads to Freedom: Socialism, Anarchism and Syndicalism* from 1918.<sup>6</sup>

As such, when in April 1920 Fu Tong and the president of the China College (*Zhongguo gongxue* 中國公學) Wang Jingfang (王敬芳) visited Liang to seek his support for inviting Russell to China, the latter was just in the middle of realizing a number of ideas which he gathered during his recent visit in Europe. These were mainly related to the ways and sources for the dissemination

5 See "Welcome Speech for Russell at the Chinese Lecture Society (1920)" pp. 65-69.

6 In 1919 and 1920, the texts were translated by the renowned Chinese writer and literary criticist Mao Dun (茅盾, original name Shen Dehong 沈德鴻, courtesy name Yanshui 雁水, 1896-1981). Zhang Dongsun's articles on Russell from 1919 included "Russell's Political Ideals" (*Luoseer de zhengzhi lixiang* 羅塞爾的政治理想), "Why do We Have to Speak about Socialism?" (*Women weishenme yao jiang shehui zhuyi?* 我們為什麼要講社會主義?), and "The Third Kind of Civilization" (*Disan zhong wenming* 第三種文明). In 1920, the journal also published commentaries on individual chapters of Russell's work *Principles of Social Reconstruction*. The years 1919 and 1920 also saw the publication of several articles interpreting Russell's concept of "guild socialism" (translated either as *jierte shehui zhuyi* 基爾特社會主義 or *gonghang shehui zhuyi* 工行社會主義).

of Western science and philosophy in China. For the very same purpose, in March 1920, together with the circle of his associates, he initiated the reorganization of their former society *Xinxuehui* 新學會 (New Academic Society) into the Communal Education Society (*Gongxueshe* 共學社),<sup>7</sup> and their main publication the *Liberation and Reform* into the journal *Reform* (*Gaizao* 改造).<sup>8</sup> Liang also took over the control of the China College. Thus, the main reason why, in their initiative to invite Russell to China, Cai Yuanpei and Fu Tong consulted Liang was to obtain both organizational and financial support from his reformed organization(s). After they received Liang's approval, the task of sending the official invitation to Russell was taken over by Peking University, which was also the official host of Russell's visit in China. Most importantly, the official invitation letter was written and signed by Fu himself (May 1920) – though its content might not necessarily have been decided by Fu himself.<sup>9</sup> Suzanne Ogden, who had a chance to personally examine the letter, described its content as follows: "The invitation seemed to express primary interest in Russell's theory on mathematics and logic and suggested that although the writer did not know precisely what Russell's social and political views were, he would be welcome to lecture on them as well as on his theoretical philosophy" (Ogden 1982, 533). At the same time, the letter also recognized Russell as a social reformer (*ibid.*),<sup>10</sup> which, in eyes of the general

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- 7 The main motto of the society was "to foster new talent, propagate a new culture and pioneer new politics", while their main objectives included editing new books, supporting authors, and helping prospective students to enrol into Western universities. (Zuo Yuhe 1998, 101).
- 8 The journal became the source of a major controversy in socialist circles, because under the editorship of Liang Qichao and Zhang Dongsun, the main aim of the journal was the propagation of "moderate socialism" (*wenhe de shehui zhuyi* 溫和的社會主義), an essentially non-Marxist version of scientific socialism. Since this was exactly this kind of socialism which Zhang and Liang had attributed to Russell (Zuo Yuhe 1998, 129), it seems as if the journal was set up to echo Russell's reformist ideas. This unconventional departure from the mainstream idea of a revolutionary form of socialism prompted many critical responses from Chen Duxiu and other Communists (see *ibid.*, 103-125 etc.). Chen, for example, wrote regularly on Russell and the problem of reforms and socialism in his "Random Thoughts" (Suigan lu 隨感錄) article series, published in the *New Youth* (1920/1). The "polemics on socialism" which consequently developed between these two factions not only coincided with Russell's visit to China, but eventually also came to absorb Russell's notion of guild socialism. The latter also significantly influenced Zhang Dongsun's vision of socialism.
- 9 Probably because of the uncertainty related to Russell's current affiliation (he was reinstated as a fellow at Trinity College, Cambridge only in 1920), the letter was addressed to J. H. Muirhead, a professor at the University of Birmingham (probably one of Fu's former professors) and a close acquaintance of Russell. Today, the letter is held as part of the main collection of the Russell Archives (Ogden 1982, 532).
- 10 Feng (1994, 99) mentions that, regarding the content of the proposed lectures at Peking University, Fu was inviting Russell to lecture on any topic related to philosophy, science, and politics.

Chinese public at the time, may have denoted a person of inherently humane (*ren* 仁) character, who understands the underlying patterns (*li* 理) of the universe, and directs all his efforts to establishing harmony between nature and humanity by propagating wisdom (*zhi* 智) and commonality (*gong* 公, "impartiality, common justice"). This idea of Russell as a scholar of outstanding moral character and a most insightful scientist was highly reminiscent of the traditional idea of a sagely person (*shengren* 聖人) akin to Confucius. Curiously, when Russell finally arrived in China it was exactly the unyielding ethical persona of Russell, as an immediate result of his scholarly excellence, which eventually attracted most attention in Chinese public. Moreover, this image of Russell as a scientific social reformist (*shehui gaizao* 社會改造) was completely in line with Liang Qichao's ideas related to the current Chinese intellectual needs.

Not long after the official invitation was issued, the university received a telegram from Russell, confirming his arrival in China in October. Consequently, in July 1920, a public announcement was issued by the university, announcing Russell's forthcoming visit.<sup>11</sup> Whilst Fu and others were preparing the stage at the university, Liang and his associates took over the challenge of financing and organizing Russell's visit in China. Firstly, the Communal Education Society together with some private donors were endeavouring to raise the financial means needed to cover the costs for Russell's travel and stay in China, including the 2,000 pounds salary promised to him in the letter of invitation. For the same purpose, in September 1920 Liang and his associates established the Lecture Society (*Jiangxueshe* 講學社), which was about to take over the formal role as the official institution organizing and financing Russell's journey and stay at Peking University.<sup>12</sup> Otherwise, for the purpose of organizing the trip a joint committee was formed of representatives from the Shangzhi Academic Society (*Shangzhi xuehui* 尚志學會), Peking University, Communal Education Society and China College in Shanghai. At its first meeting, which took place on August 30<sup>th</sup> in Beijing, the joint organizational

11 One of the newspaper articles that announced Russell's visit also mentioned Dewey's recent lectures, in which he described Russell as one of three great Western philosophers. (See "*Yingguo zhexuejia Luosu jiang lai Hua* 英國哲學家羅素將來花 [The English Philosopher Russell Will Come to China]")

12 The member of the society, who was also responsible for organizing Russell's stay in China was Liang Qichao's right hand, Zhang Dongsun, who was also in charge of collecting and raising donations needed to subsidise Russell's, Dewey's, Driesch and Tagore's stay in China. Beside the Chinese Ministry of education, which allegedly contributed about 20000 yuan each year, Russell's stay in China was financed by more than 30 donors. (See Xu Yibao 2003, 183; Zuo Yuhe 1998, 103-4)

committee elected Zhao Yuanren (趙元任, Yuen Ren Chao, 1892-1982), Ding Wenjiang (丁文江, courtesy name Zaijun 在君, 1887-1936), Qin Fen (秦汾, 1882-1973) and Ye Jingshen (葉景莘, 1881-1986) as Russell's official interpreters – although ultimately Zhao took over the task of the chief translator, and Tao Lügong (陶履恭, also called Tao Menghe 陶孟和, 1887-1960) and Fu Tong as his attendants (see “*Taolun huanying Luosu shixiang*” 1920). At the same time, the organisations and individuals involved in Russell's visit in China started introducing his work and personality to Chinese public.

### 1.3 A Short Period of Introduction

In the few months before Russell's arrival in China, the stage for his visit was prepared by a small number of authors, who introduced different aspects of Russell's thought to the general Chinese readership. One such author was probably the most ardent follower of Russell's philosophy in China, Zhang Shenfu. Already from 1919 on, Zhang was publishing articles introducing different aspects of Russell's philosophy, his views on society and his methodology (analytical method, mathematical logic etc.). Most importantly, in the few months before Russell's arrival, Zhang published a great number of translations from his texts as well as a few articles introducing Russell's life and work.<sup>13</sup> Amongst others, Zhang's articles and translations were also published in the renowned *New Youth* (*Xin qingnian* 新青年) magazine, which devoted two special issues entirely to Russell (Vol. 8, No. 2 and No. 3) – altogether more than 20 articles and translations were published. Later in the same year, Zhang also published an exhaustive bibliography entitled “A Tentative Bibliography of Russell's Published Works” (*Shi bian Luosu jikan zhuzuo mulu* 試編羅素既刊著作目錄) in the same magazine. Other leading Chinese periodicals, where, in the initial months, special sections were given over to discussions of Russell's thought included the *Eastern Miscellany* (*Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌) (around 30 articles and translations), the *Young China* (*Shaonian Zhongguo* 少年中國) (mainly by Zhang Shenfu), the *Xinghua* 興華 journal (mainly commentaries), and Liang Qichao's journal *Reform* (*Gaizao* 改造) and the *Awakening* (*Juewu* 覺悟), a supplement to the *Republic Daily* (*Minguo ribao* 民國日報) newspaper. While *Reform* focused more on Russell's political thought, *New Youth* and *Eastern Miscellany* also contained articles on Russell's theoretical philosophy and his views on science and logic.<sup>14</sup>

13 See Zhang Shenfu pp. 101-164.

14 Authors who published in the *New Youth* include Chen Duxiu (on the problem of socialism), Wang Xinggong and Zhang Shenfu; authors who wrote for the *Eastern Miscellany* include Pan Gongzhan (潘公展), Yang Duanliu (楊端六), Hu Yuzhi (胡愈之) and Zhang Shenfu.



## 2 The Advent of the “New Confucius” – Russell’s Arrival in China

Russell arrived in Shanghai on October 12<sup>th</sup> (1920).<sup>15</sup> He was accompanied by his new, extramarital partner - who was later to become his second wife, the feminist and socialist activist Dora Black (1894-1986). One day later, on October 13<sup>th</sup>, a special welcome banquet was given by a few Shanghai educational institutes,<sup>16</sup> held at the Great Eastern Hotel (Gu Runqing 1920). The banquet was attended by several important dignitaries and members of the Chinese intellectual elite, including those who were in any way involved either in the invitation or organization of Russell’s subsequent stay in China. In his welcome address, the representative of the organizations that hosted the banquet, Shen Xinqing (沈信卿, Enfu 恩孚, 1864-1944),<sup>17</sup> said that:

If Russell is a great English philosopher, he is also a great philosopher of the World. His philosophy has got many points in common with the teachings of China’s forefathers... If Russell has come to China to advocate reformist thought, this is even more deeply in accord with China’s present mentality...

In the second address, Zhu Jinzhi (朱進之, 1888-1923) remarked:

Today China should rejoice. There are three reasons for this: (1) China is the world’s most ancient country; (2) As the first republic in Asia, China is also one of the world’s newest states; (3) Today, Russell, one of the greatest philosophers in the world, has come to visit... China’s greatest disgrace is the underdevelopment of its education; because China has

15 *Xinwen bao* 新聞報, October 13 (1920), 3. In the contemporary scholarship – especially the earliest more extensive studies on Russell and Chinese modernity, there seems to have been some confusion around the exact day of his arrival in Shanghai. Quoting Zhang Shenfu, Vera Schwarcz (1991-2, 126), for example, claimed that Russell had already arrived in Shanghai on October 8<sup>th</sup>. Apart from the local newspapers that reported on the occasion, the most relevant biographical accounts which also explain the problem related the exact date of arrival, were that of Russell’s official translator Zhao Yuanren (1997) and the person who accompanied him on his initial travels in China, Zhang Dongsun. Zhang’s biography (Zuo Yuhe 1998, 104) reveals that in the weeks before Russell’s arrival, Liang Qichao had notified Zhang in a letter that the arrival of the ship Porthos had been rescheduled from October 8<sup>th</sup> to October 12<sup>th</sup>.

16 Jiangsu Educational Association (*Jiangsu sheng jiaoyuhui* 江蘇省教育會), China College, China Vocational Educational Association (*Zhonghua zhiye jiaoyushe* 中華職業教育社), Progressive Association (*Gongjinhui* 共進會), Christian Association for Saving the Nation (*Jidujiao jiguohui* 基督教救國會), etc.

17 Shen was the father of two renowned Chinese scholars: the philosopher, logician and educationist, Shen Youqian (沈有乾) and the mathematical logician and philosopher of logic, Shen Youding (沈有鼎).

always worshipped philosophers in the same way as the Chinese people worship Confucius. But the learning of Confucius is not appropriate to be practiced today. I hope, therefore, that today a new Confucius will arise. Russell, who is present here today, is almost like a new Confucius! I hope that he will work diligently to realize the cause of the new Confucius! (“Huanyan da zhexuejia Luosu ji” 1920)

Although, upon his arrival to China, Shen Xingqing and Zhu Yanzhi welcomed Russell as the “second Confucius” (Xu Yibao 2003, 183), naturally this was not a generally held notion, though occasionally comparisons between the two were indeed made by others who also admired either Russell’s work or persona. Usually, such comparisons came from the ranks of leftist political theoreticians, activists, or philosophers. In some cases, the admiration for Russell was not motivated by his image as a fervent social reformer, but was rather induced by his scientific results, mainly those related to logic and the analytic method. Such admiration was usually reserved for intellectuals engaged in research into modern Western philosophy, science and mathematics, all those who maintained an interest in such matters. Moreover, different factions and adherents of different social theories reacted to what they were told or knew about Russell in different ways. Some proponents of pragmatism (Bergson and Dewey), who were previously not familiar with Russell, recognized in him an ally in their common struggle against Bolshevism and materialism (such as, for example, Zhang Dongsun 張東蓀)<sup>18</sup>. Several introductions, translations and outlines were printed in key journals of the various Chinese ideological factions. Critiques directed against Russell came from proponents of Dewey’s philosophy, who recognized in Russell an opponent to their worldview, one that had recently been strengthened by Dewey’s visit in China.<sup>19</sup> Generally speaking, there was a tendency among Chinese Marxist intellectuals to defend Russell against attacks from their opponents, namely philosophers with more traditional views who were gathering around

18 For example: the public (written) debate between Zhang Shenfu on one side and Zhang Dongsun and Liang Shuming on the other (see Schwarcz 1991/2, 134-139). Zhang Dongsun also wrote a series of articles about logicism, which he considered the fundamental feature of Russell’s philosophy, and the ‘unified’ philosophical worldview of New Realism. He wanted to show that Russell’s “new logicism” is not epistemologically consistent with his logicism, while the latter *per se* represents a scientific method embodied in logic and has a scientific value equal to Einstein’s theory of relativity (see Zhang Dongsun 1922; 1923, 58).

19 The Progressive Party, which was the main agent in Russell’s visit in China, was at that time already ideologically divided. Its members “held heterogeneous political views ranging from guild socialism and democratic socialism to capitalism and constitutionalism” (Ogden 1982, 534). Even Liang Qichao, the member of the party who was most interested in Russell’s teachings, had moved to the liberal camp (see Chang Hao 1971).

Dewey.<sup>20</sup> Naturally, in these confrontations, the defence of Russell was centred on the fact that the objectivity of his teaching on problems related to ethics and society stemmed from his knowledge of the natural world, which he could only have attained with the use of a more objective methodology: mathematical logic or the method of analysis. On the other hand, most of those members of the public who sought in Russell the paragon of a revolutionary were less academic in the manner in which they perceived him. After having listened to a short speech delivered by Russell on the occasion of the welcome reception in Shanghai,<sup>21</sup> the young leftist thinker and activist Li Zhenying (李震瀛, 1900-1938) noted:

Just because we have lost our hopes about Dr. Dewey, we must not despair about Russell. We must recognize that, nowadays, Russell is one of the most thorough social reformists. Because he repeatedly also received lessons from the government, he cannot but have a thorough (perfect) awareness (*juewu* 覺悟, “enlightenment”) ... I have a deep admiration for Russell’s personal character. In the turbulent times of the Great War, when governments and capitalists of all countries were all behaving like ferocious beasts, he was willing to sacrifice everything to be able to declare himself as a “conscientious objector” (*liangxin de dikangzhe* 良心的抵抗者) and openly oppose the war. Because of that he was sentenced to a half year in prison. This sentence, however, was not only incapable of harming him, but, quite the opposite, made him to gain a more complete realization and become an extreme reformist – an anarchist scholar. (Li 1920, 1)

As already mentioned above, Russell’s chief interpreter for his entire time in China was Zhao Yuanren. Zhao was deemed the most appropriate person for this task, because he was one of only two Chinese scholars who held a PhD related to mathematical logic (the other was Yu Dawei (俞大維, 1897-1993)).<sup>22</sup> The decision was probably also grounded in the understanding of

20 Zhao Yuanren mentioned that the more specialized audience attending Russell’s lectures were: “Those with interest in science, mathematics and philosophy, and also those interested in his revolutionary social ideals.” (Zhao 1977, 62). On the question which “revolutionary social idea” was more interesting to the Chinese audience, Zhao answered, “I suppose it was his advocacy of some sort of socialism” (ibid.)

21 Russell held a short speech in which he addressed the problem of reforms in China. The speech was published in *Chenbao* on November 16<sup>th</sup> (1920).

22 In 1918, Zhao was awarded a PhD degree in philosophy from Harvard University. His doctoral dissertation “Continuity: A Study in Methodology” in part also discussed the notion of infinity from the perspective of mathematical logic as established in Russell’s and Whitehead’s *Principia Mathematica* and other related sources (symbolic logic). Although in the years immediately following his return to China Zhao was still lecturing on philosophy and general logic, later he gradually turned to linguistics (see Zhao Yuanren 1977, 43).

the main organizers in China that Russell was a profoundly scientific figure, whose highly logical and scientific manner of expression required an expert in the field of mathematical logic. Apart from Zhao and Fu Tong, the Lecture Society and Communal Education Society also sent Zhang Dongsun, who was to accompany Russell as the main representative of the society organizing the visit. Zhang Shenfu took part in the welcome reception in Shanghai as the representative of Peking University.

### 3 A Lecture Tour across China – From Shanghai to Beijing

Russell delivered his first lecture only a few days after he arrived in Shanghai. On October 15<sup>th</sup>, he gave a short lecture on the “Principles of Social Reform” at China College in Shanghai. The event, which was moderated by Fu Tong and translated by Zhao Yuanren, was attended by more than 100 people.<sup>23</sup> As already indicated by its title, the lecture was based on Russell’s book *Principles of Social Reconstruction* from 1916. The lecture revolved mainly around Russell’s key-concepts of possessive and creative impulses and the vital importance of distinguishing between them for Chinese social development. Most importantly, in the lecture Russell stated that to reach the final goals of social and spiritual reconstruction, China must not embark upon the path of socialist revolution immediately, but first focus on developing and strengthening its economy (industry and commerce), while the best way to achieve such progress would be through trade associations – i.e. guild socialism (Russell 1920a, 23-5).

One day later, Russell was invited to deliver a lecture at the Jiangsu Educational Association. This time, he was invited to lecture on education-related topics. In a lecture entitled “The Effects of Education”, Russell pointed out that education has got three main goals: to produce professionals, good citizens and good people. He further argued that Chinese education had a chance to fulfil all three goals as long as its education system remained in consonance with the needs of the people and professional requirements, and at the same time independent from politics. Russell also emphasized the importance of a unified system of education with a sound developmental policy. In the future development of their education system the Chinese ought to follow two guidelines: (1) avoid obstinately following the ancient

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23 See: “*Luosu yanjiang gaizao shehui yuanli* 羅素演講改造原理 (Russell Lectures on Principles of Social Reconstruction),” 17. The translation was originally published in the *Chenbao* 申報, two days after the event.

ways, while (2) seeking support for their future developments in studying their ancient culture. Russell also warned that China ought not to follow in the footsteps of Bolshevik Russia or even the general trends in Western higher education, where, according to Russell, the spiritual aspects were often given precedence over the material, and instead China should pay more closer attention to industrial (vocational) education, for industry and commerce are the main prerequisites for the progress of a nation. Apart from focusing more closely on supporting the needs of the economy, the Chinese education system ought also to attach more importance to universal education, providing elementary education to all citizens, irrespective of gender or class. Finally, the main prerequisite for China to embark upon a path of social reform was to provide good education for all its citizens. And only after its education system had produced good citizens and reformed their thought could the country hope to extend its reforms to politics and remaining aspects of society (“*Luosu yanshuo ‘Jiaoyu zhi gongyong’*” 1920).

Similar ideas were reiterated in Russell’s next two lectures. The first one, entitled “On the Problems of Education” (*jiaoyu wenti* 教育問題) was delivered on October 19<sup>th</sup> at Jiangsu First Normal School (*Diyi shifan* 第一師範) in Hangzhou. (Yuan Gang et al. 2004, 308; “*Luosu zai Hang zhi jiangyan*” 1920) On the next day (October 20<sup>th</sup>), Russell gave his second speech at the Jiangsu Educational Association. This time, his audience was a council comprised of representatives from all regional educational associations in China (“*Luosu yanjiang Zhongguo jiaoyu*” 1920). In his address to the leading educationalists of the country, Russell emphasized the importance of adopting a “new [type] of education”, which would be based on the scientific method, the main benefits of which would include: being more applicable (practical) than the old education, giving people the ability to use the forces of nature, and advancing human abilities (Yuan Gang et al. 2004, 7). He called upon his audience to create China’s new education system and science as a synthesis between Chinese and Western civilization, drawing from both the scientific method, with which they could research the phenomena of the universe, as well as the abstract method, which could be used to elaborate on the totality of scientific findings about the universe (*ibid.*).

Russell finally left Shanghai on October 21<sup>st</sup>, and in company of Dora Black, Dewey and an entourage of his Chinese assistants, set out overland towards the northern capital (Beijing). They made their first stop in Nanjing, where a reception was prepared for Russell at the seat of the Science Society. There, Russell delivered a short lecture outlining the main tenets of Einstein’s General Theory of Relativity. The lecture was entitled “Einstein’s New Theory

of Gravity” (*Aiyinsitan yinli xin shuo* 愛因斯坦引力新說) (Ibid., 9-11), and summarized Russell’s years long engagement with modern physics and the meaning of its theories, such as Einstein’s relativity, quantum mechanics and atomic physics, for modern philosophy. His fascination with Einstein’s theory of relativity resulted in the book *ABC of Relativity*, which was first published in the year 1925.

Their next important stop was Changsha, the capital of Hunan province, and the stronghold of Chinese Communist political activists – with the Communist Party of China (CPC) only officially founded in 1921. Russell’s visit to Changsha had been much anticipated by the proponents of socialism who were based there – including the young Mao Zedong – as they hoped to find in Russell a still living mentor and supporter of their cause in China. At the same time, they also probably anticipated that Russell would endow them with new knowledge about the objectivist foundation of socialism – Marxism defined itself as a scientific worldview. Thus, Russell’s dual image as a reformer and an unyielding fighter for liberty on one side, and a man of science and scholarly disposition on the other, held great promise for China’s leftist elite. Therefore, in the few days he spent in Changsha, Russell decided to give lectures on the topic at the very heart of his philosophical bearing towards the problems of Marxism (theory) and Bolshevism (its practical application in Russia) in the contemporary world. Only one year earlier Russell had had the chance to visit Russia, and upon his return to England wrote an essay which conveyed his highly critical attitude towards the results of the Bolshevik revolution. One year later, faced with an audience of enthusiastic Chinese proponents of Marxism and socialist revolution, Russell felt a deep sense of duty to expound on the drawbacks of Communism and the utter failure of Bolshevik revolution in Russia. Consequently, on October 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>, he delivered a series of four lectures entitled “Bolshevism and World Politics.” In the first, Russell described Bolshevism as simply a Russian attempt to implement Communism and not the latter *per se*. As such it contained a series of shortcomings, which include the underdevelopment and failure of industry and excessive use of repression and authority in its attempt to inculcate Communist ideas into the minds of the majority of the population. Aside from the precarious economic conditions in the country, the two other main points of Russell’s criticism of Bolshevism were related to its inherent lack of liberty and freedom of speech, as well as the fact that the majority of the population were not Communists, and that the Bolshevik solution to that problem included indoctrination of the masses rather than education. The second and third lectures followed Russell’s account of his visit in Russia

in 1919, which described the authoritarianism, dysfunctional economy and intellectual backwardness he witnessed there, as well as his interviews with Trotsky and Lenin, whom he described as having had no idea of liberty. The final lecture presented Russell's analysis of the problems and future of Communism. He stated out that in the following 50 years it could only succeed as a universal Communism. Finally, he pointed out that China must not follow the example of Russia and try to implement scientific Communism. He also warned China against the Bolshevik ambitions to dominate and rule over Asia (ibid., 12-27).<sup>24</sup> Although in his lectures Russell did not explicitly dwell upon his notion of guild socialism, which was an object of much debate and criticism among Chinese Communists long before his arrival in China, the Changsha lectures revealed profound disagreements between some of the most fervent Chinese followers of Communism and Russell.

Whilst in Changsha, the editor of the *Eastern Miscellany* review, the reformist and economist Yang Duanliu (楊端六, 1885-1966), conducted a few interviews with Russell, which mainly examined his views on the problems of Chinese society. The focal point of the conversation, which was later summarized in Yang's "Conversations with Mr. Russell" (*He Luosu xiansheng de tanhua* 和羅素先生的談話), revolved around the problems of implementing Russell's ideal of guild socialism in China, essentially because, on the one hand, the process would have to reduce the centralizing influence of the capitalist class, while on the other it would also require the rapid advancement of commerce and industry, and a radical change of mentality of the people that could only be attained through a mass education scheme (Yang Duanliu 1920, 14-6).

Russell's stay and lectures in Changsha prompted a turn in Chinese Communists' attitude towards him, which soon manifested in a series of critical accounts on Russell's political philosophy and his criticism of Bolshevik Russia, written by leading Chinese leftist intellectuals and published in periodicals like the *New Youth* and so on. Despite his initial failure to win over the majority of the Chinese Communist community, in the months to follow, Russell continued lecturing on the relationship between Bolshevism and Communism and his ideas related to the ideal form of socialism. These lectures, however, were conducted in a more diverse and cosmopolitan setting of Beijing, where Russell spent the rest of his time in China.

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24 The Chinese translation of the lectures was recorded by Li Jimin (李濟民) and Yang Wenmian (楊文冕) and published in the *Republic Daily* (November 3, 7, 8, and 9). A significantly edited and adapted English translation of Russell's lectures was published in Shanghai based *The China Press* on December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup> 1920.

## 4 Arrival in Beijing – Welcome Reception by the Lecture Society

Russell arrived in Beijing on October 31<sup>st</sup>. Following a reception by the representatives of the Peking University, Russell and Dora Black were accommodated at the same residential unit on the university as his translator, Zhao Yuanren.

The main welcome reception in Beijing took place at the Academy of Arts, on November 9<sup>th</sup>. The event was organized by one of the official hosts of Russell's visit in China, the recently established Lecture Society. At the event, which was attended by around 100 people, the main welcome speech was delivered by Liang Qichao. In his speech, Liang described Russell's visit to China as a part of the Lecture Society's endeavours to foster the "absolutely unrestricted and maximal import" of Western scholarship. Having compared China to a bare tree which had awakened from a long winter's sleep, Liang, however, prescribed a balanced and thoughtful approach to cultivating and nourishing its opening buds and flowers. He described Russell as a scholar able to make ideals truer to life, praising his outstanding moral character:

Because he is against wars, he was subjected to severe harassment of his country's government. Later, because of his spreading of the ideal of great harmony (*datong* 大同) and his resistance against nationalism, he was ultimately sentenced to six months in prison. The book *Roads to Freedom*, which we have all read, was completed in his first few days in prison. After he was released from custody, he continued spreading his ideology with even greater passion. This is the genuine bearing of an independent and fearless scholar, a towering figure of humanity's struggle for freedom. (*Jiangxueshe huanying Luosu zhi yanqi* 1920, 24)

As the most precious object Russell could bestow upon the Chinese people in their search for new culture and scholarship Liang named his research method, which he compared to the fingers of a well-known Chinese literary character, the immortal Lü Chunyang (呂純陽, Lü Dongbin 呂洞賓), who possessed the ability to turn stones into grains of gold. In a jocular manner, Liang remarked that:

At this very moment we also want Mr. Russell's fingers. And what exactly are his fingers? What we want him to bestow upon us is the method he himself uses in his scholarly research. If we will use his method in our research, we will naturally be able to obtain same kind of knowledge as him. By so doing, however, we shall not turn into a second Lü Chunyang. But will we be also able to turn stones into gold? I sincerely believe that Mr. Russell can understand and forgive the Chinese people's fervour for attaining erudition. (*Ibid.*)



To facilitate the access to “Russell’s fingers”, later in 1921, Liang Qichao’s Lecture Society founded the *Russell Monthly* journal and the *Russell Book Series*, which was published with the Commercial Press in Shanghai.

## 5 The Russell Monthly Journal and the Russell Series

The *Russell Monthly* (*Luosu yuekan* 羅素月刊) journal was founded in early 1921 by the Lecture Society in cooperation with some more visible members of Peking University and the circle of philosophers in Beijing.<sup>25</sup> The journal specialized on publishing Chinese articles on Russell’s thought, translations from Russell’s work and transcripts of Russell’s lectures and speeches in China. The editor-in-chief of the journal was Qu Shiyong (瞿世英, 1901-1976), a lecturer of modern Western philosophy at Peking University, who earned his PhD in philosophy from Harvard University. Another more visible contributor to the journal was the philosopher and Russell’s chief interpreter Zhao Yuanren. Although in 1921, when the journal was launched, a total of six issues were planned, in the end only four were actually published. The first, introductory issue contained a biography of Russell, a concise bibliography of his works, an article by Zhao Yuanren titled “The Spirit of Russell’s Philosophy”, transcripts of Russell’s lectures on the “The Analysis of Mind”, and an account of the welcome reception given by the Lecture Society in November 1920. The same structure content was retained throughout the remaining three issues of the journal, while more emphasis was given to the content of Russell’s lectures and speeches in Beijing.<sup>26</sup>

In addition to the journal, in 1921 the Communal Study Society set up a “Russell Book Series” (*Luosu congshu* 羅素叢書), which was intended for the Chinese translations of Russell’s major works. While the series was sponsored by the society, it was actually printed by the Commercial Press, which later included the early translations into its own book series. By the year 1922, the series already included the complete Chinese translations of the following books: *Justice in War-Time* (translated in 1921 by Zhang Taipu 鄭太撲), *Political Ideals* (1921, Cheng Zhenji 程振基), *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (1922, Fu Zhongsun and Zhang Bangming), *Scientific Method in Philosophy* (1922, Wang Xingcong) and *German Social Democracy* (1922, Chen Yuyi 陳興漪).

25 Aside from Qu Shiyong and Zhao Yuanren, there were also Sun Fuyuan, Jiang Boli (蔣百里, 1882-1938) and Wang Geng (王賡, 1895-1942).

26 Regarding the journal see also Song Jinkai 2020.

## 6 In Search of “Russell’s Fingers” – Lectures at Peking University

Russell delivered his first lecture at Peking University two days prior to the welcome reception described above. Although, back in November, the *Peking University Daily* reported that during his visit at the Department of Philosophy Russell would be lecturing primarily about social reform and analysis of the mind (Xu Yibao 2003, 183), in the time since Russell seems to have changed his mind completely. Instead, he decided to focus his lectures at the university exclusively on topics in theoretical philosophy. Thus, on November 7<sup>th</sup>, he started teaching a course entitled “Problems of Philosophy” (*zhexue wenti* 哲學問題). As the title suggests the course was aimed at epitomizing the main conclusions of Russell’s book of the same name from 1912. The course was given in the form of a series of 12 consecutive lectures. While the first was given in the building of the so-called “Third Court” (*di san yuan* 第三院) of Peking University, the rest of the lectures were delivered in the auditorium of Peking Normal University. The lectures were regularly recorded by Sun Fuyuan (孫伏園, pseudonyms Fulu 伏廬, Bosheng 伯生, Songnian 松年, 1894-1966) and Zhang Yanqian (章延謙), a student of philosophy, and published in the *Peking University Daily*.<sup>27</sup>

As regards the content of the lectures, the course represented a condensed introduction to the epistemological tenets of logical positivism, with a special emphasis on logic and physical sciences. The first five lectures, which bore the titles “Appearance and Reality”, “What is Matter?”, “Subjective Idealism”, “Logical Idealism” and “Mystical Idealism”, were summaries of the first four chapters of Russell’s book *The Problems of Philosophy*. Whereas in the remaining seven lectures, entitled “The Notion of Cause” and “Knowledge and Error”, Russell summarized the parts of the book which touched upon the problems of logic and induction – a part of the lectures even mentioned his quintessential work *Principia Mathematica*. The last two lectures were modelled on the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of *The Problems of Philosophy*. The last in the series of lectures was given in January 1921.

The second series of lectures delivered in the framework of Russell’s visit at Peking University was entitled “The Analysis of Mind” (*xin de fenxi* 心的分析). The lectures were given at the “First Court” of Peking University. In the

27 The complete record of lectures was published *Collected Lectures of Bertrand Russell and Dora Black* (*Luosu ji Bolake jiangyan ji* 羅素及勃拉克講演集), which was first printed in 1922 by the Weiyi ribao 惟一日報 publishing society. The anthology was edited by Liang Qichao. Some of the lectures were also recorded by and published in the central newspapers.

course of 15 lectures, conducted from November 7<sup>th</sup> 1920 until early February 1921, Russell delivered a comprehensive introduction to his forthcoming treatise re-evaluating human consciousness from the perspective of recent advances in psychology – the book *The Analysis of Mind*. The most important aspect of these extensive excursions into the realms of modern psychology was undoubtedly that in them Russell introduced psychological theories such as behaviourism, comparative psychology and Freud’s psychoanalysis (*jiexin shu* 解心術). Following Zhang Shenfu’s translation of Russell’s essay “The Modern Science of Psychology” (*Jindai xinlixue* 近代心理學) in the *New Youth* magazine in 1920, this was the second attested and significant introduction of Freud to the Chinese intellectual world. As in the case of the lectures based on *The Problems of Philosophy*, the lectures were regularly recorded and published in various newspapers and reviews.

In late December 1920, Russell also started giving a third series of lectures, entitled “The Analysis of Matter” (*wu de fenxi* 物的分析). This was a more elaborate and longer version of his Nanjing lecture on Einstein’s relativity and its implications for philosophical understanding of reality (the philosophy of science), extended to cover other theories of modern physics. A final version of Russell’s comprehensive interpretation of Einstein’s theories of relativity (general and special), also covering the uncertainty principle of Heisenberg and other novel approaches in particle physics (quantum mechanics), was published under the same title in 1925. The booklet *The Analysis of Matter* served as an ontological compendium to his previous book *The Analysis of Mind*. Russell’s course at Peking University encompassed six lectures, which were delivered between December 1920 and March 1921. All the lectures were translated and recorded by Zhao Yuanren and Ren Hongjun (任鴻雋, 1886-1961). A preliminary lecture was delivered on December 14 in the context of the weekly meeting of the recently established Russell Study Society (*Luosu xueshuo yanjiuhui* 羅素學說研究會, “Society for Study of Russell’s Theories”) (*Luosu jiang jiangyan wu de fenxi* 1920).

## 7 The Russell Study Society

In late November, a group of students and professors from Peking University and other educational institutions in Beijing established a study society for the organized research of Russell’s thought, the Russell Study Society. The preparatory session of the society took place on November 20<sup>th</sup>, 1920. On that occasion, more than 100 people registered as members of the society. Already at this first session, the society was divided into two sections:

an English and Chinese, both of which convened on a weekly basis to discuss Russell's thought in English and Chinese, respectively (*Luosu xueshuo yanjiuhui kaihui* 1920a). The inaugural session of the society took place on November 28<sup>th</sup> (at 7 pm), in the auditorium of the Western Returned Scholars Association (*Ou-Mei tongxuehui* 歐美同學會). Apart from Russell, Dora Black, Zhao Yuanren and Fu Tong, around 30 members of the society attended the event.

Akin to the first and second welcome receptions, the reception of Russell at the inaugural session of the Russell Study Society also contained a slightly mystical undertone, in which Russell's arrival to China was set into a historical context, in which Russell was compared to Confucius. Thus, in the opening lines of the welcome speech, an unknown member of the society made the following remark:

Sir is referring to himself as a follower of the philosophy of neutral monism, who takes the middle road between idealism and materialism, expounding on the principles of philosophy by using the scientific method. This corresponds very much to the Chinese philosopher Confucius, who famously said that: 'my *dao* 道 is woven together by one single principle' (*wu dao yi yi guan zhi* 吾道一以貫之). His way of distinguishing the true and false of matters started in the investigations of the underlying principles of things. Which is why he also said: 'Knowledge is attained by investigation of things (*gewu* 格物); after one has investigated their underlying principles one will attain knowledge.' This clearly shows that the integrating principle Confucius spoke about was the analysis of things. Now, since, to one's great surprise, Sir's theories are identical to the philosophy of Confucius, our county should treat Sir with the same sense of reverence as is paid to Confucius... (Zhichang 1921, 114)

Following the initial welcome addresses and a discussion regarding the work and internal organization of the society, Russell was invited to give some advice on how the study society ought to be conducted.

The society adopted an astoundingly rigorous and complex method of discussion which was set to be followed at the weekly meetings:

(A) First, someone would express their own opinions about a book by Russell they had already read in the form of an essay, whose content would be read at the meeting. After that, everyone would engage in an open discussion. (B) Every time, another member of the society would write an essay about point out a specific question, about which they would then also compose an essay. This essay would, in turn, be handed

out to another member of the society, who would then summarise its conclusions. This summary would then be revised and epitomized for the second time. The final summary would then be subjected to common discussion. (C) Subsequently, a question would be formed, which would be studied by all members. Each member would express their own views in form of an essay, which would be handed out to another member for review. In turn, this would then serve as a topic of the next symposium. (*Luosu xueshuo yanjiuhui kaihui* 1920b)

Furthermore, another goal set by the society was to print and disseminate Russell’s writings and records of his lectures, which were also to be used as the principal resource for the society’s regular discussions. The first two manuscripts to be reproduced by the society were English manuscripts for the lectures on “Analysis of Mind” and “Bolshevism and World Policy” (*ibid.*). At the inaugural session the society also determined the main topic, which were to be discussed at the future meetings of the Chinese section of the society. The first two such topics were the definition of truth, and marriage and the population question – the latter referring to the sixth chapter of Russell’s book *Principles of Social Reconstruction*.

The regular discussions and analyses of Russell’s work by the Chinese section of the society were primarily meant to supplement Russell’s lectures at the university as well as his thought related to other questions. On the other hand, the meetings of the English section, which were led by Russell, represented a relatively advanced discussion forum on questions which were related directly to his lectures on the “Analysis of Mind”, and later also the ontological aspects of his philosophical worldview. At the initial meeting, Russell outlined the working method of the English section in the following manner:

Above anything else, the essence of a study society resides in the possibility to conduct straightforward conversations, the ability to take part in intense debates where everyone can argue from one’s own standpoint. The spirit of a study society can be recognized only after the possibility to do so. Yesterday four main problems featured within the scope of “The Analysis of Mind” were published in the *Peking University Daily*. This was not unnecessary at all. If anyone among you is able to write a solution to anyone of these problems in the English language, it can be handed over to me before the next session of the English section of the study society, so that it can be given further discussion in the framework of the debate on particular problems. (Zhichang 1921, 114-5)

According to a student of philosophy, who wrote under the pseudonym Zhichang 質廠, the meetings of the English section were not as well attended as originally planned. If the first meeting was attended by 18 people, only four of them engaged in an open discussion with Russell and wrote papers discussing the solutions to the three problems published in the *Peking University Daily*. The two subsequent meetings were attended by even fewer people. Beside the three problems from the “Analysis of Mind” Russell further discussed the work *The Analysis of Sensations* by the Austrian physicist and philosopher of science Ernst Mach. At the third session, which was attended by only three people, Russell asked why so few people were attending. In response, the only student of philosophy who was still attending the meetings pointed out that the majority of the researchers and students at Peking University were not interested in problems from psychology, and that the number of participants was bound to increase when Russell started lecturing on matter-related problems. Upon which Russell responded with the following remark: “My ability to study problems hinges entirely on my having the capacity of mind. If indeed, one possesses a sound knowledge of psychology, one can easily solve all sorts of scientific problems” (ibid., 115).

This reveals that the main interest of the majority of the philosophical audience at Russell’s lectures rested predominantly with topics related to modern science and science-based philosophical epistemology. At the same time, a high degree of interest seems also to have been directed towards Russell’s scientific method or, more precisely, his mathematical logic.

## 8 Lectures on Mathematical Logic

Thus, in March 1921, the Society for Mathematics and Physics of Peking University and the Society for Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics of Peking Teachers College jointly invited Russell to give a series of lectures on mathematical logic (*suānxue de lūnlǐxue* 算學的論理學). Initially four lectures on the basic principles were planned, however, because in mid-March Russell fell ill with pneumonia only two lectures were carried out. The first was given on March 8<sup>th</sup>, to an audience of about 150 professors and students (Xu Yibao 2003, 183).

Among those who attended Russell’s lecture were Wu Fanhuan and Wang Shiyi. Both of them kept detailed notes of the lecture. Wang’s notes were immediately published in the *Magazine of Peking University for Mathematics and Natural Science*. Wu’s notes, nevertheless, were published in 1921 by the New Knowledge Press of the National University of Peking

as a pamphlet entitled: *Shuli luoji*, an expression that soon became the standard Chinese translation for ‘mathematical logic.’ (Ibid.)

In addition to Wu Fanhuan (吳範寰, 1897-1978) and Wang Shiyi (王世毅, ?), the third version of notes from the lectures was recorded by a person writing under the name Muyan (慕岩). These bore the Chinese title *Shuxue luoji* 數學邏輯 and were published as a part of Liang Qichao’s collection from 1922. Although the three records differ significantly from each other, what they collectively confirm is that Russell intended to deliver an overview of the elementary concepts from the mathematical and logical apparatus of the first volume of the *Principia Mathematica*. In the two lectures, which he actually managed to carry out, Russell was only able to give a brief introduction to the concepts of propositional functions, deductive principle, relations among propositions, logic of classes etc. Generally speaking, in the lectures the discipline of mathematical logic was represented as a discipline complementing “general” mathematics. Russell delineated the main difference between general mathematics and mathematical logic as one in orientation: while that of general mathematics is “forward” (inductively), mathematical logic works in a “backward” direction (deductively). These two orientations do not describe the stages of development, but rather how the two are related to the fundamentals of mathematics. In this regard, mathematical logic is a direct offshoot of studies in the fundamentals of mathematics. Naturally, this view was a clear expression of Russell’s philosophical position towards the relationship between logic and mathematics, namely his philosophy of logicism (Yuan Gang et al. 2004, 292-299).

Indirectly and in the long term, Russell’s lectures on mathematical logic opened up a new chapter in Chinese academic studies in modern logic, by introducing this new branch of formal logic to both Chinese mathematicians and philosophers. Following Russell’s lectures in March 1921, the first step towards appropriation of his contributions to fundamentals of mathematics and mathematical logic took shape in an effort to translate his work *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*. This was done by two young mathematicians from Peking Normal University who were present in the audience of the lectures from March 1921. Even before they accomplished their ambitious mission, Fu Zhongsun (傅種孫, 1898-1962) and Zhang Bangming (張邦銘) wrote a letter to Russell (March 23<sup>rd</sup> 1921), explaining their intent to translate his *Introduction* into Chinese (Xu Yibao 2003, 185-9). The importance of the letter also resided in the fact that, at the same time, they also raised a number of relevant questions about some parts of the work they intended to translate, revealing a surprising degree of understanding

of its content (see Xu 2003 and 2005). Before the first edition of Fu's and Zhang's translation was ultimately published (August 1922),<sup>28</sup> Fu wrote a concise summary of the first six chapters of the *Introduction*, which was published in the *Shuli zazhi* 數理雜誌 (*Mathematical and Physical Magazine*) in 1921.<sup>29</sup>

## 9 Other Lectures in Beijing – From Bolshevism to the Science of Social Structure

Before his departure from Beijing, Russell also delivered a few other lectures, which, by and large, were all related to social and political issues. The first such lecture, "Bolshevist Thought", was given at the Women's College in Beijing on November 19<sup>th</sup>, 1920. Another such lecture was given at the Chinese Association for Social and Political Sciences (*Zhongguo shehui zhengzhi xuehui* 中國社會政治學會). The title was "Industry in Undeveloped Countries" (*weikaifa guo zhi gongye* 未開發國之工業), which called upon the members of the public to recognize the importance of developing a strong industry in China; a form of industry which would at the same time be as independent from the capitalist class as possible.<sup>30</sup>

Two months later, on January 6<sup>th</sup> (1921), Russell gave a lecture at the recently established Philosophical Association. The lecture was entitled "Religious Belief" (*zongjiao zhi xinyang* 宗教之信仰). The Philosophical Association (*Zhexueshe* 哲學社, full name *Zhexue yanjiu she* 哲學研究社 "Association for Studies in Philosophy") was established in January 1921 by Fu Tong and affiliated with the Department of Philosophy at Peking University. Owing to its main founder Fu Tong, the society had a profoundly modern outlook and consequently became one of the platforms for dissemination of Russell's ideas. Moreover, the content of the lectures organized in the framework of the society and the content of the journal *Philosophia* (*Zhexue* 哲學), the official publication issued by the society, reveal that the central focus of the society was the study and introduction of contemporary Western trends in philosophy (as well as logic, critical

28 Their translation was entitled *Luosu suanli zhexue* 羅素算理哲學 (*Russell's Mathematical Philosophy*) and was published by the Commercial Press in Shanghai.

29 In the article, Fu further discussed the nature of the relationship between mathematics and philosophy (see Fu 1921).

30 The text of the lecture was included in Zhang Jinglu's (張靜廬, 1898-1969) *A Compendium of Records of Lectures by Dewey and Russell* (*Duwei, Luosu yanjianglu hekan* 杜威、羅素演講錄合刊) from 1921.



study on religion, etc.). From its establishment in January 1921 on, the society organized two regularly held series of lectures: one was called "Comprehensive View of the Universe" (*Yuzhou zhi mianmian guan* 宇宙之面面觀) – held two times a week, and the second "Accounts on the History of World Philosophy." Because, as previously mentioned, Fu Tong was a great admirer of Russell's philosophy, the first four numbers of the journal *Philosophia* also contained Fu's articles about the philosopher. The third issue of the journal, which was published two months after Russell left China, also contained an account of a written discussion between Fu Tong and Zhang Dongsun as well as Russell's final speech, which he delivered on the eve of his departure from Beijing.<sup>31</sup>

The last of the short independent lectures in Beijing was given at the Yude Middle School (*Yude zhongxue* 育德中學) on March 14<sup>th</sup>, shortly before Russell fell critically ill. The lecture, "The Problems of Education", was a recapitulation of Russell's earlier lectures on education in China.

Russell's last significant group of lectures in China was on "The Science of Social Structure" (*Shehui jigou xue* 社會結構學), comprised of four major lectures given between February and March 1921 in the main hall of the Ministry of Education. The content of the lectures was, in large part, extracted from his *Principles of Social Reconstruction* (1916), a work which won Russell critical acclaim as a reformist thinker. However, surprisingly, Russell's Chinese lectures contained a number of personal statements, which had previously been absent from any other of his texts or lectures on reform and socialism. Most notably, he said the following:

I am a Communist. I believe that Communism, combined with developed industry, is capable of bringing to mankind more happiness and well-being, and a higher development of the arts and sciences, than have hitherto existed in the world. I therefore desire to see the whole world become communistic in its economic structure.

I hold also, what was taught by Karl Marx, that there are scientific laws regulating the development of societies, and that any attempt to ignore these laws is bound to end in failure. Marx taught what his nominal disciples have forgotten, that Communism was to be the consummation of industrialism... (Harrison 1989, 6)<sup>32</sup>

31 On the founding of the Philosophical Association see: *Zhexue yanjiu she zhi neirong yu jianzhang* 1921; *Yizhen* 1921; and *Zhexue yanjiu she tonggao* 1921.

32 This text was taken from Russell's original notes written for the lecture in Beijing. The document is kept as a part of the Dora Black papers in the Russell Archives.

Undoubtedly, after a series of relatively neutral as well as politically ambiguous lectures, these statements must have caused a stir among those members of Chinese intellectual elite who followed Russell's lectures from the time of his arrival in China. Thus, in one of his final lectures before he fell ill, Russell finally revealed the side of himself which everyone had hoped for from the very beginning. Nonetheless, the venue for such public declarations could not have been less fortunately chosen. Some records from the time reveal that these lectures made a rather unfavourable impression on some of the most politically influential members of the public., who, according to a rumour, even pushed to expel Russell from China (see Lizi 1921). When, due to his sudden illness, Russell was not able to complete the fifth and final lecture from the series, the tension between the government in Beijing and Russell seemed to have been overshadowed by the seriousness of his medical condition and then eventually faded away.

## 10 Illness and Departure

As mentioned above, Russell's lecturing activities in China were suddenly interrupted, when in mid-March he contracted a pneumonia-like disease<sup>33</sup> and fell critically ill. In his initial weeks at the hospital a rumour even spread in a few Japanese periodicals whose reporters were stationed in Beijing that Russell had passed away at the hospital. "This news was forwarded by mail from Japan to America to England. It appeared in the English newspapers on the same day as the news of my divorce. Fortunately, the Court did not believe it, or the divorce might have been postponed" (Russell 2009, 347). Although Russell eventually recuperated, he was too weak to carry on with his lectures. Almost three months later (July 6), on the eve of his departure from China, he addressed the Chinese audience for one last time in the well-known lecture "China's Road to Freedom" (*Zhongguo dao ziyou zhi lu* 中國到自由之路). At the same event, Dora Black also gave a speech entitled "Men and Women of Young China".<sup>34</sup> On the following day, Russell left Beijing for Tianjin, from where he took a ship to his next destination, Japan.

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33 In his autobiography Russell recounts: "during convalescence, I had a whole series of minor diseases. The main trouble had been double pneumonia, but in addition to that I had heart disease, kidney disease, dysentery, and phlebitis" (Russell 2009, 346).

34 The English manuscript of the lecture was first printed in Fu Tong's journal *Philosophia*, in September 1921.

## 11 Epilogue – Glimpses of a Long-Lasting Aftermath

As the above survey reveals, Russell’s visit and lectures in China, which took place between late 1920 and July 1921, most probably influenced Chinese intellectual developments in the 1920s in an extremely multifaceted and complex way. While in matters related to science and theoretical philosophy, his influence manifested itself in a rather straightforward manner, the impact of his lectures on social questions and political philosophy was rather indirect and, in many cases, still remains a matter of discussion. It appears that the main direct impression Russell’s lectures and presence in China left on his audience was in line with the original expectations: wholesome and general. Hence, the image of Russell which remained in China after his departure, roaming the Chinese intellectual world as a more or less faint memory, was a collection of impressions and quintessential notions which constituted Russell as a complete, integral persona. This idea of personal integrity, which strung together the scientific method, mathematical logic, excursions into the world of modern psychology and physics of his scholarly self on one side, and profoundly humanistic bent towards values of equality, freedom and love on the other, made Russell’s persona very much like that of the sages of ancient China. Therefore, even if his friendly advice to his fellow socialists or Communists in China did not produce any of the desired effects and redirect the future of Chinese Marxism onto a more moderate path, in the more scholarly echelons of Chinese intelligentsia, both the scientific and humanistic aspect of his thought left a lasting impression. Even though it took at least five years for the results to appear, Russell’s influence on Chinese philosophical discourse finally took shape in the establishment of analytical philosophy (New Realism) and mathematical logic at Chinese universities (Peking University and Qinghua University). More directly, the influence of Russell’s scientific and philosophical worldview on Chinese intellectual discourse prompted, or at least critically contributed to, the development of the debate on “Science and the View on Human Life” (*Kexue yu renshengguan* 科學與人生觀, also referred to by the proponents of science as the debate on “Science and Metaphysics” (*Kexue yu xuanxue* 科學與玄學)) of 1923, which represented the confrontation between two sides of the objectivist schism, which underpinned the long evolving dissonance between the Chinese cultural perception and modern scientific worldviews. By binding together the undisputable and somehow mystical efficacy and insight of modern science with modern libertarian values such as freedom of speech, gender equality, universal suffrage, freedom of marriage, etc., philosophical worldviews such as Marxism or Russell’s New Realism or scientific socialism increased

the moral imperative of the objectivist turn in Chinese culture, forcing the proponents of traditional thought and more subject-oriented philosophical views to rise in defence of their place in the Chinese intellectual world.

If in 1920s China there really was a general image of Russell, then it boiled down his multifaceted persona to two mutually related aspects: his scientific method and the embodiment of scientific truth in his sage-like moral character. To put it at its simplest, it was this combination which to the members of his Chinese audience was reminiscent either of a “new Confucius”, as in the case of some senior members of Chinese intelligentsia, or a world-leading scientist and revolutionary, in the eyes of the younger Chinese intellectuals. In the very same manner, in the months following Russell’s departure from the country one of his academic sympathizers in China and the editor of the *Russell Monthly*, Qu Shiyong, summarized the English philosopher’s contribution to the Chinese as follows:

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... during his visit Russell did bestow upon us two exceptionally precious things. If these two things really were received by everyone of us and if everyone is also able to put them to use, then, irrespective of the matter we use them in or the problem we want to resolve with them, we will always be successful. These two treasures are: (1) His personality. When one is conversing with Russell, one gets the feeling that he is a person who really embodies a scholarly attitude. If one catches only a glimpse of him, one can already imagine what a solemn spirit must have surrounded him when he was put into prison. This kind of spirit to sacrifice himself for his ideology is what has influenced us to a great degree. ... (2) His method... Regardless of whether one is conducting research into a scientific question or handling different affairs, the analytical method is indispensable. It does not matter what profession one is working in, if one does not possess the spirit of sacrificing oneself for one’s convictions, one will never completely succeed. (Qu Shiyong 1921, 2-3)

Indeed, as Qu indicated in 1921, in the following two decades, the notion of analytical method obtained an important place in modern Chinese philosophy. Moreover, it became a synonym for modernity of philosophical systems, a foundation upon which a group of philosophers at Qinghua and Peking Universities endeavoured to establish their systems of philosophy. On the other hand, the gradual rise in significance of analytical philosophy, which can be traced back to Russell’s direct and indirect influence on China, opened up a current of scientific objectivism in Chinese philosophy, one which vitally coincided with that embodied in the Marxist movement. From this point of

view, what had probably been Russell's main contribution to China, a scientific worldview warped together by modern formal logic and analytical method, underpinned the Chinese intellectual discourse for the decades to come. Over time, though, in the same discourse Russell's philosophical scientism became divorced from his social and political theories and integrated into a discursive framework similar to that of the logical positivism of Vienna School. Furthermore, by the early 1930s, the analytical method and mathematical logic became considered by some Chinese philosophers as something which can be used in argument against dialectical materialism and Marxist philosophy in general.

However, in the 1920s, the Chinese intellectual world had also produced a rather unique theoretical phenomenon, which can be also traced back to Russell and his visit in China: a theoretical fusion between Russell's analytical philosophy, Confucian morality and dialectical materialism. The person responsible for this transcultural syncretism, which was also hoped for by Russell in one of his speeches in China, was Zhang Shenfu, the Russell enthusiast, who can also be credited for the earliest introduction of Russell's thought to China. In the years following Russell's visit in China, Zhang continued teaching mathematical logic and Russell's philosophy at Chinese universities, which he also used as a platform for propagating his syncretistic philosophical worldview. Zhang's popularisation of mathematical logic, Russell's analytical philosophy and dialectical materialism reached its peak in early 1930s. As the editor of a special column of the newspaper *L'Impartial* (*Dagong bao* 大公報), Zhang wrote numerous articles about Russell and regularly produced translations from his most recent works.

In a less conspicuous way, Russell's contact with China in early 1920s also influenced many other aspects the intellectual and socio-political discourse. Regardless of whether we observe the purely academic, general intellectual or ethical influences of Russell's stay and lectures in China, or whether we consider his influences in the years immediately following his visit or the long-term presence of his ideas in Chinese intellectual discourse, it is beyond doubt that Russell had immensely influenced the courses of intellectual development in Republican China. Beside Bergson, Dewey, Marx and others, he was one of the towering personalities from the West which were more or less directly involved in China's search for modernity, either as idols which ought to be followed or the representatives of the cultural/ideological other, which the proponents of traditional solutions to Chinese problems of modernity needed to overturn in order to assert their identity. Either way, in the decades following his tour of China, Russell became unavoidable ingredient

of the most of Chinese discourse on philosophy of science, society, politics, logic and so on. Therefore, our understanding of the circumstances and content of Russell's visit in China represent a vital and indispensable part of our understanding of the intellectual foundations of Modern China.

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# WELCOME ADDRESSES



# Welcome Banquet for the Great Philosopher Russell (1920)<sup>1</sup>

Yesterday, at 7 o'clock in the evening, the Jiangsu Educational Association (*Jiangsu sheng jiaoyuhui* 江蘇省教育會), China College, China Vocational Educational Association (*Zhonghua zhiye jiaoyushe* 中華職業教育社), Progressive Association (*Gongjinhui* 共進會), Christian Association for Saving the Nation (*Jidujiao jiuguohui* 基督教救國會) and others, seven organisations in total, held a welcome banquet for the great philosopher Dr. Russell at the Great Eastern Hotel. Taking part in the banquet were Xu Jilong (徐季龍), Zhu Jinzhi (朱進之), Shen Xinqing (沈信卿), Chen Duxiu (陳獨秀), Zhou Yueran (周越然), Yang Duanyuan (楊端元), and Gu Yinting (顧蔭亭), as well as reporters from all Chinese and Western newspapers. Altogether, around 100 people were present at the occasion. Russell arrived at the venue at 7 o'clock, accompanied by his wife. First, a commemorative photograph was taken. Soon afterwards, the people who attended the banquet started the dinner. At the conclusion of the feast, the chairman of the reception, Shen Xinqing, gave a welcome speech:

Generally speaking, there are two main ideas behind welcoming Mr. Russell here today: Firstly, if Russell is a great English philosopher, he is

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1 “*Huanyan da zhexuejia Luosu ji* 歡宴大哲學家羅素紀 (Notes from the Welcome Banquet for the Great Philosopher Russell).” *Shibao* 世報, October 14, 5.

also a great philosopher of the World. His philosophy has many points in common with teachings of China's forefathers. This is one aspect of why I would like to welcome Russell here today. Secondly, if Russell has come to China to advocate reformist thought, this is even more deeply in accord with China's current mentality. This is the second aspect of welcoming Russell. Today, we also hope that Russell will introduce European culture to China in simple terms.

After some more hopes for guidance had been expressed, Russell was invited to give a speech. The speech, which was translated by Zhao Yuanren (趙元任), went as follows:

Yesterday, when I arrived here in China, I was welcomed by the Chinese people in an extremely touching and heart-warming manner. In his speech the chairman mentioned the matter of reforms, asking me to introduce new European schools of thought to China. Although, only in the last century the new European schools have increase in number, they still contain many shortcomings. Let us suppose that China would not use them all, without distinguishing between superior and inferior among them, then, I am afraid that it will hardly attain good results. The beauty of Chinese culture and art have always been regarded as perfect. I have also always spoken favourably of them. I sincerely hope that you will work hard to preserve it. Because the prosperity of a state depends exclusively on the movement of new culture, therefore the so-called European culture is indispensable. But if you will only recognise strength in new culture and completely discard the national essence of this country, then I am afraid that this will be of no advantage to you. I hope, therefore, that Chinese people will only adopt the best parts of the European culture and discard all its shortcomings. Moreover, you must not exclusively tend towards the new culture and completely discard the merits of the old. We live in an age of extremes, from thought down to practice. It is in such a time of extremes that one will ultimately be unable to avoid the emergence of various corrupt practices. This is what happened in Europe, where various forms of immoral conduct occurred. Consequently, I hope that China will not thread on the same path as Europe. I sincerely hope that in point I will be of some assistance to you. The most and only effective method to achieve this is education...

This was followed by a speech from Zhu Jinzhi (朱進之):

Today China should rejoice. There are three reasons for that: (1) China is the world's most ancient country; (2) As the first republic in Asia, China is

also one of the world's newest states; (3) Today, Russell, one of the greatest philosophers in the world has come to visit. It is no disgrace that the armies protecting our borders are weak. It is not a disgrace that China's commerce is underdeveloped and that our industry is lagging behind. What should be called China's greatest disgrace, though, is the underdevelopment of its education, because China has always worshipped philosophers, in the same way as the Chinese people have worshipped Confucius. But the learning of Confucius is no more suitable to be practiced today. I hope, therefore, that today a new Confucius will arise. Russell, who is present here today, is almost like a new Confucius! I hope that he will work diligently to realise the cause of the new Confucius!

This was followed by the humorous speech by Xie Fuchu, which was rewarded with a round of applause. At about 10 o'clock, the guests started to leave the venue.

*(Translated by Jan Vrhovski)*





# Welcome Speech for Russell at the Chinese Lecture Society (1920)<sup>1</sup>

The Lecture Society (*Jiangxueshe* 講學社) together with the Academy for Fine Arts welcomed Russell and Miss Black. Around 100 people attended the welcome reception, which was chaired by Wang Daxie (汪大燮). At the beginning of the reception, Liang Qichao delivered a speech on behalf of the Lecture Society welcoming Russell and Miss Black. Concurrently, he also explained the aims of the society as well as the reasons why the society has asked Russell to come to China. The speech went as follows:

Following its establishment, the first person whom the Lecture Society invited to China was the great philosopher of the new era, Bertrand Russell. It really is a great honour for us to welcome Mr Russell here today. First, however, I shall use this opportunity to explain the main objectives of the society.

With respect to the Chinese cultural movement, we have always advocated “absolutely unrestricted and maximal import” (*juedui de wuxianzhi jinliang shuru* 絕對的無限制盡量輸入), because, today, the entire world has already been reached by a destiny of reform. Within this destiny, we naturally also have to go through a period of scepticism and experimentation, which is

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1 “*Jiangxueshe huanying Luosu zhi yanji* 將學社歡迎羅素之演詞 (Welcome Speech for Russell at the Chinese Lecture Society).” *Jiaoyu gongbao* 教育公報, 7(12), 23-4. The speech was also published in the *Chenbao* 晨報 newspaper (November 10, 1920).

why numerous schools of thought have emerged one after the other, which although on the surface inevitably portray numerous contradictions, each of them have still opened up the potential for achievement in the future. In the end, each one of them has its own beneficial influence. Speaking just about the nature of learning, of course there is no such thing as absolutely good or absolutely bad learning. No one can pass the judgment which says that for today's China this kind of learning is suitable while that one is not. I believe that China is a country of such vastness and richness, that our intelligence and talent, if compared with the population of any other civilization or country, can in no way be considered inferior. Now, in the time of our intellectual hunger, the concern for pursuing the truth is critical. It is as if a severe winter has finally turned into a warm and pleasant spring, and long dormant tree shoots, flowers and buds are just starting to open up. We must seize this opportunity and cultivate it, making it flourish. For that there is only one method: the absolute freedom of research. Hence, regardless of what kind of theory, as long as it has got value, we must import it, enabling people of all orientations to research such interesting theories to the fullest. Even though, on the surface, the directions which they will take may not be identical, their fruits will always bring some kind of progress to the culture as a whole. I also think that, perhaps, China can serve as a perfect testing ground for all kinds of different systems of ideas studied by scholars around the world today, something which cannot be successfully implemented in Europe, because Europe has already reached a time when its old habits are difficult to alter. Though it has got many systems that are clearly known to be good, it has got no method to realize them. Europe would have to make a great sacrifice and experience great hardship and pain to attempt this, and we still do not know how successful it would be. While, in the recent past, social progress in China has been relatively slow, we were able to observe how the progressive European states all embarked on a wrong path, and [later also] how the medicine they used to heal their ailments slowly gained the upper hand. Now, China still resembles a blank piece of paper which has not yet been imprinted with any colours. Which is why it still is not that difficult to get China on a good path. Observed from this point of view, our cultural movement is not only the responsibility of China, but in fact is a responsibility of all humanity. As to what plan would be the best one to select, we can only decide through liberal research and after we have conducted various kinds of experiments. Today, we only have to continue importing all kinds of theories without any restrictions. A choice which is different with that of the German people, will naturally bear most favourable results in the future. However, if we create scholarship individually, then it is also no doubt that everyone should end

up following their own convictions, and thus will not necessarily agree with each other. As far as the Lecture Society is concerned, it presents an opportunity for introductions. As long as they have got some value, we shall, indiscriminately of their method of approach, set out to introduce such theories. It is as if we have opened a big store. If the merchandise is of good quality, we shall always deal with it, not relying on whether people like to buy this or that kind of product. I often say that the decay of Chinese scholarship started with the Han Dynasty, when the hundred schools were dismissed in favour of the court's recognition of the Six Arts of Confucianism. If one wants to honour something, one has to dismiss something; regardless of whether that which is honoured or dismissed is correct or not, it is always an attack on the freedom of thought. Therefore, we have to open our doors widely and welcome in all the valuable teachings that exist today. To be able to teach and transfer all those theories is the main aim of the Society. This time, we take great pleasure in having invited Mr Russell and Miss Black. Because we believe that what the world needs the most today is the idealization of life and making ideals more true to life (*shenghuohua* 生活化). Mr Russell's theories are most able to satisfy this demand. What do we mean by making ideals more true to life? We humans need ideals, but if we divorce these ideals from our lives, then the ideals turn into empty playing with shadows (*wan-nong guangjing* 玩弄光景). Much of the philosophy which China has generated over thousands of years cannot be described as bad. The same can also be said about a great deal of philosophy which has been created in Europe since the Ancient Greeks. However, even though they are good on their own, because most of these ideals are so far away from ordinary life, we simply cannot gain any benefit from them. Therefore, the ideals we require need to be closely interlinked with our current lives. And what is the idealization of life? Is it possible that humans would not be willing to live without ideals? A life without ideals becomes meaningless. It is hardly the case that we spend a few decades in this world just to be food-eating machines. We consider our lives valuable only because we live for a kind noble goal. And this is why we require ideal lives. Today, scholars in all countries are moving in this direction. But probably the first and most successful of such scholars is Mr Russell. Many of you have already read his works, and I suppose that many of you are already familiar with their general idea. So that when later you are listening to his lectures, you will naturally be capable of understanding the content, without any further explanations needed from my side.

The most noteworthy thing I shall now speak about is Russell's personal character. Because he is against war, he was subjected to the severe interference

of his country's government. Later, because of his propagation of the ideal of great harmony (*datong* 大同) and his resistance to nationalism, he was ultimately sentenced to six months in prison. The book *Roads to Freedom*, which we have all read, was completed in his first few days in prison. After he was released from custody, he continued spreading his ideology with even greater passion. This is the genuine attitude of an independent and fearless scholar, a towering figure in humanity's struggle for freedom. This time, he has travelled not much less than ten thousand miles, so that, on the one side, we would be able to hear his lectures, and on the other, receive the transformative influence of his outstanding personality. In these two regards we shall not let him down, and shall instead prove ourselves worthy of his journey.

I also have a special request for Mr Russell. To explain it, I shall first make an analogy by telling a short joke. Since time immemorial, in our novels there kept appearing an immortal (*shenxian* 神仙) called Lü Chunyang (呂純陽), who was searching for men who would be able to renounce this mortal life and prosperity and become his disciples. Often, he tested people with the method of transforming stone into gold, using it as a way of gathering disciples. On one occasion, however, he ran across a peculiar gentleman; Lü took out a piece of rock, turned it into a grain of gold and gave it to that person, who refused to take it. Lü then created an even larger piece of gold and offered it to him again. Again, the man refused to accept the gold. Upon that, Lü created a small pile of gold and offered it again to the gentlemen, who again did not want to accept his gift. This made Lü Chunyang very happy. Having been convinced that he had finally found a pure hearted and desireless person, he asked him: "What exactly do you desire to have?" And the man replied: "I want to have your fingers." At this very moment we also want Mr Russell's fingers. And what exactly are his fingers? What we want him to bestow upon us is the method he himself uses in his scholarly research. If we will use his method in our research, we will naturally be able to obtain same kind of knowledge as he has. By so doing, however, we shall not turn into a second Lü Chunyang. But will we also be able to turn stones into gold? I sincerely believe that Mr Russell can understand and forgive the Chinese people's fervour for attaining erudition. And he will definitely greatly satisfy their needs. Today, speaking on behalf on the Lecture Society, I would like to extend our wholehearted welcome to Mr Russell, wishing him good health!

In turn, the speech was translated into English by Ding Zaizheng (丁在征), which was followed by a response from Russell. Here is a brief summary of his speech:

A moment ago, when I was listening to Mr Liang's speech, I felt great admiration for him. Although, for now, my fingers are still very much attached to my body, in the future, I will be most willing to give them to you. Although the European governments are very powerful and very capable of handling affairs, powerful governments are usually intimately related to the capitalists. A powerful government can still commit both good and bad deeds, while, if a government lacks power, it can neither carry out good deeds nor commit bad deeds, which is still slightly better than those powerful governments that can carry out good deeds.

As a current method for reforming China for now your humble comrade would put off advocating socialism and advocate developing the national sources of revenue instead. I believe that at present China ought to start with education, with education for common people. After the knowledge of the common people has been increased, only then China should proceed to adopting socialism. If, akin to Russia, where socialism and communism were adopted in a very short time before its common people were educated, China was to adopt it without having previously gone through this process, then a disaster could not be avoided. As regards the aspect of education, what China must urgently pay attention to now are the tools used in education: these need to be simplified. I have heard that learning Chinese characters is abnormally difficult. In comparison with Western countries, in China the process of learning the script is about four or five years longer. If, in the future, Chinese academia would want to become balanced with other countries, then the time Chinese children spend learning the script would have to be further increased for another four or five years. This clearly indicates that a major impediment is bound to be faced by Chinese academia. I hope that China will do its best to simplify its script. Adopting pinyin, for example, would also be a simple way out. As regards the scope of education, China needs to take elementary education as its starting point, letting all commoners receive appropriate education. Your humble comrade believes that Westerners' are obsessed with authority (power). China's strength resides in the fact that its people have always been less addicted to it than the former. Chinese people must not forsake China's advantages, while at the same time it must also do everything in its power to take over the advantages of the West. If in the future China will make progress day after day, then, who knows, in the end the Western people might even have to emulate China instead.

*(Translated by Jan Vrhovski)*



# THE RUSSELL STUDY SOCIETY





# A Meeting of the Russell Study Society (1920)<sup>1</sup>

The Russell Study Society (*Luosu xueshuo yanjiuhui* 羅素學說研究會) was founded by a group of students from Peking University as well as a few others. On November 20<sup>th</sup>, at the preliminary meeting of the society, more than 100 people had already registered as members. On that day, the conclusion of the discussion was that their resolution in spirit alone was not enough for a formal commitment. Therefore, they did not sign the regulations of the society. They decided that all duties and expenses should be shared equally among the members of the society. Functions such as the president, secretary, etc. would not be required at all. Internally the society was divided into Chinese and English sections. Each section would convene once a week. Each time the meeting would be prepared by three members of the society who had been recommended by all members. The inaugural meeting was held on November 28<sup>th</sup> at the seat of the Western Returned Scholars Association (*Ou-Mei tongxuehui* 歐美同學會). Russell was also invited to give guidance and instructions to everyone. The inaugural meeting was attended by Russell, Miss Black, Fu Peiqing (傅佩青), Zhao Yuanren (趙元任) and altogether 39 members of the society. The discussion touched upon the research methodology. Following a debate, a resolution was passed

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1 “*Luosu xueshuo yanjiuhui kaihui* 羅素學說研究會開會.” *Minguo ribao* 民國日報, December 1, 3.

that only those who were able to conduct direct conversations in English were eligible to be selected as members of the English section of the society. At first, Russell raised four topics which ought to be answered by each member of the English section at its weekly meetings, which would be led by Russell himself. The Chinese section would meet every Tuesday at 7 o'clock. Anyone who encountered any difficult and important problems which he himself was unable to solve, would be able to pose the same question to Russell, who would then present the solution to it at a meeting. The meeting was translated by Fu Peiqing and Zhao Yuanren.

*(Translated by Jan Vrhovski)*

# The Inaugural Meeting of the Russell Study Society (1920)<sup>2</sup>

The preparatory meeting of the Russell Study Society (*Luosu xueshuo yanjiuhui* 羅素學說研究會, “Society for Study of Russell’s Teaching”) took place at the Western Returned Scholars Association (*Ou-Mei tongxuehui* 歐美同學會) on November 28<sup>th</sup>. (See this newspaper.) Yesterday (Tuesday) at 7 o’clock in the evening, an inaugural discussion was conducted by the Chinese language section of the society. The author of this report was also present at the symposium, sitting in the back rows of the auditorium. The report presents a summary of the entire discussion. The author of this report hopes that the recordings will be appreciated by all those who take great delight in hearing news from the world of science.

1. The number of participants: The symposium was attended by altogether 23 members of the society, including Fu Peiqing (傅佩青) and Zhao Yuanren (趙元任).
2. The time of the discussion: From 7 to 9.30 PM.
3. The method of the discussion: (A) First, someone would express his/her own opinions about a book by Russell he or she had already read in the form of an essay, whose content would be read at the meeting. After

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2 “Luosu xueshuo yanjiuhui kaihui 羅素學說研究會開會.” *Minguo ribao* 民國日報, December 4 1920, 2.

that, everyone would engage in an open discussion. (B) Another member of the society would then point out a specific question, about which he would also compose an essay. This essay would, in turn, be handed to another member of the society, who would then summarize its conclusions. This summary would then be revised and summarized for the second time. The final summary would then be subjected to common discussion. (C) Subsequently, a question would be formed, which would be studied by all members. Each member would express his/her own views in the form of an essay, which would be handed out to another member for review. In turn, this would then serve as a topic of the next symposium. (D) The English manuscripts of Russell's works "Analysis of Mind" and "Bolshevism and World Politics" are to be put into printing. Five hundred copies of the provisional text will be created, so that each member will be able to get one and use it as a reference material for the lectures.

4. Discussed questions: (A) "What is truth?" This question contains two different meanings, on which any discussion of this question ought to be based. (a) What is the meaning of truth? (b) How do we know the truth? In other words, the first one is a qualitative, ontological and logical question, whereas the second one is a normative, epistemological and psychological question. This question was set by Wang Mou (王某). In the course of the meeting, both Fu and Zhao delivered their ample expositions of this problem and, in addition, also pointed out the literature on this topic which ought to be consulted by the discussants. The most important works of reference, pointed out by Fu and Zhao, included Russell's *Philosophical Essays*, Bradley's *Truth and Reality*, Zhaoqin's [趙琴] *The Meaning of Thought*, Schiller's *Studies in Humanism*, and Russell's *Problems of Philosophy* etc. (B) Marriage and the Population Question. The main reference material is the sixth chapter of Russell's book *Principles of Social Reconstruction*. On these two questions, each member should submit his/her essay at Fu Peiqing's home before the next Monday, so that these may be discussed at the next meeting. (i) In the case that the members of the society themselves will not be able to resolve these questions, the society will ask Russell to come and explain these questions at one of its future meetings. (ii) Dora Black shall also be invited to give a lecture.

Because this society is open to the public, anyone who would like to wholeheartedly study Russell's teachings can join the society at any time. In addition to that, if any of the non-members would like to study

any of the questions discussed at the society's meetings, he or she is invited to submit his/her article to the society. If one would desire to join the society, this can be arranged with Zhang Tingqian (章廷謙) at the first courtyard of Peking University. Here concludes the summary of the discussions conducted by the society on the aforementioned evening.

*(Translated by Jan Vrhovski)*



*Zhichang*

# Records from Sessions of the English Section of Russell Study Society (1921)<sup>1</sup>

## 1 A Brief Account of the Welcome Session

The society is divided into Chinese and English sections. In the third week following Russell's arrival in Beijing, the society organized a welcome reception for him in the headquarters of the Western Returned Students Association. Russell attended the welcome session in the company of Miss Black as well as Fu Tong and Zhao Yuanren. After a group photograph of the entire company was taken, a welcome address was read by a member of the society. The speech started with the following words:

Sir is referring to himself as a follower of the philosophy of neutral monism, who takes the middle road between idealism and materialism, expounding on the principles of philosophy by using the scientific method. This corresponds very much to the Chinese philosopher Confucius, who

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1 Zhichang 質廠 (1921). "Luosu (Russell) xueshuo yanjiuhui yingwenbu jishi 羅素 (Russell) 學說研究會英文部紀實 (Records from the Sessions of the English Section of Russell Research Society)." *Gaizao* 改造, 3(6), 113-5.

famously said that: 'my *dao* 道 is woven together by one single principle' (*wu dao yi yi guan zhi* 吾道一以貫之). His way of distinguishing the true and false of matters started in the investigations of the underlying principles of things. Which is why he also said: 'Knowledge is attained by investigation of things (*gewu* 格物); after one has investigated their underlying principles one will attain knowledge.' This clearly shows that the integrating principle Confucius spoke about was the analysis of things. Now, since, to one's great surprise, Sir's theories are identical to the philosophy of Confucius, our county should treat Sir with the same sense of reverence as is paid to Confucius...

Russell responded in the following manner:

Speaking about monism: in the past there was an abundance of philosophers who advocated monism, yet the research methods they used were never consistent. When we discuss theory, the most important thing resides in what kind of research method we use and not in the conclusions. When I was still a lecturer of mathematics, I had a student who used the algebraic method to calculate the mathematical problems I was giving to him. Although the numbers he obtained were not incorrect his method of calculation was not fitting. In my opinion, to understand the ineffectiveness of his approach is the same as knowing that the most important part in an exposition of a theory does not lie in its results.

As regards the part on discerning right from wrong, this needs to be explained in two different parts. The morals which prevail in different societies originally do not have fixed norms. What in this place is considered to be right, is considered as wrong in another place. What in the present we believe to be right, in the past was considered as wrong. Which means that this does not fall into the scope of our scholarship. What ought to be studied instead is the right and wrong of what is true. The accuracy of the truth is induced from the facts which correspond to the various aspects of a certain matter. If something agrees with both scientific theory and facts it is thus referred to as true, otherwise we call it false.

Regarding the organization and research method of a study society, Russell further noted that:

Above anything else, the essence of a study society resides in the possibility to conduct straightforward conversations, the ability to take part in intense debates where everyone can argue from one's own standpoint. The spirit of a study society can be recognized only after the possibility to



do so. Yesterday four main problems featured within the scope of “The Analysis of Mind” were published in the *Peking University Daily*. This was not unnecessary at all. If anyone among you is able to write a solution to any one of these problems in English language, it can be handed over to me before the next session of the English section of the study society, so that it can be given further discussion in the framework of the debate on particular problems.

In turn, the assembly of members also fixed the exact time and venue at which the meetings of the society would be convened each week, after which they all departed. This was a brief account of the welcome session.

## 2 A Summary of The First Meeting

This time, 18 people attended the meeting. Among them, only four people have written an answer to the problems posed by Russell. The latter treated everyone with warmth and modesty, attending to the members with careful attention. First, with each member he studied the problem of his choice, trying to find a solution for each of them. Among them there was also a member who was unable to set a question. Russell encouraged him to try again and again, so that in the end he was finally able to complete the question. This was followed by a long session of questions and answers. Those who had not composed their responses first shook hands with Russell, while those who had already composed one sat down in a circle with Russell and carried on with the discussion. At first, I maintained that the main elements of an idea (*yishi* 意識) are composed out of content (*zhuxiang* 主象), object (*kexiang* 客象) and action (*zuoyong* 作用). Later, following a long conversation with Russell, I started to realize that an idea consists only of two elements, content and object.

## 3 A Summary of the Second Meeting

This time seven people attended the meeting. Two of them wrote their solutions to the problems posed by Russell. In the meeting we conducted a long analysis of the solutions. My solution also contained the sentence: “We cannot affirm the existence of everything which is not placed within space.” Russell responded: “Things like ‘imagination’ or ‘thought’ etc. occupy no space, yet the fact that every single person possesses these functions cannot but confirm their existence.” Upon which I responded: “Imagination and thought are functions of the human mind and do not qualify as independent. Hence,

it is possible to assert imagination and thought are the capacities of the human mind.” Russell answered: “This kind of standpoint is rather close to materialism, which defines the existence and nonexistence of a thing through whether it occupies a physical space or not. Since this is a major problem, I would invite you to elaborate on it in a longer text.”

At the same time, after we had reviewed the research methods, Mach’s work *The Analysis of Sensations* was assigned as the provisional scope of research: because this work equates the psychological with the physical. Russell also holds this book in high regard because it expounds on the true essence of sensation using exclusively the scientific method.

## 4 A Summary of the Third Session

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Because this meeting took place in the middle of the summer term, only three people attended. I said: “The second and third sessions were not attended by many researchers, because the theories studied at the last two sessions belonged to the domain of psychology. While only those who study philosophy have a relatively deep interest in such topics, the philosophical department at Beida has very few students who are able to engage in direct discussions. Due to this reason many of them enrolled into the division for Chinese literature. Apart from that, the rest of those who are able to conduct a direct conversation about these matters do not have a deep interest in psychology. For this reason, in the future when you lecture about ‘The Analysis of Matter’ the number who will come to study problems will be much higher than it is now.” Russell responded: “My ability to study problems hinges entirely on my having the capacity of mind. If indeed, one possesses a sound knowledge of psychology, one can easily solve all sorts of scientific problems.” We continued by discussing the content of Mach’s *The Analysis of Sensations*. Then I carefully read my notes in order to check the depth of my understanding of the book. In our conversation, Russell was extremely amiable. Subsequently, we also discussed political themes. Then Russell invited Miss Black to come and lecture for a while.

(Translated by Jan Vrhovski)

**CHINESE INTERPRETATIONS  
OF RUSSELL'S PHILOSOPHY**



*WANG Xinggong*

## An Outline of Russell's Logic and Worldview (1920)<sup>1</sup>

**W**e are all aware that in the universe there exist the following two kinds of things: One is matter (*wuzhi* 物質) and the other is form (*xingshi* 形式). In other words, the first kind of things are elements (*yuanzhi* 原質) and the second kind are relations (*guanxi* 關係). If one of those things were missing, a thing such as the universe would never have come to exist. Both of these things are real (*shizai de* 實在的). According to Russell's understanding, the essence of philosophy is logic. Logic, on the other hand, is the same as mathematics, a science which specializes on studying form – relations. As for the matter, it is studied by a variety of different specialized fields of science, while it ought not to be studied by philosophy. Because form is universal, the aim of philosophy is also universal. Philosophy does not use scientific data as its foundation but philosophical conclusions, it also does not change because of scientific theory. Instead, it has got its own scope. And, if one understands the things within this very scope, then one can also understand the general aspects of the universe (*yuzhou zhi pubian de muyang* 宇宙之普遍的模樣).

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1 Wang Xinggong 王星拱. "Luosu luoji yu yuzhou guan gaishuo 羅素邏輯與宇宙觀該說 (An Outline of Russell's Logic and Worldview)." *Xin qingnian* 新青年, 8(3), 1-6.

First, we shall raise an example, with which we shall try to explain the realness of these form – relations (as studied in philosophy). When, for example, I say: “I am in this house” (*wo shi zai zhe jian ju li* 我是在這間居裏) there is no doubt that “I” (*wo* 我) and “house” (*ju* 居) are real, while “this” (*zhe jian* 這間) expresses a special property of this house. The word “in” (*zai li* 在裏), however, necessarily also stands for a real thing. This real thing is a relation which subsists between me and the house. If what the words “am in” represent was not a real thing, then the proposition (*mingci* 命辭) “I am in this house” would be meaningless – humans would not be able to understand it. This is why our understanding (*liaojie* 了解) does not only imply matter and its properties but also relations. At this level, we can already understand that relations are real.

Because Russell wanted to confirm the realness of relations, consequently he also had to disprove the scholastic notion of logic. From Aristoteles onwards, the scholastic logic was a logic of classes – it divided everything that exists in the universe into two classes, which was Aristoteles’ wild ambition. This logic derived from the relationship between subject (*zhuci* 主詞) and predicate (*weici* 謂詞). Thus, for example, in the proposition “oxen have horns”, the word “oxen” is a subject and the expression “have horns” is a predicate; in the proposition “human is an animal with the capacity to laugh”, “human” is the subject and “is an animal with the capacity to laugh” its predicate. According to the scholastic definition of logic, all propositions can be reduced back to a subject-predicate form. In other words: all relations can be simplified into the subject’s properties. Since the above mentioned two examples basically speak about the properties of “oxen” and “men”, it is also self-evident that they can be included into the subject-predicate form. If, however, the same theory is used for the aforementioned sentence “I am in this house”, the interpretation becomes a bit more difficult. This is so because this proposition contains two terms (*xiang* 項) – two things. Two things which are relative to each other – they have a relative relationship. If we were to consider this term only as a property of another term, then it cannot be avoided that what was originally an equal wife becomes suppressed as a mere appendage to the husband. However, this still is not regarded as the fatal blow to scholastic logic. Let us take another look at the propositions which contain a “comparative degree” (*bijiao de dengji* 比較的等級); the relations contained in this kind of propositions are what Russell calls “asymmetrical relations” (*fanxiang de guanxi* 反相的關係). For an asymmetrical relation it is impossible to be simplified into a property of a subject. Let’s take a look at what he says about this matter.

Now, let us take a proposition "this thing is larger than that thing." This proposition does not only reveal to us that the two objects are different in size (*tiliang* 體量), we also learn that the size of one of them is larger from the other's components (*fenliang* 分量 "partial size"). It is completely impossible to reduce this relation to a property of a subject. Provided that we know that this thing is the same as that thing, we can also transform the proposition "this thing is the same as that thing" into the proposition "these two things are the same". If in this new proposition, we regard "these two things" as the subject and "are the same" as the predicate, this would be the same as to regard "are the same" as the common property of the two subjects of "these two things". In other words: we would reduce the relationship between them to a property common to both of them. Let us assume that we only know that this thing is different from that thing, we are again able to change the proposition "this thing is different from that thing" into a proposition which says "these two things are different". Again, in this new proposition we treat "these two things" as its subject and "are different" as its predicate. This is to say: we regard "are different" as the property of the subject "these two things." In other words, we simplify the relation which subsists between them to their property of being different. But if now we not only know that these two things are different, but also that this thing is larger than that thing, then their property of being different, from the formal aspect, cannot entirely explain this fact. Plainly speaking, what the proposition "this thing is larger than that thing" contains within itself is not only their property of being different. Let us assume that this proposition would only contain their property of being different. In that case there would be no difference between the propositions "this thing is larger than that thing" and "that thing is larger than this thing" whatsoever. What ought to be said is: the size of this thing is greater than the size of that thing. No matter how, what we cannot do is to dismiss the relation "larger than". For, because the relation is not the same, neither is the form. Therefore, the proposition "this thing is larger than that thing," and the propositions "these two things are the same" and "these two things are different" all have different forms. This asymmetric relation is indissoluble – no matter how, it cannot be simplified to a property of the subject. This further reveals the reality of relations, which we need to recognize.

The relation "larger" is like that, and so are relations like smaller, before, behind, on the left, on the right, inside or outside. The example discussed above only represents a relation between two terms; however, we should also know that the same relation can be shared by three, four, five, down to an infinite number of terms, such as the elements in a series or the dots in a straight line.

Because scholastic logic maintains the universality of the subject-predicate form, therefore it also maintains that “the world” (*tianxia* 天下) is only one single subject, and that this subject is absolute. It further maintains that whenever we pass a judgement (*panduan* 判斷) and form a proposition, we are denoting the attributes of an aggregate, identical subject. If “the world” could have two subjects, then the proposition “these two subjects are here” (in this proposition, the expression “two subjects” is the subject and “are here” is the predicate) could neither denote the property of this subject nor the property of that subject from the two subjects. Hegel therefore argued that the form of philosophical propositions is necessarily “absolutely so and so” (see Russell’s *Scientific Method in Philosophy*). This postulation was strongly opposed by Russell, who proposed that there is not only one form of proposition. Not only is there not only one form, but there are many of them – infinitely many! Through the examples raised above it could already be indicated that propositions can have different forms. All other propositions, which contain any of the words “and”, “or”, “only if”, “if”, “every”, “no”, “not”, “does not exist” (*meiyou* 沒有), as well as other words of negation, all have different forms, because each of these particles represents its own special relation. This argument by Russell can be best understood if used in propositions which contain negations such as “not”, “is not” or “does not exist.” All these words represent relations – formal relations. If we do not regard form as real, but instead maintain that these negations express actual substance, this makes no sense, because there is no such thing as “nothingness” (*meiyou*) as the property of actual substance. Because of this argument many philosophers maintain that there is no such thing in the world as “non-being” (*meiyou*). Their mantra is “Thou cannot not conceive nothing”. However, that in each and every day we almost always use “does not exist” (*meiyou*, “not”) in making judgements adequately demonstrates that “nonbeing” must also be real. This reality, however, is of a negative form. For the reality of forms is different from the that of the substance. Therefore, Russell says that: “In the past, people believed that there exist no other worlds apart from the mental and the physical world. Now we know that beside these two worlds there also exists the world of form. Akin to the physical world, this world of form is also objective, however, unlike the physical world it cannot be perceived by sense organs.” The duty of logic is to study this world of form. In this world there also exists a variety of types, analogous to the “abundant variegation” of the flora and fauna in the physical world. It is not like the scholastic logic, which generalizes all forms into one. The function of logic is analysis; the “dictionary” of logical form needs to be adequate, so that the flaw of “subduing the multitude under the one” (*qu zhong jiu yi zhi xia* 屈眾就一之下) will



be unlikely to occur. The first step towards such logic consists in recognizing the reality of relations.

Generally speaking, the worldview (*yuzhouguan* 宇宙觀) which ensues from such analytical logic contains four main characteristics: (1) plurality (*duoyuan* 多元), (2) insignificance of humanity (*renlei miaoshao* 人類渺少), (3) realism (*weishi* 唯實), (4) neutrality (*zhongli* 中立).

1. Plurality. The actual world is composed of numerous things with numerous properties and numerous relations. The relation is never more important than matter – based on the realist philosophical aspect of Russell's theory, what is important is that there is such a relation – but it is at least as important as matter. Thus, for example: if you and I are friends, our friendship contains a relation between two terms; if I am jealous of you because of her, this is a relation between three terms; if I hope that you will give this book to him, this incorporates a four-term relation; if all people in the world perfectly exhaust their abilities to get what they need, this contains relations between immeasurable number of terms. We could also try – I hope not incorrectly – to explain it using a simple metaphor: matter is a brick and relations are mortar. One would not be able to build a wall with either one of them missing. But relations cannot be regarded as space-occupying things in the same way as mortar occupies space. The question of “How do many items come to constitute the world by being linked together by relations?”, also needs to involve the concepts of continuum and infinity. But because Russell's theories of continuum and infinity are derived from mathematics, it involves specialist undertones, which is why we shall not discuss it here.
2. Insignificance of humanity. Ancient Greek philosophers believed in harmonic unity. They maintained that the universe is “one” (*yi* 一, “uniform”). The medieval theologians-philosophers believed that man is the ruler of the universe. According to Russell's philosophy, though, this is a grave underestimation of the universe. The reason why the Greek philosophers maintained a belief in the one lay in their excessive worship of rationality and underemphasizing of experience. Basing themselves on the rational, they inferred that the universe must be uniform and not plural. Because the medieval philosophers lived in a world of constant war and turmoil, their ideal was a tiny and orderly universe. Russell, on the other hand, believed that such worldviews treated everything that exists – the known and the unknown – as a globe on [the philosophers'] writing desk, [believing that the world can be] discussed from within

the confines of their rooms. According to Russell, we can only infer this from that because of the relationship which subsists between this and that. And, because that is further related to that, we can also infer that from that. This further implies that, if the relations are complex, then one will probably find oneself unable to make any inferences. How can one then say that [everything] constitutes a harmonic unity? This is why, the boundaries of the domain of the one cannot be set within the realm of the unknown. If we claim that this universe is complete and therefore a harmonic one, then in this “world” (*tianxia* 天下) there probably exist many different worlds, while each one of them must seem to be complete. This is the same as the mathematical principle which stipulates that outside of infinity there can also be the finite. How could this be impossible? Therefore, this universe is perhaps only one of many universes. And it may also be that our solar system is only some particles of dust in this universe, while the Earth is only a small element of this solar system. In the same way, humankind is only one of the species of animals which live on this planet. To believe that humanity’s desires correspond to the course of this universe is indeed the same as a frog which lives in a well and thus cannot speak about the ocean. (Naturally, this principle also agrees to the fourth characteristic, neutrality.)

3. Realism. Logic is a science which studies relations. But the basis (*zhangben* 張本) of these relations is perception (*gan chu* 感觸, also translated as *gan jue* 感覺). And the datum (*zhangben*) of sensation is real. This differs from what is claimed by the idealists. Namely, that it exists because of the mind. It is also different from the claims of the materialists, who say that it is the substance of the external world *per se*. Since all sensations are genuine, so are the sensations we have in our dreams. But, because these sensations are irreconcilable with those we experience when we are awake, we say that dreams are not true. One can see that the falsity of dreams is not at all the falsity of elements of our perception, but only a falsity of the relations of these elements. (This has got the same meaning as the assertion that the scientific truth is a systemic truth.) Now, since these sensations are based on the real, then the physical “objects” (*wu* 物) are all also founded on these very same sensations. In other words: the objects in physical science have got a definite relation to the sense data (*gan chu zhangben* 感觸張本); the objects in physics are the function (*hanshu* 函數) of sense data. Thus, for example, if I go past this table, then the continuum of the table is represented by the colour perceived by my eyes. These combinations of the grades of colour

are real. As far as the existence of the table *per se* is concerned, it is thus established as an aggregation of different sensations. (Vision and touch.) Things like a point in geometry or the [notion of an] instant in mechanics are all established on the basis of sense data.

4. Neutrality. The universal forms studied by philosophy are not ordered about by human desire. [It is a fact that] two plus three equals five. And the result cannot be changed to six just because we would wish it to be so. Russell believes that the question whether the actual course of the universe is evolution (*jinhua* 進化) or regression (degeneration, *tuihua* 退化) is not to be answered by philosophy. All notions of advancement from inadequate to better in evolution are only the product of human desire. But we must not despair: since the universal form is neutral, the survival and preservation of humanity depend entirely on good fortune (*quan ping mingyun zhipei* 全馮命運支配, "depend entirely on fate"). If we want to pursue happiness, to do it via some indirect path is usually far better than to do pursue it directly. Astrology is trying directly to attain fortune and avert misfortune, but its benefit to humanity far less than that of the neutral astronomy. Alchemy (*dianjin huaxue* 點金化學) wants to directly produce wealth, but its benefit to humanity is far less than that of the neutral modern chemistry. Pursuit of the good is also like that: although philosophy does not regard the good as its final objective, if we want to understand the universal patterns of the universe, then its results are much better than if we follow the slavish manner of seeking good by trying to cling to and preserve one's wealth.

(Translated by Jan Vrhovski)



*ZHAO Yuanren*

## The Spirit of Russell's Philosophy (1921)<sup>1</sup>

It is not easy to talk about an individual's philosophy in a short essay, but it is even more difficult in the case of Russell. For Russell's school is empirical (*shiyan de* 實驗的), analytical (*fenxi de* 分析的) and specific (*xiding de* 細定的); he is against the pure, mixed and general schools. Thus, to understand Russell's knowledge, the most important thing is to patiently study the detailed answers to the detailed questions raised in his works and lectures. It is not like the philosophy of these schools of literature, where you can take one or two interesting phrases like "everything changes", "I think, therefore I am", "the universe is my idea" etc. as the essence of their philosophy. It's not some kind of "Russell crash course", where you can learn fast and go away.

Even though I speak in this way, I cannot promise that readers will learn anything about Russell's philosophy after reading this passage. That is not my intention. My intention is not to talk about the essence of Russell's philosophy, but about his spirit, so that an appropriate, scientific, careful and unbiased attitude can be formed in the mind of the reader, and an interest can be created

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1 Zhao Yuanren 趙元任 (1921). "Luosu zhexue de jingshen" 羅素哲學的精神 (The Spirit of Russell's Philosophy). *Luosu yuekan* 羅素月刊, 1(1), 1-9.

in experiencing Russell's knowledge; so that after my lecture, readers will be impatient to read Russell's articles. Then I shall think that these words have not been written in vain.

Since Russell is both a mathematician and philosopher, and has contributed most profoundly to the science and mathematical logic, we can expect that his thoughts and arguments must be very "logical" (*lunli de* 論理的), articulated (*you jiegou de* 有結構的), reflective (*mingxing de* 明省的) and exceedingly sophisticated (*guibian de* 詭辯的). This last word is very important.

Since most students in my country, whether reading or writing, do not understand the sophisticated attitude of Western philosophers and end up losing their most important spirit, I ask the readers for permission to say a few more words:

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Russell did not use the adjective "sophisticated" when talking about himself, but he would accept to be addressed in this way. In the early stages of a person's or country's thought, words are usually expressed without adding any additional range or description. But when thoughts become more complicated and debates more extensive and we want to express a meaning, we will immediately consider the relationship this idea has to other people's knowledge, and the similarities and differences it has to the opinions already expressed by others. Therefore, when this new idea is formulated, it must go through many conjunctions (*lianci* 連詞), quotations (such as "that" ...), relative clauses (*lianfu duju* 連附讀句) and so on. Only then can this sentence be perfectly said, seen and thus stand for itself. This style (*lunpai* 論派) is the same in all modern Western learning, especially Russell's, so I am afraid that what was expressed above is still not clear. Therefore, I will give you some more examples to explain it better.

Russell for example says: "Unless I am very much misled by my reasoning, I should entirely agree with the realities that the task of philosophy is not to prove that the world is as we wish it to be, as has always been the motive of the so-called tender-hearted philosophers, but to discover, from as neutral a point of view as we know how, what the world really is like."

I fear that many people will break his words into pieces and translate them in this way: "My theory has not misled me, realism is right. They say that philosophy should prove that the world is good. We all want the world to be good, and good-natured philosophers all have this goal. Philosophy should be neutral, and we should try our best to be neutral as well. Philosophy should discover what the world really is like. "

The comparison of this translation with the original text is like comparing a children's story about flowers with classical masterpieces, or even better, like comparing a heap of broken bricks with a palace.

Of course, Russell never said the above sentence, it's just similar to what he said. His usual speech was not necessarily so thorough, and his translation was not always as "a bamboo tube for steaming rice", as they would call it in the South, and as I wrote above. The inadequacies of this kind, however, are often seen in the translation, causing Russell to suffer losses on the one hand and scholars to lose the spirit of his ethical prudence on the other. That is why I deliberately describe it in too much detail so that if you study his work and you happen to see that he is using a childish vocabulary, you know that it is not his original tone.

Russell's philosophy focuses on methods, but it takes conclusions lightly. First of all, we will talk about the spirit of his philosophy, so methods are more important. I said above that his school is empirical, meaning that he believes that in order to judge right and wrong the truth must be based on direct experience and not on an aprioristic theory. Like the idealism of modern theory, Russell advocates that logic is the main part of philosophy, but the difference is that idealism believes that we can deduce what the world looks like from the method of logic, while Russell proposes to use logic as a means to emancipate one's freedom of thought. In this way, we can see things we have not thought about before, things that are likely to exist, or even things that are determined to be existent but are actually not. This is not the same as empirical facts, so this is the spirit of his experiment.

When Russell's experimentalism is applied to the problem of substance, it is based on his theory of so-called neutral monism (*zhongli yiyuanlun* 中立一元論). People claim that what is most real is either the mental or material. But mind and matter are both concepts constructed through the process of logic. Truly the most reliable, simple and real things are the events (*shiqing* 事情) that happen in the world at any given time. These can be experienced directly, which means that the ideology of seeing things as elements of the real world also comes from the spirit of empiricism. This ideology of seeing things as the elements comes very close to the radical empiricism (*genben jingyanlun* 根本經驗論) of James and the basic idea of the latest theories in physics, and this it is not just a strange opinion produced by Russell.

As I said above, Russell's method is analytical. His philosophy is therefore known as logical atomism (*lunli de yuanzilun* 論理的原子論). This analytical method is a tool of mathematics and experimental science. American realists

also strongly advocate the use of analytical methods in philosophy and have made numerous polemics against idealists and mystics in this regard. Now is not the time to discuss this topic in detail. However, Russell used the analytical method to obtain many precise scientific theories of construction, which can be seen as an advantage.

I also said above that Russell's school is specific. In other words, whatever problem he is working on, the conclusion he draws after extensive analysis and research must depend on the facts that have been linked to the origin of the problem. Just because the theory of guiding principles is done in a certain way, we cannot have everything judged in the same way.

For example, members of the old school of idealism like to say that people are idealistic or materialistic. Russell is not bound by these concepts. In fact, there seems to be a psychological implication in his engagement with the matter and his definition of the class of events (*shiqing de zuhe* 事情的組合). But when he studied desire, he regarded it as a rule of procedure for behaviour stimulated by the outside world, which is closer to materialistic theory. It turns out that Russell is not limited by old ideas, but that he is able to deal with specific questions and to carry out rather detailed research and solutions.

Since the spirit of Russell's philosophy is experimental, this means that the fewer entities (*xiangjian* 項件) used for theoretical purposes other than experimental matters the better. For example, the appearance, colour, sound and hardness of the table are things you can experience. The substance of the table is assumed, but if we put those things that are related to each other in a group, we call this class of events (*yizu shiqing* 一組事情) a table. In this way a material entity is left out. This principle of learning is called Occam's razor. Occam was a philosopher in the Middle Ages, and Russell takes his phrase "Entities are not to be multiplied without necessity" very seriously. Therefore, he cuts away everything theoretical but empirically not needed metaphysical redundancies, such as material consciousness.

When Occam's razor is used in a particular place, it becomes Russell's "principle of abstraction" (*chouxiang fa* 抽象法), better called the "principle which does away with abstraction" (*xiaochu chouxiang fa* 消除抽象法). For example, it is said that there are many pairs of things in the world, a pair of cubes, a pair of clay moulds, two people, two pieces of paper, and so on. Do these pairs have anything in common? In general, we say that everything on Earth can have this property called "2". Each of these pairs of things contains this property of "2", so that is what makes them similar. Russell's definition of the number is different. In fact, he says that we only see pairs of things, but



we have never seen anything abstract with the property of "2". So if Occam's razor can cut this off, Russell says it means that all these pairs of things are concrete. Now put all the pairs of things in the world in one group and call this big group "2". In this way, the abstract number becomes a concrete set.

As mentioned above, Russell's school of criticism emphasizes methods rather than conclusions. So when I talk about the spirit of Russell's philosophy, I mention his suggestions only in passing. He himself would have said that Occam's razor is the most important of his methods. There is no lack of such spirit in modern philosophy, but Russell is perhaps the only one who has so many valuable structures in philosophy, mathematics and psychology. If readers want to know what these valuable findings are, please read the text of the *Russell Monthly* journal.

(Translated by Maja Kosec)



**ZHANG SHENFU AND RUSSELL –  
IMAGES OF AN INSPIRING  
RELATIONSHIP**



*Jan VRHOVSKI*

## Zhang Shenfu – China’s First Popularizer of Russell’s Philosophy and Mathematical Logic, 1920s

**Z**hang Shenfu (張申府, 1893-1986), originally called Songnian 崧年, was an important Chinese intellectual, who greatly contributed to propagation of Western science, analytical philosophy and dialectical materialism in 1920s and 1930s China. As an important member of the May Fourth intellectual elite, he took part in shaping of the left-oriented intellectual movement at Peking University. As a close colleague of Li Dazhao, Zhang was a senior member of the Communist movement in Beijing and a cofounder of the CPC (Communist Party of China). Having been a notoriously outspoken and prolific writer, and later also as an important member of the first modern department of philosophy at Qinghua University (between 1929 and 1936), Zhang played a key role in the process of dissemination and establishment of modern Western philosophy in Republican China.

In the intellectual history of modern China, Zhang has been generally credited for pioneering contributions to the introduction and dissemination of the philosophy of Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein in the 1920s and

early 1930s.<sup>1</sup> To a minor degree, Zhang has also been credited for his general introduction of Freud's psychoanalysis in the early 1920s,<sup>2</sup> and the earliest introduction of the philosophy of the Vienna School (in the early 1930s), in particular the thought of Rudolf Carnap.<sup>3</sup> Above all, he is given credit for his introduction and longstanding efforts at spreading the philosophy of Bertrand Russell and Ludwig Wittgenstein – he also produced the first translation of the latter's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* in Chinese.<sup>4</sup> However, maybe the most important of all Zhang's contributions to the development of the discourse of modern science and philosophy in China was his early expositions on the notion of mathematical logic, followed by his many years of lecturing about Russell's mathematical logic at the most prestigious Chinese universities, such as Peking and Qinghua Universities. Zhang was also the first Chinese philosopher to organize a specialized course on mathematical logic, Russell, or Wittgenstein at any Chinese university.<sup>5</sup>

Earlier, in the final years of the May Fourth period (1919-1921), Zhang was one of the foremost proponents and popularizers of Russell's thought in China. His discovery of Russell as a philosopher and social reformist took place as early as 1916, when he came across his writings in the influential American journal *The Monist*. Under the influence of Russell's (mathematical)

1 Thus, for example: Wen & Cui 2012, 359-366.

2 As an example of the first introduction, Jiang and Ivanhoe (2013, 26-8) mention Zhang's article "Social Questions" (*Shehui wenti* 社會問題) from 1922, which written and published during his stay in Paris. Allegedly, in 1922 Zhang attended Freud's lectures at the University of Paris. (Zhang 1993, 99) However, Zhang was already interested in modern psychology in the late 1910s, mainly due to his impression that Russell also had a deep interest in psychology. Thus, in 1920 he had already published an abridged translation of Russell's essay "The Modern Science of Psychology" (*Jindai xinlixue* 近代心理學) in the *New Youth*, which also mentioned Freud's psychoanalysis.

3 Together with his younger brother Zhang Dainian (張岱年, 1909-2004). See, for example: Jiang Yi 2009.

4 The translation titled *Mingli lun* 名理論 (*Luoji-zhexue lun* 邏輯哲學論) was published in two parts in the *Xiandai pinglun* 現代評論, in 1927 and 1928.

5 The nature of his role in the history of mathematical logic in China is still a matter of discussion. The majority of historical surveys on this subject either do not recognise Zhang's role at all or only briefly mention him as the first proponent of Russell's philosophy in China. As examples thereof, see Zhou and Zhou 1989, 1-25; Zhou 2004, 398-406; Lin and Zhang 1983; Shi and Zeng 1998; and Song 2000. Only recently, this trend has been reversed by the study of Su and Dai (2019), who in their article "Zhang Shenfu's Contribution to Early Dissemination of Mathematical Logic in China" (*Zhang Shenfu dui shuli luoji zai Zhongguo zaoqi chuanbo de gongxian* 張申府對數理邏輯在中國早期傳播的貢獻) delivered a non-critical overview of Zhang's publications and translations from the 1920s and 1930s, set into the framework of Zhang's own autobiographical accounts on that period.

philosophy, mathematical logic, and his own understanding of the English thinker's political ideas, Zhang, who was originally studying mathematics, decided to switch to philosophy and become actively engaged in political activism, publicly advocating notions such as science, mathematical logic, women's emancipation, liberty and socialism. During the culmination of the May Fourth movement, as a member of Peking University, Zhang thus took a position at the frontlines of those Chinese intellectuals who espoused Marxist or socialist ideals regarding the future of Chinese culture and society. Most importantly, in his support for the notion of science-based libertarianism in that period, he mainly relied on Russell's philosophy and invoked him as an exemplary figure of a scientific social reformer, and to a much lesser extent drew on ideas from Marxism. Thereby, through Zhang's contributions, notions from Russell's philosophy and logic became an integral part of the intellectual production of the more left-oriented segment of the May Fourth movement. Because Zhang was also a member of Peking University, Russell's thought had also been gradually introduced into modern Chinese academic discourse. It is more than possible that Zhang's twofold introduction of Russell – to the political discourse of Marxist intellectuals and the curriculum at Peking University, contributed significantly to the fact that one year after Zhang started writing articles about the philosopher he was ultimately invited to lecture in China. His role as China's first advocate and expert on Russell became even more visible in the final months before Russell's arrival, when Zhang was stretching all efforts to introduce the Englishman's personality and work to the general Chinese readership, by publishing articles, translations and letters defending Russell's thought against biased criticism and misunderstandings.

Many years later, Zhang's life-long admiration of Russell was brought back to the attention of Chinese and Western scholarship on modern Chinese intellectual history by Vera Schwarcz, who, in the late 1970s and early 80s, had the chance to interview Zhang on her visits to Beijing. Schwarcz's interviews with Zhang, embedded critically into their historical context of reference, were contained in her provokingly titled book *Time for Telling Truth is Running Out: Conversations with Zhang Shenfu* (1992). A part of the book, which deals with Zhang's "intellectual infatuation" with Russell, was also reprinted in an article published in *Russell: The Journal of the Bertrand Russell Archives* (1991/1992). Since the late 1980s, Zhang's life and work has also been reintroduced into contemporary Chinese scholarship and the re-evaluation of the intellectual foundations of Chinese modernity. If the early re-discoveries of Zhang's life and work mainly involved collections of his representative works

and general intellectual biographies, a more in-depth scholarly engagement with Zhang's world of ideas started only in the early 2000s, and has been on the rise ever since.

For the purpose of this anthology, in the following text I will try to give a general overview of Zhang's engagement with Russell's ideas from the time of his visit in China to the end of the 1920s, right before Chinese studies on analytical philosophy and mathematical logic had finally started to flourish at Chinese universities. In other words: the following narrative will focus on the period of time when Zhang was still one of only few Chinese enthusiasts of Russell's thought, who was intellectually engaged with the most profound aspects of his work, such as mathematical logic, the "analytical method," philosophy of science (modern physics) and so on. In order to avoid getting ourselves immersed too deeply into the vast body of Zhang's philosophical thought, the following narrative will mainly be confined to (a) the introduction of Zhang's life in the 1920s, (b) the main aspects of his propagation of Russell in the late May Fourth period (1919-1921) and (c) his early notion of Russell's mathematical logic.

Since, at least to a major part of Western sinology, Zhang is still a relatively unknown figure, in the next part of this survey I shall first give a more detailed introduction to his life, focusing exclusively on the period we are interested in.

## 1 A Biographical Introduction: The Years of Political Activism and Intellectual Polyamory, up to the Late-1920s

In the academically most active years of his life, between 1917 up to the late 1940s, Zhang was an outspoken advocate of liberty, scientific objectivism, traditional Confucian ethics, and comprehensive worldviews. In his personal as well as public intellectual undertakings, Zhang stood out as a rather eccentric intellectual with an insatiable appetite for the new,<sup>6</sup> an intellectual *enfant terrible*, whose voice was ever filled with the dramatic and tinged with a sense of historical urge. Although, in the 1920s and 1930s, his intellectual passions had never really drifted far away from Russell and mathematical logic, both his life and thought at the time give testimony to a restless quest

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6 In conversation with Vera Schwarcz from 1984, Zhang remarked: "All my life, I have loved new ideas. I loved the idea of the new. As soon as I encountered something new, I would drop the old subject that had interested me earlier. Thus, I became hopelessly scattered. I have been diffuse in my scholarly concerns, as in all my political life..." (Schwarcz 1992, 20).



for utopian notions of liberty, spiritual and scientific progress, manifested in intellectual polyamory as its ultimate means and a never ceasing propensity towards political non-allegiance. His extraordinary personality, intellectual bluntness and political dauntlessness only amplified the influence of his voice in the propagation of modern scientific or philosophical ideas, as well as the political causes which lead to his public downfall in the late 1940s. As a senior member of the May Fourth intellectual elite, Zhang was stretched between its strong foundations on traditional thought, and the fervour of modernist idealism that pervaded the intellectual climate of the time.

Zhang Shenfu, originally called Songnian 崧年, was born in Xian county, Hebei Province in 1893. He was the elder brother of the renowned philosopher Zhang Dainian (張岱年, 1909-2004) and the physicist Zhang Chongnian (張崇年, 1904-1994). Zhang was born into a family of scholar-officials, which meant that from early childhood on he was subjected to a profoundly traditional upbringing, which consisted mainly of intense instruction in the Confucian moral code and the study of Confucian classics.<sup>7</sup> From the late 1900s on, his father Zhang Lian (張濂) worked as a high-ranking official at the Ministry of Education. As a direct result of his experiences gained at the Ministry as well as his official visits to Japan, where he had the opportunity to inspect the general circumstances in the Japanese system of education, in 1908 Zhang Lian decided to send his oldest son to study at the progressive Shuntian Academy (順天高等學堂) in Beijing. There, instead of Confucian classics and traditional-style scholarship, Zhang first came in contact with a modern, natural science-centred system of education. In his years at the progressive Shuntian Academy Zhang also made a number of important life-long friendships. Amongst the most notable friends whom Zhang had first met at the Shuntian Academy were Guo Renlin (郭仁林), Gu Jiegang (顧頤剛, 1893-1980), Liang Shuming (梁漱溟, 1893-1988)<sup>8</sup> and Luo Jialun (羅家倫, 1897-1969)<sup>9</sup> (Zhang 1993, 78-81).

7 When Zhang later looked back at the years of his childhood, he characterized them with the following words: "Until the revolution of 1911, I lived the Confucian role of the elder son in a traditional literati household without any inner rancour at all." (Schwarcz 1992: 20). In his case, a "traditional" upbringing meant that from the age of five he was taught ancient classics (*Book of Change*, *Classic of Filial Piety*, *Book of Rites* etc.) and instructed in strict observance of Confucian values (Zhang 1993, 1-4).

8 For Liang's account on their friendship see, for instance, Lynch 2018, 60-63, 111, 123, etc.

9 Akin to all above-listed scholars, Luo also came from a family of scholar-officials. He studied at the modern Fudan University in Shanghai and from 1917 on at Peking University. He obtained his specialization in history and philosophy at Princeton and Columbia (1920-1924). Later (1928) Luo became the president of Qinghua University. In the early 1920s Luo seemed to have shared Zhang Shenfu's enthusiasm for Western science and positivist philosophy.

Quite early on, Zhang's outlook on society was strongly affected by the outbreak of the Xinhai Revolution in 1911. If in his mind the revolution announced the advent of new world order driven by liberty, on the other side he was still deeply immersed in the constraining influences of the traditional world. Thus, in the same year when Zhang was fantasizing about revolution in Beijing,<sup>10</sup> he was also ordered by his father to return to his hometown and marry his first wife<sup>11</sup> (Zhang 1993, 82; Schwarcz 1992, 29). In the autumn of 1912, he joined his friends Liang Shuming and Guo Renlin working at the editorial office of the *Guomin bao* 國民報 [*The Nation*], to which he also contributed a series of his first short writings.<sup>12</sup>

In 1912, when the Shuntian Academy was forced to close its doors, Zhang had to leave Beijing. Later, following an unsuccessful attempt to enrol into the Nankai Secondary School (*Nankai zhongxue* 南開中學), Zhang ultimately succeeded in completing his secondary education at the secondary school affiliated to Peking Higher Normal School (*Beijing gaodeng shifan xuexiao* 北京高等師範學校). Already one year later, Zhang was taking part in the preparatory program for natural sciences (*like* 理科) at Peking University (Zhang 1993, 81-3). Due to his advanced knowledge of various subjects, during his preparatory training Zhang was also able to attend regular courses at the university. Because Zhang's main interest at the time was mathematics,<sup>13</sup> this was what he wanted to study after having completed the preparatory training. However, because the prerequisite for that was also a successfully completed preparatory course in literary sciences (*wenke* 文科), Zhang first decided

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Thus in 1923, while he was studying at Columbia University in New York, Luo composed a relatively in-depth overview of the main theoretical pillars of contemporary Western science in contrast with its opposite pole, metaphysics. Later in 1930, after his return to China, Luo published his manuscript under the title *Kexue yu xuanxue* 科學與玄學 (*Science and Metaphysics*). In this book he also briefly described some of the important aspects of mathematical logic, which he seemed to have held in high esteem.

- 10 In 1911, Zhang invented for himself a new *nom de guerre*, Zhang Gong 張弓 (sobriquet Jiansu 見素).
- 11 His first wife's name was Zhu Diyi 朱德依. She died after giving birth to their daughter Alice (Yali 亞麗) in 1914. Zhang's daughter was named after the character from *Alice in the Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll. (Zhang 1993, 82; Schwarcz, 1992: p. 29)
- 12 At the time he wrote under the penname Chizi 赤子 "the Kid."
- 13 The university library provided him access to various books on mathematics and the history of mathematics. In his memoirs, for instance, Zhang noted that at the time he read a collection of Japanese textbooks on mathematics, written by Hayashi Tsuruichi (林鶴一, 1873-1935). Around the year 1915, Zhang also became interested in the history of mathematics. In his later years, he recalled that he had read the works by Japanese historian of mathematics Endō Toshisada (遠藤利貞, 1843-1915). At the time, the mathematical division already organized a course in the subject's history.

to enrol into an undergraduate program in philosophy, shortly after which he managed to transfer to the mathematical division (*Shumen* 數門). Even though Zhang was a student of philosophy for only a few months, his first contacts with Western philosophy aroused a profound interest in philosophical forms of investigation. As a consequence, having been now drawn both to mathematics as well as philosophy, as a freshman in mathematics Zhang still pursued his newly arisen interest, taking various advanced classes at the Department of philosophy. As Zhang later reminisced, these early encounters with philosophy eventually caused him to develop a strong interest in mathematical philosophy (*shuli zhexue* 數理哲學), the philosophy of mathematics (*shuxue de zhexue* 數學的哲學), foundations of mathematics and, most of all, mathematical logic, where, according to his view at the time, the essence of both disciplines was combined into one (Zhang 1993, 85).

In his undergraduate years at Peking University, Zhang's main source of new material related to Western ideas was the university library.<sup>14</sup> Starting in 1915, the library underwent a series of reforms, through which foreign publications, especially periodicals, became more available to the students and broader readership. In this crucial period, the new procurements also included the journal *The Monist* and monthly magazine *The Open Court*, through which Zhang first came across the writings of Bertrand Russell. In his early encounters with Russell's thought, apart from his contributions to mathematical logic and mathematical philosophy, Zhang was also strongly impressed and affected by his social and political ideas, especially by his progressive outlook on marriage and gender equality. In the years to follow, these ideas, which were in direct opposition to the traditional values from Zhang's Confucian upbringing, caused Zhang to become one of the most outspoken proponents of women's emancipation in China.<sup>15</sup>

14 In 1915, a reading room was opened for broader readership. At the same time, the basic collection got considerably enlarged through donations and procurements of recent publications from the West. Beside a general increase in funds intended for procurement of foreign publications, the foreign collection was significantly increased with the help of the famous Science Society of China, with which in 1917 the new rector Cai Yuanpei established formal relations. From 1917 on, in return for a monthly donation of 200 Yuan, the society based in the US aided the university library by purchasing new books and periodicals from the West (Reynolds 1986, 74-5).

15 In fact, the majority of Zhang's early articles were concerned with either women's contributions to science or the problem of women's emancipation in post-May Fourth Republican China. While as early as in 1915 Zhang had already published a biographical article on the 19<sup>th</sup> century Russian mathematician Sofya Kovalevskaya (Schwarcz 1992, 29), his writings on gender equality, marriage and women's rights culminated in the year 1919. Zhang continued publishing articles on the same topic throughout the entire 1920s and early 1930s.

Apart from the indirect influence of Western authors and their ideas, in his formative years at Peking University Zhang was further influenced by two renowned Chinese intellectuals, both of whom were connected to the university. The first was Cai Yuanpei (蔡元培, 1868-1940), who served as the dean from 1916 on,<sup>16</sup> and the second one was Zhang Shizhao (章士釗, 1881-1973).<sup>17</sup> If Zhang's association with the first might have favourably affected a part of his early career, his contact with the latter was of a more formative significance. As Zhang recounted in his reminiscences, back then Zhang Shizhao's thought had had a great influence on him, regarding both his interest in logic as well as his philosophical thought (ibid. 72-3). It seems that his early admiration of Zhang Shizhao's precise and profound "logical writing style" (*luoji wen* 邏輯文)<sup>18</sup> led Zhang Shenfu to adopt a similar kind of semi-traditional style of logical writing on the one hand, and a similar kind of approach towards logical terminology on the other.<sup>19</sup> By the year 1917, when Zhang Shizhao assumed the post of a lecturer in logic at Peking University, Zhang Shenfu's admiration of the former's thought mainly revolved around the general notion of logic as expounded on in his extremely popular lectures<sup>20</sup> (Zhang 1993, 72-77). However, besides Zhang Shizhao's

- 16 According to Zhang's *Reminiscences*, he developed a close relationship with Cai. Zhang claimed that in his early years at the university they frequently met to discuss Western thought, mainly aesthetics. Later Cai introduced Zhang to Li Shizeng (李石曾, 1881-1973) and arranged for him to be employed as a teacher at Kongde Elementary School (*Kongde xiaoxue* 孔德小學) (see Zhang 1993, 55-58).
- 17 On his relationship with Zhang Shizhao see ibid., 72-77.
- 18 For a more detailed study on Zhang Shizhao's "logical writing style" and its impact on "logical literature" in the Late Qing Dynasty see Kurtz 2020.
- 19 For instance, already in his earliest writings on logic from the late 1910s, Zhang Shenfu was using the term *luoji* 邏輯 for "logic" – instead of the then commonly used *lunli* 論理. Thus, Zhang was also one of the first Chinese intellectuals to have translated the term "mathematical logic" as *shuli luoji* 數理邏輯 (see Zhang 1919a, 306). Zhang Shizhao's terminological solution *luoji* was first proposed in an article from 1910 (see Chen 1992, 51-4 and Kurtz 2011, 270-1). Later, his views were recapitulated and further elaborated on in an article entitled "*Luoji* 邏輯" published in the *Tiger Weekly* magazine in 1914. Zhang's article initiated a minor debate which continued in the same periodical. Nonetheless, it also seems that, in Zhang Shenfu's eyes, terminological invention represented one of the main skills of a modern Chinese scholar, since he tended to invent his own terminological solutions – one of the most notable was his use of the word *jiexi* 解析 as the translation for English term "analysis". In his autobiography, Zhang claimed that he developed his own method of translating Western terms, which imitated the approach adopted by Yan Fu.
- 20 Zhang Shizhao's notes for these lectures were later summarized in his monograph *Essentials of Logic* (*Luoji zhiyao* 邏輯指要). The book was first published only in the year 1939. Akin to his remaining writings on logic, published roughly between 1910 and the late 1920s, the book reveals that Zhang espoused a definition of logic as a universal notion, an inherent capacity of the human mind to produce correct thinking, which transcends culture, language, etc.

universalist notion of logic, another aspect of his thought that probably left an imprint on Zhang Shenfu was his strong propensity towards objectivist comprehensiveness, or more specifically, a syncretistic vision of Chinese modernity.<sup>21</sup>

Shortly upon his graduation in 1917, as a graduate student Zhang joined the graduate school (Research Institute 研究所) for both philosophy and mathematics. In the framework of his graduate studies of philosophy, Zhang attended Zhang Shizhao’s lectures on the history of logic, Hu Shi’s introduction to Chinese logic (*mingxue* 名學) (Guoli Beijing daxue 1917), and maintained an deep interest in Buddhist and contemporary Western philosophy (Guoli Beijing daxue 1918, 376). Zhang also became a member of the recently established research institute at the department (*Shuxuemen yanjiusuo* 數學門研究所), which was supervised by two senior members of the Department of Mathematics, Feng Zuxun (馮祖荀, 1880-1940) and Qin Fen (秦汾, 1882-1973).<sup>22</sup> As a graduate student at the institute, Zhang specialized in Cantorian transfinite set theory and also composed two articles introducing the main concepts of set theory (Zhang Shenfu 1918a/b). His work was supervised by Professor Feng Zuxun (Guoli Beijing daxue 1917). In 1918, Zhang also became a lecturer of mathematics and logic at the university’s preparatory school (ibid. 1918).

In 1917 Zhang’s political life took a sudden turn, when he befriended the leftist intellectual Li Dazhao (李大釗, 1889-1927).<sup>23</sup> In the next few years, the two worked closely together. Due to their friendship, in 1918 Zhang got employed at the university library and later took an active role in the process of

21 In his political and philosophical writings, published in the *Tiger* periodicals between 1914 and 1927, Zhang developed a theory of harmony (*xiehe* 協和), which stipulated that the harmonic unity between diametrically opposed things, such as Western and Eastern cultures, was the crucial condition for the “evolutionary” preservation of both. By emulating the traditional idea of the mean (*zhongyong* 中庸), Zhang emphasized that the principles of the universe must be brought into a synergic relationship. On one hand, Zhang’s “harmonism” was an essentially pluralistic type of philosophy, while on the other hand it presupposed an underlying order of the universe, whose patterns are manifested in human knowledge. (Cf. Guo 2000)

22 At the time, the research work at the institute for mathematics focused on transfinite set theory and its introduction to China (Ding et al. 1994, 75). During his work there, Zhang was assigned research work on the Fourier series and transform (Meng 2014, 6). One year later (1918), Zhang also became a member of the newly founded Mathematico-Physical Society (*Shuli xuehui* 數理學會) of Peking University (Ding et al. 1994, 75).

23 In the same year Li returned from Japan and started working in the Peking University Library. Thanks to Li, in the years following the May Fourth movement, the university library became a centre of the Communist movement at the university.

establishing the Chinese Communist Party.<sup>24</sup> As an editor of the *Tiger Daily*, Li also helped Zhang publish his early political writings – on revolution, women’s emancipation and youth. Shortly before the outbreak of the May Fourth movement in 1919, Zhang also joined the editorial of the influential *New Youth* (*Xin qingnian* 新青年) and later also became a cofounder of the important *Weekly Critic* (*Meizhou pinglun* 每周評論) magazine.<sup>25</sup> Around the year 1918, when he became more actively involved in the leftist current within the New Culture movement, Zhang started organizing elementary lectures on mathematics and logic in the university’s Red Building (*Honglou* 紅樓) (Zhang 1993, 92). By the year 1919, when the May Fourth movement broke out, Zhang became an important member of the leftist intellectual elite in Beijing. Although Zhang practiced a “less practical” form of political activism, his contribution to the movement lay mainly in propagating public debate on important social and political questions, like sexuality, the notion of socialist revolution, the role of science and philosophy in political reform, etc.<sup>26</sup> As one of the most outspoken theoreticians of the May Fourth leftist elite, together with Li Dazhao and Chen Duxiu (陳獨秀, 1879-1942), Zhang became a senior member of the Yong China Association, joined the Peking University Worker Education Association and cofounded the Marxist cell at the university. When, in the winter of his life Zhang looked back at the May Fourth period, he described himself as an “enemy of marriage and a lover of logic” (Schwarcz 1992, 42).

By 1920, Zhang was a regular lecturer at the university. As an already well-known adherent of the thought of Bertrand Russell, in September he was sent to Shanghai to represent Peking University at the welcome banquet organized for Russell’s arrival in China. Though in Shanghai his interaction with Russell had been rather formal and fleeting, Zhang was able to meet him again in Beijing, during the Englishman’s stay at Peking University. In Beijing, Zhang was not only able to engage in private conversations with Russell, but also established a long-lasting written correspondence, up until 1962, with Russell

24 As Zhang later reminisced, in 1918 when he was in charge of the library, Mao Zedong came to Peking University together with his father-in-law Yang Chengji 楊昌濟, and worked under him at the library (Zhang 1993, 91).

25 Initially, the *Weekly Critic* was a fundamentally leftist periodical. The Chinese translation of the *Communist Manifesto* and some of Zhang’s translations of Russell’s writing all first appeared in the *Weekly Critic*. Later, when the leadership of the magazine was taken over by Hu Shi, the nature of the content took a turn in another direction (Zhang 1993, 91).

26 In its expression the kind of revolutionary fervour practiced by Zhang differed critically from zealotry of his fellow Marxist, who took a rather more aggressive approach towards implementing social revolution.

recognizing in Zhang a person who was well-versed in all of his writings<sup>27</sup> In these conversations from 1920, Zhang and Russell discussed a variety of different topics, from Bolshevism and dialectical materialism,<sup>28</sup> to science and philosophy. In their conversations, Russell also convinced Zhang of the utmost significance new discoveries in physics, such as Einstein's Theory of Relativity, had for the development of scientific method and philosophy (Schwarcz 1991/2, 131). Consequently, in the following years Zhang's attention turned from biology to modern physics and its philosophical connotations.

Later that year, on Cai Yuanpei's request, Zhang travelled to France to take the post of a professor of philosophy at the newly established Institute for Chinese Studies at the University of Lyon. Together with his newlywed wife, Liu Qingyang (劉清揚, 1894-1977),<sup>29</sup> Zhang established a Chinese Communist cell in Paris, into which he also recruited young Zhou Enlai (周恩來, 1898-1976) who stayed in Paris as a correspondent for a newspaper from Tianjin. In 1922, Zhang moved temporarily to Berlin, where he endeavoured to establish an organization similar to that in Paris.<sup>30</sup> During his stay in France and Germany, Zhang also attended lectures at the Sorbonne (in psychoanalysis), and at the Universities of Berlin and Göttingen, where he listened to the lectures of the famous mathematician David Hilbert and the philosopher Leonard Nelson (1882-1927) (Zhang 1993, 99).

When in 1923 Zhang returned to China, the political and intellectual atmosphere was already starting to change. At first, he wanted to resume his work as a lecturer of philosophy at Peking University, but due to Hu Shi's disapproval ultimately was not accepted back at the university. Instead, Zhang became a professor at the Guangdong University (*Guangdong daxue* 廣東大學), where he taught mathematics, the history of Western philosophy and logic. In May

27 A day before their meeting in the Continental Hotel in Beijing, Russell described Zhang in his letter to Jean Nicod as a Chinese scholar "who knows my writings, all of them, far better than I do and has constructed an inconceivably complete biography of them." Schwarcz 1991/2, 122)

28 At the time, Russell was widely criticized by the Western socialists and Marxists for his criticism of Russian Bolshevism voiced after his short visit in Russia in 1919. Russell was concerned that Chinese "Marxists" might adopt an attitude similar to their Western comrades.

29 Liu was Zhang's former lover, whom he started seeing in 1920. Their relationship was a part of Zhang's pursuit for "sexual freedom", emulating Russell's philosophy on marriage and love. Liu herself was a political activist and a Communist from Tianjin. Her role-model was the famous late-Qing revolutionary and feminist Qiu Jin (秋瑾, 1875-1907), who was executed by the royal authorities in July 1907. In 1914, she opened a school for women and publicly propagated the idea of women's emancipation. Later, she was one of the leaders of the party's organization for women-activists.

30 In Berlin he recruited Zhu De (朱德, 1886-1976).

1924, when the Whampoa Military Academy (*Huangpu junguan xuexiao* 黃埔軍官學校) was established as a joint project by the Guomindang (國民黨) and Soviets, Zhang took over the office of the assistant head of the political department. Not long after that, due to political tensions, Zhang resigned from his post and returned to Shanghai, where he took a more active part in party-related political activities. When, in 1925, Zhang Shizhao became the Minister of Education, he offered Zhang a post at the Ministry. Consequently, whilst working at the Ministry, Zhang helped set up the Editorial Committee which he later also became a member of. In 1927, one of his fellow members at the Committee, Chen Yinghuang (陳映璜), who was also the head of the philosophy department at the China University (*Zhongguo daxue* 中國大學) in Beijing invited him to lecture on Western philosophy there. In the same year, on an invitation by Zhang Shizhao, Zhang became a member of the newly established Institute of Compilation and Translation (*ibid.*, 102-6).

After political unrest had erupted in Beijing and high-profile members of the local CPC were either arrested or took refuge at the Soviet Embassy, Zhang and Liu were also forced to leave the city and retreat first to Wuhan and then Shanghai. During the nationalist takeover of 1927, Zhang's main source of income was translation and writing: later the same year he published his translation of Wittgenstein's *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (*Minglilun* 名理論) and started working on his signature work, *Reflections* (*Suosi* 所思) (*ibid.*, 106). In the second year of his exile from the capital (1928), Zhang resumed teaching logic and Western philosophy at universities like Jinan University (*Jinan daxue* 暨南大學), Dalu University (*Dalu daxue* 大陸大學) and Great China University (*Daxia daxue* 大夏大學) in Shanghai (*ibid.*, 107).

Zhang was able to return to Beijing in 1929, when he was again appointed a lecturer at his *alma mater*, Peking University. In the following years Zhang's academic career was at its highest. Already in 1930, he started cooperating with the philosophical department at Qinghua University and became a member in 1931.<sup>31</sup> After he became a professor at Qinghua, he continued teaching logic and Russell's philosophy at the Department of Philosophy at Peking University and Yanjing University. In his years at Qinghua (up to 1936),

31 Most probably, the person behind Zhang's appointment as a professor of philosophy at Qinghua University was Luo Jialun, Zhang's lifelong friend and the then Dean of the University. Thus, Lin Xiaoqing's (2012: 139) claim, that "the appointment of Jin Yuelin, ..., led to the appointment of Feng Youlan, Zhang Shenfu, Zhang Dainian, Shen Youding..." is not entirely correct. Another fact that speaks against Jin's direct involvement in hiring Zhang was his strong, negative opinion of the latter – according to his follower Yin Haiguang, Jin thought that Zhang was a talentless, knowledge-less pretender, who was interested only in propagating dialectical materialism.



Zhang contributed greatly to the teaching of modern logic as well as the reputation of the department, which became known as the “Qinghua School of Mathematical Logic”. From the start on, he taught the history of Western philosophy, introductory courses on logic, mathematical logic and Russell’s philosophy. According to contemporary descriptions of the curricula, the main textbook used at the course on mathematical logic was Russell’s *The Principles of Mathematics* (1903). Apart from logic and mathematical logic, Zhang was also teaching Russell’s philosophy at Peking University, with his lectures all based on his translation of Russell’s *An Outline of Philosophy* (1927) (*ibid.*, 107-9). In 1936, his participation in the student demonstrations following the December 9 Movement cost him his position at the university. Indeed, after that Zhang was never again able to obtain a teaching post at any Chinese university. Following the establishment of the People’s Republic of China (PRC) in 1949, Zhang assumed the post of a librarian at the central library in Beijing, where he remained working until his retirement. Zhang passed away in June 1986 in the capital, at the venerable age of 93 years.

## 2 Zhang’s Early Admiration of Russell

Akin to other members of his generation, Zhang’s world of ideas was still deeply rooted in the traditional Confucian setting of his childhood upbringing. Naturally, his close relation to the, so to say, “past tradition(s)”, decisively predefined the future trajectory of his psychological development. In that way, the revolutionary movement of early 1910s spoke first and foremost to Zhang’s juvenile urge to emotionally detach himself from the morally authoritative confines of the past, while a more mature and rational realization of his cultural identity resurfaced in the later years of his participation in the political movements (around 1922), as Zhang’s attitude towards the seemingly distant past became more balanced. Thus, back in the year 1911, when the winds of the Xinhai Revolution (*Xinhai geming* 辛亥革命) carried along the promise of liberty, and calls for the rebirth of Chinese identity resounded throughout the streets of Chinese cities, a new world was painted before Zhang’s eyes, set into a diametrical opposition with the old, dim and narrow one of the Confucian past. If the latter was a realm defined by oppression and subjugation, the former was created on the promise of a liberation, that was supposed to be attained through a new kind of realism which would deconstruct the foundations of the rusty machinery of Imperial institutions and Confucian ethical norms. About five years later, when Zhang was studying philosophy and mathematics at Peking University, he discovered his own

source of realism in Russell's work. It seems that the first thing Zhang adopted from Russell were his views on marriage and sexual liberty. This is not surprising at all, since at that time Zhang was still directly confronted with the institution of arranged marriage, imposed upon him by his father in the provincial setting of the family home, forcing him to temporarily abandon the intellectual pleasures of life in the capital.

Although even before this time, and in contrast with most of his fellow students at primary and secondary schools, Zhang was extremely open to all ideas from the West,<sup>32</sup> his search for a universal solution for all problems of Chinese society intensified during his years at the university, and reached its peak when he first became familiar with Russell's work. Ultimately, he became convinced that all the desired solutions resided in a scientific worldview, whose source of potency (i.e. objectiveness) resided in the scientific method.

## 2.1 A Popularizer of Russell's Ideas (from 1919 on)

Following his explorations of Russell's philosophical writings, Zhang became convinced that all his opinions were derived directly and solely from scientific facts. He also came to believe that Russell's inextinguishable fountainhead of truth resided in the principles incorporated in mathematical logic, or as Zhang saw it, a revolutionary form of scientific method. Zhang first mentioned Russell's connection to mathematical logic in an article entitled "A Historical Outline of the Relationship between Philosophy and Mathematics" (*Zhexue shuxue guanxi shilun yin* 哲學數學關係史論引) (1919). Together with another of Zhang's articles from 1919, "Philosophical Principles of Numbers" (*Shu zhi zheli* 數之哲理), these early essays provide a profound insight into Zhang's understanding of the concept of mathematical logic in the context of the intellectual climate of the May Fourth movement.

## 2.2 Writing in Defence of his Teacher, 1920

Even before it became publicly known that Russell was going to visit China, Zhang already started translating essays and chapters from his most influential works. Thus, in the year of the May Fourth event, Zhang published translations of the following texts in various Chinese periodicals: "The Value

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32 This observation was made by Liang Shuming, who called Zhang his early source of Western ideas. When they were still in secondary school, Zhang, for instance, introduced Liang to the philosophy of Schopenhauer. Later, however, Zhang failed to convince Liang to follow Russell's philosophy. See Lynch, 2018.

of Philosophy" (1912),<sup>33</sup> the lecture "What We Can Do" (1915) and the "Declaration of Independence of the Spirit" (1919).<sup>34</sup>

Subsequently, in March 1920, Zhang felt the responsibility to publicly defend Russell against the criticism launched by the Chinese proponents of other philosophies, most notably the adherents of pragmatism based at Peking University's Department of Philosophy. In his "Letter to the Editor" (*Ji bianzhe* 寄编者) of the *Chenbao* 晨報 newspaper, Zhang set out to defend the tenets of Russell's philosophy against the fierce attacks coming from the pragmatists.<sup>35</sup> In the letter, Zhang disproved Dewey's portrayal of Russell philosophy as pessimistic and elitist, emphasizing that "Russell stands for ethical neutrality (*lunli zhongli* 伦理中立) and is a thorough realist who upholds logical atomism (*mingli yuanzilun* 名理原子論) and the principle of absolute pluralism (*juedui duoyuanlun* 絕對多元論)." (Schwarcz 1991/2, 134). Zhang further described Russell's philosophical method as "to dissect all categories of thought, be they political, scientific or philosophical" (*ibid.*), claiming that if one takes a closer look at Russell's philosophy, one can observe that it represents a form of realism, which can also be called "analytical realism" (*jiexi de shizailun* 解析的實在論) due to its analytical method, or "realism of mathematical principles" (*shuli shizailun* 數理實在論) because it is based on mathematics and obtained through investigation of its philosophical principles.

Both in support of his argument and to help create a positive image of Russell prior to his arrival, Zhang published a new series of translations from Russell's writings. These included Russell's "On Scientific Method in Philosophy" (1918), "Dreams and Facts" (1920), "Democracy and Revolution," "The Nature of the State in View of its External Relations" (1916) and "Government and Law" (1918)<sup>36</sup>. Apart from translations, in the months preceding Russell's arrival Zhang also produced a series of writings which directly or indirectly expound on the eminent image of the English thinker's scholarly and ethical

33 This was actually a translation of a part of Russell's *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912). It was published under the Chinese title "*Zhexue zhi jiazhi*" 哲學之價值.

34 According to Schwarcz, Zhang's translation of Russell's works can be divided into two distinct periods: the first was between 1919 and 1920, and the second from 1927 to 1928. While in the first period Zhang focused mainly on introduction of the "key terms of Russell's" logic, the second was devoted to "the scientific and social foundations of Russell's work" (Schwarcz 1991/2, 140). A closer look at Zhang's later translations, however, reveals that the years at Qinghua University (up to 1936) need to be taken into account as another, separate period (see: Appendix).

35 An extended version of the same letter was appended to Zhang's translation of Russell's essay "Dreams and Facts" (1920).

36 A chapter (no. 5) from Russell's *The Proposed Roads to Freedom*.

persona, while at the same time pointing out the “revolutionary” character of his contributions to science (mathematical logic and mathematics). These articles included “Russell and the Question of Population” (*Luosu yu renkou wenti* 羅素與人口問題) (1920) and “A Revolution in Science” (*Kexue li de yi geming* 科學裏的一革命) (1920). Writing in the very same spirit, Zhang further composed a biographic essay entitled “Russell” (*Luosu* 羅素), which was followed by an exhaustive bibliography of his writings carefully titled “A Tentative Bibliography of Russell’s Published Works” (*Shi bian Luosu jikan zhuzuo mulu* 試編羅素既刊著作目錄). The bibliography, published around the time of Russell’s arrival, listed 94 works authored by the latter. A few weeks later the list was supplemented with an additional 16 bibliographical units enumerated in “A Footnote on Russell” (*Zhi Luosu* 志羅素) (1920). The great majority of these essays and translations appeared either in *New Youth* (*Xin qingnian* 新青年) or *Young World* (*Shaonian shijie* 少年世界).

### 2.3 The Portrait of a Scholarly Sage

Zhang’s biographical essay “Russell” (1920) opens with the following summary of his main contributions to science and philosophy:

Russell is currently the world’s leading mathematical philosopher, who greatly contributed to the founding of a most splendid new science (i.e. mathematical logic (*shuli luoji* 數理邏輯), also called symbolic logic (*ji-hao luoji* 記號邏輯) or logistic (*luojisitike* 邏輯斯諦科)) which inaugurated a new period in the development of modern scientific thought. Founded on his critical survey of mathematics, he also established a new kind philosophical method (in terms of spirit it is the scientific method in philosophy, with regard to the manner it is the “logical and analytical method” (*luojide he jiexide fangfa* 邏輯的和解析的方法), which may also be translated as “*mingli-jiexifa*” 名理·解析法 [logico-analytical method]). His philosophy (called “logical atomism” or “absolute pluralism”, which presupposes the existence of various kinds of individual [entities] and relations and does not rest on the cosmological foundations that presuppose an existence of one all-encompassing entity. In plain words: it is a new research that sets out from the “relations” and rests in the “theory of external relations”) counts as the most influential in the contemporary philosophical and intellectual circles. Recently, he has also taken this “logico-analytical method”, which already had such a great effect on mathematics and philosophy, and conducted new research in psychology, having obtained results that correspond in great part to the

newest psychological teaching of behaviourism (*xingdong zhuyi* 行動主義), which emerged in America, as well as to “neutral monism” (i.e. the American School of New Realism). He believes that the distinction between mind and matter is not substantial, but it is rather the case that they do not share the same status in the law of cause and effect that they adhere to. (Zhang Shenfu 1920d, 1)

He describes Russell as a prolific writer, insightful philosopher, brilliant scientist, noble political thinker, and a person of principles who acts and speaks in accordance with the truth and facts. Reading Zhang’s lofty depiction of Russell’s personality, one is instantly reminded of the ideals pertaining to the sages of old. It is highly reminiscent of those exemplary figures from China’s past; a person who does not abandon their moral paths, even when confronted with the worst threats, but remains faithful to their mission of extending benefit and wisdom to the people. Thus, when Russell was facing the consequences of his pacifism with respect to World War I, “his courage was ever more flourishing, his illuminating light of his wisdom became all the more brighter, his mind ever calmer, the excellence of his scholarship became more and more evident, his reformist treatises grew more abundant, his viewpoints fairer and more equitable and his corrective influence [on society] grew greater day by day” (ibid., 2). Above all, Zhang described Russell as the protector of the working man, of the common people (*min* 民), the care for whose welfare and pacification (*an* 安) was in the early Confucian tradition attributed to a humane (*ren* 仁) sage-like character.

He further believed that all of Russell’s teaching constituted one consistent whole, his teaching on society and politics being “of the same stock” as his teaching on mathematics and philosophy. Accordingly, Zhang probably believed that the reason why Russell attached great importance to the individual, liberty and autonomy was a result of his command of the principles of logic and his knowledge of scientific facts. Russell’s emphasizing of the autonomy of the individual was intertwined with the high regard for the particular in the universe (logical atomism) and view of absolute pluralism in his philosophy. Zhang aimed to convince his readers that, as a thinker, Russell possessed a great capability to illuminate the foundations of society and causes of “modern diseases”. To attain this goal, Russell was struggling for social reforms through “impulsive transformations” (*chongdong zhi zhuanbian* 衝動之轉變), to achieve the social circumstances which would enable progress. Most importantly, Zhang wanted to persuade the Chinese public to accept Russell’s worldviews by pointing out that he appreciated traditional Chinese poetry and on certain occasions in his discussions even drew from Laozi and Zhuangzi (ibid.).

In Zhang's eyes, by having been the "most realistic philosopher, who attaches most importance to facts", by possessing the utmost ability to implement the scientific method, Russell was able to speak about all aspects of life and all phenomena of the natural world, and was a polymath immersed deeply into every development in science and philosophy. According to Zhang, Russell's philosophical thought was defined by four main characteristics: the analysis of the "common-sense data (*dita* 棗他)", critique of idealism, spreading the school of philosophy of science – which integrates physics, mathematics and mathematical logic – and advocacy of guild socialism (*ibid.*).

Finally, Zhang also stressed that Russell believed that the universe was a continuum (*xiangxuti* 相續體) or cluster of individual objects, events or beings. This meant that the human being's view on phenomena or the individual existence of objects or beings resembled an experience of watching a movie, which consists of a succession of individual images. Zhang further compared this idea of the universe to the notion of *ālāya-vijñāna* (阿賴耶識 *alaiyeshi*) or "storehouse-consciousness" from the Consciousness-only school of Buddhism (*weishi* 唯識).

In late October 1920, when his "British master already set foot on Chinese soil," (Schwarcz 1991/2, 134) Zhang decided to respond publicly to Zhang Dongsun's misinterpretation of Russell's philosophy. At the time, Zhang Dongsun was one of the principal members of the Lecture Society, who was also tasked with the organization of Russell's visit in China. After Russell's arrival in Shanghai, he accompanied him to Hangzhou, Nanjing, and Hunan together with Yang Duanliu and his official translator, Zhao Yuanren. Zhang's contact with Russell left a great mark on him. Which is why, in the following years Zhang Dongsun also published a number of critiques of Russell's philosophy (New Realism and logicism).<sup>37</sup> In October 1920, however, he believed that Russell might have represented a probable solution to China's political and social difficulties, and set out to apply Russell's ideas against those of his new Marxist opponents. Both as a member of Marxist circles at Peking University and an advocate of Russell's philosophy, Zhang Shengfu was thus compelled to take a stand against Zhang Dongsun's imperfect portrayal of Russell's philosophy, who seemed to have mistaken Russell's realism for

37 The first article, where Zhang mentioned Russell was the article "We Must All Keep in Mind the Sincere Advice That Was Given to Us by Mr. Russell" (*Dajia xu qieji Luosu xiansheng gei women de zhonggao* 大家須切記羅素先生給我們的忠告) written in response to Chen Duxiu and other's criticism of "guild socialism," a form of socialism advocated by Russell and now adopted by Zhang. In the article he summarized the content of Russell's lectures related to Chinese current situation and emphasized that what China needed was knowledge (Zuo Yuhe 1998, 124).

pragmatism. In another letter addressed to the editor of the *Chenbao* 晨報 newspaper, Zhang Shenfu noted:

Mr. Zhang Dongsun is thoroughly misreading Russell when he describes his philosophy with the Chinese words *shiyong zhuyi* 使用主義. The English equivalent of this is “pragmatism” not “realism” ... Russell is a firm opponent of pragmatism. His views are very different from Bergson and Dewey, in the same way that his mathematics is fundamentally different from that of Galileo.

Since last year, when he began to study modern psychology, Russell has developed a new theory, which suggests that there is no difference between mind and matter. They are both part of a continuum of varied perception. In this respect Russell’s theories are quite close to those of William James. Russell’s idea that “truth propositions correspond to actual facts” is nonetheless different from James’ notion... It is also very different from Dewey’s notion... The difference in their positions is amply evident in the *Principia Mathematica* and in other of Russell’s works... (Schwarcz 1991/2, 135)<sup>38</sup>

In these early years (1920s), Zhang eagerly followed Russell’s interests in science. Thus, after the Englishman discovered behaviourism Zhang also became interested in psychoanalysis, which he introduced to his Chinese readership.<sup>39</sup> His interest in psychoanalysis might also have been a result of his obsession with the notion of “analysis”. Zhang believed that Russell’s main philosophical method was so-called “logical analysis”, established based on his most advanced mathematical logic.

Shortly before Russell’s arrival in China, Zhang was sent to Shanghai by Peking University to represent the institution at the official reception ceremony. As Zhang himself pointed out in his conversations with Vera Schwarcz, when Russell finally arrived in China he did not play a central role in the organization of his trip and lectures. Zhang remarked:

I did not invite Russell to China – Liang Qichao did. I did not translate his public lecture, Zhao Yuanren, an American-educated young man, did. I did not even translate Russell’s lecture notes. A member of the New Tide society, Sun Fuyuan did. I was not even involved in the founding of the Chinese “Russell Society” in 1921, I had already gone to France. (Schwarcz 1991/2, 122)

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38 This is a revised and abridged version of the original translation.

39 He first introduced Freud and psychoanalysis in an article from 1922, entitled “Social Questions” (*Shehui wenti* 社會問題).

Nor did Zhang have enough opportunities to converse personally with Russell about questions related to philosophy and science. After having met Russell at the public reception banquet in Shanghai and later attending some of his lectures in Beijing, Zhang was finally able to personally meet Russell in November in the capital. Writing on the day before their meeting in the Continental Hotel, Russell described Zhang in his letter to Jean Nicod as a Chinese scholar: “who knows my writings, all of them, far better than I do and has constructed an inconceivably complete biography of them” (ibid., 130). According to Zhang’s own narrative, in their conversations over tea, conducted in the lobby of the Continental Hotel in Beijing, they touched upon a wide variety of questions, from those related to Bolshevism and dialectical materialism, to matters related to science and philosophy. In these conversations Russell also convinced Zhang about the utmost significance of new discoveries in physics, such as Einstein’s Theory of Relativity, for the development of the scientific method and philosophy in general (ibid., 131). Consequently, in the immediate years to come Zhang’s attention turned shifted from biology to modern physics (atomic physics, quantum mechanics and Einstein). Modern physics and psychoanalysis were also two main field of interest that Zhang actively pursued during his years in France and Germany. In the remaining weeks before his departure for Europe, Zhang further exchanged a few letters with Russell, which started a written correspondence that lasted until 1962 (ibid., 120).

### **3 The Student and Professor of the Foundations of Russell’s Thought: Mathematical Logic and Analytical Method**

In the years following his return from Europe in 1923, Zhang gradually re-established his position in Chinese academia, teaching at various universities across the country. In his subsequent career, Zhang retained his special connection to Russell’s theoretical philosophy and his revolutionary theory of mathematical logic, teaching almost exclusively courses on Russell, modern Western philosophy (probably with a focus on New Realism, Vienna School (late 1920s – early 1930s), and dialectical materialism) and, last but not least, mathematical logic. As a professor of mathematical logic and modern analytical philosophy, Zhang made his next significant contribution to the dissemination and establishment of Russell’s thought in China, and eventually as a professor of philosophy at both Qinghua and Peking Universities (1929 on) also became one of the leading popularizers of the notion and discipline of mathematical logic, as well as Russell’s *Principia Mathematica*, in China.



As a concept, mathematical logic first appeared in Zhang's writings in connection with the evolutionary background of mathematics. Because, in Zhang's understanding, mathematical logic was at the heart of Russell's philosophy, an exposition of its developmental history would also serve as a demonstration of the objectiveness and the revolutionary character of his work.

At the earliest stage, Zhang understood Russell's philosophy as a derivation of his philosophy of mathematics (which we would today describe as logicism or logical atomism), based on a methodological foundation of mathematical logic. Three months before the May Fourth event (1919), Zhang wrote an article entitled "A Historical Outline of the Relationship between Philosophy and Mathematics" (*Zhexue shuxue guanxishi lunyin* 哲學數學關係史論引), in which he attempted to outline the historical coexistence of mathematics and philosophy, from the beginning of Western science down to the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Zhang emphasized how both disciplines shared a common methodological foundation, namely logic (Zhang Shenfu 2005 II, 1).<sup>40</sup> As far as the evolutionary development of both was concerned, Zhang believed that their main point of confluence was Russell's philosophy of mathematics, founded upon his advances in the study of mathematical logic. As I will try to demonstrate in the following discussion, in his early encounters with the concept Zhang most probably understood mathematical logic as a method binding together the dialectical principles of thought and numbers, or philosophy and mathematics, respectively. Because these principles were understood in an ontologically positive sense (principles embodied in logic corresponded to the laws of nature), logic was also believed to equip mathematics and philosophy with a higher level of epistemological validity. In the same sense, Zhang related the occurrence of mathematical logic with Russell's philosophy of New Realism, logical atomism, and neutral monism (*ibid.*, 4). He did not regard mathematical logic as a mere technical outgrowth of formal logic, but rather as an outcome of a dialectical harmony between mathematics and logic. The theme and approach of the above-named article were more or less in line with a common tendency in the Chinese intellectual world of the time to assess both traditional and modern scientific ideas from the West through the perspective of evolutionary cosmologies. In short, what Zhang wanted to show or discover was the positive evolution of mathematical logic, in harmony with the evolutionary laws of the universe.

Apart from the above, the article may be the earliest mention of the contemporary Chinese term *shuli luoji* 數理邏輯 for "mathematical logic". Zhang's

40 He believed that logic is embodied partially in mathematics and language. Zhang also recognized that logic is a universal language and as such the foundation of all expressions of truth.

use of the word *luoji* 邏輯 instead of *lunli* 論理 was almost certainly the result of Zhang Shizhao's influence. At the same time, Zhang also used the same Chinese translation to refer to another synonym for "logistics", an early synonym for mathematical logic, and was also aware that the field was generally also referred to as "symbolic logic", "algebra of logic" or "algorithmic logic". Finally, the article represented one of the earliest overviews of the history of mathematical logic in China, mentioning the contributions of its main figureheads, such as Grassmann, Schröder, Peirce, Burali-Forti, Frege, Peano, Dedekind and so on.

Another of Zhang's reflections on the evolution of mathematical logic took place in the article "A Revolution in Science" (*Kexue li de yi geming* 科學里的一革命) from the year 1920, where he compared mathematical logic to Einstein's Theory of Relativity, calling it a revolution in mathematics and philosophy. Zhang noted that while in physics Einstein's relativity replaced Newtonian mechanics, in the domain of logic mathematical logic superseded Aristotelian logic (Zhang Shenfu 2004 II, 30).

### 3.1 On the Practical Utility of Mathematical Logic

The earliest text in which Zhang described the immanent utility of mathematical logic was the article "Liberty and Order" (*Ziyou yu zhixu* 自由與秩序) published in 1919, when the spirit of the May Fourth movement was in full swing. The article called for the establishment of the "order of liberty" (*ziyou de zhixu* 自由的秩序), a social order that would approach the ideal of unity with the natural (*ziran* 自然). According to Zhang, at the collective level such an order is attainable only through inner liberation (self-cultivation), while the latter is possible only by means of knowledge of the facts. At this point Zhang combined the Confucian ideal of bringing order (pacification) to the people through inner perfection (attainment of humaneness (*ren* 仁)) with scientific empiricism, because in turn he claimed that true knowledge can only be attained with the help of the scientific method, application of Descartes' methodical doubt, Occam's razor, and finally mathematical logic. In this way, through science, one's inner personal perfection would be transmuted into transcendence over one's inner epistemological or psychological constraints, for the "power of science will prevail over nature" (Zhang Shenfu 2005 III, 30-1). Zhang described the liberating power of mathematical logic with the following words:

The most modern logic (mathematical logic) can give our thoughts wings, empowers our abstract imagination, and equips us with a tool

of possibilities never imagined before. There are more worlds than this world, and more mankind than this mankind. To be Nietzsche's *Übermensch* [superman] is to recognize this. (Ibid., 32)

Apart from the Confucian idea of inner moral cultivation, Zhang also integrated into his early notion of mathematical logic another the traditional concept of the harmonistic complementarity (*xiangcheng xiangfan* 相成相反) of antagonistic cosmological principles. This application is exemplified in his interpretation of "principles of numbers" and their concrete use in resolving political dilemmas. In the article "Philosophical Principles of Numbers" (*Shu zhi zheli* 數之哲理), Zhang interrelates seemingly dialectical principles in mathematics, or the so called "laws of numbers", with complementary dialectical principles in nature. First, he introduces an idea of mutual complementarity of the physical principles of the world:

In the ever-evolving world, there always exist two aspects which mutually oppose and create each other. Being mutually correlative, together they form function and variable (*hanbian* 函變) ... If one progresses, at the same time the other recedes. If one is diverse and complex, the other is singular and simple. A dynamic factor has got a corresponding static one. If there is a progressive aspect, at the same time there also exists a complementary conservative factor... Therefore, the method of governing the world does not go beyond harmonizing and adjusting these two aspects. Following their natural posture, one certainly will attain their equilibrium. (Zhang Shenfu 2005 III, 18)

Zhang believed that this universal law of perpetual change was also embodied in the principles governing mathematical equations, in particular a mathematical function. He further remarks: "Many social theoreticians are familiar with this principle, and thus say that 'the society's progress is nothing but differentiation and integration'" (Ibid.). By "social theoreticians" Zhang probably meant socialists or Marxist philosophers. Most notably, as a dialectical pair differentiation and integration are mentioned in Engels' *Dialectics of Nature* and *Anti-Dühring*, where they are associated with incorporation of the dialectical principle of dynamic change from science into mathematics.<sup>41</sup> While this is a strong indication that, to some extent, Zhang's ideas were already influenced by Marxist philosophy in the early May Fourth period, on

41 In *Dialectics of Nature*, for instance, Engels wrote: "...the turning point in mathematics was Descartes' variable magnitude. With that came motion and hence dialectics in mathematics, and at once, too, of necessity the differential and integral calculus..." (Engels 1987, 537) Differentiation and integration are mentioned also in connection with "negation of negation" in Engels' *Anti-Dühring*.

the other hand borrowings like that were still adapted to fit the traditional concepts of the dialectical complementarity (*xiangcheng xiangfan* 相成相反), harmonic unity (*tiaohe* 調和) and incessant metamorphosis (*bianhua* 變化) of the universe. Thus, Zhang entrenched the traditional cosmological perspective, while in almost the same breath he also postulated that, even if the universe might appear to be in a state of constant movement, never still or balanced, perceived as a whole it exists in a state of constancy. According to Zhang the same principle is amply illustrated by the fact of the consubstantiality of mathematical or logical form with the principle of harmonic balance in the universe:

Suppose that one [value in an equation] converges towards zero, and the other, at the same rate as the first one, converges towards infinity, then their product never changes, it always remains the same. In that way the world can always be at peace. This principle can be expressed with mathematical symbols:  $a \cdot b = K$  (constant) (Ibid.)

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The most important point was that Zhang defined this principle in the terms of, as it were, “mathematical logic”. Hence, when he speaks about the mathematical logical principle of constant totality expressed by the said equation, what he probably had in mind was the concept of a universal set and the operation of “multiplication” as a relationship defined between two subsets of this universal set.

Finally, Zhang also delivered a concrete example of the same principle governing the processes of social dynamics and mutual interactions between different social entities<sup>42</sup>:

If a great country wants to unite, it cannot but turn into a federation. If one wants to join something together, one cannot but separate. If we want to achieve world unity, we must first side by side develop the individual and its pure independence to the perfection. After the ambition of occupying [territories] has shattered, the individual will enjoy absolute freedom and be individualistic through the career of creation. This all follows from the everywhere present and all permeating principle. This is also the same as: when the affairs in the contemporary world are getting more and more complicated, the methods to cope with them are required to be simpler and more effort-saving. When economy is sought in industry and economy of thought in scholarship, it is all in order to save effort and produce great achievements. It is all a desire to spend as little effort as possible and reach the greatest possible profit, to achieve the

42 Most probably, Zhang was referring to the idea of class-struggle in historical materialism.

efficient functioning. This is also included in the principle of simple and complex assisting each other. (Ibid., 19)

Similar ideas continued to permeate Zhang’s writings on social and political topics in the 1930s. An illustrative example thereof is the short article entitled “Women and Revolution” (*Funü yu geming* 婦女與革命) from 1930, where Zhang still uses concepts from “mathematical logic” to expound on the predicament of Chinese women, emphasizing that a social revolution is a necessary but not sufficient condition for improving the status of women in Chinese society. According to Zhang, complete emancipation could only be achieved by means of a “natural revolution” (*ziran geming* 自然革命), which would follow the same dialectical precepts as outlined above (see Zhang 1930).

### 3.2 Mathematical Logic, Infinite Sets and Russell’s Theory of Types

Between 1917 and 1929, Zhang taught general or introductory courses on logic at various Chinese universities, from Peking University to Whampoa Military Academy, Jinan University (*Jinan daxue* 暨南大學), Dalu University (*Dalu daxue* 大陸大學) and Great China University (*Daxia daxue* 大夏大學). It is highly probable that, at least from 1919 on, his lectures on logic, at least to some extent, also included Russell’s *Principia Mathematica*, elements of transfinite set theory and related chapters from the history of mathematical logic. Nonetheless, because there is no concrete evidence as to the actual content of his lectures, this remains only a hypothesis.

Even though we do not know much about the content of Zhang’s lectures from his years at Peking University, some light on the nature and broadness of his understanding of mathematical logic is shed by a series of articles written in 1925, when Zhang took part in two written discussions about the Chinese translation of Russell’s *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* and the meaning of infinitesimal (infinitely small), which developed in the *Contemporary Review* (*Xiandai pinglun* 現代評論) and the *Literary Supplement to the Peking Gazette* (*Jingbao fukan* 京報副刊). In an article entitled “Mathematical Logic” (*Shuli luoji* 數理邏輯), Zhang defended certain postulations in Russell’s *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* by recapitulating the history of mathematical logic and its relationship with mathematics and set theory. In the rest of articles Zhang contributed to the debate, such as “Philosophy of Mathematics” (*Shuxue de zhexue* 數學的哲學), “The Infinitesimal” (*Wuqiong Xiao* 無窮小) and “From Infinitesimal to Infinitely Large” (*Cong wuqiong Xiao dao wuqiong Da* 從無窮小

到無窮大), Zhang further expounded on the concept of the infinitesimal in transfinite set theory, mathematical analysis and Russell's philosophy of mathematics. In his articles Zhang mainly pointed out the authors and works in Western mathematical logic and mathematics, which in his opinion ought to be used as authoritative sources for a discussion on concepts such as the infinitesimal, variable, infinite numbers and so on. Apart from Fu Zhongsun and Wang Dianji, who also joined the debate on his side, Zhang's familiarity with mathematical logic, mathematics, and transfinite set theory<sup>43</sup> made him the most erudite participant in the debate. In the framework of this, Zhang also compiled and published a second bibliography of Russell's works, entitled "Russell's Recent Publications" (*Luosu jin kanwen* 羅素近刊文), which listed around sixty works published between 1924 and 1925. Like the majority of the remaining contributions to the abovementioned debate, the bibliography was published in a special number of the supplement to the *Peking Gazette* (*Jingbao* 京報) newspaper, the *Jingbao fukan* 京報副刊.

#### 4 Epilogue – The Later Years

The final period of Zhang's active engagement with Russell's philosophy and mathematical logic extended between 1929 and 1936, when Zhang was at Qinghua University. During his tenure as a professor of philosophy, Zhang contributed significantly to the academic establishment and advancement of Russell's philosophy and logic in China. Concurrently, he also continued with the popularization of Russell's philosophy, mainly through the medium of the Intellectual Currents of the World (*Shijie sichao* 世界思潮) column of the *Dagong bao* 大公報 (*L'Impartial*). Between the years 1933 and 1934, when Zhang was editing the column, more than 30 articles were published on various aspects of Russell's current work and thought. Furthermore, Zhang also published reviews and lists of newly published books on logic and analytic philosophy, written in English, French or German. The Intellectual Currents column was also an important platform used by Zhang and his younger brother Zhang Dainian (張岱年, also called Jitong 季同, 1909-2004) for dissemination of their shared idea of a synthesis between analytical philosophy and dialectical materialism. Finally, by means of the abovementioned column, the Zhang brothers also for the first time

43 In his graduate studies of mathematics at Peking University, Zhang studied Cantorian transfinite set theory under the supervision of Feng Zuxun 馮祖荀 (1880-1940) (see Zhang 1918a/b; Guoli Beijing daxue 1917).

introduced the philosophy of the Vienna School to China. Nevertheless, it could be claimed that the main focal point of the column was still Russell, his philosophy and mathematical logic.

In 1936, following his arrest and incarceration for his participation in the student protests that broke out in the aftermath of the December 9 Movement, Zhang was discharged from his position as a Qinghua professor. Despite the fact that he would never be able to lecture on Russell again, he resumed writing about the English thinker and kept including his ideas into his own philosophical meditations. Thus, in the following decades he continued publishing translations of Russell's works and writing essays about the man's life and work. In 1942, for instance, he published a short text "To Russell on His 70<sup>th</sup> Birthday" (*Zhu Luosu qishi* 祝羅素七十) in the leftist newspaper *New China Daily*; while in 1946 an essay entitled "Russell – The Greatest Still Living Philosopher" (*Luosu – Xiandai shengsun de zui weida de zhexuejia* 羅素·現代生存的最偉大的哲學家) appeared in the *Xinwen pinglun*, where Russell was once again praised as "the great scholar of enlightened realism", whose keystone book the *Principia Mathematica* "opened up a new page in both mathematical logic and philosophy". Concurrently, on the philosophical meaning of mathematical logic, in 1946 Zhang still emphasized that (quoting Russell): "No problem in philosophy can be truly solved unless there is a breakthrough in mathematical logic" (Schwarcz 1991/2, 129).

The above overview of the main milestones and aspects of Zhang's intellectual relationship with Russell and his philosophy reveals his indisputable role in the introduction, establishment and advancement of Russell's philosophy and logic in 1920s and 1930s China. He was one of only a few Chinese intellectuals who were able to introduce Russell to China both in the period before his visit as well as in the decades following it. Zhang can moreover be credited for not only having played an important role in introducing Russell's philosophy to the Chinese but also for his seminal contributions to establishment of Russell's philosophy and mathematical logic at Chinese universities. Maybe his most important contribution is his undying efforts to popularize various aspects of Russell's thought and bring them closer to the ordinary people by advocating the idea which had also been hinted at by Russell during his visit to China. Specifically, that the East and West can be united in a harmonic synthesis, established on the basis of Russell's logical analysis, Lenin's dialectical materialism and Confucius' humanity.

## 5 Appendix: A List of Zhang Shenfu's Translations of Russell's Works (1919-1936)

Year	Original Title	Title in Chinese
1919	"What We Can Do" (1915)	<i>Women suoneng zuo de</i> 我們所能作的
	<i>Problems of Philosophy</i> (1912 – last chapter)	<i>Zhexue zhi jiazhi</i> 哲學之價值 (The Value of Philosophy)
	"Declaration d'independance de l'esprit" (1919)	<i>Jingshen duli xuanyan</i> 精神獨立宣言
1920	"The Nature of the State in View of its External Relations" (1916)	<i>Guo</i> 國 (The State)
	"Democracy and Revolution" (1920)	<i>Minzhu yu geming</i> 民主與革命
	"Dreams and Facts" (1919)	<i>Meng yu shishi</i> 夢與事實
	"Scientific Method in Philosophy" (1918)	<i>Zhexue li de kexuefa</i> 哲學裏的科學法
1926	"The Philosophy of Mr. Bertrand Russell" (1924) <sup>44</sup>	<i>Luosu xiansheng zhi zhexue</i> 羅素先生之哲學
1927	"Nature and Man" (1925) <sup>45</sup>	<i>Ziran yu ren</i> 自然與人
	"British Folly in China" (1927)	<i>Yingguo dui Hua de chunju</i> 英國對華的蠢舉
	"Is Science Superstitious?" (1926)	<i>Kexue shi mixin de ma</i> 科學是迷信的麼
	"The Meaning of 'Meaning'" (1920)	<i>Yiwei de yiwei</i> 意謂的意謂
	"The Training of Young Children" (1927)	<i>Youer de xunyu</i> 幼兒的訓育
1927/1928	"Introduction" to <i>Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus</i> (1922) by L. Wittgenstein	<i>Ming-li lun</i> 名理論
1928	"What is Matter" (1925) <sup>46</sup>	<i>Shenme shi wuzhi</i> 什麼是物質
	"Things That Have Moulded Me" (1927) <sup>47</sup>	<i>Luosu zixu sixiang de fazhan</i> 羅素自叙思想的發展 (Russell's own account on development of his thought)

44 Chapter 2 of the *Introduction to Modern Philosophy* by C. E. M. Joad. Zhang's translation of the entire book was published in 1926.

45 The first chapter of Russell's essay/booklet entitled *What I Believe* (1925).

46 Chapter 14 of Russell's *The ABC of Relativity*.

47 Introduction to the *Selected Papers of Bertrand Russell*.



1928	“Introduction” to <i>An Historical Introduction to the General Theory of Relativity</i> (1924) by A. V. Vasiliev	<i>Xiangduilun yu zhexue</i> 相對論與哲學 (Relativity and Philosophy)
	“Events, Matter and Mind” (1927) <sup>48</sup>	<i>Shi yu wu yu xin</i> 事與物與心
	“New Physics and the Wave Theory of Light” (1923) <sup>49</sup>	<i>Xin wuli yu guang de bodong shuo</i> 新物理與光的波動說
	“Behaviourism and Values” (1926)	<i>Xingwei zhuyi yu jiazhi</i> 行爲主義與價值
1930	“Man and His Environment” (1927) <sup>50</sup>	<i>Ren yu qi huanjing</i> 人與其環境
	“Incompatibility and the Theory of Deduction” (1919) <sup>51</sup>	<i>Luosu de yanyilun</i> 羅素的演繹論 (Russell’s Theory of Deduction)
	“Language and Meaning” (1927) <sup>52</sup>	<i>Yanyu yu yiwei</i> 言語與意謂
1932	“What is Western Civilization?” (1929)	<i>Luosu lun Xiyang wenming</i> 羅素論西洋文明 (Russell on Western Civilization)
1934	“On Locomotion” (1932)	<i>Lun dongzhuān</i> 論動轉
	“Probability and the Rate of Probability” (1930) <sup>53</sup>	<i>Gairan yu Gailü</i> 概然與概率
	“What Makes People Likable?” (1933)	<i>Youde ren weshenme rang ren xihuan?</i> 有的人爲什麼讓人喜歡? (Why are Some People Liked by Others?)
1936	“Was Europe a Success?” (1934)	<i>Ouzhou shi yige chenggongzhe ma?</i> 歐洲是一個成功者麼?
	“What do We Really Know?” (1935)	<i>Women shizai zhidao shenme ne?</i> 我們實在知道什麼呢?

48 Chapter 26 of *Russell’s An Outline of Philosophy*.

49 A Part of Russell’s book *The ABC of Atoms*.

50 Chapter 2 of *An Outline of Philosophy*.

51 Chapter XIV of *Russell’s Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*.

52 With Introduction by Zhang. According to Blackwell and Ruja, this is a translation of the excerpt from *An Outline of Philosophy*. Zhang, however, claims that the text was taken from *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* etc.

53 Two excerpts from “Heads or Tails”.

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*Vera SCHWARCZ*

## Between Russell and Confucius: China's Russell Expert, Zhang Shenfu (Chang Sung-Nian)<sup>1</sup>

The longing to resemble is an incipient resemblance. The word which we shall make our own is the word whose echo we have already heard within ourselves. (Maurice Friedman, *To Deny Our Nothingness*)

**O**n a chilly, mid-November afternoon in 1979, Zhang Shenfu was allowed to meet with a Western scholar for the first time in over twenty years. Good fortune and China's new policy of openness to the West enabled me to be the American researcher chosen to interview this octogenarian philosopher. Our conversation took place in the reception room of the National Beijing Library – the official unit to which Zhang Shenfu belonged in his capacity as “senior researcher”. The meeting of November 12 turned out to be the first in a series of sixty hours of taped interviews, all the rest conducted in Zhang's own home over the next four years. From our initial encounter, it became clear that Zhang considered himself to be China's

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1 The text was originally issued in *Russell: The Journal of the Bertrand Russell Archives*, 11 (Winter 1991-92): 117-46.

foremost Russell expert. The more I listened to Zhang Shenfu's story, the more I checked its details against the documents and memories of the intellectuals of the same generation (the most cosmopolitan of all the generations of twentieth-century Chinese intellectuals), the greater the mystery of why this eminent philosopher should have been overlooked in the history of modern Chinese thought.

*17 December 1979:* My third visit to Wang Fucang Lane. Zhang Shenfu is drawing me deeper and deeper into the crevices of his philosophical system. I feel lost, unprepared, over my head. In just one month we have strayed far from the political events of his life. Nothing in my training as a historian of modern China has prepared me for this. We have left behind the May Fourth Movement of 1919. We have been over his role in the founding of the Chinese Communist Party in 1920. We have already explored his political associations with China's Premier, Zhou Enlai.

Today, Zhang Shenfu wants to talk about the virtues of traditional Chinese philosophy. He is using our conversation to work out his ideas. He wants to find a place for himself in native Chinese thought. Zhang is looking for a world view that he can claim his own.

Today, Zhang Shenfu fills the page in front of me with synonyms for his favourite idea in Chinese philosophy – *zhong*, the golden mean. He is struggling to explain to me the connection between this ideal and a psychological state of mind that he calls *rong*, “forbearance”. This “*rong*”, Zhang believes, must accompany the quest for a genuinely balanced world view. At one point, he goes off on a long tangent criticizing Chinese Marxism. He likens the effort to emulate Soviet models of thought and economic development to a man who enters a river without knowing how to swim: “He can do nothing but drown.” As in every conversation since we met in the National Library, Zhang Shenfu comes back to Russell. Russell is his private raft, as it were. This is what seems to have kept Zhang afloat over the years—even when China became submerged in wave after wave of revolutionary fervour. But today, he adds something new:

I believe I understand Russell. Maybe I am the only one in China who really does.... Russell himself did not understand Confucius. But, in fact his thought is very close to Confucius. I see this similarity even if nobody else does. Even if Russell were to deny it. My philosophy brings them together. I am like a bridge (*qiaoliang*), you might say.

I try to make sense of these water metaphors – “bridge”, “drowning”. I try to hear what lies beneath Zhang's unabashed arrogance, beneath his claim that



he alone understands Russell in modern China. Zhang has a vision of himself as linking the unlinkable. If, as we both know, China is still struggling with the dilemma of modernization, with the challenge of crossing over from Confucian politics and values into a world shaped by Western technology and revolutionary ideas – can Zhang Shenfu alone have solved these problems?

I look up from my notes to see Zhang's ironical smile. He knows his claims sound extravagant. He wants to see how far I will travel along his thought paths. In the end, what seems to matter is not whether I accept or reject his version of himself as the most important philosopher in twentieth-century China. Rather, what he looks for in my face is a sign that I sympathize with the problem of bridging East and West. Zhang Shenfu feels misunderstood, forlorn among his contemporaries. Of all the parts of Zhang's long life that were swept under the rug of public amnesia, his philosophical efforts matter to him the most. And for this, there seems to be the least amount of time in public interviews these days. And too little publishing space, even in China's current climate of reform.

Russell and Confucius—the more we go on, the more I understand them as the objects of Zhang's love: "Among all philosophers I have read, and there have been so many, those two are the ones I respect and admire the most." Before they became objects of thought, before Zhang embarked on the difficult task of distilling the best from each, Russell and Confucius captured Zhang Shenfu's imagination. They echoed and expanded his own concerns. They were life-saving devices when all else appeared unmoored, in flux around him. To this day, they remain a source of endless interest for him because they matter in a deep, personal way.

*Winter 1930*: Zhang has finished the introduction to his first book of philosophy, *Suosi (Thought as Such)*. Two previous books – a lengthy translation in 1926 of C. E. M. Joad's *Introduction to Modern Philosophy*, and in 1927 of Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* – are behind him. These two were books about other thinkers. This time, Zhang Shenfu has collected his own episodic essays written over a dozen years – from 1919 to 1930. He is about to publish them as his own philosophical statement. At thirty-seven, he appears ready to cast a glance backward, to sum up the main themes of his work. The introduction to *Thought as Such* identifies two themes: "humanism" and "the scientific method". These, Zhang writes: "are what I believe to be the two most precious things in the world."<sup>2</sup>

The introduction leaves little doubt about the sources of Zhang Shenfu's

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2 *Suosi (Thought as Such)* (Shanghai: 1931): p. 2.

values. Humanism is “what Confucius wrote about.” Scientific method is “rooted in Bertrand Russell’s philosophy of logical analysis.” With these roots acknowledged, the author moves off in a direction all his own. This he describes by using an English phrase, “polarity”, and a Chinese concept, “*chun keguan*”, pure objectivism.

These odd twists of tongue enable Zhang Shenfu to look at issues—such as dialectical materialism that Russell never considered. He can also write about sexual intimacy and the problem of philosophical certainty that Confucius ignored or considered immoral.

By 1930, Zhang Shenfu was swimming in alien waters. He had strayed far from Chinese contemporaries, as well as from Western and ancient Chinese mentors that had guided his philosophical maturation. By the end of the brief introduction to *Thought as Such*, Zhang pleaded with the reader:

Whenever you do not understand my words, I hope you will look around, especially at the facts of your own existence. I hope you will expend a bit of energy to integrate them concretely. That facts of one life, however, are just a fragment and cannot be substituted for the totality of facts that exist out there in the world. (p. 3)

Fragments and totalities, these constitute Zhang Shenfu’s subject. Bits and pieces is what *Thought as Such* is all about. Its form—that of the fragmentary episodic essay—Zhang acknowledges, is informed by the precedents of Pascal and Novalis. The content, Zhang affirms, is unmistakably his own. And if a reader wants to make sense of these fragments, there is no other way but to retrace the idiosyncratic itinerary of Zhang Shenfu’s philosophical loves and hates.

## 1 The Making of Russell Admirer

*9 November 1920*: Zhang Shenfu is writing his most impassioned letter to Bertrand Russell. He has been reading the British logician’s work for more than half a decade. During the past few weeks, he has met him in Shanghai and heard his lectures in Beijing.

But today, Zhang is after something far more personal. Today, he confesses a deep admiration for Russell tinged with the imminent loss of a still un consummated friendship. With awkwardness, Zhang writes in English:

Probably I will leave Peking for France on the 17th, or later. I am very sorry we would separate so soon. But even I go to France, I will continually study your philosophy and as I always attempt to read anything you

write, henceforward when you publish books or articles (even reviews), please kindly make me knowing at once. Thank you in anticipation for the trouble you will take.

May you favour me with a copy of your photograph with your autograph? I only wish this because I worship you.<sup>3</sup>

Sixty-three years later in 1983, I read this letter in the Russell Archives. Zhang's fervent admiration for Russell leaps off the yellowed page undiminished by the passage of time. It foreshadows Zhang's enduring attachment to Russell over the course of his long life.

The letter also puzzles me. What did Zhang Shenfu really mean by "worship you"? I first read these words in a 1982 article by a colleague, Suzanne Ogden, "The Sage. in the Inkpot: Bertrand Russell and China's Social Reconstruction in the 1920s". Ogden never met Zhang Shenfu but used his letter to show how carried away some of Russell's Chinese admirers were on the eve of his China visit. In a footnote on Zhang Shenfu, Ogden suggests that he was "China's Russell's specialist" at the time of May Fourth and that he was "instrumental" in bringing Russell to China. The quotation "worship you" is then added to suggest a kind of blind admiration.

Now with the original letter in my hand, with Zhang's face and words fresh in mind, I am less convinced this was blind admiration.

*11 May 1983:* A few days ago, I gave Zhang Shenfu a copy of Suzanne Ogden's article. Today, Zhang tells me that Ogden – like Russell's biographer Ronald Clark – overestimates his role in inviting Russell to China. Zhang himself gives credit to Liang Qichao, a more senior scholar-official, who provided the money and organized Russell's itinerary. His view mirrors a photograph in the Clark biography of Russell – the one that shows Zhang Shenfu almost off the page while Russell and Dora Black take centre stage in front of the entrance to Beijing University. Zhang's own narrative, like the photograph, shows him to be marginal to the managerial aspects of Russell's China journey:

I did not invite Russell to China – Liang Qichao did. I did not translate his public lectures. Zhao Yuanren, an American-educated young man, did. I did not even translate Russell's lecture notes. A member of the New Tide society, Sun Fuyuan did. I was not even involved in the founding of the Chinese "Russell Society" in 1921. I had already gone to France. Your friend does not tell my story but that of others who

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3 9 Nov. 1920 (RA). This letter is used and quoted in Suzanne P. Ogden, "The Sage in the Inkpot", *Modern Asian Studies*, 16 (1982): 533-4.

stayed on in China after I left. I did something else, something maybe more important. I translated Russell's philosophy. I introduced him to Chinese readers as an important modern thinker. I think I set the stage for informed appreciation.

Zhang's self-presentation contradicts Ogden's use of "I worship you." If Zhang did "worship" Russell, it was not like an idol or infallible god. Zhang Shenfu was, by 1920, deeply involved in the iconoclastic New Culture Movement. He had already allied himself with those who challenged idolatry, both Chinese and Western.

When he writes "I worship you", Zhang Shenfu is trying to say something new to Russell, and to himself—something about the self-expanding possibilities that informed admiration can open in the "worshipper". I think that Zhang wanted a signed photograph from Russell to help him along his own path of becoming an iconoclastic philosopher. In "worshipping" Russell, Zhang was looking to explore possibilities that were already immanent within himself.

Why then, did he use the English word "worship"? One of Zhang Shenfu's short essays from 1928 finally answers this question. Entitled "A Free Man's Worship", this essay is a distillation and defence of Russell's 1903 work by the same title. Although Zhang did not translate this key text until he had returned from France, until after he left the Chinese Communist Party (in 1925), until after he witnessed the collapse of the social revolution in the summer of 1927—Zhang's 1928 essay makes it clear that he had read and loved "A Free Man's Worship" many years earlier.

*15 January 1928:* The Shanghai based *World (Shijie)* magazine publishes Zhang Shenfu's essay "A Free Man's Worship", consciously echoing the 1903 text with the same title by Bertrand Russell. Two and a half decades earlier, the British philosopher had wrestled with a personal spiritual crisis. In 1903, Russell's conclusion was that "true freedom" is found "In the determination to worship only the God created by our own love of the good, to respect only the heaven which inspires the insight of our best moments."<sup>4</sup>

For Zhang Shenfu, however, the spiritual crisis is both personal and social. Russell's words are particularly timely, Zhang argues:

because they remind us that a free person must think freely. A free person's worship transcends all religions, all idols. It transcends all desire to rely on supernatural forces. It is nothing more than the worship of the

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4 *The Basic Writings of Bertrand Russell*, ed. L. E. Denonn and R. E. Egner (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1961), pp. 66-72; *Papers* 12: 66-72.

creativity inherent in one's own thoughts, especially in what is most noble and spirited in one's thinking.<sup>5</sup>

Zhang Shenfu's spiritual crisis, unlike Russell's, was not about Christianity. It did not revolve around notions of God but rather around Confucianism, women, personal freedom and the right to define truth in keeping with one's own inner lights.

In 1920, Zhang had begged Russell for a personal memento. Since he was getting ready to leave China and the charmed intimacy of Russell's conversations, Zhang Shenfu needed a reminder of what "free worship" was all about. By 1928, however, after Zhang Shenfu had had his own share of dogmatic faiths – including Marxism–Leninism – the need to worship freely had grown stronger.

*February 1983:* Zhang Shenfu is dictating an essay to his daughter Zhang Yan-ni. It is called "My Admiration for and Understanding of Bertrand Russell". He hopes it might serve as an introduction to a collection of his essays about Russell. I read the draft of this essay in 1986, two months after Zhang died. The book of essays on Russell remains bogged down in a publishing house plagued by new pressures to show quick profits. For the moment, a book of essays on Russell is not deemed to be profitable enough.

Still, the 1983 essay brings *me* some profit. It helps me understand what Zhang Shenfu – as distinct from Russell – meant by "a free man's worship". The concept of "free worship" is, not surprisingly, dealt with indirectly in a text meant for circulation in the People's Republic of China. There is no room here for the passionate defence of "*ziyou chongbai*" – the explicitly religious and iconoclastic phrase that Zhang Shenfu had used in 1928. Instead, Zhang gives this essay a more cautious title. He writes of his *zanpei* – "admiration", or "esteem" – of Russell. And yet, in spite of this shift in connotation, Zhang's approach is the same. His 1983 essay, like that of 1928, leaves no doubt that in discovering Russell, in cultivating admiration for him as a man and as a thinker, Zhang Shenfu had cultivated his own commitment to critical thought.

The story of his own "free worship" begins in 1913, when Zhang Shenfu was a student in the preparatory programme of Beijing University. It describes the spiritual awakening of a young man in love with books:

At that time, the library was nothing but a space for storing books located in the innermost courtyard of the university campus. The books

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5 Zhang Songnian (Shenfu), "Ziyou ren de chongbai" (A Free Man's Worship), *Shijie*, 15 Jan. 1928, p. 2.

could be borrowed, but there were few readers. In the following year (1914), when I entered Beida's undergraduate school, the library finally opened a reading room. Books in Western languages were placed on bookshelves along the walls. But the shelves were locked up most of the time. Still, I came often. Because of my frequent appearances, I became very familiar and friendly with the librarian. So, I was allowed to read whatever I wanted from the locked shelves. There were very few books in the reading room at the time. Other than a few texts on engineering, there was almost nothing that I did not read.

One day, I found a very interesting book, published in the us in 1914. The title was *Our Knowledge of the External World* written by Russell. From the first time I read it, I sensed that it was full of new meaning for me. Then, I read it two more times growing more interested in its author, Bertrand Russell.<sup>6</sup>

What started out as a seemingly accidental encounter among the engineering books developed into a passion. Zhang was not satisfied with one book by Russell. He wanted more—anything he could get his hands on. The quest for Russell's texts opened the door for Zhang Shenfu onto a new world of periodicals published by the Chicago based Open Court Book Store: "This book store published two periodicals, the *Monist* and *Open Court*, in which there were always some articles by Russell. I subscribed and read them all" (p. 5).

Snippets from the *Monist* and *Open Court*, however, did not satisfy Zhang's deepening interest in Russell the man. And like so many others among Russell's admirers, Zhang Shenfu found his way to *The Problems of Philosophy*. Published in 1912, this slim volume had been commissioned by a popular press with the express purpose of widening readership for modern philosophy. It was meant as a "handbook for shop assistants" – a simplified but intelligible version of the philosophical issues that Russell had been struggling with over a decade.<sup>7</sup>

Zhang Shenfu was no shop assistant. By this time, he was a sophomore majoring in mathematics at the National Beijing University. With the aid of

6 "Wo dui Losu de zanpei yu liaojie" (*My Admiration for and Understanding of Russell*), unpublished ms., completed 2 March 1983, pp. 3-4. This ms. and the circumstances of its composition were conveyed to me by Zhang Shenfu's daughter, Miss Zhang Yanni, in August 1986. This essay was finally printed as an introduction to Zhang Shenfu's posthumous book of essays, *Luosu zhexue yishu ji* (Collected Translations of Russell's Philosophy) (Beijing: Jiaoju Kexue Chubanshe, 1989), pp. vii-xiv.

7 Clark, pp. 153-4.

Russell's *Problems*, Zhang Shenfu developed an even stronger interest in logic. Russell's simple, lucid text opened up for Zhang a new way of looking at philosophy. It suddenly appeared worthy of scholarly study. Russell's book, in this sense, occasioned a conversion from mathematics to philosophy. Seventy years later, Zhang Shenfu recalls as follows how *The Problems of Philosophy* clenched his commitment to walk in Russell's footsteps, how he decided to become a philosopher himself:

In this book, Mr. Russell uses the example of the painter to talk about how an artist becomes interested in the appearance of things. By contrast, the practical person wants to know what things are really like. The philosopher, in turn, is moved by an even more profound desire to know the inner quality (*benri*) of things. According to Russell, philosophy is not the process through which one finds concrete, definite answers to this or that question. Unlike the physicist, the philosopher studies the questions themselves. Philosophical questions broaden our conception of reality. They enrich our inner feelings and imagination and diminish arbitrary self-righteousness. Arbitrary self-righteousness, Russell wrote, is difficult to undo. More difficult than acquiring Reason. Still, this is the most important object of philosophy. It is concerned with nothing less than the universe as a whole. The subject is so great that it must, by necessity, stretch our minds as well. To put it simply; it is possible for us to strive to obtain truth – a truth that is part of the great objective truth of the universe. (p. 3)

In the wake of this realization, Zhang Shenfu changed his major from mathematics to philosophy and plunged himself more deeply into reading and translating Russell. The tide of Zhang's interest in Russell crested in 1919 and 1920 – during which he translated, annotated, and wrote more than ten articles on Bertrand Russell. In this sense, Zhang Shenfu did contribute to the invitation Russell received to visit China in 1920. Zhang created a climate of interest, of appreciation for Russell as a technical philosopher and social activist.

On 8 October 1920, when Russell arrived in Shanghai, Zhang Shenfu was on hand to welcome him to China. He had, by that time, already made plans to go to France on the same boat as Beijing University President Cai Yuanpei. The month and a half that remained before his departure was all the more intense. It tested, and confirmed, Zhang Shenfu's fervent admiration of Russell. After their public meeting in Shanghai, Zhang Shenfu and Russell continued conversation over tea in Beijing in November. They developed

a mutual respect that lasted through 1962, even though Zhang never met Russell face to face again.<sup>8</sup>

For Zhang Shenfu, Russell's voice was as exciting as his mind. In 1920, Zhang had the opportunity to hear Russell explain his philosophy in his own words. This left an enduring impression on the young Chinese philosopher. In 1983, Zhang recalled:

Russell's speeches were easy to understand, fluent, humorous and inspiring. When analyzing a problem, Russell explained the problem in simple terms. His reasoning powers were penetrating, but not without irony. But it was not a hurting sort of irony. To me, his voice sounded like spring water from a sacred mountain. It cools and calms. It also leaves one with a chilly, alert, pleasant sensation.<sup>9</sup>

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*January 1988:* One of Zhang Shenfu's students, Sun Dunheng who took Zhang Shenfu's logic courses at Qinghua University in the mid-1930s is recollecting his teacher's lecture style. Sun describes his impression of Zhang in ways that echo Zhang Shenfu's own recollections of Bertrand Russell. No accident, here. In the decade after he met Russell, Zhang Shenfu went on to fashion himself into a philosopher on the Russell model. In his own teaching, Zhang mirrored the approach of the British logician who first opened him up to the everyday significance of philosophy:

8 The last letter from Russell to Zhang Shenfu preserved in the Russell Archives is dated 17 September 1962. It is a response to Zhang's congratulations on the occasion of Russell's ninetieth birthday.

In 1962, China was undergoing a brief period of political liberalization during which Zhou Enlai could, and did, acknowledge his political debt to Zhang Shenfu. Zhang Shenfu thus felt free to contact his Western mentor. With the outbreak of the Cultural Revolution in 1966, the possibility of correspondence with Russell ended.

In his 17 September 1962 letter, Russell writes: "It was very rewarding for me to receive your thoughtful and kind letter. I am enclosing to you a copy of a programme given to me on the occasion of my ninetieth birthday, which I value and should wish you to have. I am also sending you a copy of my "History of the World in Epitome", which I hope you will like. ...

I should very much like to see you again to discuss all that has happened in the years since we last met. Naturally, those who write about one have their own particular Veltanchaug [*sic*], which affects their vision of oneself. I am not publishing my autobiography until after my death, because there is so much that affects contemporary events, and because there is much that I am hoping to add to it.

The danger of nuclear war is overwhelming and terrifying, and I feel that I must do anything I am able to prevent it.... I hope that you will write again, because it was a source of pleasure for me to hear from you."

9 "Wo dui Luosu ...", p. 7.



In his logic classes, Mr. Zhang Shenfu sat in the centre of the dais. With his glasses on, he never stopped looking at us while he lectured. With a piece of chalk in his right hand, he would cover the blackboard with abstract signs like a circle, or a plus or a minus sign, or with formula such as AEIOPQ. Often he dwelt at length on the thought of the great English philosopher, Russell.

In general, the study of logic dealt with abstract concepts. But Professor Zhang Shenfu's knowledge was broad, many-sided, mind-expanding. He would always enrich his subject with examples from everyday life, from commonplace existence. This made things easier to understand. For example, he would say: "Logic is the study of propositions, the study of form, the science of all sciences. To see how its reasoning works, let me give you a commonplace example: If it rains the ground gets wet. So rain seems to imply a wet ground. If it rains, the ground is definitely wet. But if the ground is wet, it is not necessarily because it rains. It could be wet because the street cleaner has just sprayed water over the ground."

Each of Mr. Zhang's sentences was like a piece of crystal sugar. It could be pondered with increasing pleasure for a long time. Each class was full of "asides". These consisted of leisurely digressions from the dry subject of logic. They were anything but useless diversions. They were the harvest of his own truth-seeking that he used to make his lectures more lively.<sup>10</sup>

Here, a student pays unwitting tribute to the teacher's teacher. Zhang Shenfu, the dispenser of "crystal sugar" in the 1930s, had received his first-taste of lucid, earth-bound philosophizing while drinking from Russell's "mountain spring" in 1920.

21 May 1942: Zhang Shenfu continues to savour the pleasures of Russell's thought. He continues to relish the "cool and calming" effect of the British logician's philosophy even in war-torn China. Though the Japanese invasion has forced him to leave Beijing and resettle in Chunqing, Zhang continues to read as much as possible of Russell.

On this day, writing for a Communist-supported newspaper, *New China Daily*, Zhang takes the opportunity to mark his mentor's seventieth birthday. He takes space out of a special column dedicated to science and dialectical materialism to comment on the enduring significance of Russell for philosophers, and for the world in general:

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10 Sun Dunheng, "Zhang Shenfu jiaoshou zai Qinghua" (Professor Zhang Shenfu's Years at Qinghua), *Beijing wenshi ziliao*, Jan. 1988, pp. 30-1.

Bertrand Russell is the greatest philosopher of mathematical logic. He is a veteran soldier of the new enlightenment trend that has brought science to the study of human nature. Every new philosophy has its own methodology. Russell's pathbreaking method is that of logical analysis. If you want to truly understand Russell's philosophy, you have to understand the tradition of British empiricism out of which Russell emerges. His goal was to set mathematics on a firm foundation of logical proof. In this he succeeded admirably.<sup>11</sup>

*12 April 1940:* The anti-Japanese war has been over for about a year. Zhang Shenfu is deeply involved in negotiations about the future form of China's national government. Still, he takes time out again to write about Bertrand Russell. Unrestrained by Communist sponsorship, he now published an essay entitled "Russell: The Greatest Philosopher Alive Today". Published in *New Criticism (Xinwen Pinglun)* this essay allows Zhang to speak even more effusively than he had in 1942.

Russell, the great scholar of enlightenment realism is the most well-known modern thinker in the world of Western philosophy. Russell's works have been translated into more foreign languages than that of any philosopher alive today. Russell's philosophy is complex and cannot be explained in a few simple terms. The source of his original contribution must be traced to his masterwork, the *Principia Mathematica*, which opened up a new page in both mathematical logic and philosophy. Russell has often said, and I always agreed with him: "No problem in philosophy can be truly solved unless there is a breakthrough in mathematical logic."

Currently Russell is working on an autobiography that is eagerly awaited by readers all over the world. His thought, like his personal demeanour; is thoroughly revolutionary. He is capable of evoking intense admiration. This can be seen in the powerful loyalties he has generated among the women who have shared his life. Since Russell is a powerful and attractive personality, he has been, naturally, envied, and even hated by some people. His commitment to science and democracy have not always received a supportive response. Some people hate him, just because others love him too much, especially women.<sup>12</sup>

After this tribute to his philosophical mentor, Zhang goes on to praise himself as the conduit through which Russell has reached Chinese readers:

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11 "Zhu Luosu qishi" (To Russell, on His 70th), *Xinhua ribao*, 21 May 1942., p. 4.

12 "Luosu – Xiandai shengcun zui weida de zhaxuejia" (Russell – the Greatest Philosopher Alive in the Modern Age), *Xinwen pinglun*, 12 April 1946. p. 16.

In China, some of the most important new theories and new personalities (from the West) have been introduced first by me. Not a few new names and works were first translated and explained in my writings, and then became more popular later on. This is especially the case with Romain Rolland, August Rodin, Barbusse, and many others. This was even more apparent in the circumstances surrounding Russell's reception in China. Here was one of my main contributions to the nation. This is what I myself consider most glorious. Now these seeds have been scattered into the broad public. But, naturally, I have no way of knowing what kind of significance, if any, they will have in the world at large. (p. 22)

*February 1983:* Thirty-seven years after the essay on "Russell: The Greatest Philosopher Alive Today", Zhang Shenfu is less doubt-ridden about the impact of his own "glorious" contribution to the nation. Now, Zhang is less worried about Russell's impact on China ("already proven!") and more interested in Russell's significance for himself. Dictating to his daughter, Zhang's tone is unequivocally admiring. At the same time, the octogenarian's words continue the search for self justification:

To be a great philosopher, a person must be creative. He must have something original to say about the human condition and have a noble purpose in philosophizing. Russell did not fail to meet all of these criteria. To sum up Russell's life: he was not only a great philosopher, but also a theorist of education. He also fought for justice and peace. He was tireless in his appeal to critical reason and in the fight against Fascism. His great achievements in mathematical logic have transformed the entire philosophical world. Thus I write this article to show my admiration and respect for Russell.<sup>13</sup>

Zhang Shenfu was, from beginning to end, a fervent admirer of Russell. In 1920, he "worshipped" Russell as a model. By 1983, he acknowledged Russell as a creative philosopher beyond himself. Zhang Shenfu rested on his laurels as Russell's expert.

## 2 The Making of a Russell Expert

*10 November 1920:* The day before Russell is to have tea with Zhang Shenfu at the Continental Hotel. Also, the day before Russell drafts a letter to his French disciple Jean Nicod describing Zhang as one: "who knows my writings, all of them, far better than I do and has constructed an inconceivably

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13 "Wo Dui Luosu ...", p. 1.

complete bibliography of them.” This day, too, in spite of Zhang’s intense admiration, indeed “worship” of Russell, a gap opens between the two men.

Russell’s letter inviting Zhang Shenfu for tea concedes the gulf. In response to Zhang Shenfu’s earlier questions about the importance of biology to philosophy, Russell writes: “Yes, philosophy depends, as you say, especially upon biology, but, at the moment even more on physics.”

This, at first glance is a brief, mild reference to Russell’s current interest in physics, and in the work of Albert Einstein. Zhang Shenfu adopted these interests in the following decade. And yet there is a premonition here of a more significant difference: for Zhang, biology and philosophy will remain related concerns. They will, in time, open the door to a further divergence from Bertrand Russell as Zhang moves closer to dialectical materialism.

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Dialectical materialism is not yet on Zhang’s intellectual agenda in 1920. Nonetheless Russell senses its shadow. He closes the November 10th letter to Zhang Shenfu with the following words: “I am very sorry you are going away so soon. I would have made more attempts to see you, but was persuaded you hated me on account of my criticism of Bolshevism.”

Zhang Shenfu answers on the same day. He accepts the invitation to tea but takes issue with Russell’s letter. With effort, in English, he writes:

Many thanks for your reply. I will see you tomorrow at the time requested. I am delighted very much by your so estimable reply.

Its last sentence surprises me also very much. Not only I never hated you at all, but I hope eagerly that there would be no hatred at all. Even Mr. Anatole France’s saying “to hate the hatred”, for me, is not quite right. Your criticism of Bolshevism are all right, and valuable, I believe.

Even if not so, there would be no reason for me to hate only on account of this. You said, “If I be a Russian, I would defend the socialist gov’t” (cited from memory). This attitude, I quite admire. Though I consider Russia as the most advanced country in the world at the present, and though I believe in communism, I am not a Bolshevik. This is of course also your opinion. I believe I agree with you at nearly every point and believe myself I can *almost* always understand you quite correctly.<sup>14</sup>

Before sending the letter, Zhang Shenfu added the word “almost” just before “always”. This was his only acknowledgement that there might be a gulf between himself and Russell. It was, however, a momentary concession. Over

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14 Dated 10 Nov. 1910 (RA).

all, Zhang believed that he understood Russell fully. More importantly, he was convinced he had found in Russell's philosophy a key to a new Chinese thought. In 1920 Zhang Shenfu was convinced that the British logician's lectures and writings were true and sufficient onto themselves. That conviction would erode over the years that followed their 1920 meeting.

*11 June 1981:* Today is our most extensive conversation about mathematical logic. Zhang Shenfu is explaining, line by line, a narrative "poem" he wrote in 1960. As a diversion from illness and political repression Zhang had composed this ten-page overview of the entire history of mathematical logic.

As always, our conversation – and the "poem" – starts and ends with Bertrand Russell. Even as Zhang reviews his appreciation for the contributions of Leibniz, Boole, Pierce, Jevons and other pioneers in mathematical logic, he reserves highest praise for Russell: "It is Russell who sets the whole field of mathematical logic on a firm theoretical foundation. His contribution is the greatest. He has expended great effort to rebuild philosophy through the theory of types, through the theory of descriptions and through the logic of relations."

I have a hard time following his list of technical developments in logic. It is hard enough to thread my way through the thickets of Zhang's political career. This material on mathematical logic is tougher still. How am I to make sense of Chinese words for Russell's *Principia Mathematica* – when I don't even understand them in English? All the names of Westerners who have moved forward the history of mathematical philosophy are now in front of me – in Chinese! An almost hopeless puzzle.

I am not even sure what all these names mean to Zhang Shenfu now in his late old age. Leibniz, Boole, Pierce, and Gödel appear as so many logical symbols in Zhang's condensed history of mathematical logic. Sometimes I have the feeling that these names are like mantras, incantations· that Zhang Shenfu uses to maintain some philosophical lucidity in old age.

But this is not the case with Russell. Russell's work remains real, detailed and richly nuanced in Zhang Shenfu's mind. And today, he wants to underscore his own contribution to clarifying Russell's thought in China:

I was the first to translate most of Russell's key texts into Chinese. Others followed with longer books, more technical works. But I introduced all the key phrases, all the key themes. I was the first to notice and to emphasize what was new in Russell's thought. For example, I was the first to emphasize the concept of philosophy as "the science of the possible" – though I

am not sure where this concept appears in Russell's work. I was also the first to translate and interpret the logical concept of *guilun* – from the English “falsification” – which is fundamental for all of logical analysis.

I also translated the concept of “analysis” very differently from all others. I used the Chinese term *jiexi* instead of the more commonly used *fenxi*. Why, you wonder? Because I believe *jiexi* is more logical. It also sounds more new somehow. *Fenxi* suggests something being cut up, scattered, severed – as if by one blow. *Jiexi*, by contrast is not so simple.

How is it more complex, you ask? I feel that there are many more steps involved in *jiexi*. When something is subjected to logical analysis, it is a slow, systematic operation. *Fenxi* was widely accepted as a synonym for “analysis” when I began my work on Russell. But I did not think it conveys the full implications of Russell's thought. It was too simple. So I made an innovation through translation. Maybe this is my most important contribution to clarifying Russell's work in twentieth-century China.

*Fenxi* vs. *jiexi* – this strikes me, at first, as a very simplistic claim by a man who wants to convince me of his grasp of the “complexities” of Russell's thought. But, the more I listen to Zhang Shenfu, the more I read about him, the more I understand that his philosophical commitment revolves around words, around specific turns of phrase. He is nothing if not a philosopher of the word. And in Russell – through Russell – Zhang Shenfu has found a new vocabulary of his thought.

So, I go back to 1920, to the year in which Zhang Shenfu made the most concentrated effort to introduce Russell's vocabulary to Chinese readers. This is the year in which he chose to translate logical “analysis:” as *jiexi* instead of *fenxi*. This is the year that he became convinced that Russell's logic opened up a new path in scientific philosophy. This is the year in which Zhang became convinced that philosophy is the science of the possible. This is also the year in which he began to develop a more independent philosophical outlook. From 1920 on, Zhang Shenfu expressed his thoughts by clarifying words. He believed that truth lay in words. In words, too, lay the significance of Russell for China.

*16 March 1920:* Russell has not yet landed in Shanghai, but already Zhang Shenfu is defending him in Beijing. Seven months before his mentor began to lecture on philosophy, logic and social issues in China, in Chinese intellectual life, Zhang is already on the alert against any possible misreadings. He is especially concerned with how John Dewey – currently lecturing in China – might distort or eclipse Russell's philosophy in China.

In a letter to the editor of the most influential newspaper in North China, the *Chenbao*, Zhang Shenfu takes issue with Dewey's characterization of Russell:

The night before last, Mr. Dewey talked about Russell as a despairing pessimist. In fact, Russell stands for ethical neutrality (*lunli zhongli*). Russell stands beyond judgement in all categories of thought. ... Furthermore, Dewey is thoroughly mistaken when he describes Russell's philosophy as elitist. This leads us to think of him as somehow anti-democratic. In fact, Russell is a thorough realist who upholds logical atomism (*duoli yuanzi lun*) and the principle of absolute pluralism (*duoyuan lun*). Russell's philosophical method is to dissect all categories of thought, be they political, scientific or philosophical. To make this clear I have translated his piece on "Dreams and Facts" which appeared first in the January issue of *Athenaeum* and was reprinted again in the February, 1920 issue of *Dial*.<sup>15</sup>

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Less than two months after Russell publishes something in the West, Zhang Shenfu was ready to defend and explain his position in Beijing. Zhang's vigilant alertness testifies to his admiration for Russell. Admiration, in turn, enables Zhang to quarrel with the ignorance of his contemporaries.

30 October 1920: Zhang Shenfu enters the fray of public debate again. He is defending Russell's philosophical position once more. Now that his British mentor has set foot on Chinese soil, interest in his ideas is spreading like wildfire among young Chinese intellectuals. Zhang Shenfu is even more on guard against distortions. On this day, Zhang is picking a bone with a young Chinese philosopher, Zhang Dongsun.

Though not much older than Zhang Shenfu, Zhang Dongsun has an already established reputation as political activist. He is an associate of Liang Qichao and editor of the Shanghai based *Shishi xin bao*. By October 1920, Zhang Dongsun had produced Chinese translations of Henri Bergson's *Creative Evolution*. He was also looking for a spiritual ally in the battle against Bolshevism. Having heard about Russell's negative reaction to the Soviet Union, and about Russell's reservations about the applicability of Marxist analysis to the Chinese situation, Zhang Dongsun is beginning to take an interest in Russell's philosophy. Zhang Shenfu lost no time in taking Zhang Dongsun to task for misreading Russell. Anti-Bolshevik ideas could not be taken as a common ground. Zhang Shenfu is convinced that Russell is far more complex than Zhang Dongsun would like to believe. In yet another letter to the editor of the North China daily, *Chenbao*, Zhang Shenfu

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15 "Ji bianzhe" (Letter to the Editor), *Chenbao*, 16 March 1910, p. 4. [Dewey's lecture is "Russell's Philosophy", *Russell* no. II (autumn 1973): 3-9. – Ed.]

quarrels with Zhang Dongsun's interpretation of Russell's philosophical realism. As always, his argument revolves around words:

Mr. Zhang Dongsun's is thoroughly misreading Russell when he describes his philosophy with the Chinese words *shiyong zhuyi*. The English equivalent for this is "pragmatism" not "realism". This is a major, fundamental mistake. Anyone who knows anything about contemporary philosophy and about Russell's work knows that Russell is a firm opponent of pragmatism. His view is very different from Bergson and Dewey, in the same way that his mathematics is fundamentally different from that of Galileo.

Since last year, when he began to study modern psychology, Russell has developed a new theory which suggests that there is no difference between mind and matter. They are both part of a continuum of varied perception. In this respect, Russell's theories are quite close to those of William James. Russell's idea that "truth propositions correspond to actual facts" is nonetheless different from James' notion that "truth is an assumption we need in order to proceed with the work of philosophy." It is also very different from Dewey's notion that "truth is an assumption about what works in a given situation." The difference in their positions is amply evident in the *Principia Mathematica* and in other of Russell's works. So how can one of our so-called illustrious commentators make such a fundamental mistake?<sup>16</sup>

Setting words straight – this was Zhang Shenfu's philosophical ambition in 1920. And has remained ever since. Defending Russell's "realism" in the public gave Zhang an opportunity to defend his own philosophical position. Each time he translated a work by or wrote about the British logician, Zhang was, in effect, stretching the limits of his own language and thought.

In the same month that he took on Zhang Dongsun, Zhang Shenfu also edited a special issue of *New Youth* dedicated to Bertrand Russell. This was a rare opportunity to make an enduring impact on the most inquisitive minds in China. *New Youth* – the most cosmopolitan publication of the day – had only three special issues in its entire publishing history: one dedicated to Ibsen in June 1918, one dedicated to Marx and Marxism in May 1919, and the one dedicated to Russell in October 1920. As special editor of the October issue, Zhang Shenfu had an opportunity to set the tone for subsequent Chinese discussions of Russell.

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16 "Ji bianzhe" (Letter to the Editor), *Chenbao*, 30 Oct. 1920, p. 4.



*October 1920:* Zhang's introduction to the Russell bibliography in *New Youth* is focused on linguistic and philosophical issues. The emphasis is a bit odd in light of the fact that Zhang Shenfu, like other young Chinese, was amply aware of Russell as a social theorist and activist for peace. Russell's views on free marriage, women's rights and socialism were of immediate interest to young radicals of the May Fourth era.

Nonetheless, Zhang Shenfu's introduction to *New Youth* emphasizes Russell's contribution to scientific philosophy. This essay dwells on the significance of "new realism" in British philosophy and traces its evolution from G. E. Moore to Russell. In it, Zhang takes great care to explain Russell's "key dictum" that: "whenever possible, logical constructions are to be substituted for inferred entities." Zhang is clearly at great pain to find the right Chinese word for Russell's method of "logical atomism".

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He finally hits upon the rather cumbersome but evocative Chinese expression "*mingli yuanzi lun*". With this in mind, he argues that philosophy can be placed on a realistic foundation. Unlike other philosophers in the past-and even contemporaries – Russell does not use logical analysis to examine only philosophical statements. For him, logical atomism is a powerful method of investigation and justification beyond philosophy. It takes philosophy out into the world. Logical analysis (*mingli jixifa*) is the most important recent invention. "It makes philosophy truly scientific."<sup>17</sup>

With this essay on Russell, Zhang Shenfu established himself as a Russell expert, not just a Russell admirer. His mission, however, would not remain unchallenged. Many others became more expert, such as the Western trained logician, Jin Yuelin. Some, very close to Zhang Shenfu as Liang Shuming, called into question Zhang's admiration for Russell.

*March 1921, Shanghai:* Zhang Shenfu is in Paris organizing a small cell for the Chinese Communist Party. Russell is lying ill in Beijing, given up for dead according to one Japanese newspaper. Zhang's boyhood friend, Liang Shuming goes public with his reservations about Russell as a philosopher and moralist. Liang's essay is published in a major Shanghai daily, under the title "My Reservations about Russell".

Liang starts the critique of Zhang Shenfu's philosophical mentor with the following acknowledgement:

To my friend Zhang Shenfu who already loves Russell's theories. Over the past, seven, eight years he has not stopped talking about and praising

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17 Zhang Shenfu, "Luosu" (Russell), *Xin qingnian*, 8, no. 2, Oct. 1920, p. 1.

Russell's theories. Following Mr. Zhang's urgings, I have also tried to read Russell's works and to like them. And in fact found that some aspects of his theories accord well with my own thought – such as his social psychology. Also his theory of impulsion [here Liang uses the English word] is quite coherent.

I also found Russell's theories of cognition and of the essential continuity of all matter very suggestive. Last year, when Russell passed through Nanjing, he gave a very convincing lecture on the subject using the example of the concept of "hat" to prove that hats seen by people in the present are nothing more than extensions of hats that they have seen before-though they might not actually be the hats bought originally. So I accept some of Russell's theories. But my dissatisfaction with Russell's thought is more serious. I am full of doubt about its foundation.

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What gives me great unease about Russell is the way he criticizes-quite unfairly and ignorantly the theories of Bergson. [Liang's favourite Western thinker.] Although I do not know much about mathematical logic, still, I have deep reservations about Russell's unscholarly attitude in intellectual debate. It is well known that Russell opposes Bergson. But he has never bothered to understand the other's point of view. In Beijing, he attacked Bergson for "mythical idealism" without any basis at all.

In conclusion, Liang again pays tribute to Zhang Shenfu's overview of Western thought-while continuing his critique of the philosopher Zhang admired:

Finally, I also want to warn my readers about the quest for an all encompassing, comprehensive philosophy. Truths attained through such comprehensive philosophies might sound good. Indeed, they appear to be perfect in their claim to certainty. But the real truth is always more complex. It is neither as pleasant nor as fine sounding as Russell likes to claim.

A scholar is an expert only in his own field. Outside of it, he is just a commoner. Zhang Shenfu is right in saying that "Today's philosophy belongs either to the Russell's school or to that of Bergson." One is a leader in rationalism, the other is a leader in non-rational thought. Russell and Bergson are the two greatest contemporary philosophers. Although they are different, each has a claim to truth.

But from Russell's short-sighted words it is evident he is not open to learning. He seeks for truth, but cannot attain it. In this Russell has forsaken the outlook of a true scholar. I write this not only to criticize Russell.

There are many people who discuss philosophical issues the same way as Russell does. I have been feeling pity for them for a long time now. The reason that such persons cannot be true scholars is they are not prudent in their outlook. They do not know that only one who is calm, careful and insightful can be a truly great philosopher.<sup>18</sup>

Was Liang Shuming talking about Zhang Shenfu here? Did he sense already in 1921 that Zhang – China's foremost Russell expert and public defender of the British logician – did not have the inner justification of a "great philosopher"? Liang Shuming said as much to me during our first meeting on 29 April 1983. In 1921, however, Liang did not yet have the evidence of Zhang's life – a lifetime spent in the teaching of logic and political activism. Nonetheless, Liang was already emphasizing the need for "calm" and "prudence". Zhang never treasured these as much as Liang, and never did produce a single coherent work of original philosophy. By 1921, Zhang Shenfu, unlike Liang Shuming, was deeply attracted to comprehensive philosophies. He was already embarked on the search for an encompassing answer. Mathematical logic seemed to promise this through its formulas and step by step process of deductive reasoning. Mathematical logic eventually gave way to dialectical materialism, and finally, to an idiosyncratic combination of Russell and Confucius.

To the end of his life in 1986, Zhang Shenfu was aware of his failure to convert Liang Shuming to Russell's point of view. Nonetheless, he took endless pride in having exposed Liang to the works of Bertrand Russell. Zhang remained a critically minded Russell expert while Liang went on to become a philosopher in his own right.

The evolution of Zhang Shenfu's own writing and teaching career, however, shows that he – like Liang – was far from blind to Russell's shortcomings. Although Zhang never wrote a detailed critique of his British mentor, his philosophical journeys took him far from Russell's arrogant certainties. In all the far-flung journeys through Confucianism and dialectical materialism, however, Zhang maintained his interest in Russell's thought. Over and over again he translated or abstracted the latest book by the prolific Englishman. Over and over again, he expresses his admiration for the political courage manifested in Russell's stand against war and Fascism. Over and over again, Zhang showed that he enjoyed "Bertie", the irreverent private man inside Russell, the public philosopher.

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18 Liang Shuming, "Dui Luosu zhi buman" (My Reservations about Russell), in *Shuming sahou wenlu* (Liang Shuming's Writings after the Age of Thirty) (Shanghai: 1930; Taiwan reprint, 1971), pp. 103-5.

*1 May 1931:* Zhang Shenfu is writing his most personal essay about Russell. It is a confession of his enduring interest in the man who invited him to tea in Beijing in November 1920. The essay is a meditation on “What Russell Loves and What Russell Hates”. It is also an oblique recognition that Zhang’s interest in the man behind the thought might not be enough to nurture prolonged philosophical work in the Chinese context.

By 1931, Zhang had made his imprint as a Russell expert on Chinese intellectual life. He had produced translations and interpretations of Russell’s works in two distinctive periods: the first during the May Fourth Movement, 1919-20, the second in the wake of the failure of political revolution, in 1927-28. Whereas the first period was marked by careful introduction of key terms in Russell’s analytical logic, the second was marked by an attempt to delve into the scientific and social foundations of Russell’s work. It began with a translation of Russell’s 1927 essay “Is Science Superstitious?” and went on with essays on “The Meaning of Meaning”, on “A Free Man’s Worship”, on “The ABC of Relativity” and on “Russell’s New Views of the Atom”.

But translation is one thing. Writing a book about Russell is quite another. And this is exactly what Zhang Shenfu kept putting off and putting off. In May 1931 – recently appointed Professor of Logic to the prestigious Philosophy Department of Qinghua University – he is still imagining that he is going to write such a book. He never did.

Instead, Zhang Shenfu wrote yet another translation – essay published in the *Qinghua University Weekly*. This piece centres around a recent interview in *The Little Review* in which Russell spoke about his loves and hates.<sup>19</sup> Zhang’s preface to the Russell interview contains his confession of a frustrated desire:

I have been wanting to write something about Russell for a long time. He will be 60 years old next May. I very much wanted to write a big, thick book about his thought by way of congratulation. What I have here instead, is sort of a foreword to that project. It is only an expression of my personal interest in Russell.

But actually if you stop to think about, what other criteria is there for truth but that of interest, or rather beauty. What is life for, if not for the expression, the fulfilment of interest? But whether my interests will find an echo among readers is beyond my ability to predict.<sup>20</sup>

19 “Confessions”, *The Little Review*, 12, no. 2. (May 1929): pp. 72-3.

20 “Guanyu Luosu” (About Russell), *Qinghua zhoukan*, 1 May 1931, pp. 8-9.

Zhang's self-doubt here is coloured by the conflict between the desire to write a "big, thick book" about his British mentor and the proclivity to follow a wide array of "interests". Zhang Shenfu never did write that "big, thick" book. Not on Russell or any other subject. This set him apart from Liang Shuming, whose many books won him an assured place in the annals of twentieth-century Chinese philosophy.

The *Little Review* piece, nonetheless, allowed Zhang Shenfu to look behind the solemn aura of Russell as the public philosopher. Zhang excerpted the interview for Chinese readers because he was convinced that "among the fifty famous people interviewed by this journal, Russell's answers were most interesting, most profound, and humorous."

To make his point more concrete, Zhang goes on:

When asked what do you like best and would have liked to be Russell answered: "I would have liked to know physics best and be a physicist."

"What are you most afraid of? I fear most becoming a boring companion to my friends. When was the happiest and the most unhappy time in your life? The unhappiest was the time of my birth. The happiest will probably be when I die."

"What do you like most and least about yourself? What I like the most about myself is that many people like me. What I dislike is that I hate myself." (*Ibid.*)

Even with Zhang Shenfu's appreciative introduction, Chinese readers could not but raise eyebrows at the kind of man revealed in the answers to the *Little Review*. Zhang himself concludes on a critical note. On the face of it, he is troubled by Russell's repeated praise of physics – the source of their old disagreement from 1920, when Zhang was quite taken by psychology and biology:

Russell says that physics is the most important realm of theoretical research, and that it helps us to understand everything including social phenomena. But ten years ago, I already discussed with Russell the importance of psychology for philosophy. Even then, he told me, philosophy must rely more on physics. It is a pity, though, that he never developed the specific reasons for his preference of physics. (p. 10)

The question of Russell's infatuation with physics is but the tip of the iceberg. Beneath it lies a host of buried doubts about the social usefulness of the kind of cool, mocking rationalism that informed Russell's answers to the *Little Review*.

How useful could such rationalism be for a thinker like Zhang Shenfu – or for a country like China – that needed a more compassionate analysis of society and a more comprehensive view of. The dynamics of social change?

*Spring 1897:* Using the pen name Orlando, the twenty-five-year-old Bertrand Russell writes a brief essay entitled “Self-Appreciation”. In it he lays bare his likes and dislikes even more sharply than in his subsequent answers to the *Little Review*:

I am quite indifferent to the mass of human creatures, though I wish, as a purely intellectual person, to discover some way in which they might all be happy. I wouldn't sacrifice myself to them, though their unhappiness, at moments, about once every three months, gives me a feeling of discomfort. ... I care for very few people and have several enemies-two or three at least whose pain is delightful to me.<sup>21</sup>

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Zhang Shenfu did not read this extreme version of Russell's antihumanism. But he sensed it in the answers to the *Little Review*. Zhang had a glimpse of Russell's anti-humanism even earlier, in 1920, when he had tried to convince Russell of the importance of biology – the science of living, changing human beings. Russell, on his side, remained firmly committed to the razor-sharp approach of analytical logic. It helped to cut away, not through, the muddy problems of social life.

Through his long life, Zhang Shenfu never lost his interest in Russell the man, or even in Russell the philosopher. But the chilly, formalistic core in his mentor's world view forced Zhang to look beyond Russell. Though he did not say as much in 1931, Zhang Shenfu could not deny the truth in Liang Shuming's 1921 accusation: Russell *was* arrogant and one-sided. For a corrective, Zhang Shenfu, like Liang Shuming, turned to the rich traditions of native Chinese social thought.

### 3 Chinese Roots

*16 June 1981:* We are talking about the connection between materialism and realism. Most of it is above my head – partly because Zhang Shenfu tends to drift off into a low mumble whenever we circle back to the ideas that have become code words for him more. than five decades ago. Once in a while, however, his voice clears. It rises out of his chest unencumbered by old

21 In *Papers I*: 72. It is discussed at length from a critical perspective by Sidney Hook in his review “The Philosopher as a Young Man”, *The New York Times Book Review*, 29 Jan. 1984, pp. 7-8.

battles. Then he surprises himself, and me, with something new about the evolution of his philosophical world view.

Today, Zhang stops in the middle of a sentence about the utility of Western logic in fostering a scientific, realistic view of the world. He adds:

But Russell, you see, ended up so one-sided in his philosophical outlook. His philosophy is useful in seeing only discrete parts of a problem. I wanted to think about the whole. In many ways Russell was biased. He opposed materialism. But materialism and idealism are just two sides of the same coin. Materialism does not see the heart (or "mind", *xin*) while idealism fails to appreciate outward realities.

My own philosophy seeks for a more comprehensive view of experience, for a more thorough realism, for an expansive objectivity. So I went back to certain ideas in Chinese philosophy – especially to the Confucian notions of *ren* (tolerance, humanism) and *zhong* (the unprejudiced golden mean).

"But didn't Russell himself hold Confucianism in contempt?" I ask. I remind Zhang Shenfu that the British logician himself wrote in *The Problem of China* that he was "unable to appreciate the merits of Confucius." Russell went as far as to say that: "His writings are largely occupied with trivial points of etiquette" and "his main concern is to teach people how to behave correctly on various occasions."<sup>22</sup> Zhang loses no time in answering me: "Yes, it is true Russell did not understand or respect Confucius much. But that is just another example of his one-sided view of things. My philosophy took the best in each, but never blindly. And to this day, the two philosophers I admire most deeply are Russell and Confucius."

The problem of the "worship" of Confucianism did not begin – or end – in 1934 with Jiang Kaishek's New Life campaign or with Puyi mounting the throne of Manchukuo. It did not subside until the war against Japan was over. Zhang Shenfu, himself, never tired of worrying about what it would take to build "national confidence" in a protracted war of resistance to Japan. He continued to write essays about the need to bring back Confucius – but always with critical eye. The problem in Zhang's view, was political. The solution lay in something personal: Zhang Shenfu's own quest for a philosophical world view that modified the cold, harsh edge of Russell's dissective genius.

*27 September 1932:* Zhang Shenfu has just edited the fourth instalment of his special column for the North China daily, *Da Gong Bao*. Entitled "Trends in World Thought", the new project brings Zhang a national readership and new

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22 *The Problem of China* (London: Allen & Unwin, 1922), p. 190.

social contacts (Sun Junquan among them). For the moment, Zhang Shenfu is concentrating on introducing readers to the latest and the best of Western and Marxist philosophy. In this column he also takes the opportunity to continue his episodic essays that began in his 1931 book, *Thought as Such*. The new essay series is entitled “Thought as Such – Continued”. In this series, Zhang allows himself to explore anything that comes to his mind.

In today’s instalment, Zhang recalls a passage by the ancient Taoist relativist, Zhuangzi. Then he proceeds to muse about Russell’s extreme scepticism and how it prevents Russell from penetrating the emotional component of reality. Finally, Zhang concludes, Eastern and Western philosophy have their own disparate genius:

Oneness and universality are the strong points of Eastern philosophy. Multiplicity and distinction are what is prized in Eastern philosophy. Russell is certainly the most inspired among those who talk of the many and who distinguishes himself by analyzing differences between them. He believes that oneness and universality are nothing but superstitions.

Someone who seeks to understand multiplicity and distinctions cannot but emphasize logic, cannot but seek absolute certainty.

My own goal is to glimpse the One among the many. I seek, through distinctions, to arrive at what is truly universal. When thinking of One I try not to forget the many. I moderate what exists with an understanding of what is universal.

Then, as if the implicit reputation of Russell’s dissective genius were not enough, Zhang asks rhetorically: “Is absolute knowledge anything but superstition?”<sup>23</sup>

The man who was once so taken by Russell’s claims for absolute certainty in the 1910s, now uses Russell’s own criticism of “superstition” to indict as “vain” the quest for absolute certainty.

*8 April 1980:* My first meeting with Zhang Shenfu’s younger brother Zhang Dainian – a tall, grey-haired man, who is a well-known expert on traditional Chinese thought in the Beijing University Philosophy Department. He’s a more traditional scholar than Zhang Shenfu. Nonetheless, Zhang Dainian has shared the political fate of his revolutionary older brother. Both were condemned as “rightists” in 1957.

23 “Ji suosi, 4” (Thought as Such – Continued, No. 4), 1932, reprinted in *Suosi* (Beijing: 1986), p. 135.



Like the first-born son, Zhang Dainian has made a professional career of philosophy. He teaches and writes about traditional Chinese thought. Today, he recalls his first articles about philosophy published in 1933-34. Under Zhang Shenfu's guidance these pieces appeared in the special column "Trends in World Thought". Like Zhang Shenfu, Zhang Dainian, wrote a great deal about Russell:

In fact I translated some of the most technical parts of Russell's work into Chinese. Then, I decided to turn all my attention to the history of China's own traditions of thought. My brother also became interested in Chinese philosophy. Later, and never whole-heartedly.

Our conversation drifts back and forth over Zhang Shenfu's philosophical maturation. His younger brother, an urbane, highly trained, careful historian of philosophy is now helping me to untangle the various, often contradictory threads in Zhang Shenfu's work. He points out how important Russell was in deepening Zhang Shenfu's interest in mathematical logic. Then, Zhang Dainian adds, "Zhang Shenfu also gained a great deal by not cutting himself off from traditional Chinese ideas."

In our conversation today, Zhang Dainian makes a great effort to explain to me the significance of Zhang Shenfu's attachment to the Confucian idea of *ren* – active humanness:

This was not easy to do in the ideologically torn world of Chinese philosophy in the 1930s. Among dogmatic materialists and narrow-minded Confucians, Zhang Shenfu stood out like a light. He was conversant with the latest ideas from the West. And yet he found it possible – indeed necessary – to affirm the value of certain key ideas from Confucian thought.

Zhang Dainian tells me where to find Zhang Shenfu's scattered remarks on the ideal of *ren*:

The best place to start is in the introduction to *Thought as Such*. There, the mathematical logician already credits Confucius with a truly balanced view of the world. There you can see how Zhang Shenfu passed beyond his early infatuation with narrowly scientific rationality.

Zhang Shenfu insisted that a true understanding of the Confucian "middle" necessarily demanded struggle against injustice in contemporary society. By the mid-1930s, Zhang Shenfu's quarrel with a socially conformist Confucianism had escalated into full-fledged war. He was now more convinced than ever that true equanimity required an active commitment to see the world as it really was. He had made the leap from "benevolence" to "objectivity".

By 1932, Zhang Shenfu believed himself to be a resident of the “abode of objectivity”. He had a new concept, a world view of his own making. *Da keguan*, however, the phrase as well as the expansive state of mind that nurtured it, was short-lived. Zhang Shenfu was swept up in a new wave of political activism. As Japanese aggression mounted in North China, it was less and less feasible to maintain the lofty standpoint of either “pure” or “expansive” objectivity. By 1935 Zhang Shenfu was pulled – or rather, rushed – into the fray of yet another patriotic movement. This time it was the movement for national salvation. Political activism, in turn, opened up new philosophical questions for him. During the war with Japan, Zhang became increasingly drawn to dialectical materialism. The graceful bridge he had wanted to build between Russell and Confucius, between Chinese humanism and analytical logic, collapsed under the pressure of political events.

**ZHANG DONGSUN AND  
RUSSELL: SIMILARITIES  
AND DIFFERENCES**



*ZHANG Dongsun*

## Logicism of New Realism (1922)<sup>1</sup>

The discussion in this essay focuses on the so-called New Realist logicism in the most recent Anglo-American philosophy. As such, logicism (*lunli zhuyi* 論理主義) most certainly is not confined solely to the school of New Realism. Instead, it has to be recognized that, in Western philosophy, logicism not only represents one of its major factions, but also one of its traditional schools (*zhengzong* 正宗), a representative of which we could also consider Kant. At this point in the discussion, I shall first give a contrastive enumeration of the special features of logicism. In his expositions on Western philosophy, Zhang Junmai (張君勱) claimed that the former can be divided into two major schools: while the first school bases itself in life (*shenghuo* 生活), the second takes thought (*sixiang* 思想) as its starting point. I believe that, although no such completely strict distinction can be drawn between them, one can always say that there still exists such an opposition of two parallel systems of thought. I propose that these systems contrast each other in the following manner:

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1 Zhang Dongsun 張東蓀. "Xin shizai lun de lunli zhuyi" 新實在論的論理主義 (Logicism of New Realism). *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌, 19(17), 15-34.

**System A***Logicism**Philosophy of thought**Stressing general form**Transcendentalism**Advocating rational knowledge***System B***Psychologism**Philosophy of life**Stressing particular content**Empiricism**Opposing rational knowledge*

Although this contrast does not exhaust all options, by using it one might still be able to understand the essential nature of logicism. Speaking about the contemporary schools of thought, those which belong to the latter category (System B) are (1) the school of pragmatism (*weiyong zhuyi* 惟用主義), (2) Henri Bergson (Bogesen 柏格森), (3) Rudolf Eucken (Woyikeng 倭伊鏗) and others, while the former category (System A) consists mainly of the ranks of German successors of Kant's philosophy, and as such is naturally rather wide-spread and active. This latter current includes members of the so-called Southwest German School [of Neo-Kantian philosophy] such as Windelband (Wendeerban 文得爾班) and Rickert (Likate 黎卡特), members of the Marburg school such as Natorp (拿托潑) and Cohen (Keheng 柯亨), as well as Husserl (Husaier 呼塞爾) who gave rise to an independent philosophical option. As far as the Anglo-American world is concerned, the followers of this school include only the members of the New Realist school. In this essay I intend to focus my discussion solely on the logicist aspects of New Realism – as regards New Realism as a whole, I shall perhaps discuss it in another text. In addition to a general description of its content, I also intend to present a criticism [of its main tenets]. And what was my motive for writing such an article? I wrote it because, recently, I became very interested in researching German Neo-Kantian philosophy. It came to my attention that Husserl has already been lecturing in England. I anticipate that in the Anglo-Saxon world Rickert's philosophy is bound to occupy a position of influence akin to that of Bergson. Aside from Bergson, the modern philosopher I respect the most is Rickert. But to introduce this philosophical current to China is not an easy task at all, mainly because deriving from logicism, the attitude that investigation of thought equals the investigation of the universe had never existed in the East. On the other hand, because, for several thousand years, the Chinese had been imperceptibly influenced by Buddhist philosophy, the task of introducing Schopenhauer, Nietzsche and Bergson was not so difficult at all. Since, after all, Eastern thought and the Anglo-American empiricist school do have some degree of interrelatedness, it is also rather difficult to get a grasp of the transcendentalist ideal(s). Therefore, instead of proceeding

from introducing Rickert's philosophy I shall rather set off by making a brief introduction from the perspective of the scientist notion of New Realism. There are two reasons for this: 1.) Because Bertrand Russell, the champion of New Realism, recently visited China, many people were able to attend his lectures. Which is also why a discussion about philosophy may attract much attention. Moreover, because to a certain extent many people have already been introduced to his philosophy, it may even be expected that they will be able to understand what I have to say. 2.) Because scientism is the basis of New Realism, by describing it one is more or less able to avoid implicating the abstruse realms of philosophy, which makes it easier for the people to understand. In addition to these two reasons, there also exists another, which is that, according to my view, New Realist logicism appears not to be as thorough as in the philosophical faction affiliated with Rickert. Therefore, I must set out by giving a preliminary account of this not so thorough [form of logicism]. Since my idea behind writing the present discussion was to present a prequel to my future introduction of Rickert's philosophy, as regards my plans to synthesize Bergson with Rickert, for now, this will have to wait for another day. Because this nevertheless is a great undertaking – fusing together the philosophy of life and philosophy of thought indeed is a heroic undertaking, although I do aspire to succeed in my endeavour, I am still quite afraid that my vital force will be inadequate for me to fulfil these ambitions. The original intent of this exposition was to deliver preliminary indications about this point. As to whether my elucidations are adequate and appropriate, I cannot rely solely on my self-confidence in this regard, and shall instead openly await everyone's criticisms. Lately, the number of people studying philosophy is increasing day by day. Apart from the growing number of various introductions, we will be naturally also able to see a gradual increase in the creation [of philosophical content]. Moreover, without the sufficient introduction [of Western philosophy], such philosophical production would be less likely to take place. This is why production and introduction are intertwined with each other. In order to inspire researchers, I prefer to advocate a form of introduction which often engages in criticism, blending one's creativity into the introduction bit by bit, which is the most apposite manner of raising the spirit of the scholar. One is naturally reluctant to say that we are able to deliver such [philosophical] creation; however, on the other hand, it is also unlikely that to carry out criticism would also be beyond our capabilities. If we want to give a thorough exposition on this philosophical current of logicism, then, naturally we cannot do so without giving a detailed exposition on the essence of Kant's theory. At present, however, our main focus resides on New Realism, which is why I intend to start with an exposition on Russell's

philosophy, mainly because Russell visited China. Nonetheless, even though in the one year of his stay in China he delivered a great number of lectures, I am afraid that not only do no students actually understand where the spirit of his philosophy really resides, but also that this is probably still not thoroughly understood by all my colleagues who are engaged in research into [Western] philosophy. While I do not dare to claim that I already understand Russell's philosophy, I can say that my understanding does not contain any misunderstandings. As such, I hope that I will be able to shed some light on this self-professed understanding of mine.

Russell refers to his own philosophy as both Logical Atomism (*lunli de yuanzilun* 論理的原子論) as well as Neutral Monism (*zhongli de yiyuanlun* 中立的一元論). What exactly is Logical Atomism? I am afraid that its definition is rather complicated! For now, I will have to divide this expression into two separate parts: one is "logical" and the other is "atomism". First, I shall explain the concept "logical". In so doing I cannot but to expound on the key points of the second lecture in Russell's famous work *Scientific Method in Philosophy*.<sup>2</sup> This book has already been translated by Wang Xinggong (王星拱). Although I have always greatly admired Wang's erudition, I am afraid that his translation of Russell's book is excessively unmethodical. (Since this article does not focus on criticizing Wang Xinggong's translation, I shall not raise specific examples from his text, but the manner of his translation can be quite easily recognized already in the first sentence, where Wang writes "every school of philosophy" (*gepai zhexue* 各派哲學) while in the original text there was only the word "philosophy" and there was no mention of "every school"; there is also his translation of the title of Bradley's book *Appearance and Reality*, which he translated as "*Maosi yu shizai* 貌似與實在". The use of expression *maosi* 貌似 in this context is extremely inappropriate. Wang further translated both Hegel's and Haeckel's name as Hege'er 赫格爾, which clearly causes the reader to think that these two were in fact the same person.) Consequently, in the present discussion I shall not quote from Wang's translation of Russell but instead offer a more precise version.

The second lecture in the abovementioned book is entitled "Logic as the Essence of Philosophy", which can be summarized in the following extract:

In every proposition (*tiyan* 提言) and in every inference there is, besides the particular subject-matter concerned, a certain form, a way in which

2 Ed. Zhang refers to the collection of lectures originally published under the title *Our Knowledge of the External World – As a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy* in 1914. Wang Xinggong's translation of the work from 1922 bore the abbreviated title *Scientific Method in Philosophy* (*Zhexue zhong zhi kexue fangfa* 哲學中之科學方法).



the constituents of the proposition or inference are put together. If I say, "Socrates is mortal," "Jones is angry," "The sun is hot," there is something in common in these three cases, something indicated by the word "is" (*shi* 是). What is in common is the form of the proposition, not an actual constituent. If I say a number of things about Socrates – that he was an Athenian, that he married Xantippe, that he drank the hemlock – there is a common constituent, namely Socrates, in all the propositions I enunciate, but they have diverse forms. If, on the other hand, I take any one of these propositions and replace its constituents, one at a time, by other constituents, the form remains constant, but no constituent remains. Take (say) the series of propositions, "Socrates drank the hemlock," "Coleridge drank the hemlock," "Coleridge drank opium," "Coleridge ate opium." The form remains unchanged throughout this series, but all the constituents are altered. Thus form is not another constituent, but is the way the constituents are put together. It is forms, in this sense, that are the proper object of philosophical logic.

It is obvious that the knowledge of logical forms is something quite different from knowledge of existing things (*xiancun de wujian* 現存的物件). The form of "Socrates drank the hemlock" is not an existing thing like Socrates or the hemlock, nor does it even have that close relation to existing things that drinking has. It is something altogether more abstract and remote. We might understand all the separate words of a sentence without understanding the sentence: if a sentence is long and complicated, this is apt to happen. In such a case we have knowledge of the constituents, but not of the form. We may also have knowledge of the form without having knowledge of the constituents. If I say, "Rorarius drank the hemlock," those among you who have never heard of Rorarius (supposing there are any) will understand the form, without having knowledge of all the constituents. In order to understand a sentence, it is necessary to have knowledge both of the constituents and of the particular instance of the form. It is in this way that a sentence conveys information, since it tells us that certain known objects are related according to a certain known form. Thus some kind of knowledge of logical forms, though with most people it is not explicit, is involved in all understanding of discourse. It is the business of philosophical logic to extract this knowledge from its concrete integuments, and to render it explicit and simple.

In all inference, form alone is essential: the particular subject-matter is irrelevant except as securing the truth of the premises. This is one reason

for the great importance of logical form. When I say, "Socrates was a man, all men are mortal, therefore Socrates was mortal," the connection of premises and conclusion does not in any way depend upon its being Socrates and man and morality that I am mentioning. The general form of the inference may be expressed in some such words as: "If a thing has a certain property, and whatever has this property has a certain other property, then the thing in question also has that other property." Here no particular things or properties are mentioned: the proposition is absolutely general. All inferences, when stated fully, are instances of propositions having this kind of generality. If they seem to depend upon the subject-matter otherwise than as regards the truth of the premisses, that is because the premisses have not all explicitly stated. In logic, it is a waste of time to deal with inferences concerning particular cases: we deal throughout with completely general and purely formal implications (*hanyi* 涵義), leaving it to other sciences to discover when the hypotheses are verified and when they are not.<sup>3</sup>

The above excerpt can be found between pages 42 and 44 of the abovementioned book. On page 56 Russell goes on to state that:

The above conclusion, of which we had an instance in the case of the inductive principle, is important, since it affords a refutation of the older empiricists. They believed that all our knowledge is derived from the senses and dependent upon them. We see that, if this view is to be maintained, we must refuse to admit that we know any general propositions. It is perfectly possible logically that this should be the case, but it does not appear to be so in fact, and indeed no one would dream of maintaining such a view except a theorist at the last extremity. We must therefore admit that there is general knowledge not derived from sense, and that some of this knowledge is not obtained by inference but is primitive.

Such general knowledge is to be found in logic. Whether there is any such knowledge not derived from logic, I do not know; but in logic, at any rate, we have such knowledge. It will be remembered that we excluded from pure logic such propositions as, "Socrates is a man, all men are mortal, therefore Socrates is mortal," because Socrates and man and mortal are empirical terms, only to be understood through particular experience. The corresponding proposition in pure logic is: "If anything has a certain property, and whatever has this property has a certain other

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3 Ed. Bertrand Russell (1914). *Our Knowledge of the External World – As a Field of Scientific Method in Philosophy*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 52-54.

property, then the thing in question had the other property.” This proposition is absolutely general: it applies to all things and all properties. And it is quite self-evident. Thus in such propositions of pure logic we have the self-evident general propositions of which we were in search.

A proposition such as “If Socrates is a man, and all men are mortal, then Socrates is mortal,” is true in virtue of its form alone. Its truth, in this hypothetical form, does not depend upon whether Socrates actually is a man, nor upon whether in fact all men are mortal; thus it is equally true when we substitute other terms for “Socrates” and “man” and “mortal”. The general truth of which it is an instance is purely formal, and belongs to logic. Since this general truth does not mention any particular thing, or even any particular quality or relation, it is wholly independent of the accidental facts of the existent world, and can be known, theoretically, without any experience of particular things or their qualities and relations.

Logic, we may say, consists of two parts. The first part investigates what propositions are and what forms they may have; this part enumerated the different kinds of atomic propositions, of molecular propositions, of general propositions, and so on. The second part consists of certain supremely general propositions, which assert the truth of all propositions of certain forms. This second part merges into pure mathematics, whose propositions all turn out, on analysis, to be such general formal truths. The first part, which merely enumerates forms, is the more difficult, and philosophically the more important; and it is the recent progress in this first part, more than anything else, that has rendered a truly scientific discussion of many philosophical problems possible.<sup>4</sup>

Thus, in this place we can see what Russell advocates, which I shall try to explain in a simple manner. He believes that the each of the following propositions, (1) “Li Yuanhong is the president,” (2) “The president is elected,” (3) “Election is a legal form of voting,” and (4) “To vote is the right of the people” contains different key constituents, while the only universal thing conjoining these propositions is the copula (*xici* 繫辭) “is”. Therefore, logic does not research the essential components of propositions – thus for example whether voting is the right of the people is studied by legal studies, but only questions the purity of the form “A is A”. This kind of pure logic can be completely expressed by using symbols. “A is A” can, for example, also be expressed as “A=A”. Consequently, Russell maintains that the subject-predicate form of old

4 Ed. *Ibid.*, 66-67.

formal logic is inadequate, because in this way one can only express the qualities of things and not the relations between them. On the other hand, mathematical symbols, such as the expressions  $A < B$  and  $C < D$ , in his view can express relations. That is to say, he proposes that logical form ought to express relations. This school of pure logic reduces the universal form of thought down to symbols, which is why it is also referred to as “symbolic logic” (*fu-hao de lunli* 符號的論理). Regarding the question why Russell maintains this view, no other explanations need to be added. In his book *English and American Philosophy since 1800* [ed. Arthur] Rogers (Luojisi 洛機斯) described the gist of Russell’s theory in the following way:

Now the common belief is that there is one real “thing” which the observer may view from different standpoints, each of these revealing to him a different “appearance” of the thing; for Russell’s theory, on the contrary, the appearances are the sole facts that are real, and the thing is only that whole system of appearances of which each “aspect” of a thing is a member. A thing can thus be defined as the entire class of its appearances, including not only those appearances that are actual sense data (*ganjue zhangben* 感覺張本) to someone, but the *sensibilia* (*keganxing* 可感性), or possible sense data, which represent the appearances that *would* arise were a certain kind of observer in a certain relation to the object. These appearances are not in common space, ... Each observer had only his own private space, and no place in the private world of one observer is identical with a place in the private world of another observer; the common space is, again, a logical construction from these private spaces.<sup>5</sup>

Rogers’ commentary has already more or less completely described Russell’s theory, but let us though take another look at Russell’s own explanation:

The final substance of the universe can neither be a material thing (*wu* 物), nor can it be the mind (*xin* 心), it is only the event (*shi* 事) ... In universe nothing is more real than the temporary thing (*dongxi* 東西). ... For example, when I lift this pencil, everyone can see it. Although what each of you see does slightly differ from each other, there still exist the same rules [for how something is seen]. In fact, pencil is an event, comprised of hundreds or thousands of perceived appearances. But what is seen is not limited to the human being, whatever is projected on a ceiling or a wall by a camera is also included therein.

5 Ed. Arthur K. Rogers (1922). *English and American Philosophy since 1800*. New York: The Macmillan Company, 435-6.

The scope of “events” is very wide. Revolution, for example, is also an event. In physics, an “elementary event” (*jiben shi* 基本事) (also called an “event-point” (*shiduan* 事端)) denotes an event which cannot be further divided [into smaller events]. If this concept is applied in explaining matter, one can learn that a physical object consists of various different events. Let us take a table; after observing, touching, and moving it around I can then combine these sense events and turn them into a table. ... But because in movement this table still conforms to the laws of dynamics, this still is the same table. Now, if the chair beside it would not conform to the any fixed laws, then it would not be possible to consider it together with the table as a part of it. When a symphony is performed, for instance, it constitutes a harmonic synthesis of various tones, which appear to one’s ear as if they were only one single [flow of music]. A table is the same. Moreover, akin to symphony it is also a harmony of different segments, it also follows fixed laws. In the case of the table, however, these are linked together by logical method, in the same manner as a symphony is a harmony of tones, regulated with the help of an artistic method.<sup>6</sup>

Now I shall give a further summary of Russell’s theory. In my opinion, he maintains that there are two worlds: one is the [the world of] sense data, a temporary world, and the other is [the world of] logical entities (*lunli de shiti* 論理的實體), which is permanent. Even though the world of logical entities is derived from the world of sense data, it still is a true world. He further maintains that sense data are non-material and non-rational and also both materially and rationally neutral. The logical entities are also neutral things, non-material and non-mental but also both material and mental. For example, consider a table in front of our eyes. Russell does not believe that the table is a concrete object (*shiwu* 實物) but merely a logical being (*lunli de cunzai* 論理的存在) inferred from innumerable “perspectives” (*guanxiang* 觀相). In other words, this table does not “exist” (*you* 有) factually but only logically. But the perspectives are not limited to humanity endowed with consciousness (*renshi zuoyong* 認識作用), an image of the table caught by a camera also counts as a perspective. For that purpose, a wide variety of new terms have been created in Russell’s school of New Realism, such as *sensa* (*sensum*) and *qualia* (*qualium*) and so on, all in order to eliminate the antiquated *sensation quality*, which was weighted too heavily toward psychological subjectivity. Instead, he adopted Einstein’s principle of relativity,

6 Ed. These are probably Zhang’s own notes from Russell’s lectures on the “Problems of Philosophy” (*Zhexue wenti* 哲學問題) delivered in 1921 in Beijing.

maintaining a relativity of time and space. Every single sense datum has got its own private space and time and has not just incidentally occurred within the common space-time. Russell's specious argument did not reside in his world of sense data, but in his world of logical being, because Russell attempted to merge these two worlds into one. In this regard, we must necessarily be aware that, even though the members of the school of New Realism keep considering themselves as realists, their realism is still also a logical realism. In other words, their theories and their so-called naive realism (*cupu de shizailun* 粗樸的實在論) are not necessarily identical. Naive realism presupposes that the table we saw yesterday is the same as the table we see today. In other words, in the external world there is only one single table, which we have seen yesterday, and which we also see today. Concurrently, we can also infer that there exists the possibility that we will see the same table tomorrow. Russell, on the other hand, does not agree with that. He thinks that that the table we saw yesterday and that which we have seen today are identical only in the logical space, because independent entities are all logical constructs. Therefore, we can say that in reality it is only a set of sense data, namely our sensations yesterday and today (seeing, touching, etc.) of the table. Aside from that, no entity exists, and the reason why it makes up an entity lies completely in logic. Yet sensation is not subjective at all, because sensation is pure experience (*chuncui jingyan* 純粹經驗) and precedes any divisions between subjective and objective. Thus, there exist two reasons why such teaching can be called realism:

- 1.) Undividedness of sense data into subjective and objective.
- 2.) Universality of logic.

Speaking about the first point, although we could use various terms, such as "sense data", "pure experience" or "pure perception", I believe that the most suitable expression which can be used to explain the undividedness of subjective and objective, and to distinguish what had not yet arisen, is the word "that". Although this word can be translated as *ci* 此, which is opposite to *bi* 彼, this is still an inappropriate translation. Consequently, I shall make use of the word *zhe* 这, in order to stay above the opposition between *ci* and *bi*. *Zhe* is the opposite to "what?", which I will translate as *he* 何. Therefore, I claim that this sort of philosophy is defined over two different worlds: One is the world of "that" and the other is the world of "what?" These two worlds are merged into one whole; namely, "that" is the material of the world and "what?" is its form. In other words, pure experience is the source material from which the world of logical form is constructed.

Since we have completed our brief account of Russell's main views, now we must also review the philosophical approach of the American New Realists. By and large, American New Realism agrees with Russell – though there also exist quite a few differences between them. Since at the present I am unable to focus exclusively on New Realism, it is only natural that I shall not describe it in its entirety, but instead deliver only an account on those points which are related to logicism. Apart from a book entitled *The New Realism* co-written by a few scholars,<sup>7</sup> the representative works of American New Realism also include [Edwin] Holt's *The Concept of Consciousness* and [Edward Gleason] Spaulding's *The New Rationalism*. As Holt wrote:

Our starting-point, then, is not a world in which all is knowledge, but in which some part is knowledge, nor yet a world in which all is experience, as in Avenarius; our point of departure is a world of pure being.<sup>8</sup>

Briefly to sum up, then, this sketch of what mathematical logic is; we have found that its subject-matter is systems of being (*shiyou* 實有) or, as they are often called, universes of discourse. Any system of being, if it is a coherent of true system, arises from a certain Given (*yi shezhe* 一設者) consisting of terms and propositions, which generate of their own motion all further terms and propositions that are in the system. The Given together with these latter are the system. The act by which the thinking mind explores those parts of the system that ensue from the Given is called deduction by logical necessity, or simply deduction.<sup>9</sup>

Spaulding also stated:

The Realism which is accepted, defended, and explained in this book is one that is based on logical and metaphysical doctrines that are directly opposed to the logic and metaphysics of the Aristotelian tradition. The logic is one that has long been used in the development of modern science, but that has only recently been formulated as the logic of series (*xilie* 系列), or as the science of order (*zhixu zhi xue* 秩序之學), and that can be designated broadly as non-Aristotelian. The metaphysics is one that denies the universality of causation and of substance, and that emphasizes relations. On this basis it is found that the knowing situation is of such a character that the knowing process neither causally affects,

7 Ed. Edwin B. Holt et al. (1912). *The New Realism – Cooperative Studies in Philosophy*. New York: The Macmillan Company.

8 Ed. Edwin B. Holt (1914). *The Concept of Consciousness*. London: George Allen & Company Ltd., 86.

9 Ed. *Ibid.*, 16.

modifies, or creates that which is known, nor demands an underlying entity to mediate the relationship between knowing and its object. For this reason the position is called Realism.

Rather, it is a Realism which insists also on the factuality and knowableness of entities that are neither physical nor mental, not “individual” in the usual sense of this term as meaning spatially and temporally particularized. All such entities may be called “subsistents” (*zhenyou* 真有) to distinguish them from the temporally and perhaps also spatially particularized “existents” (*cunzai* 存在). They include what are frequently called “universals” (*pubian* 普遍), and also “ideals” (*lixiang* 理想) such as justice, and still other entities, such as numbers, and the ideal systems of mechanics. This Realism is one which holds that the realm of such subsistents, as entities that are both knowable and yet independent of being known, is even more varied and extensive than the realm of existential entities.<sup>10</sup>

The above excerpts are Holt’s and Spaulding’s explanations of New Realism, but in order to find their notion of logicism, we have to look elsewhere in their work:

1. The new logic is opposed both to the psychologizing tendency, and to the pragmatic. The standpoint of the new logic is, that logical principles are present in entities, i.e., that they are objective. Toward them one takes the attitude of empirical procedure and of discovery. ...
2. The old logic is a logic of substance (*zhi* 質) and qualities (*xing* 性) ... The new logic is, in contrast, one in which these concepts, even if they are not given up entirely, play a minor part, and the concept of “relation” plays the major role.
3. The new logic emphasizes relational propositions, exemplified by “A is less than B.”
4. The new logic consists largely of those principles which are discovered by the analysis of series. This means, again, that the new logic recognizes many types of relations which the old logic quite ignores. ... Some of the most important types of these relations are the following: (i) Asymmetrical relations, ..., e.g.  $a < b$ , precludes  $b < a$ . (ii) Transitive relations: e.g.,  $a < b$ ,  $b < c$  implies,  $a < c$ . Asymmetrical and transitive relations are recognised by the new logic as subsisting between individuals as well as between classes. ... (iii) Correlating relations, e.g., between the men of a regiment and

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10 Ed. Edward G. Spaulding (1918). *The New Rationalism*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 10-11.



- their guns, where one and only one specific gun is assigned to each man. ... (iv) Functional relations ... The entities that are functionally related are variables, and a variable is a series. ...
5. The new logic solves the problems of “infinity” (*wuxian* 無限) and “continuity” (*lianxu* 連續) through its recognition of this principle of limits (*youxian* 有限) ...
  6. The new logic recognizes and uses the principles, that most wholes are of that type in which the parts are related non-additively to constitute the whole. This allows for different kinds of part in the same whole, each set of parts being related in perhaps a specifically different non-additive manner. (Translator’s note: this means that the whole is not larger than its parts.)<sup>11</sup>
  7. It results that one and the same whole may belong to different universes of discourse – to one, by virtue of one kind of part, to another, by virtue of another kind. Accordingly those characteristics of a whole that are relational result of one kind of part are not deducible from those that are the relational result of another kind.
  8. The old logic accepts the principles of the inconceivability of the opposite (*xiangfan* 相反) and of self-evidence (*ziming* 自明) as norms of absolute truth; the new logic looks askance at these tests, and sets up propositions only as “postulates” (*shezhun* 設準) from which to develop consequences.<sup>12</sup>

For the most part, the New Realists notion of new logic is as stated above. In order to further confirm this, we will take another look at Russell’s work *Scientific Method in Philosophy*:

Traditional logic (*jiu lunli* 舊論理), since it holds that all propositions have the subject-predicate form, is unable to admit the reality of relations: all relations, it maintains, must be reduced to properties (*xingzhi* 性質) of the apparently related terms. There are many ways of refuting this opinion; one of the easiest is derived from the consideration of what are called “asymmetrical” relations. In order to explain this, I will first explain two independent ways of classifying relations.

Some relations, when they hold between A and B, also hold between B and A. ... If the colour A is unlike the colour of B, then the colour of B is unlike the colour of A. Relations of this sort are called symmetrical.

All relations that are not symmetrical are called non-symmetrical. Thus

11 Ed. Original note by Zhang Dongsun.

12 Ed. Spaulding 1918, 173-5.

“brother” is non-symmetrical, because, if A is a brother of B, it may happen that B is a sister of A.

A relation is called asymmetrical when, if it holds between A and B, it never holds between B and A.

Classification into symmetrical, asymmetrical and merely non-symmetrical relations is the first of the two classifications we had to consider. The second is into transitive (*chuandi de* 傳遞的), intransitive (*fei chuandi de* 非傳遞的), and merely non-transitive (*fan chuandi de* 反傳遞的) relations.

A relation is said to be transitive, if, whenever it holds between A and B and also between B and C, it holds between A and C. ... [Many] transitive relations [are] asymmetrical, but many transitive relations are symmetrical...

A relation is said to be non-transitive whenever it is not transitive. Thus “brother” is non-transitive, because a brother of one’s brother may be oneself. All kinds of dissimilarity are non-transitive.

A relation is said to be intransitive when, if A has the relation to B, and B to C, A never has it to C. Thus “father” is intransitive.<sup>13</sup>

If we take a closer look at the above few excerpts, we can see that the chief object of New Realism is the notion of “relation”, and this the New Realists attach utmost importance to this. They have coined a variety of terms to discuss this issue, also including the word *relatum (relata)*, that is “relatedness” (*guanxizhe* 關係者). They claim that traditional logic only studies quality (性) and substance (質), expressing them in the object-predicate form. It also turns all relations into properties (*xingzhi* 性質). Thus, for example, the new logic maintains that “A is larger than B” is the relation between A and B, while the traditional logic considered it to be a property of A. As a matter of fact, they have changed all properties into relations. Here, we are bound to study whether it is actually possible to transform properties into relations. In my view, most properties can be turned into relations. Thus, for example, the statement “Socrates is an Athenian” does not convey a special property of Socrates, but rather a relation between Socrates and Athens (i.e. that he was born there). This is a rather obvious example. Another would be the proposition “Roses are red,” which can also be understood through general relations. Because “red [colour]” is a concept, and not only one rose is red. This proposition reveals a necessary relation between roses and the colour red,

13 Ed. Russell 1914, 56-8.

which, expressed formally, equals  $A=B$ . Why do we need relations to explain the properties of objects? It is because in the universe no object is autonomous. In other words, there is no object which would not have any relations with any other object. Therefore, determining the properties of an object is nothing other than an pointing out that the object is set within some kind of relationship. Although in New Realism there also exists the term “independence” (*buyi* 不依), the meaning of this is not that there are no relations between this object and all other objects. It rather says that, even though a thing is related to external things, its existence does not depend upon these relations, because these can change. Let us take an example of a painting; although by hanging on the wall it has a relation with the wall, we still cannot say that it would not exist if it had not hung on that wall, because the same painting could also be placed on a table. Observed from this perspective, a most properties are in fact relations.

However, the New Realists still have an important point on the concept of “relation”, namely that they consider consciousness (*renshi zuoyong* 認識作用) to be a special kind of relation. For example, if I see a table, a relation between me and the table is generated. Because they called this “the relational theory of consciousness” (*renshi zhi guanxi shuo* 認識之關係說), Montague (Mengtaigou 孟泰苟) claimed that consciousness is a special relation which subsists amid living beings and substance. (*The New Realism* 1912, 47). Perry (Peilai 陪萊) claims that “internalism” (*neizai lun* 內在論) advocates that the difference between knowledge and things, and the separation between mind and body, are only [manifestations of] the difference between relation and function, and not a difference of content. All in order to amend the old-fashioned dualism (*liangyuan lun* 兩元論) (*Present Philosophical Tendencies*, 312).<sup>14</sup> This is the quintessence of what they advocate. Since knowledge is only a kind of relation, the relatedness (*guanxi zhe*) does not depend on relations; this is their “theory of independence”. In my opinion, this kind of theory is very near to common sense, because it is common sense to maintain that my seeing a table gives rise to a relationship between me and the table, i.e. the act of “seeing” (*kan* 看), by virtue of which a relation between me and the table ensues. When I do not see the table, then, although there [currently] is no relationship between me and the table, the latter still exists, because I will still be able to see it tomorrow. Since New Realists claim that objects exist independently from human cognition, they also claim that the

14 Ed. Ralph B. Perry. *Present Philosophical Tendencies: A Critical Survey of Naturalism, Idealism, Pragmatism, and Realism Together with a Synopsis of the Philosophy of William James*. New York: Longmans, Green and Co.

world is not entirely known, and that knowledge only covers a part of the world; and that the object of cognition can be changed through its being known. From this it follows that they oppose solipsistic idealism (*weiwu de guannian lun* 唯我的觀念論) (i.e. *Esse est percipi* (*cunzai jishi beijue* 存在即是被覺)), as well as the notion of pragmatist rationalism (*weiyong de lixiang lun* 唯用的理想論) (i.e. positing that knowledge has got a creative function). What they do maintain is that objects cannot be influenced by knowledge; in this point of view they can be called extreme realists. If knowledge, however, is the relationship between the knower and the known, then what is known and the knower together create the relatedness of the relation. Relatedness must thus be external to the relation. Which is why this theory is called the “theory of relational externality” (*guanxi zhi waizaixing* 關係之外在性).

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Now, at this point in the discussion, we have come to the realization that the New Realists theory of relations is founded solely on pluralism. If such a plural universe had not been presupposed beforehand, the theory of relations would not hold. Therefore, what Spaulding calls “logical pluralism” (*lunli de duoyuanlun* 論理的多元論) has got the very same meaning as what Russell calls “logical atomism”. But what is this thing they call pluralism? In this regard, Russell clearly said that pluralism does not only denote sense data, but also logical form. This exactly is what we refer to as New Realist logicism. They spoke about simple elements (particulars) (*chunyuan* 純元) and complex elements (particulars) (*fuyuan* 複元). Perry also wrote: “Physical and psychological complexes have in common not only sensible qualities, but also certain more fundamental formal relationships, such as implication, order, causation, time, and the like.”<sup>15</sup> It is at this point that we shall engage in criticism.

I believe that one cannot determine whether New Realism can be established without also taking under consideration its logicism. In other words, if new logicism does not stand New Realism falls as well. Their logic is merely relational form(s); they recognize not only the reality of relatedness but also the reality of existence of relations. The relatedness is neither psychological (mental) nor material, and can be called an “event point” (*shiduan* 事端). Because relations are not pure consciousness, they are also non-mental and immaterial, and can be called “form”. Logic is exactly these universal forms. According to this kind of explanation, what they call logical form has also got a slightly transcendental overtone, because they maintain that the form is independent from cognition, which means that it exists even if it is not known. Thus, the characteristics of New Realism can be arranged in the following order:

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15 Ed. *Ibid.*, 310.

1. New Realism advocates that the universe is plural. In plurality there exist multiple relations. Since the universality of this kind of relations is not psychological construction, New Realism is a form of logicism and not psychologism.
2. New Realism claims that these forms of relations are not entirely within cognition. This means that they exist even if there is no cognition. Consequently, New Realism is a form of transcendentalism and not empiricism.
3. New Realism maintains that consciousness is just one kind of relation, originally a relation is not universal or necessary, but constitutes only a part of the whole universe. Therefore, New Realism is not a philosophy which takes thought as its starting point. They do not believe that researching ideas enables one to pry into the mysteries of the universe.
4. New Realism stresses form and not content. Obviously, it is not a philosophy that would derive from life as its starting point, because New Realists believe that the universe is self-caused (*zicheng* 自成 “self-become/created”) and not created. Moreover, the so-called self-causation is diverse and not simple. (For example, Russell used the principle of the law of relativity which treats time as the fourth spatial dimension, as a result of which every single coordinate axis constitutes a world; since coordinate axes can be infinite, they can include innumerable worlds, each having its own time-space. This is what is considered to be a plural universe.)
5. New Realism claims that objects of cognition are concrete objects and not only appearances of things. Therefore, New Realists respect rational knowledge. Yet, on the other hand, they still believe that reality is not completely encompassed within knowledge and that there still exist unknown things. Consequently, their reverence for rational knowledge is not as thorough. Besides, they also think that the various kinds of logical laws are not the absolute truth, but only established norms. Which is why they do not esteem the ideal (*lixiang* 理想).

We can understand a greater part of New Realism based on what was said above. It is not that there never existed some minor differences between different authors – Spaulding, for example, does not agree with the relational theory of mind but advocates a “dimensional theory” (*duxi shuo* 度系统说), but in comparison with the major agreements between them these minor differences are completely negligible and thus do not require further discussion. Moreover, based on what was noted above, I believe that New Realism is incomplete. In what ways? I shall start with relations. A relation, which has been separated from relatedness, simply cannot exist. But since

relatedness can also constitute a separate relation (i.e. one that is not limited to this kind of relation), obviously it cannot be claimed that relatedness is absolutely independent. Since relatedness cannot exist independent from any relation, then the real simply is not limited to relatedness, the so-called “particular” (*yuan* 元) of the plural (*duoyuan* 多元) [existence], while the form linking together relations is also real. In other words: what is real is not only the particular, which constitutes the substance of the universe, but also the “form” (*xingshi* 形式) as the framework of the universe. However, I have some doubts with regard to the following [issue]: Let’s say that now here is a table, and that we identify it as a table is based entirely on our judgment. What is called judgment is a “that” of any new simple experience placed into the previous complex system of experience, which is consequently turned into “what?” So, after we have looked at the table, we say that the table still is a table and still exists here. This statement cannot be asserted. Because, according to Russell, we can say that the table is only one perspective, and today’s perspective is not bound to be necessarily identical with the one from tomorrow. Therefore, we can only say that the “that” of table still exists. As regards the question whether it will again change into “what?”, this then cannot be asserted without any further cognition. If, for example, we say: Li Guang (李廣) shot two arrows into the stone; the first time the stone resembled a tiger, [which is why the arrow was able to] pierce through it, whereas the second time Li recognized it as stone and the arrow was not able to penetrate it. Because the world of “what” is a completely known world, and knowing is judgement. If we say “A is A”, the second A includes an A opposite to “not A” or the meaning of “A” in A, B, C, D. If A did not contain “not A” or “B, C and D,” then A would not be established in the first place. Therefore, distinguishing and judging is what Hegel called “concepts used in particularities.” Based on that, the realist philosophy can be naturally applied to the world of “that”. But we cannot differentiate between “that” and “what?” There is no “that” which does not change into “what?” Consequently, we can say that in fact there only exists the world of “what?”. Since there is only this world, the prerequisites to know this world are constituted entirely of differentiation and judgements, otherwise there would only be chaos and ignorance. At the centre of our research are not randomly established “relations” but rather the mysterious “judgments”, for relations still have to be subjected to judgment. In other words, relations are formed and made from judgments themselves. If we accept this point, we can see that our problem is not any more the form of relations, but only the nature of judging. In other words, what exactly are judgments? Thus, again there exist two theories: the first one being psychologism and the other logicism. Psychologism maintains

that judgments are experiences in re-cognition. And according to behaviourist psychology and current research into the response (*fanying* 反應), judging is just a kind of habit, one gained from experience. In contrast, the logicist viewpoint derives from the pure form of "A is A". It further maintains that the expression "A is A" represents the internal development of thought *per se*. In other words, it is the thought's self-development (*zizhan* 自展). Heinrich Rickert focuses on this and is also one of the foremost proponents of this notion, which he terms transcendental psychology.

New Realism maintains that relations come before judgments, and this is not to say that there are judgments about cognition, but rather that before that there first exist relations within the sphere of the unknown (which does not refer to something which cannot be known but something which is still unknown). This is what I am not entirely satisfied with. While I also believe that rejecting logicism when it comes to dealing with judgments and adopting psychologism instead is even less satisfying. Therefore, unlike Neo-Kantian logicism, the New Realist logicism is incomplete, because Neo-Kantian logicism is a logicism of thought (*sixiang* 思想), whereas the New Realist one is an external[ist] logicism.

The idealist (*lixiang*) logicism posits that logical form developed from the internal aspects of the thought *per se*. The externalist logicism, on the other hand, maintains that logical form is formed after relations that exist between the external objects, which are such that they exist even if they are not known. Moreover, I also maintain that by only recognizing external relations and discarding ideas, logical form is definitely unable to explain what kind of thing is logic. Logic is to be able to explain (i.e. to explain it by means of external relations) the complex form "A is greater from B," "B is greater from C," and "therefore A is greater from C", deriving from the pure form "A is A." While, at the same time, logic still cannot explain the simple form of "A is A." Hence the essence of logic necessarily still remains unintelligible. Therefore, I think that the investigation on what is logic can be concentrated around this single point. Because the explanations of New Realism have never touched upon this critical point, it is not a thorough form of logicism.

Furthermore, according to my view, New Realism maintains that the function of conscious mind is a special new relation. This is equivalent to the clandestine negation of modern pure empiricism. This pure empiricism maintains that the world is only experience and that nothing exists outside of experience, while the basis of all experience is pure experience. What is pure experience? It is the bare notion of "that", which I have mentioned

above. It is the sole state (although it is already incorrect to call it a “state”) of simplicity, which exists before the separation between subjective and objective, and before any differentiating judgment has arisen. New Realism opposes this theory in a tacit way. Naturally, its views are rather close to common sense when it proposes the existence of the knower and that which is known. Not only do the knower and the known form a special relation, but also the function of knowing is regarded as being able to differentiate the relations between objects. With this kind of spirit it will clearly be possible to liberate philosophy from [the constraints of] epistemology. (This aspect is discussed in a chapter of the book *The New Realism* written by Marvin (馬文).) New Realists further believe that the conscious mind is not real substance. What is called mind is just some kind of a centre (*zhongxin* 中心). In other words, it is a centre which creates relations with everything that surrounds it. Living beings (i.e. conscious) in the natural world are like the stars in heaven, moreover they are like a few lights suspended in the sky. This is also why Russell said:

Subjectivity [is] a characteristic of mental phenomena... We there decided that those particulars (*yuan* 元) which constitute the physical world can be collected into sets in two ways, one of which makes a bundle of all those particulars that are appearances of a given thing from different places, while the other makes the bundle of all those particulars which are appearances of different things from a given place. A bundle of this latter sort, at a given time, is called a “perspective” (*guanxiang* 觀相); taken through a period of time, it is called a “biography” (*xingji* 行級). Subjectivity is the characteristic of perspectives and biographies, the characteristic of giving the view of the world from a certain place.<sup>16</sup>

Hence, we can understand that the reason why they advocate this view is that they basically do not recognize the notion of “mind” as a real entity, assuming that the mind is just a function. If we ask them why this is the case, they would surely answer that the burden of answering this question is the responsibility of modern psychology, especially behaviourism. But it is fairly obvious to me that at this point they would already have abandoned logicism for psychologism.

Husserl’s “The Method of Pure Phenomenology” speaks about how philosophy ought to abandon all standpoints (*lichang* 立場). It further claims that the main task of philosophy is to make non-standpoint its main standpoint. If we

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16 Ed. Bertrand Russell (1921). *The Analysis of Mind*. London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 295-6.



are to follow Husserl's theory, we can most certainly say that New Realism is a non-philosophy, because it first establishes a standpoint using both science and common sense, in the way that these are applied to support the resulting lofty skyscraper. In other words: New Realism can be regarded as a scientific worldview because it is established on three kinds of basic sciences: physics, mathematics (i.e. symbolic logic) and behaviourist psychology. In my opinion, what New Realists call logical form is rather a kind of physical rule, and what is called New Realism is in fact a rather deformed form of materialism. In this group's midst, apart from the sophistic character of Russell, there is also the so-called American school, which is relatively close to the concept of common sense – beside their use of behaviourist psychology and extreme functionalist psychology, they also maintain that the mind does not exist and that in reality there is no collusion between thought and being (*shiyou* 實有). What they call new logic (*xin lunlixue* 新論理學) is still a riddle, because they still have not explained how there can ever be such a thing as new logic. They have also never explained what exactly is “logical priority” (*lunli de xiantianxing* 論理的先天性). If we genuinely want to research these questions, we must first engage with Rickert's school of philosophy.

Finally, after the outline and criticism of main ideas of New Realism provided above, I also need to make one unrelated note: [it is currently the case that] the contemporary American and British philosophers look down on German schools of philosophy. This view cannot be blindly followed here in China. Dewey, Santayana (Sangdaiyena 桑代耶那), and others all despise the German schools, while German philosophy has also been greatly smeared in the introduction of the recently published book *The Group Mind* (*Jituan xinli* 集團心理) written by [William] McDougall, a British psychologist from Harvard. I think that this sort of behaviour ought not to be emulated by the Chinese people. We cannot do without opening our eyes and conducting thorough comparisons [between Western philosophies], while at the same time we must not confine ourselves within our national borders.

(Translated by Jan Vrhovski)



*Jana S. ROŠKER*

# Russell's Inference and Zhang Dongsun's Compatibility – Two Models of Structural Perception<sup>1</sup>

## 1 Introduction

**A**lthough 張東蓀 Zhang Dongsun (1886-1973) can also be regarded as one of the leading Chinese philosophers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, his Sinitized Marxist criticism of ideology characterized him as a political dissident, so that he was forgotten for several decades. Only recently has his work been rediscovered by a number of younger Chinese theorists, who show a growing interest in his ideas. During the first three decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Zhang was one of the most influential thinkers in the Republic of China, a reputation based in part on his extraordinary ability to introduce Western thinking in a way that was compatible with the spirit of Chinese tradition. In

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this context, he also played an important role in the introduction of Bertrand Russell and epistemology to Chinese intellectuals, who sought to understand modern Western discourses in this field of theory.

Zhang Dongsun, who is certainly one of the most important Chinese epistemologists of the early modern period, developed his own system of thought based on the so-called pan-structural epistemology. According to this theory, the external cause of our perception is not a substance, but the structural order of the external world. In his *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy* (1919), Bertrand Russell had proposed a similar idea.

This chapter is based on a comparative analysis of these two structural epistemological models, and aims to determine the specific and unique features of Zhang's theory, focusing on the elements derived from traditional Chinese thinking. In order to achieve this goal, the chapter aims primarily to highlight the crucial differences between the two systems. As we will see, Zhang, unlike Russell, has rejected any form of substance. He also considered the dualistic theories of idealism and materialism to be completely wrong. For while Zhang's theory contains elements of both approaches, his system as a whole cannot be identified with either of them.

We can assume that the basic inspiration for Zhang Dongsun's pan-structural epistemology came directly from his expertise in Western epistemological discourses, which at that time had a decisive influence on the search for new paradigms for the perception, understanding and interpretation of reality. We must therefore correct Zhang Yaonan's evaluation of pan-structuralism (2000, 143) in which he claims that Zhang Dongsun's system was a pioneering achievement in the field of international structuralism and that he had researched structuralist methods in ontology and epistemology "almost forty years before the emergence of Western 'structuralism'" (ibid.), which then became one of the leading discourses in Europe and America<sup>2</sup>.

2 "20世紀20年代,張東孫先生(1902–1973)提出了一種他稱之為‘架構論’(Theory of structure)的‘結構主義’(structuralism)宇宙觀,並在以後20年間不斷完善,使其成為他本人終生不願放棄的幾個基本觀念之一。就時間上說,這一宇宙觀的正式形成要比西方‘結構主義’風行歐美(20世紀60年代)早出將近40年;就內容上說,這一宇宙觀完全改變了二十世紀中國哲學家的固有思維方式,開了二十世紀中國哲學‘非本體論化’的先河。”(Zhang, 2000, 143)  
 (“In the 1920s, Zhang Dongsun (1902 – 1973) established a cosmological structuralism, which he called the ‘Theory of Structure’. Over the next twenty years, he continued to elaborate this theory as one of his basic paradigms, and would not abandon it until the end of his life. We should point out that this theory was elaborated almost forty years before the appearance of Western ‘structuralism’, which then became one of the leading discourses in Europe and America. In its content, this cosmology completely changed the previous mode of thinking of 20<sup>th</sup> Century Chinese philosophers and was a precursor for the new ‘deontological’ approaches of Chinese philosophy”).

Obviously, structuralism in the sense of an integral and substantial paradigm of academic research and an independent branch of Euro-American discourse did not appear in a significant way until the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, but a structural approach to understanding had certainly been developed almost half a century earlier in Western philosophical systems, especially in the theories of the British philosopher Bertrand Russell (1918, 1919).

Although Zhang Dongsun acknowledged that his (pan-)structural epistemology was partly derived from the philosophy of Immanuel Kant<sup>3</sup>, he almost never mentioned Russell's philosophy, even though he must have been quite familiar with his work, since he had accompanied the British philosopher on his lecture tour in China in 1920-21 (see Russell 2000). In addition to the influence of Western philosophy, and despite the differences between the two structural epistemologies, which we will indicate schematically below, in Zhang Dongsun's pan-structuralism we can also clearly detect the influence of both Chan Buddhism<sup>4</sup> and the autochthonous, classical philosophy<sup>5</sup> of ancient China. In this sense, it represents an extremely intriguing synthesis of modern Western and classical Chinese approaches.

3 “我主張感覺不能給我們以條理的知識,這雖跟康德相同,但條理卻不能完全是心的綜合能力所產,這又和康德不同了.因此我承認外界有其條理;內界(即心)亦有其立法;內界的立法又分兩種,一為直觀上的先驗方式,一為思維上的先驗方式.(這一點與康德相似).至於感覺,則不是真正的‘存在者’.所以我此說有幾個方面, 因名之曰多元論”. (Zhang, 1995, 165)

(“I believe that we cannot obtain regulated (structured) recognition through sensory perception – in this respect, I agree with Kant. On the other hand, this regulation (structuredness) cannot arise entirely from the synthetic ability of our mind - in this respect, I disagree with Kant. Therefore, I acknowledge that the external world is ordered and that our inwardness (i.e. our mind) also functions in accordance with particular laws. This regulated constitution of our inwardness can also be divided into two kinds: the first can be called the *a priori* form of direct sensory perception, and the second the *a priori* form of cognition. /Here, again, my view is similar to Kant's/. However, the sensations are not identical with ‘existing beings’. Since my theory arose from many different aspects, I have named it a ‘pluralistic theory”). See also Jiang Xinyan: ‘His pluralism is derived from a revised version of Kantian philosophy. To justify such an epistemology, he proposed a cosmology: pan-structuralism”. (Jiang, 2002, 58)

4 “As a youth, it was Buddhist scriptures such as *Leng Yan Jing* and *Da Cheng Qi Xin Lun* that led him to be interested in philosophy. Although he criticized Buddhism later on, he seemed always to have accepted Buddhist cosmology, especially certain ideas from the Great Vehicle School (Mahayana, *dacheng*). (Jiang, 2002, 63)

5 Nonetheless, Zhang still managed to remain rooted in his own tradition. In his youth, he had obtained a very solid classical Chinese education. (Rošker, 2008, 301)

In order to better understand this synthesis and the transcultural methodological paradigms on which it is based, and also to shed light on the main methodological and theoretical divergences between Russell and Zhang, we will first take a brief look at some general problems that define the dialogues between Chinese and Western philosophies.

## 2 Back to the Roots: Frameworks of Reference

On the threshold of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it finally became widely known that Western epistemology is only one among many different theoretical models for the perception and understanding of the outside world. Even though numerous transcultural studies still often assume that Western standards of knowledge and interpretation are universal, we must take into account the fact that these standards have dominated the sciences for centuries due to the colonial past of European cultures.

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This chapter is dedicated to the study of the so-called non-European views of reality and perception, in order to overcome the dualistic and mechanistic theory that has prevailed in the development of modern science. Indeed, in such discourses nature was seen as something bereft of consciousness, something that was objectified to the extent that it was completely separated from perceptual experience:

Adhering to the principles of scientific materialism, science came to be equipped with more and more sophisticated means of exploring objective physical processes; but there was no corresponding development of means to explore subjective cognitive processes. Thus, scientists simply redefined secondary properties – such as colour, sound, and so on – in terms of the objective physical stimuli for the corresponding subjective experiences. In so doing, they shed increasing light on the nature of these physical phenomena, while shedding little or no light on the corresponding subjective perceptions. (Wallace 2000, 123)

Among other issues, this chapter is focused upon the illumination of some specific epistemological approaches to human understanding that differ from the prevailing Euro-American paradigm-based models. Based on a comparison between Russell and Zhang, it *inter alia* presents a theory which could be called “relational epistemology”, and which has historically been developed

within the framework of the East Asian and Sinitic, especially the Chinese, intellectual tradition<sup>6</sup>.

It should be borne in mind that researchers who work with texts from different cultural traditions must take into account that these texts always relate to a specific frame of reference. The particular characteristics of this frame of reference are defined by the use of specific categories and concepts that lead to specific methodological measures (Rošker 2019, 283). The Sinitic frames of reference have the following characteristics:

- Their basic groundwork consists of dynamic, processual and strongly context-related fundamentals;
- They belong to all-embracing, holistic schemes;
- They include both immanent and transcendent elements;
- They are binary (though not dualistically) designed;
- They function in accordance with processes of correlative complementarity.

These specifics are even more important in the framework of our focal topic, which deals with two different referential frameworks. In the framework which prevailed in the Chinese (and Sinitic) tradition, the processual network of reality was embedded in a holistic structure in which the existence of each individual object, idea or category was determined by its relations to the others (Rošker 2019, 282). Within this framework, the concept of relation represents a core of human perception of external reality. In order to place this new theoretical model in the context of the corresponding contemporary discourses, it must also be linked to a number of other

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6 These kinds of theories are not only typical for the Chinese, but to a certain extent also for the entire Sinitic region. The Sinitic cultural-linguistic space includes most East Asian regions and some countries in Southeast Asia such as Vietnam. The term refers to all areas that have historically been under strong Chinese cultural influence (especially under the influence of Confucianism, but also of Chan Buddhism and some other ideological systems) and have traditionally used Chinese characters. (For the example of Korea see e.g. Maldonado 2020, 129-30.) In the Sinitic traditions, the structural approaches to human perception and understanding of external reality were part of the common and elementary world views. They are found in most of the dominant epistemological approaches that are part of the most influential Sinitic philosophies, starting with classical works such as *Guanzi*, *Gongsun Longzi*, *Mozi* and *Xunzi*, but also in the works of some important Neo-Confucian thinkers such as Cheng Hao, Cheng Yi Zhu Xi, Jeoung Jak Yang, and Itō Jinsai. Of course, they are also present in some pre-modern, modern and contemporary scholars who have adopted certain classical paradigms of structural epistemology in their works, such as Nishida Kitarō, Xiong Shilli, Zhang Dongsun, Cheng Chung-ying, Hajime Tanabe, Feng Qi, Eun Ha Jun Cho Kyu Young and Lee Seong Woo. For a longer and more detailed elaboration of the main features of such structural epistemologies see Rošker 2012 and 2018.

newly coined concepts that denote the multiple ways in which the world is perceived and interpreted – including the culture in which the human world is always necessarily embedded. Therefore, the present chapter is closely linked to the problems of human understanding in different cultural environments. We will therefore begin our investigation with the question of whether human perception and understanding of reality is a universal or culturally determined process. At this point, people are always confronted with the need for objectivity, which could enable them to establish universally valid evaluation criteria.

In illuminating this problem, we can start from the connection between language and thought. At its most elementary level, human thinking is certainly something universal, such as the general human ability to produce language. Thus, although the ability or potential to produce language and thus linguistic communication is universal, each individual language and the grammatical structures by which it is defined are culturally conditioned. Because human thinking is also semantic and thus linguistically determined on a more differentiated level, or, in other words, because of the inherent connection between language and reasoning, different languages simultaneously represent different ways of cognition or different patterns of thinking. The greater the structural, semantic and axiological differences between two languages, the more diverse are the specific laws of rational thought in the respective cultures. Different linguistic environments produce different frames of reference, which in reality are discrete networks of concepts and categories with different semantic connotations. They are based on the non-transferability of concepts from one socio-cultural context to another. Many contemporary scholars (e.g. Feng 1989, 291-292) assume a certain degree of impossibility of comparison or incommensurability between the frames of reference of the Euro-American and the Sinitic traditions. In other words, culturally conditioned differences in human understanding are rooted in the differences between certain frames of reference, which are complex and very dynamic networks of constantly changing references that are used as patterns to describe the lived realities of human life.

On the individual level, these frameworks differ from person to person, but cultures and societies provide us with semantically stable coordinate systems that inspire our sensitivities and mental states and strongly influence our language, thinking and behaviour. Therefore, the different reference systems produced in different societies are also associated with different methods used in the processes of recognizing, understanding and communicating reality.



In this context, I explicitly discuss frames of reference that refer to methods and theories of the social sciences and humanities, and can be defined as interactive networks of categories, terms, ideas and concepts, but also values, which are used in the processes of perception and understanding. These networks comprise discrete perspectives and dimensions that have a strong influence on the perception and evaluation of concrete semantic elements within their internal structure, as well as on the structure as a whole. However, such questions are by no means limited to theories or methods developed in different cultures and corresponding traditions. On the contrary, they usually arise in a single language or tradition. This is indeed a general problem that has been discussed by many Western theorists such as Feyerabend, Quin, Lakatos, and Kuhn, among others. In this context one could mention the relationship between the theories of Newton and Einstein: since they were embedded in different frames of reference, the semantic connotations and functions of the same concepts applied in them are also dissimilar. Thomas Kuhn has explained these kinds of problems as arising from different paradigms:

Within the new paradigm, old terms, concepts and experiments fall into new relationships one with the other. The inevitable result is what we must call, though the term is not quite right, a misunderstanding between the two competing schools...Consider, for example, the man who called Copernicus mad because he proclaimed that the earth moved. They were not either just wrong or quite wrong. Part of what they meant by "earth" was a fixed position. Their earth, at least, could not move. Correspondingly, Copernicus' innovation was not simply to move the earth. Rather, it was a whole new way of regarding the problems of physics and astronomy, one that necessarily changed the meaning of both "earth" and "motion". (Kuhn 1996, 149).

As we have seen, different frames of reference can lead to different descriptions and interpretations of the same objective reality. Let us take a closer look at specific frames of reference developed in Sinitic societies. Since one of the main features of such frames of reference is their relational character, which emphasizes the fact that all existing entities receive their meaning and identity only through their relations to other entities, the epistemological theories and theories of perception that have emerged from such frames of reference are also relational.

### 3 Relational Epistemology

In order to understand the common threads of the differences between Zhang's and Russell's structural epistemologies, we need to look at those specific approaches of the Chinese tradition on which Zhang based his theory and which differ substantially from the Western type of structural epistemologies, the pioneer of which was Bertrand Russell. An important basis of these divergences is the relational nature of reality, which leads to relational approaches in epistemology, as presented in the present section of this paper. In later sections I will also show why and how relational epistemology is essentially linked to a processual and dynamic constitution of both inner and outer realities.

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In contrast to the dominant traditional European epistemologies, knowledge of and about reality has chiefly been gained through reasoning and observation. However, in traditional Chinese thought, it has been seen in a much wider sense, namely as something which primarily arises from moral subjects and which cannot be separated from social action.

The method which determined most of the epistemological teachings found in the Chinese classics was based on a holistic world view, and was directed towards a comprehension which could be achieved through education and learning. The basic contents of these teachings were rooted in the premises of pragmatic and utilitarian ethics. Chinese epistemology was relational, meaning that it understood the external world to be ordered structurally, while the human mind was also structured in accordance with its all-embracing but open, organic system (*li* 理). The relational correspondence between the cosmic and mental structures thus represents the basic precondition of human perception and comprehension (see Rošker 2012).

In the frames of reference developed in the Chinese tradition, reality is seen as a complex network of relations that links all objects of the external world (Rošker 2010, 80). This network represents a dynamic structure that is compatible with the operating of human perception, which was also seen as a structural network of relations. This compatibility of internal and external structures was this seen as the basic condition of human perception and comprehension of reality.

An important supposition of such epistemologies is the neo-realist view that the external world exists independently of our consciousness and that there is no exact correlation between external phenomena and our understanding of these. Therefore, we are not able to perceive these phenomena as

they really are. In most of these epistemologies, especially those developed in Chan Buddhist discourses, the external cause of our perception is not a substance, but simply the order or structure of the external world. What is transmitted to us through our sensory impressions is a modification of this external order (Rošker 2015, 110). The negation of substance also refers to the sphere of ideas. Therefore, such cosmologies are neither idealistic nor materialistic (ibid. 214). One reason for our inability to perceive the quintessence of external things “as such”, lies – according to such theories – in the nature of our being itself; actuality is understood as a process of constant change that takes place in the interrelationships among the individual entities<sup>7</sup>. Such discourses are not metaphysical, and these ontological predispositions are particularly evident in the ideas of the Buddhist Great Vehicle School (Mahayana) (Jiang 2002, 63).

In such views, there can be no substance. Therefore, the objects perceived by human beings cannot have any “ontological status” (Zhang 1995, 215). All that exists in a process of continuous changing of structural relations, and in the development and disintegration of the “essential” properties of the individual entities. All that we can identify in such processes are some facets of these modifications. Nevertheless, this does not only relate to the level of our perception and understanding, because this network of relations is the only thing that truly exists in the external reality. Since these structures have neither substance nor any of their properties, they are essentially empty. What is shown to us as material being is hence merely a physical phenomenality that manifests itself as matter, even though in reality it cannot be equated with material substance. At best, it can be identified with structural connections that appear in physical laws which determine all forms of existence. In such a view, “matter” is only a notion, an umbrella term which includes a wide range of innumerable ideas about physical features.

We could therefore say that in such a view “there are only physical laws, but no matter”. (Jiang 2002, 64). Such “matter” is thus quite different from our usual notion of matter. What we perceive through our sense organs is not the colour, smell, size or sound of perceived objects, for they are usually too subjective. In this context, “matter” is only density, speed or the volume of concrete things. This is a form of existence that can only be defined by a set of physical formulas.

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7 This is actually a specific view of the universe that could be called “relational ontology”. Such a world view forms the basis of the “relational epistemology”, which can be regarded as a kind of epistemological theory that corresponds to such a processual ontology or cosmology.

In such an epistemology of relations, the structures of the external world are mirrored in our mind, which (re)shapes them in the process of developing structural orders of thought and comprehension. However, as we shall see later, Zhang Dongsun has emphasized that relational approaches are not solipsistic, for in their frameworks the external reality is not entirely a creation of our cognizance (Zhang 1995, 171). Here the relationship between our subjectivity and the external reality is correlative and interactive (ibid., 218).

On the other side, however, the structural composition of the external world is also a common assumption of some contemporary Western theories of perception: “The seemingly isolated phenomenon of consciousness reappears in the structure of the cosmos itself” (Glattfelder 2019, 530). But this also means that structures are not limited to the external world. Somehow, they also must influence our consciousness.

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Consciousness is compositional (structured): each experience consists of multiple aspects in various combinations. Within the same experience, one can see, for example, left and right, red and blue, a triangle and a square, a red triangle on the left, a blue square on the right, and so on. (Ibid., 523)

Confronted with such new visions, Glattfelder adds that “it is perhaps not too puzzling that the prevailing scientific paradigm has failed to reveal such a definitive nature and the links between reality and the human mind” (ibid., 584). Here, a connection to the “Eastern” tradition is made on an obviously intuitive basis: “This knowledge, some ancient Eastern truth-seekers and traditions appear to have had access to for a long time” (Ibid.).

Without knowing his theory (or even his name), some discourses in contemporary Western epistemology are therefore already quite close to Zhang Dongsun’s approach. They categorize it as a type of the so-called “participatory ontology”, in which the “ultimate taboo within the current materialistic and reductionist scientific world view is broken by exposing a mind-matter relationship” (ibid.). They also admit that such theories include refined methods of both being in the world and knowing the world. In this context, Graham Harvey (2005, 20-21, 49) even explicitly speaks about “relational epistemology” and “relational ontology” .

Of course, the structural nature of perception became part of the dominant Western theories of knowledge much earlier than this. As already mentioned, Russell was one of the pioneers of the structural approach to the riddles of human understanding. However, as we shall see in the following parts of this essay, his structural theories of understanding differ in several of their

methodological foundations from those constructed by Zhang Dongsun. To illustrate some central dissimilarities between them, the next section will introduce Zhang's pan-structuralism in greater detail. In the following, I will provide a contrastive analysis of Russell's structural theory of knowledge on the one side, and the "pan-structural" epistemology created by his Chinese contemporary Zhang Dongsun on the other.

#### 4 Pan-structuralism (Fanjiagouzhuoyi 泛架構主義)

Pluralistic epistemology represents the core of Zhang's philosophical system. His pluralism is derived from a revised version of Kantian philosophy. To justify such an epistemology, he proposed a new cosmology: pan-structuralism (Jiang, 2002, 58).

An important assumption of his theory of knowledge is the neo-realistic view that the external world exists independently of our consciousness, and that there is no exact correlation between external phenomena and our comprehension of them. Hence, we are unable to perceive these phenomena as they really are.

According to Zhang, the external cause for our sensation is not a substance, but the order or structure of the external world. What is transmitted to us through our sensory impressions is a modification of this external order. In interpreting the basic structure of reality, he also referred to scientific discoveries regarding atoms and their most elementary structures, which transcend the categorical boundary between particles of matter and non-substantial electromagnetic waves. Here, his critique of substance was quite radical, and he denied the real existence not only of the smallest particles of matter, but also of quanta, electrons and even electromagnetic waves (Zhang, 1995, 168-9). Similarly, the theory of relativity was important only in terms of recognizing structural laws, and not in terms of recognizing any new essences in nature or the cosmos. The denial of substance also refers to the sphere of ideas. As in Chan Buddhism, all that we perceive is not only empty in the sense of substantial absence, but also illusory. Therefore, Zhang's cosmology is neither materialistic, nor idealistic (ibid. 214).

According to Zhang, one reason for our inability to recognize the essence of external things "as such" is thus to be found in the very nature of their existence; for Zhang, who did not acknowledge the existence of substance, reality was a process of constant changes that manifests itself in the inter-relations of particular entities. His cosmology is not metaphysical. In his view, this constituted another difference between Kantian philosophy and his own. In Kant,

metaphysics is not abandoned, even though the priority given to epistemology radically alters its role. Zhang's revision of Kant is, in fact, limited to the Kantian theory of knowledge. In his ontology, the Chan-Buddhist impact is much stronger. In his early youth, his reading of Buddhist sacred texts got him interested in philosophy. Although he would criticize Buddhism severely later on, he always seemed to have accepted much of Buddhist cosmology, especially certain ideas from the Great Vehicle School (Mahayana) (Jiang, 2002, 63).

Because he rejected the existence of substance, Zhang maintained that the objects we cannot possess any "ontological status" (Zhang, 1995, 215). All beings exist in a process of constant change that manifests itself in a never-ending modification of structural connections, and the growth and decline of the qualities of the "essence" of particular entities. According to Zhang, our consciousness can only recognize certain aspects<sup>8</sup> of these manifest changes. However, this refers not only to the level of our perception and comprehension, as, according to Zhang, the structured order of relations is all that really exists in the cosmos.

Zhang argued that all these structures are empty, for they possess neither substance, nor its qualities. The level of material being (*wu* 物) is thus a merely physical substantial phenomenality which cannot be equated with material substance, but, at the most, with structural relations and the physical laws which determine its existence. For him, "matter" is a general concept comprising a total domain of many specific concepts about physical properties. There is nothing in matter itself which corresponds to our concept of matter. It is not the colour, fragrance, sound or size that we perceive through our senses, because they tend to be subjective. Therefore, by "matter" he understood an object's volume, density, or speed. Thus, in his view, matter becomes little more than a set of physics formulas. Therefore, there are only physical laws, but no matter (Jiang, 2002, 64).

All external structures are manifested in our mind, which (re-)establishes them in the process of forming structural patterns of thought and comprehension. However, Zhang's theory is not solipsistic, since the external reality for him is not an exclusive product of our recognition (Zhang, 1995, 171). Thus, similar to the holistic approaches that have prevailed in classical Chinese philosophy, Zhang also presumes that the relation between the external world and our subjectivity is interactive and correlative (*ibid*, 218).

8 These aspects are atomicity (*yuanzixing* 原子性), continuity (*lianxuxing* 連續性) and creativity (*chuangbianxing* 創變性). The cosmos also possesses the quality of (latent) plasticity (*kesuxing* 可塑性), which is passive in nature and does not belong to the external order; therefore, it cannot be perceived or comprehended directly. (Zhang, 1995, 168)

## 5 Two kinds of structural epistemology

As we have seen, in Zhang's epistemology the external cause of our sensation is not a substance, but the structural order of the external world. What is transmitted to us through our sensory impressions are modifications of this external order (Jiang, 2002, 59). Russell had proposed a similar idea (1919) in his *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*:

Against the then dominant claims that only the phenomena (“the world of percepts”) can be known and that, even if they exist, their “objective counterparts” are unknowable, Russell (1919, 61) suggested that “the objective counterparts would form a world having the same structure as the phenomenal world, [a fact which would allow us] to infer from the phenomena the truth of all propositions that can be formulated in abstract terms and which are known to be true of the phenomena. (Psillos, 2001, 14)

But while, based on this supposition, Russell concluded that the recognition of external objects could allow us to infer the reality of all propositions that can be expressed on this abstract level, Zhang cautioned that this problem could not be solved so easily, since all things that were transmitted to us through our sense-conditioned impressions were modifications of this external structural order. Therefore, because objects cannot be recognized in a one-dimensional way, we are incapable of comprehending the internal nature (or essence) of the external reality, but can only recognize its relations, which form a relatively fixed structure. And this impossibility of recognizing the substance of external objects is due not only to the limits of our sense organs, but also the fact that these objects as such, even though they exist objectively, do not possess any substance.

若我們暫假定物質并無 內性，而只是架構，則我們已可謂知道外物了。(Zhang Dongsun, 1929, 32)

If we assume that the qualities of things do not possess any inner nature (essence), and that things only exist as a structure, we have already recognized the external reality.

In this respect, Zhang's epistemology differs considerably from Russell's (1919) system, which only presumes the possibility of *inferences* leading from the structure of the phenomenal world to the structure of objective reality. It does, however, resemble Russell's later, more elaborated thesis (1929) on the objective nature of conceptions within the mind.

By 1921, Russell had assigned the role of logical atoms to events, the more neutral, neither definitely physical nor definitely mental elements, that fitted nicely with his newly discovered affection for neutral monism. Moreover, he had assigned the role of the objects of direct recognition to percepts, or those events that occurred within one's head. (Votsist, 200, 879)

But Russell's structural theory of perception, which he introduced in his book *The Analysis of Matter* (1927), remains focused upon logical inferences as the only possible link between objective reality and consciousness. In this work, he advocates a causal theory of perception, asserting that even though it is reasonable to presuppose the existence of causes (entities) outside our mind, we still cannot expect proof for the supposition that things perceived by us are necessarily produced by external causes. And while we can directly recognize the inner nature or quality (the first order of properties and relations) of the objects perceived, this in no way means that the same holds true for the entities of external reality. Zhang Dongsun pursued a similar line of reasoning, claiming that the contents of our comprehension did not correspond to the actual state of the objects of recognition.

須知我們所有的感覺都不是外界存在的.所以我們絕對無法知道外界的'內容'. (Zhang, 1995, 171)

We should know that none of our sensations exist in the external world. Therefore, it is absolutely impossible for us to recognize the 'content' of the external world.

Both philosophers also shared the view that the spheres of reality and phenomena are ordered by the same structure. Russell (1919, 611927, 249) suggested that there was "a certain similarity of structure between cause and effect where both are complex", concluding that the objective counterparts would form a world having the same structure as the phenomenal world (Psillos 2001, 14). Moreover, similar to Zhang (and to the basic presumption of classical Chinese structural epistemologies), Russell also defined structure as a set of relations: "The first point is to be clear as to what we mean by structure. The notion is not applicable to classes, but only to relations or systems of relations" (ibid). In this context, Zhang Dongsun sustained the hypothesis of the structural compatibility of both systems:

因此我承認外界有其條理;內界(即心)亦有其立法. (Zhang, 1995, 165)

Therefore, I acknowledge that the external world is ordered and that our inwardness (i.e. our mind) also functions in accordance with particular laws.



An essential difference with Russell's system can be found in the method of recognition. As we have seen, based on the supposition that we are unable to recognize the inner nature of reality, Russell concluded that inferences were the only possible method of obtaining any knowledge about it.

The only way we can attain knowledge of the latter<sup>9</sup> is by drawing inferences from our perceptions. Assuming that similar causes (i.e. events) have similar effects (i.e. percepts) – with a roughly one-to-one correspondence between stimulus and percept – Russell argues that relations between effects mirror relations between causes (Votsis, 2003, 880).

Zhang's understanding of consciousness is, instead, much more multi-layered, thus allowing for more dimensions in the perception and comprehension of reality:

內界的立法又分兩種,一為直觀上的先驗方式,一為思維上的先驗方式...至於感覺,則不是真正的'存在者'。(Zhang, 1995, 165)

This regulated constitution of our inwardness can also be divided into two kinds: the first can be called the *a priori* form of direct sensory perception, and the second the *a priori* form of cognition.... However, the sensations are not identical with 'existing beings'.

One reason for our inability to recognize the essence of external things "as such" is thus to be found in the very nature of their existence. For Zhang, who did not acknowledge the existence of substance, reality was a process of constant change that manifested itself in the inter-relations of particular entities. Although in his pluralistic epistemology he rejected "substance", he still considered the dualistic theories of idealism and materialism to be completely wrong (Zhang, 1995, 214). While elements of both approaches can be found in his model, it cannot be identified with either one of them. As he explicitly stated (*ibid*), his system was not solipsistic and did not even differentiate between matter and idea or substance and phenomena. Yet, in his view, both existed objectively.

## 6 The dynamic structure of time and space

This is where Zhang's epistemology differs in a fundamental and radical way not only from Russell's theory, but even from Chan Buddhism. Taken as a whole, (Neo)-Confucian epistemology also differs in various ways from pan-structuralist approaches: while the former was based upon structural

9 Here, Russell refers to the objective reality.

relations that were fixed and unchangeable, always tending towards the “proper” (*zheng* 正), Zhang’s pan-structuralism gives much greater priority to movement and change. In effect, he implemented the static regularity of the Neo-Confucian constructs through a new, dynamic, interferential structure of continuous, indefinable and never completely understandable amalgamations and dispersions of imagined, phenomenal and actual worlds. In this respect, his approaches recall classical Chinese (especially Daoist and Chan Buddhist) cosmologies, as well as certain recent Western ontological systems based on quantum theory or the theory of relativity, which assume that time and space are not absolute and unchangeable. This is why his constitution of time and space is also structural.

In any case, in so doing, Zhang avoided the dilemma of a complete structural identity between the external world and human mind. Russell did not presuppose a complete identity of external objects and our perception. He spoke of a “roughly one-to-one relation”:

What we assume is, formally, something like this: there is a roughly one-one relation between stimulus and percept, i.e. between the events just outside the sense-organ and the event which we call a perception. This enables us to infer certain mathematical properties of the stimulus when we know the percept, and conversely enables us to infer the percept when we know these mathematical properties of the stimulus. (Russell 227)

This supposition is somehow tricky. In his critique of idealism, Kant wrote some centuries earlier that the method of inference in epistemology is scientifically problematic:

Idealism assumed that the only immediate experience is inner experience, and that from that outer things could only be **inferred**, as in any case in which one infers from given effects to **determinate** causes, only unreliably, since the cause of the representations that we perhaps falsely ascribe to outer things can also lie in us. Yet here it is proved that outer experience is really immediate. (Kant 1998, 327 (B 277))

Several contemporary theoreticians also doubt the reliability of such proposals. As the Greek philosopher, Stathis Psillos, notes in his study on Russell’s epistemological approaches:

Precisely because Russell does not have the converse principle, he speaks of a “roughly one-to-one relation”. Yet he failed to justify why this should be so. (For example, why cannot the same stimuli produce

different perceptions at different times?) Further, does it make sense to speak of a “roughly one-to-one relation”? Either it is or it is not one-to-one. If it is, we have structure-transference. But if not, then we do not. (Psillos, 2001, 15)

Here, Zhang Dongsun's suppositions recall certain approaches of so-called eliminative structural realism (ibid. 22), which assumes that all we can perceive is structure. But this approach has led Western theorists to metaphysical explanations for the ontological foundations of structure (ibid), based upon the thesis that structure is primary and ontologically subsistent (Ladymann, 1998, 420). This thesis is still the subject of intense theoretical debates:

Note that if structures “carry the ontological weight” (French, 1999, 204), we can only view the identity of structures as being ontologically primitive (since the notion of isomorphism requires different domains of individuals which are paired-off). But I am not sure whether we can even make sense of this primitive structural identity. (Psillos, 2001, 22-23)

Zhang Dongsun tried to circumvent this dilemma by postulating dynamics and changeability (in time and space) as essential characteristics of his comprehension of structure. Here we can also detect the influence of certain fundamental assumptions of classical Chinese philosophy, in which all that exists manifests itself in continuous alterations of structural connections in the formation and expiration of particular existing entities, as well as the quality of their “essence” (Rošker, 2012, 103-110).

## 7 The problem of phenomenality

However, Zhang affirmed that our mind can only recognize certain aspects of these manifest changes. All structures are empty, for they possess neither substance, nor its qualities. The level of material being (*wu* 物) is thus a merely physical substantial phenomenality which cannot be equated with material substance but, at best, with structural relations and the physical laws which determine its existence. Here, one might be tempted to compare him with the radical ontological realists who claim that structure is ontologically primary because objects as such do not exist (Psillos, 2006, 561). But Zhang's views differ substantially from such positions as well, for in his system objects do objectively exist, even though their status is not a material (physical) one in the traditional Western sense of the word. Instead, for Zhang, “matter” is a general concept covering a total domain of many specific concepts that refer to physical properties. Hence, there is no “matter”

as such, which corresponds to our concept of this term. In his discussion of matter, Zhang Dongsun argues that matter is not the colour, smell, sound or dimensions that we perceive through our senses, because these tend to be subjective. By “matter” he intends an object’s volume, density, velocity, etc. Matter thus becomes a series of physics formulas and, ultimately, there are only physical laws, but no matter (Jiang, 2002, 64). Zhang even suggested that we should replace the term “matter” with “physical laws”, “life” with “biological principles” and “mind” with “psychology”. In other words, terms for substance as bearers of attributes should be replaced by terms for structures or orders (Rošker, 2008, 210).

The structure of the external world was thus formed by relations among objective, existing, non-substantial entities. This concept of relation as a crucial feature of structure has also been stressed by many modern Western theorists:

Newman correctly points out “that it is meaningless to speak of the structure of a mere collection of things, not provided with a set of relations” and thus “the only important statements about structure are those concerned with the structure’s make-up ...” (Votsis, 2003, 882) But what exactly did Russell mean by “structure” when he said that we can infer the structure of the external world from the structure of our perceptions? Discussions on “structure” or “relation-number” (Russell uses these concepts interchangeably) are invariably discussions on the structure of a relation or of a system of relations – this latter notion signifying one or more relations defined over a single domain (ibid, 880).

But what is also important in the context of Zhang’s philosophy are the dynamics of these structural relations that unite with one another and separate again in countless ways and on countless different levels. He compares this to cosmic emptiness, which, as in the Buddhist view, cannot be equated with “nothingness”, but only with the absence of a substance, an unchangeable nature, or a self-contained, self-sufficient being. Since the cosmos is composed exclusively of relational connections, it does not imply any independent, autonomous entity. This is also one of the main reasons why the existence of substance is impossible: the world is a series of functional relations. In Buddhist cosmology, the world, which is void in itself, is a universal, eternal and unchangeable law of causal relations (*yinyuan* 因緣). Zhang Dongsun equated this law with the real objectivity of being (Jiang, 2002, 65).

## 8 Perception as a result of structural changes

The structural systems that were developed in Western philosophy during this period were based upon the supposition that we cannot recognize the real nature of (objects in) external reality. This supposition was shared by Zhang Dongsun, but in contrast to Russell's hypothesis, his theory of comprehension is not rooted in the method of inference, which can only lead us to a recognition of the structural order of the external world.

Russell argues that relations between effects mirror relations between causes. Thus, from the structure of our perceptions we can "infer a great deal as to the structure of the physical world, but not as to its intrinsic character" ([1927] 1992, 400). At most, what can be known is the logical form or structure, i.e., the second or higher-order properties and relations, of events in the external world (Votsis, 2003, 880).

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Zhang affirms that there must be some reason for the changes we perceive, and that this reason is to be found precisely in the factual, structural changes of the external reality, which are consciously comprehended as structural changes by the correlation of the external order with the laws of the mind. This also holds true in the opposite sense: each change in our consciousness is structurally conditioned and has likewise been expressed in structural changes of the external order. In this respect, Zhang's assumptions were founded upon the interdependence, co-relativity and interactivity of the inner and external worlds. Furthermore, the Chinese theorist never considered atomicity, continuity and creativity as elements which belonged exclusively to the external order; rather, he saw these structural qualities as a kind of bridge, linking the external and inner spheres (Zhang 1995, 170 - 171).

Zhang Dongsun clearly proceeded not only from modern European (especially Kantian) philosophy, but also from certain specific foundations of the Chinese tradition of thought. In addition to the structural compatibility of the external world and the mind, which can already be found in ancient Chinese epistemology, his work was also greatly influenced by Chan Buddhism, which was defined by the concepts of the emptiness of all phenomena, and their illusory, transitory nature that not only included external actuality, but the Self and its identity. Thus, one of the basic differences between Western structural realism (Psillos, 2001, 513) and Zhang Dongsun's pan-structural system is the latter's view that not only is structure all we can recognize, but that the external world includes no substantial objects. Consequently, the world is situated within a non-substantial structure that is (in a strictly physical sense) empty, since it exists as continuous change.

A logical consequence of the epistemological structural realism of the Western type is the assumption that the reality of what is not empirically perceivable can be inferred from the actuality of the empirical world. Russell, for example, claimed that in terms of the knowability of the objective external world, given that phenomena and substance shared a common structure, it was not only possible, but also legitimate, to infer the latter from the former.

Russell (1919, 61) suggested that the objective counterparts formed a world having the same structure as the phenomenal world, (a fact which would allow us) to infer from phenomena the truth of all propositions that could be stated in abstract terms and which were known to be true of phenomena. (Psillos, 2001, 514)

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However, traditional Chinese analogical inferences were, from the time of the most ancient disputes, defined by semantic connotations (Rošker, 2012, 16-17) which could place in question the very nature of the formal inferences that have dominated traditional European logic. We must also bear in mind that Zhang's pan-structuralism rested upon the structural compatibility, but not the structural identity, of the external and internal world. In his view, it was precisely the structure of comprehension which was much more complex, and it was only for the sake of facilitating his exposition that he maintained the schematic division between the subject and object of comprehension. As is well known, both poles are seen by naturalistic epistemologies as defining the process of comprehension and the theoretical mode of its framework. Zhang, however, posited the existence of vital connections between the subject (with its empirical mechanisms), on the one hand, and the objective sphere of the empirically (or rationally) unseizable world, on the other<sup>10</sup>. In this context, he was definitely guided by certain, specific implications of traditional Chinese concepts of knowledge or cognizance that are rooted in a model of structural relations, relations which are essentially not grounded upon a formal equivalence but, at most, upon the compatibility of the structures they are forming (ibid, 103). Therefore, they cannot be seized by formal means, but only through semantic inferences.

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10 這個中間普通人認為沒有東西存在, 即好像是空的. 所以能知與所知得以直接發生關係. 我則以為在這個中間 內卻有許多東西, 換言之, 即是複雜的. (Zhang, 1995, 213)  
People commonly think that there is nothing between these two poles, that between them there is only empty space. This would mean that the subject and object of recognition were in direct relation with each other. But I believe that there are many things between them, that this "middle" in other words, is very complex.

## 9 Methods of comprehension

With respect to the methods of comprehension, Zhang was following the traditional Chinese concept of qualitative knowledge as it had already been defined by his contemporary Xiong Shili 熊十力 (1885-1968) who, based upon a solid command of Confucian and Daoist approaches, denoted it as a qualitative understanding (*xing zhi* 性智):

性智者, 即是真的自己的覺悟. 此中真的自己一詞, 即為本體... 即此本體, 以其為吾人所以生之理而言, 則亦名真的自己. 即此真己, 在量論中說明覺悟, 即所謂性智... 這種覺悟雖不離感官經驗, 要是不滯於感官經驗而恒自在離系的. (Xiong, 1992, 249)

Qualitative understanding is awareness of Self. The real Self in this sense can be called substance [...] From the viewpoint of the structure which enables us to live, it could also be denoted as the Real Self.<sup>11</sup> In the domain of quantitative methodologies, this Real Self is explained by consciousness and is also called qualitative understanding. Although this kind of consciousness is not separated from sensory experiences, it is not limited to such experience; moreover, it always exists independently, outside of all systems.

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The second type of comprehension, which also includes inferences (among other elements) and functions as a qualitative understanding or habituated mind, was called quantitative knowledge (*liangzhi* 量智)<sup>12</sup> by Xiong Shili.

This mode of quantitative understanding, which represented the basis of scientific comprehension for Xiong (Rošker, 2008, 198), likewise implied inferring from fixed, eternally “valid” assumptions. But the concept of qualitative understanding as described by Xiong and which is rooted in realistic currents within Confucian philosophy<sup>13</sup> cannot be equated with many other traditions of Confucian thought as developed in the solipsistic discourses of later Daoism and the Confucian School of Mind (*xin xue* 心學). For the latter, in fact, the external world had no objective existence, but was merely represented through numerous transformations within our mind.

11 Another possible translation of this term is “the True Self”.

12 Due to their identical pronunciation, we should not confuse Xiong's term *liangzhi* 量智, or quantitative understanding, with the Neo-Confucian term *liang zhi* 良知, which means innate knowledge.

13 In this context, Neo-Confucian theories of knowledge are especially valuable, especially when based on the binary category connecting the exploration of things (*gewu* 格物) with perfect or ultimate knowledge (*zhizhi* 至知).

In essence, Zhang Dongsun's pan-structuralism also belongs to the qualitative modes of understanding. Since it proceeds from the non-substantiality and continuous changing of all mutually connected structural patterns, the correlations between them are also non-substantial and not completely accessible through logic. None of these correlations can be said to have the statute of a rigid premise from which valid inferences can be drawn. Nonetheless, these correlations are the (only) possible connection between the Self and the. Knowledge is thus also a relation, for its formation has a strong impact upon these two poles of existence and comprehension. Since the structural connection between them is compatible with the structural connection between language and meaning (*yan yi* 言意), knowledge can be semantically transmitted.

## 10 Conclusion

The qualitative mode of understanding, the dynamic view of the world and the human mind as a network of incessantly changing relationships, and structural compatibility as a crucial condition for the perception and understanding of reality are the main elements of the divergences that separate Zhang's pan-structuralism from Russell's inference-based structural epistemology.

The question of possible debates between the two scientists, who represented different (i.e. Western and Chinese) models of epistemological thought, is still open. From our analysis of Zhang's model, it seems quite obvious that he did not adopt Russell's mode of structuralism, but was rather influenced in this respect by his own Chinese philosophical tradition. Nevertheless, he must have been familiar with Russell's model, as he accompanied him on his guest lecture tour through China. All this begs the question of whether Zhang also introduced to Russell his own view of a dynamic, diverse and qualitatively determined perception. In my opinion, this was either not the case, or Russell could not understand Zhang's model because he was not aware of the existence of different frames of reference. Had a substantive debate between the two theorists taken place in a mutually comprehensible manner, it would probably have influenced Russell's modifications of his own structural perception theory.

On the other hand, Zhang's major epistemological work *Renshi lun* 認識論 (*Epistemology*) was not published until 1934, more than a decade after Russell's *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*. It is possible, therefore, that his initial inspiration for establishing structural epistemology came from Western sources (especially Russell, who was its forerunner) and developed further in the process of his later reminiscences and recollections of his own intellectual tradition.



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# **HOPES AND EXPECTATIONS**



*LI Zhenying*

## My Expectations for Russell (1920)<sup>1</sup>

Yesterday in the evening, quite a few groups of people gathered on the local pier. They were gathering to welcome the great British philosopher Mr. Bertrand Russell, who has arrived on his first visit to China.

I also took part at the welcome reception, having been able to listen to Russell's elegant speech from the back seats. Thus, a plenitude of thoughts and feelings have occurred to me, about which I intend to write here.

England is the most liberal country in the world (unfortunately the same cannot be said about how it treats its dependent territories), which is why revolutionary parties in all countries in the World all consider it to be a haven for exiles. (For example, in the past, the famous anarchist Kropotkin (Kelupaotejin 克魯泡特金) also lived in this country.) England itself also produced a great many libertarian writers. In the past this included authors such as Byron (Bailun 擺倫), Shelley (Shali 莎裏) and others, while more recently such authors grew too numerous to count.

Since the reorganization of "Beida 北大" (Peking University), in China we have actually got the phenomenon of a "renaissance" (*wenyi fuxing* 文藝復興).

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1 Li Zhenying 李震瀛 (1920). "Wo duiyu Luosu de xiwang 我對於羅素的希望 (My Expectations for Russell)." *Juewu 覺悟 (Minguo ribao 民國日報)*, October 15, 1.

Thus, the chance to enlist the most famous scholars from foreign countries and assemble them in one single room is yet another unique opportunity. Last year, following an invitation of the university, the American Dr. John Dewey assumed the post of a professor there. His teachings are very fashionable in China at the moment; all scholars of the country are desperately turning to them for solutions for all kinds of problems. It is rather unfortunate, however, that Dr. Dewey's theories are not complete (i.e. thorough), which is why they have become a great disappointment for the young. Hence, many colleagues at Beida are determined to refute his theories. American academia is not exactly a paragon of excellence. Compared with the other most advanced countries in the World, such as England, Russia, Germany, France or Italy, America is still no match for these. This was the reason why Washington Irving (Huashengtun Ouwen 華盛頓歐文) recognized that after European civilization reached America it was critically degenerated. I believe that the major enemies of American culture are religion and capitalism. Until these two things are toppled, in America there will be no space for reform. Dr. Dewey is one of America's greatest philosophers, and I cannot criticize him for that. But we must not regard his theories as sacred. The only acceptable way, however, is to try to understand things by amplifying our own way of looking at things.

Just because we have lost our hopes about Dr. Dewey, we must not despair about Russell. We must recognize that, nowadays, Russell is one of the most thorough social reformists. Because he has repeatedly received lessons from the government, he cannot but have a thorough awareness (*juewu* 覺悟, "enlightenment"). If one takes a look at his work *Roads to Freedom*, one will be able to notice that in it Russell discusses socialism, anarchism and syndicalism (*hegongtuan zhuyi* 和工團主義) in an astoundingly thorough manner. I believe that his awareness is far beyond his age, and hence also expect that the lectures which he is going to deliver in China will most certainly be even more profound. I also hope that he will deliver a more complete lecture on the *Principles of Social Reconstruction* than the last time. I hope that, unlike Dewey, in lecturing about "social philosophy" he will also not refrain from speaking about "political philosophy", as humanity cannot divorce itself from politics. Our deepest hope is that he will lecture about an extremely pure form of "social philosophy". Although I refuse to believe that Russell will be able to completely fulfil our expectations, I still believe that he will be much more successful in doing so than Dewey. But what we hope above all is that "the pupils will surpass their teacher" (*houlai jushang* 後來居上).

I have a deep admiration for Russell's personal character. In the turbulent times of the Great War, when governmental parties and capitalists of all

countries were all behaving like ferocious beasts, he was willing to sacrifice everything to be able to declare himself as a “conscientious objector” (*liangxin de dikangzhe* 良心的抵抗者) and openly oppose the war. Because of that he was sentenced to a half year in prison. This sentence, however, was not only incapable of harming him, but quite the opposite, made him to gain a more complete realization and become an extreme reformist – an anarchist scholar.

Speaking about these things I also recalled that when America first entered the war, the world’s most famous anarchists, Goldman and Alexander Berkman, also composed essays in which they argued against it, for which they were sentenced by the American government to two years’ imprisonment. They were released from prison only last year, after which in pursuit of the happiness of freedom they returned to Russia.

Nowadays in China it is often the case that whenever someone is making some trouble they already call him an anarchist. As soon as the peoples’ opinions get just a bit more intense, they are already branded as extremists. Does such a thing as extremism really exist in the world? The only ones who can really be called extremists are those governments and capitalist who are so fond of unleashing killing sprees.

Despite the fact that Russell’s father was an English Earl, Russell himself is still only a commoner. Unlike figures like Tolstoy, Kropotkin or Saint-Simon, he simply cannot be described as an aristocrat at all. Originally, in English peerage only the eldest son was able to inherit his father’s titles, while all other children had no relation to them whatsoever. They were also not given much wealth, only enough to buy some books and sustain their lives. Because this kind of system existed in England, in English history the eldest sons of nobility, who inherited all the titles, never really exerted themselves to show their skills and abilities. They simply enjoyed their high positions and lived in comfort, unwilling to handle affairs with sincerity or seek knowledge. Only the younger ones were making great efforts and stood out amongst their peers. Russell – a second-born son – also grew up in the same circumstances. Without struggle (*fendou* 奮鬥) there is no room for survival (*shengcun* 生存). This is a special lesson of English history. Hence, only difficult conditions can give rise to a genuine human talent. Our youth must engage in some hard work indeed!

13. 10. 1920

(Translated by Jan Vrhovski)





*Lizi*

## Wishing Russell to Survive (1921)<sup>1</sup>

**R**ussell got critically ill! If the worst will happen, not only China will lose a fine teacher, but it will be a great loss for all humanity!

Russell's independent spirit is most admirable. No matter what happens, he is never willing to surrender even a tiny bit of his spiritual freedom. In the time of the European war, he boldly defied the opinion of the entire country and advocated "pacifism". In so doing, he sacrificed his teaching position at the university and was sentenced to 60 days in prison, yet still remained dauntless and unyielding. Two years later he was imprisoned again. Not all scholars must have a conscience, but one Russell is enough to wipe away all their disgrace.

What we most feel sorry for about Russell is that: (1) In his first visit to China he was misunderstood by people and that his teachings were misinterpreted. First, he had to endure being the object of ridicule of some "preservation of national essence" (*baocun guicui* 保存國粹), and later his words about developing industrial and commercial enterprise (*shiye* 實業) were borrowed by some people, who took them out of context and used them to oppose socialism. (2) Before Russell fell ill, the authorities

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1 Lizi 力子 (1921). "Zhu Luosu buyao si 祝羅素不要死 (Wishing Russell to Survive)." *Minguo ribao* 民國日報, March 29, 2.

in Beijing suddenly contrived the preposterous notion to drive him out of the country.

But all this did no harm to Russell, who took absolutely no offence from these things. Initially, some people believed that Russell was affected by those who encircled him from all sides, and that he consequently gave in and greatly adapted his manner of speaking. But recently I have been reading the third of his lectures on “Science of Social Structure” (*Shehui jiegou xue* 社會結構學), and became aware of his unyielding spirit, which would never, not even to the slightest degree, allow him to reduce his independence. Now I shall give a few excerpts from his lecture:

Everyone should take a note that, today, all Western governments work in the same way; although nominally they are public institutions, in reality this is only a deception, for these governments are all under the exclusive control of a small number of capitalists.

We cannot rely only on law, because the legislation is always in service to the capitalists. I sincerely wish that social progress will eventually [always] be attained by peaceful means, but considering the current situation in the world of commerce, I am afraid that there is not much hope for peace. Although the capitalists constantly claim that they endorse peace by opposing the revolution, their actions make it absolutely clear to all workers that you shall never have progress without an immediate revolution.

This unavoidable conclusion is class warfare (struggle). I am not at all in favour of inciting such a war, but this kind of conflict is a necessary result of industrialism (*shiyeh zhuyi* 實業主義). It is so according to scientific inference. This is the same as to say that it is certain that a person who is going to jump from mid-air will hit the ground and that in so doing he will injure himself to death, while at the same time I do not at all approve of him injuring himself to death.

In brief, the industrial system will be stable only by implementing communism (*gongchan* 共產). There is no other way.

Everyone who reads these words will realize that it is obviously impossible to deceive people by countering socialism using Russell’s words about reviving [Chinese] industry. And that the authorities in Beijing want to expel him is even more so a matter which should be discussed. On the other hand, the only thing we must do is more closely observe Russell’s unyielding and independent spirit.

Even if Russell would unexpectedly die, his spirit will survive. Then, and only by making his spirit our own, we will not fail to justify the desire to pay reverence to him and cherish his views.

*(Translated by Jan Vrhovski)*



*QU Shiyong*

## Russell's Contribution to Us (1921)<sup>1</sup>

In his current visit, Russell has been in China for total period of eight or nine months, of which for two months he was struggling with an illness. After he recuperated, he was still unable to carry on lecturing. He only delivered one lecture in the final days before his departure. In the afternoon hours on July 15 Russell finally left China.

Now, how exactly have we benefited from Russell's visit here in China? This is a very important question. According to my personal opinion, we could have gained at least two different kinds of advantages, which, however, do not at all touch on his theories and teachings as such. As a matter of fact, any single person's theories, regardless of who that person is, can in no way be imposed upon all people in the world, making them agree with it. Thus, for example, I personally do not agree with the conclusions of Russell's philosophy – that is the philosophy of New Realism. Speaking more directly, I simply do not believe in the accuracy of answers to these few philosophical questions, neither do I agree with the spirit of guild socialism (*ji'erte shexhui zhuyi* 基爾特社會主義), which he advocates, and its major organizational principles, while, at the same time, I still believe that it is a feasible kind of political system. As

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1 Qu Shiyong 瞿世英 (1921). "Luosu dui women de gongxian 羅素對我們的貢獻 (Russell's Contribution to Us)." *Luosu yuekan* 羅素月刊, 1(4), 1-3.

far as I am concerned, there are also some parts of his theory I agree with, while there are some parts I am still rather sceptical about, and finally some parts I do not agree with at all. Of course, I cannot simply go on criticizing his theory by claiming that certain parts of it benefit us all, while other parts do not benefit us at all. The only correct way of answering this question is to do it on one's own behalf.

However, during his visit Russell did bestow upon us two exceptionally precious things. If these two things were really received by everyone of us and if everyone is also able to put them to use, then, irrespective of the matter we use them in or the problem we want to resolve with them, we will always be successful. These two treasures are:

1. His personality. When one is conversing with Russell, one gets the feeling that he is a person who really embodies a scholarly attitude. If one catches only a glimpse of him, one can already imagine what a solemn spirit must have surrounded him when he was put into prison. This kind of spirit to sacrifice himself for his ideology is what has influenced us to a great degree. This was his first contribution.
2. His method. In the last two days before his departure, I payed Russell a visit. During our conversation I asked the following question: "According to your own opinion, how did your visit here in China contribute to Chinese academic circles?" To which he responded by asking me the same question. I responded: "I believe that your greatest contribution to us has been your analytical method. If in your visit to China you were not able to shift Chinese thought in the direction of analysis, making the Chinese use your method, then wouldn't you consider this whole journey to have been for nothing?" In that moment, a very joyful expression took shape on his face, upon which he replied: "This is my opinion as well." Therefore, I believe that the second treasure he left behind was his analytical method.

Regardless of whether one is conducting research into a scientific question or handling different affairs, the analytical method is indispensable. And it does not matter what profession one is working in, if one does not possess the spirit of sacrificing oneself for one's convictions, one will never completely succeed. Russell possesses both of these things. If we will obtain these two precious treasures, then Russell will not consider his journey to have been entirely in vain.

*(Translated by Jan Vrhovski)*

# EPILOGUE





*Jana S. ROŠKER*

## Russell's visit to China and the Significance of Intercultural Encounters

**A**fter his return to Great Britain, Russell wrote a pamphlet entitled *The Problem of China*. In this short book, he described his private encounters with the ancient Middle Kingdom and offered readers numerous novel perceptions and images about this great, interesting, and then still unknown, almost mysterious country, which he believed had the potential to become one of the world's greatest powers. He wrote about the socio-political context of the country in great detail and offered a laborious analysis of China's political situation in the early 1920s, with the aim of proposing some practical replies to the most topical problems of the time. In this framework, he exposed the importance of the constitution and the rule of law, but also the necessity of a powerful and balanced leadership. Only on such a foundation could China, in his view, embark on a steady path towards industrial development and technological progress.

However, he also devoted much of his time in China to understanding its great and fascinating culture. It was obvious to him that China was an intensely civilized society with an admired history. Russell saw great opportunities

in intercultural exchange between China and Europe: "While China needed Western science, he believed that traditional Chinese civilization offered a vision of the good life that might discipline the destructive dynamism of the Western world" (Xu 2003, 193).

He firmly believed that China made a unique contribution to the birth of human civilization and had something more than quantity to add to the intellectual and spiritual possessions of the world:

The Chinese have discovered, and have practised for many centuries, a way of life which, if it could be adopted by all the world, would make all the world happy. We Europeans have not. Our way of life demands strife, exploitation, restless change, discontent and destruction. Efficiency directed to destruction can only end in annihilation, and it is to this consummation that our civilization is tending, if it cannot learn some of that wisdom for which it despises the East. (Russell 1993, 17)

Despite this fascination, Russell often stressed that traditional Chinese culture could not meet contemporary social, economic, and political demands and had to find a new path to something radically different (Simpson 2020, 3). He also advised his Chinese friends to be aware of the perils of colonial dominance, exposing that all great powers were keen to guarantee their own divide in the exploitation of China's resources. Russell wanted to recommend the Chinese government to instantly develop more nationwide force than it had shown so far. Otherwise, in his eyes, China could not be capable to withstand the violence fostered by overseas capitalists (*ibid.*, 4).

What the country needed most, however, was undoubtedly science and technology. Bertrand Russell recognized that what was most fatal to China was the lack and underdevelopment of science. He often emphasized that China was at least equal to Europe in art and literature as well as in customs and traditions. At the time of the Renaissance, Europe would not have been in any way superior to the ancient and admirable culture of this great civilization:

The fact that Britain has produced Shakespeare and Milton, Locke and Hume, and all the other men who have adorned literature and the arts, does not make us superior to the Chinese. What makes us superior is Newton and Robert Boyle and their scientific successors. They make us superior by giving us greater proficiency in the art of killing. It is easier for an Englishman to kill a Chinaman than for a Chinaman to kill an Englishman. Therefore, our civilization is superior to that of China... (Russell 1993, 52)

Russell understood it would be fruitless and unproductive to try to decide which of the two cultures or civilizations, China or Europe, was “greater” or “better.” But he often admonished his own countrymen to stop thinking of themselves as missionaries of a superior civilization if they wanted to establish fruitful interaction and exchange with China. He was outraged by the attitude of some Westerners who thought they had a right to exploit, oppress and cheat the Chinese because they belonged to an “inferior race.”

For him the central query was, why did modern science flourish in Europe and not in China? He was convinced that one reason was the lack of a comprehensive and systematic educational system in traditional China. This weakness was a consequence of the outmoded Confucian ideology; the uncritical learning of the old classics, in his view, petrified Chinese thought. On the other hand, he also understood that the Chinese quality of life offered people fewer impulses to adapt. He saw China as a culture that had already achieved a high degree of classicism and had known how to exist for several millennia. It was therefore rather difficult for them to imagine anything that could be improved. Moreover, the idea of “progress” did not fit well with a culture that strove for balance and harmony and looked to the past rather than the future.

Nevertheless, education remained the most pressing problem, for any kind of radical and lasting solution to China’s all-encompassing crisis depended on education, which had to be universal and scientific. Moreover, the science that had to be thought of should not be merely theoretical, but should be closely connected with modern industry and economics. In Russell’s view, the problem of education could be solved relatively quickly, although he soon realized that it would take a generation or more for China to develop an effective system of mass education.

Still, he was convinced that although Chinese educational systems and institutions suffered from a lack of money and libraries, they did not suffer from a lack of “finest human material” (Russell 1993, 193). In this context, he also pointed out that although Chinese civilization until then had a lack of science, it never contained anything hostile to science. Therefore, the spread of scientific knowledge would not encounter any obstacles comparable to those that the Church had put in the way in European history. He wrote, “I have no doubt that if the Chinese could obtain a stable government and sufficient means, they would within the next thirty years begin to produce remarkable work in science” (ibid.). He even believed that they could easily surpass Westerners in this because they possessed the fresh enthusiasm and

passion of a renaissance. He observed that there was an eager desire among Chinese youth to acquire Western knowledge, along with an intense awareness of the many shortcomings of instrumental rationality. In Russell's eyes, Chinese students wanted to be scientific but not mechanical, industrial but not capitalistic. He was amazed at the long Chinese ethical tradition and the humanistic spirit that pervaded the country despite the difficult situation it had fallen into.

It is very remarkable, as distinguishing the Chinese from the Japanese, that the things they wish to learn from us are not those that bring wealth or military strength, but rather those that have either an ethical and social value, or a purely intellectual interest. (Russell 1993, 193)

228 He was much inspired by the "profoundly humanistic attitude to life" (*ibid.*, 223) that was formed through education in the Chinese students. This humanistic spirit was – among other things – also expressed in progressive tendencies such as gender equality. Russell pointed out that the position of women at Peking University was better than at Cambridge, and emphasized that women were admitted to examinations and degrees, and that there were women teachers in the university (*ibid.*, 224).

On the other hand, he was certainly aware of the great differences between the social strata. The modern students who were marked by the fashionable outcomes of new urban civilization stood in an extremely harsh contrast to the poor and completely uneducated population of many underdeveloped areas in the Chinese countryside. Therefore, a thorough spread of modern education could – according to Russell – only be achieved through radical political change. Hence, the political problem should be addressed even before the economic one:

Democracy presupposes a population that can read and write and that has some degree of knowledge as to political affairs. These conditions cannot be satisfied in China until at least a generation after the establishment of a government devoted to the public welfare. You will have to pass through a stage analogous to that of the dictatorship of the Communist Party in Russia, because it is only by some such means that the necessary education of the people can be carried through, and the non-capitalistic development of industry effected. (Russell, cf Simpson 2020, 4)

However, Russell by no means advocated a long-lasting dictatorship, but instead suggested an ethical and resolute leadership. Although Russell envisioned a rather paternalistic kind of government for China, he certainly did not have in mind an authoritarian dictatorship.

He was also convinced that in order to allow China to liberate itself from the yoke of foreign powers, patriotism was necessary. However, the patriotism he had in mind was not the dogmatic and intolerably anti-foreign spirit of the Boxers, but one that had an enlightened attitude, that was willing to learn from other cultures while not willing to allow foreign powers to colonize or dominate China. But he also saw the dangers of patriotism, because as soon as it proved itself strong enough for successful defence, it could also automatically turn to aggression directed against everything that is foreign.

China, by her resources and her population, is capable of being the greatest power in the world after the United States. It is much to be feared that, in the process of becoming strong enough to preserve their independence, the Chinese may become strong enough to embark upon a career of imperialism. (Russell 1993, 241)

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This vision, which less than a hundred years later seems strangely accurate, was certainly not a mere product of what has Russell projected in his works on epistemology; instead, it was a result of the intellectual, aesthetic, and personal contacts between him and the Chinese people. Such encounters are doubtless still the best groundwork for any kind of intercultural understanding.

In sum, it is precisely the question of intercultural understanding that may be even more significant for the lasting fruits of Russell's visit to China than merely his introduction of mathematical logic.

This said, I must of course emphasise that it is by no means my intention to diminish the importance of this crucial task, which was undoubtedly at the heart of his encounters with China. It is certainly true that Russell's visit aroused a great interest in mathematical logic among Chinese intellectuals. It is also true that through the Chinese translation of his *Principia Mathematica* a growing number of scholars and students alike were able to receive an excellent introduction to mathematical logic, gradually leading to the systematic teaching of the subject in China's most prestigious universities (Xu 2003, 193).

At least as important, however, was his attitude toward the people and culture of the millennia-old Middle Kingdom. His visit from October 1920 to July 1921 proved to be a transformative experience, not only for the "new Chinese intellectuals" but also for Russell himself, for it was to shift his outlook significantly from a Eurocentric to a global perspective, which he maintained for the rest of his extraordinarily long life (Simpson 2020, 2). Along with this, it also shifted and transformed something else, namely our prevailing notion

of genuine intercultural communication. According to the usual understanding, intercultural communication (or even normal everyday conversations between members of the same culture) is successful when information can cross the gap between the mind of the sender and that of the receiver without distortions or obstacles (Defoort 2001, 398). But Russell himself once claimed that truly productive and fruitful communication is based on exactly opposite grounds. It should result precisely from the discontinuity between the different contexts in which a given idea is formulated and from the new and fresh associations it can evoke (*ibid.*). The fruitfulness of such relationships, new ways of seeing and understanding the circumstances, space, and time of the “other,” whoever that may be, makes this visit even more significant. It is precisely because of the openness of this creative encounter that it became a historic milestone for future intercultural exchange, not only between China and Europe, but also between writers and readers who remember and study it, each in their own way. Therefore, I sincerely hope that this short book describing, explaining, and introducing Russell’s visit to China can also become a small but bridge-building and thus important stone in the mosaic of such memories.

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# Appendix: A List of Important Chinese Publications on Russell and Translations of Russell's Works,<sup>1</sup> 1919-1922

## 1 Periodicals, 1919-1921

*Jiefang yu gaizao* 解放與改造

1919

*Vol. 1, No. 1/2*

Zhang Dongsun 張東蓀. "The Third Kind of Civilization" (*Di san zhong wen-ming* 第三種文明). (pp. 1-5)

Zhang Dongsun 張東蓀. "Russell's Political Ideals" (*Luosu de zhengzhi lixiang* 羅素的政理想). (pp. 12-22)

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1 A comprehensive overview of Chinese translations of Russell's works has already been given in Kenneth Blackwell & Harry Ruja ed. (1994). *A Bibliography of Bertrand Russell*. 3. Volumes. London & New York: Routledge.

*Vol. 1, No. 3*

Guo Yuchang 郭虞裳. "Guild Socialism" (*Ji'erte shehui zhuyi* 基爾特社會主義). (pp. 2-9)

*Vol. 1, No. 7*

Zhang Dongsun 張東蓀. "Why Do We Have to Speak about Socialism?" (*Women weishenme yao jiang shehui zhuyi* 我們爲什麼要講社會主義). (pp. 3-14)

Bertrand Russell [Luose'er 羅塞爾]. "Proposed Roads to Freedom: Socialism, Anarchism and Syndicalism" (*Dao ziyou de jitiao ni jing* 到自由的幾條擬徑). Translated by Mao Dun 矛盾 [Yanshui 雁水]. (pp. 21-37)

*Vol. 1, No. 8*

Bertrand Russell [Luose'er 羅塞爾]. "Science and Art under Socialism – A Translation of the Chapter 7 from Russell's *Proposed Roads to Freedom*" (*Shehui zhuyi xia de kexue yu yishu: Yi Luose'er Dao ziyou de jitiao ni jing di qi zhang* 社會主義下的科學與藝術：譯羅塞爾到自由的幾條擬徑第七章). Translated by Mao Dun 矛盾 [Yanshui 雁水]. (pp. 39-50)

## 1920

*Vol. 2, No. 2*

Songhua 頌華. "Thoughts upon Reading the First and Last Chapter of Russell's *Principles of Social Reconstruction*" (*Du Luose'er de Shehui gaizao yuanli shoumo liangjie* 讀羅塞爾的社會改造原理首末兩節). (pp. 10-18)

*Vol. 2, No. 3*

Xiong Zhengli 熊正理. "Russell on Criteria for the Scope of Power of States (Reading "The State" Chapter of Russell's *Principles of Social Reconstruction*)" (*Luose'er lun guojia quanli fanwei zhi biao zhun (du Luose'er Shehui gaizao yuanli di er jie "Guo jia" lun)* 羅塞爾論國家權力範圍之標準(讀羅塞爾社會改造原理第二節國家論)). (pp. 23-36)

*Gaizao* 改造

## 1920

*Vol. 3, No. 1*

Junzuo 君左. "Social Reform and New Currents of Thought" (*Shehui gaizao yu xin sichao* 社會改造與新思潮). (pp. 51-55)



Vol. 3, No. 2 – Contained a special column “Introducing Russell” (*Luosu jieshao* 羅素介紹).

Cheng Zhuxi 程鑄新. “A Summary of Russell’s *Political Ideals* (Published in 1917)” (*Luosu zhu de zhengzhi lixiang zhaiyao (yi jiu yi qi nian chuban)* 羅素著的政治理想摘要 (一九一七年出版)). (pp. 13-20)

Fu Tong 傅銅, Cheng Zhanqi 程振基. “A Summary of Russell’s *Road to Freedom*” (*Luosu zhi xiang ziyou zhi lu zhaiyao* 羅素之向自由之路摘要). (pp. 20-33)

Bertrand Russell [Luosu 羅素]. “Russian Soviet Government in 1920” (*Yi jiu er ling nian zhi Eguo Suweiai zhengfu* 一九二零年之俄國蘇維埃政府). Translated by Liu Linsheng 劉麟生. (pp. 33-50)

## 1921

Vol. 3, No. 10

Xu Zhimo 徐志摩. “After Russell’s ‘Notes from Bolshevist Russia’ – B. Russell ‘The Theory and Practice of Bolshevism’” (*Luosu you E jishu hou* – B. Russell “The Theory and Practice of Bolshevism” 羅素遊俄記書後 – B. Russell “The Theory and Practice of Bolshevism”). (pp. 51-54)

Vol. 4, No. 2

Bertrand Russell [Luosu 羅素]. “Russell’s Critique of Evolutionist Philosophy” (*Luosu piping jinhua zhuyi de zhexue* 羅素批評進化主義的哲學). Translated by Xiaohang 小航. (pp. 1-12)

## *Dongfang zazhi* 東方雜誌

### 1920

Vol. 17, No. 12

Kong 空. “Russell” (*Lase'er* 拉塞爾). (pp. 119-124)

Vol. 17, No. 18

Bertrand Russell [Luosu 羅素]. “Socialism and Liberalism” (*Shehui zhuyi yu ziyou zhuyi* 社會主義與自由主義). Translated by Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之. (pp. 45-59)

Zhang Shenfu 張申府 [Songnian 崧年]. “A Footnote on Russell (An Appendix to Bibliography of Russell’s Writings)” (*Zhi Luosu (fu Luosu suo zhu shumu)* 志羅素 (附羅素所著書目)). (pp. 130-133)

## Vol. 17, No. 19

Bertrand Russell [Luosu 羅素]. "Russell's New View on Russia" (*Luosu de xin E guan* 羅素的新俄觀). Translated by Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之. (pp. 37-50)

## Vol. 17, No. 20

Yang Duanliu 楊端六. "Russell's Philosophical Research Method" (*Luosu zhi zhexue yanjiufa* 羅素之哲學研究法). (pp. 1-2)

Bertrand Russell [Luosu 羅素]. "Russell's New View on Russia" (*Luosu de xin E guan* 羅素的新俄觀). Translated by Hu Yuzhi 胡愈之. (pp. 53-66)

Yingshui 穎水. "Commenting on Russell's 'Impressions of Bolshevik Russia'" (*Pinglun Luosu you E zhi ganxiang* 評論羅素遊俄之感想). (pp. 122-124)

## Vol. 17, No. 21

Bertrand Russell [Luosu 羅素]. "Russell on Problems of Philosophy" (*Luosu lun zhexue wenti* 羅素論哲學問題). Recorded by Pan Gongzhan 潘公展. (pp. 35-47)

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## Povzetek

**A**ntologija *Obisk Bertranda Russlla na Kitajskem: Zbrana besedila ob stoletnici medkulturnih dialogov o logiki in epistemologiji*, izdana ob stoletnici Russllovega obiska na Kitajskem (1920–1921), nudi osredotočeno pripoved o recepciji Bertranda Russlla in njegove misli na Kitajskem. Izbor besedil se osredotoča na zgodnji sprejem Russlla kot osebe, filozofa in znanstvenika v kitajskih intelektualnih krogih. Retrospektivno antologijo, ki se posveča sprejemanju Russllove misli na Kitajskem, sestavljajo tako prevodi člankov in esejev, ki so nastali pod peresi kitajskih učenjakov in drugih javnih osebnosti za časa njegovega obiska, kot tudi nekaj sodobnih študij, ki proučujejo sprejem in širjenje Russllovih idej na Kitajskem. Deli antologije, ki sledijo splošnemu uvodu k Russllovemu obisku, pokrivajo širok spekter izvornih besedil in sekundarnih študij, vključno s pozdravnimi nagovori, poročili z zasedanj Russllovega študijskega društva, ustanovljenega leta 1920 v Pekingu, uvode k Russllovi filozofski misli ter, v osrednjem delu, interpretacije Russllove humanistične misli, matematične logike in epistemologije s strani dveh sodobnih kitajskih filozofov, Zhang Dongsuna in Zhang Shenfuja. Del, ki obravnava Zhang Shenfuja, preiskuje njegov zgodnji odnos z Russllovo filozofijo in njegovim pojmom matematične logike, medtem ko se del o Zhang Dongsunu posveča osvetlitvi njegove kritike Russllovega logicizma in razlikam med njunima modeloma strukturne percepcije. Pričujoča antologija tako ponuja edinstveni vpogled v preplet vplivov Russllove humanistične, filozofske in logične misli na kitajsko idejno krajino v času, ki je sledil

dogodkom Četrtojmskega gibanja. Knjigo sta uredila Jan Vrhovski in Jana S. Rošker, predgovor pa je prispevala Vera Schwarcz, zaslužna profesorica na Univerzi Wesleyan in Hebrejski univerzi v Jeruzalemu.

## Summary

Written and compiled in commemoration of the centenary of Russell's visit to China (1920-1921), the anthology *Bertrand Russell's Visit to China: Selected Text on the Centenary of Intercultural Dialogues in Logic and Epistemology* offers a focused account of reception of Bertrand Russell and his thought in China. Set in the time of Russell's stay in China, the selection of texts revolves around the initial reception of Russell as a person, philosopher, and scientist in Chinese intellectual world. As a retrospective anthology concerned with the reception of Russell's thought in China, the work is comprised both of translations of articles and essays written by Chinese intellectuals and other public figures at the time of his visit there, as well as a few contemporary studies analysing the reception and propagation of Russell's ideas in China in the abovementioned period. Following a general introduction to Russell's visit in China, the subsequent sections of the anthology cover a wide spectrum of original documents and secondary studies, including the welcome addresses, reports from the Russell Study Society established in late 1920 in Beijing, introductions to Russell's philosophical thought and, in the main part, interpretations of Russell's humanistic thought, mathematical logic and epistemology by two Chinese contemporary philosophers, Zhang Shenfu and Zhang Dongsun. The section on Zhang Shenfu explores his earliest relationship with Russell's philosophy and his notion of mathematical logic, whilst the section on Zhang Dongsun aims at casting some light on his critical reading of Russell's logicism on the one hand and

the disparities between their models of structural perception on the other. As such the anthology provides a unique insight into the intertwined influences of Russell's humanistic, philosophical, and logical thought on the Chinese intellectual landscape in the aftermath of the May Fourth events. This volume of the *Studia Humanitatis Asiatica* series was edited by Jan Vrhovski and Jana S. Rožker. The foreword was contributed by Vera Schwarcz, a professor emerita at Wesleyan University and Hebrew University of Jerusalem.

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