



The Analysis of Mind

Bertrand Russell (1872 – 1970)

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The Analysis of Mind was written by Bertrand Russell in 1921 to attempt to reconcile the growing materialism of psychology, which was seeking a grounding in physiology and evidence gained by observation, with the discoveries of modern physics, such as relativity and quantum mechanics, that took the discipline beyond the Newtonian materialistic concepts of matter into the realm of energy and more. In doing so Russell brought forth a new conception of the mind that draws on the work of William James and the American “new realists” that postulates that “the ‘stuff’ of the world is neither mental nor material, but a ‘neutral stuff’, out of which both are constructed.” He supports his thinking with comprehensive investigations into belief,

instinct, habit, desire, feeling, memory, language and meaning. Russell’s reasoning has provided the foundation for many subsequent theories of mind as well as a structure for his subsequent work. As such, *The Analysis of Mind* remains one of the most important works in the field.

Bertrand Russell (May 18, 1872 – February 2, 1970) was a British philosopher and logician as well as a writer, historian, social critic and political activist. He is considered one of the founders of analytic philosophy, along with Gottlob Frege, G. E. Moore, and his protégé Ludwig Wittgenstein, and led the British “revolt against idealism”. His work in philosophy had a major impact on the philosophy of language, epistemology, and metaphysics, which, in turn, exerted a major influence on logic, mathematics, linguistics, artificial intelligence and computer science. He attempted to formulate a logical basis for mathematics in *Principia Mathematica*, which he wrote with Alfred North Whitehead.

Although he was born into one of the most prominent aristocratic British families, Russell was a vocal anti-war activist and was imprisoned for his pacifism during World War I. He was anti-imperialist, campaigned against Hitler, criticized Stalinism, opposed the United States involvement in Vietnam and advocated nuclear disarmament. He was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1950 for his writing to “champion humanitarian ideals and freedom of thought”.