

RUSSELL'S IDEALIST APPRENTICESHIP:
IDEALIST OR REALIST?

Nick Griffin, *Russell's Idealist Apprenticeship*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1991. xiv + 410 pp.

Reviewed by

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This book is about the first theoretic philosophy of Russell up to 1899. The education received by Russell, his intellectual environment and his first philosophical position, neo-Hegelianism, are revisited in the first, second and third chapters. Griffin also explains in the third chapter Russell's decision to work on a system of sciences using a Kantian method (What are the conditions that make possible the experience of the subject-matter of a science?) and employing a structure that is dialectical (in each science there are contradictions which are resolved by passing from one science into a science conceptually broader). Griffin calls this "the Tiergarten programme". The fourth, fifth and sixth chapters deal with Russell's attempts to construct such a system, and are devoted respectively to Geometry, Physics and pure Mathematics. Griffin explains exhaustively Russell's theories and arguments, their difficulties, mistakes and probable origins and influences.

In the seventh chapter, entitled "Logic", Griffin analyzes the influence of Moore, and the most remote antecedent of *The Principles of Mathematics*, Russell's manuscript, *An Analysis of Mathematical Reasoning* (1898). The eighth and last chapter entitled "Relations" is about the conception of those entities held by Russell at that time. This conception would be the key to understanding Russell's evolution towards analytical philosophy. Griffin's great exegetical work makes this book a helpful aid in reading vols. 1 and 2 of *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell* and *An Essay on the Foundations of Geometry* (1897, frequently called *Essay* in the following discussion).