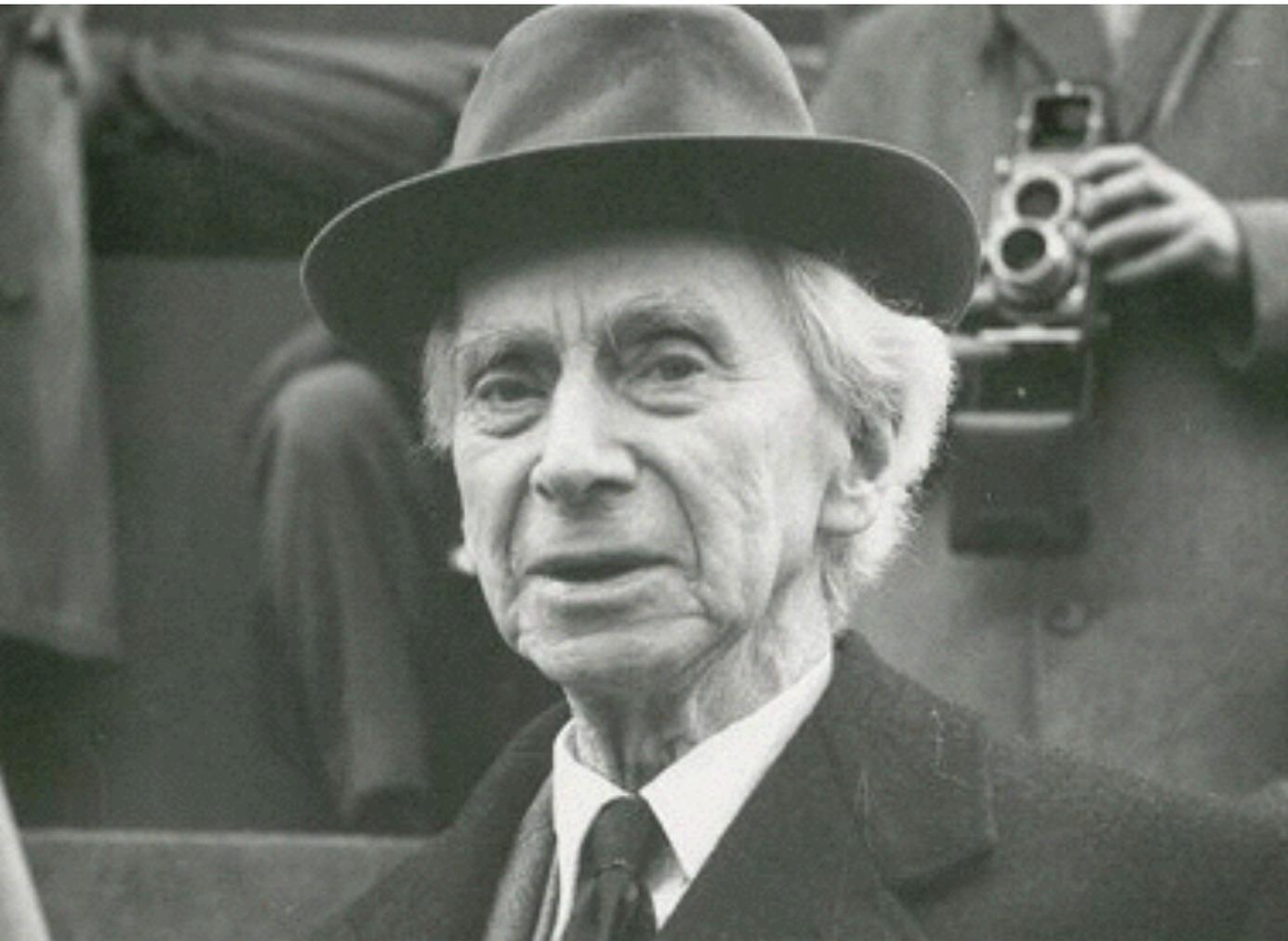


# “The Value of Philosophy”

Bertrand Russell

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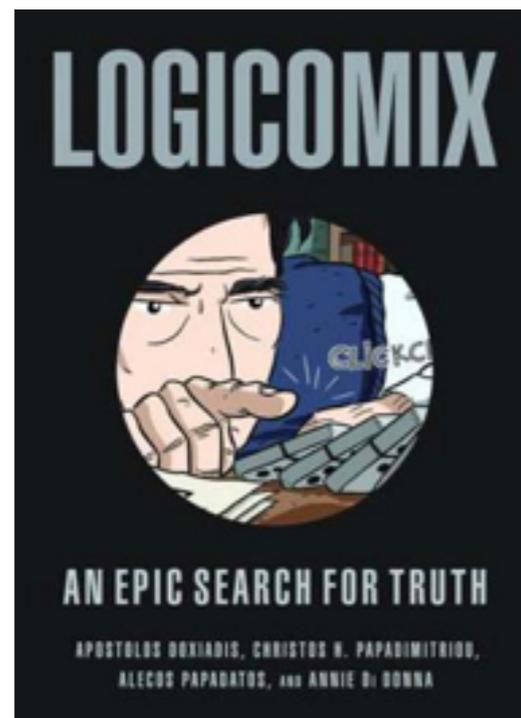
## Biography

## Influence and Major Works

*Principia Mathematica* with Alfred North Whitehead c - 1913

*The Problems of Philosophy* 1912

*Marriage and Morals* 1929



Accessed on 8.12.15 at <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Logicomix>



# Discussion questions for Russell

1. How would you describe Russell's practical person?
2. Why not live one's life as a practical person?
3. What are the goals of philosophy?
4. What does Russell think is the central value of philosophical inquiry?
5. Characterize the instinctive individual.
6. What is "enlargement of self"?
7. How does philosophical thinking relate to living and acting in the world Suggest some examples.

# Key Concepts From Russell

## 1. Intrinsic v. instrumental value

- Direct v. indirect value (2)
- Practical science v. the residue (4)
- Speculative v. practical interest (5)

## 2. Self v. not self

Self-assertion, in philosophic speculation as elsewhere, views the world as a means to its own ends; thus it makes the world of less account than Self, and the Self sets bounds to the greatness of its goods. In contemplation, on the contrary, we start from the not-Self, and through its greatness the boundaries of Self are enlarged; through the infinity of the universe the mind which contemplates it achieves some share in infinity (9).

# 3. Habit, custom, prejudice v. reason

“The man who has no tincture of philosophy goes through life imprisoned in the prejudices derived from common sense, from the habitual beliefs of his age or his nation, and from convictions which have grown up in his mind without the co-operation or consent of his deliberate reason. To such a man the world tends to become definite, finite, obvious; common objects rouse no questions, and unfamiliar possibilities are contemptuously rejected” (7).

“Philosophy, though unable to tell us with certainty what is the true answer to the doubts which it raises, is able to suggest many possibilities which enlarge our thoughts and free them from the tyranny of custom” (7)

# 4. Imprisonment v. freedom

“The life of the instinctive man is shut up within the circle of his private interests: family and friends may be included, but the outer world is not regarded except as it may help or hinder what comes within the circle of instinctive wishes. In such a life there is something feverish and confined, in comparison with which the philosophic life is calm and free. The private world of instinctive interests is a small one, set in the midst of a great and powerful world which must, sooner or later, lay our private world in ruins. Unless we can so enlarge our interests as to include the whole outer world, we remain like a garrison in a beleaguered fortress, knowing that the enemy prevents escape and that ultimate surrender is inevitable. In such a life there is no peace, but a constant strife between the insistence of desire and the powerlessness of will. In one way or another, if our life is to be great and free, we must escape this prison and this strife” (8)

Thus contemplation enlarges not only the objects of our thoughts, but also the objects of our actions and our affections: it makes us citizens of the universe, not only of one walled city at war with all the rest. In this citizenship of the universe consists man's true freedom, and his liberation from the thralldom of narrow hopes and fears” (12).

# 5. Subject v. Object

There is a widespread philosophical tendency towards the view which tells us that Man is the measure of all things, that truth is man-made, that space and time and the world of universals are properties of the mind, and that, if there be anything not created by the mind, it is unknowable and of no account for us. This view, if our previous discussions were correct, is untrue; but in addition to being untrue, it has the effect of robbing philosophic contemplation of all that gives it value, since it fetters contemplation to Self. What it calls knowledge is not a union with the not-Self, but a set of prejudices, habits, and desires, making an impenetrable veil between us and the world beyond. The man who finds pleasure in such a theory of knowledge is like the man who never leaves the domestic circle for fear his word might not be law” (10).