

# METAPHYSICS, MYSTICISM AND RUSSELL<sup>1</sup>

*Alan Schwerin*  
*Monmouth University*

August and September 1911 mark characteristic high and low points in Russell's philosophical and personal endeavors. On Friday afternoon August 11 he completed the final chapter of his shilling shocker *The Problems of Philosophy* – a compact text of fifteen chapters that would endear Russell to generations of philosophers and students of philosophy. August 1911 also marks a high point in the relationship between Russell and Lady Ottoline. The euphoric summer of 1911 that they spent together in the English countryside around Peppard Cottage would be fondly remembered by both lovers. Within a week of the completion of *The Problems of Philosophy* Russell developed an elaborate outline for a new manuscript, tentatively titled "Prisons", that the two of them were to work on. Russell would later approvingly refer to the resulting manuscript as "great."<sup>2</sup> Unfortunately, the euphoria of August would soon dissolve, to be replaced by the tribulations of an anguished September.<sup>3</sup>

In one of the longest and most autobiographical of his letters to Lady Ottoline written late September 1911, Russell expresses his great disappointment with philosophy. As he sees it, his philosophical endeavors have not yielded the fruits he has long desired. An indication of the depths of his despair can be gleaned from his scathing comment that even Hegel has failed him:

Even when I accepted Hegel, however, I found flaws in most of the comfortable consequences [of his philosophy].<sup>4</sup> (Letter #199, September 28, 1911)

More pointedly, Russell complains that philosophy has unfortunately not produced a set of religious beliefs that he can rely on in his personal life. Early in his career philosophy *had* appeared very promising. As Russell puts it,

It was largely the hope of getting a religion out of philosophy that led me to take it up.  
(Letter #199, September 28, 1911)

But the realization that much philosophy is unacceptable and, most significantly, the adoption of G.E. Moore's philosophical views puts paid to "the last hope of getting any creed out of philosophy." As Russell laconically puts it, "this was a great disappointment, and helped to turn me back to mathematics." (Letter #199, September 28, 1911)

What are we to make of these criticisms of philosophy? Are they well founded? I think not. As I shall show, by the end of September 1911 Russell ought to *celebrate* – and not complain – about the products of his philosophical endeavors. While philosophy might not have yielded any religious beliefs or creeds, I shall argue that it *has* provided Russell a tool that can be used by him to generate his long sought for religion. What is more, or so I suggest, the philosophical instrument for this desired religion *lies right before his eyes*, buried in his correspondence with Lady Ottoline. Less cryptically, I shall demonstrate that in his exchanges with Lady Ottoline, Russell implicitly commits himself to a fascinating methodological hypothesis on the relationship between emotions and understanding: a methodological hypothesis that can be used to produce the religion that Russell is after in 1911. As I shall argue, this implicit hypothesis will later form the basis of some of Russell's most obscure writing on religion – namely, his work on mysticism. Whether Russell's later mysticism is the religion he is after in 1911, is an issue that I shall not pursue here.

## **Section One: The Hidden Tool – Russell's Implicit Hypothesis**

Triumphant! If there is one word that can be said to accurately sum up Lady Ottoline's letter to Russell on Saturday August 12 1911, it is the word "triumphant." Barely able to contain herself, Lady Ottoline writes joyously about her lover's "delightful long letter. I wish you knew all the great happiness you give me..."<sup>5</sup> Congratulations are in order because Russell, apparently, has made a discovery that is likely to significantly impact his life and his work. What he has unearthed – or so it seems – is a spiritual vision that

has long eluded him. Prefacing her jubilant response with an uncharacteristic cautionary note, Lady Ottoline refers to Russell's claims about his transformation in dramatic terms:

It is difficult for me to tell but I should quite believe that...you have broken through some wall and have come out into a world of light and of possibilities and of visions that you were not in before, although you often saw into it and had all the love of it in you and desire for it. (Letter #081466)

What made it possible to break through into this world of light, possibilities and visions? Why did Russell succeed where he had previously failed, despite his best efforts?

Russell has an answer for us. In his view, his enhanced abilities have made it possible for him to break into the new enchanting world of light, possibilities and visions. In his letter on Friday morning August 11 Russell boldly announces that he has reached a milestone in his spiritual endeavors:

It really is the truth, and not delusion, that my powers have expanded lately. I have more freedom, more mastery, more insight, more energy. (Letter #168)

As Russell sees it, his powers have expanded lately, thereby enabling him to accomplish *two* related objectives that he has long regarded as vital in his search for a spiritual vision:

In the first place, Russell suggests that the recent expansion in his powers has enhanced his compassion for a thinker he has long held in high esteem. This is the philosopher Baruch Spinoza. The heightened interest in, and concern for Spinoza furthermore enables Russell – as he sees it – to more fully relate to the ideas and reasoning of the *Ethics*.

In the second place, the (alleged) increase in his (emotional) sensitivity to Spinoza's philosophy, apparently, enables Russell to more fully comprehend its intricate metaphysical and ethical analyses.

Adopting the view that the spiritual vision he is after is best articulated by Spinoza, Russell willingly concedes that the full import of Spinoza's thought escaped him until Lady Ottoline came into his life and enriched his existence with her love. While Spinoza (apparently) has long been "one of the most important people in my world", it is the emotional involvement with Lady Ottoline that finally enables Russell to realize the full significance of the views expressed by the author of *Ethics*. In short, in the August 1911 correspondence to Lady Ottoline, Russell suggests that one's concern for an individual can significantly influence attempts to comprehend that individual's writing. As he puts it to Lady Ottoline:

I find his importance grows greater and greater to me – all my thought makes me understand him better, and see the things he is meaning to say more clearly and with more knowledge of their importance. *I felt an uneasiness [with Spinoza's thought] until we had shared him.* (Letter #168, my emphasis and insert)

What Russell appears to be suggesting here is that even though he has studied Spinoza for many years,<sup>6</sup> the full import of the logical deductions in *Ethics* was not fully mastered by him. So, the co-author of *Principia Mathematica* – arguably *the* most demanding text in logic – is frank about his inability to comprehend Spinoza's thought. Intellectual acuity, apparently, is insufficient where the comprehension of Spinoza's inferences about God are concerned: to fully appreciate Spinoza's religious writing one has also to be emotionally receptive to his thought. And as far as Russell is concerned, it is the love affair with Lady Ottoline that finally provides the necessary emotional foundation that he suggests is needed to fully comprehend Spinoza. Hence his telling remark to her that he "*felt an uneasiness [with Spinoza's thought] until we had shared him.*" (Letter #168, my emphasis)

This reference – a better word might be 'concession' – that feelings or emotions play a major role in the comprehension of one of the most intellectually demanding philosophers of religion clearly stirred Lady Ottoline. For she immediately declared that she is now "very anxious to read Spinoza over again with you, for now I feel you have shown me the essence of him and of his great vision and I want to make his thought real and living in me." (Letter #081466, Lady Ottoline's emphasis) If Spinoza could come to life within Russell – an aristocratic, aloof English philosopher long impressed by the benefits of hard dry reasoning – surely Spinoza could also come to life in the more passionate Lady Ottoline. If Russell's love for Lady

Ottoline in fact had made it possible for *him* to finally grasp Spinoza, surely *her* love for Russell - with his generous assistance - would enable Lady Ottoline to grasp Spinoza as well. Lady Ottoline would no longer view Spinoza's so-called 'great vision' as a cold, detached intellectual construct remote from her life. Given what Russell had revealed in his letter of August 11 1911, Lady Ottoline would now look more favorably on Spinoza, and most important for Russell, view Russell as an invaluable *emotionally enlightened* guide to this demanding philosopher's work.<sup>7</sup> From now on both Russell and Lady Ottoline would view Spinoza's thought as a vibrant relevant set of ideas that could enrich one's life. Now that Russell had drawn attention to a dimension of Spinoza's thought (presumably) not mentioned before in his exchanges with Lady Ottoline – a dimension she found most attractive – Lady Ottoline was more willing than ever to involve herself with the logical and conceptual intricacies of *Ethics*.<sup>8</sup>

These exchanges between Russell and Lady Ottoline suggest a tantalizing hypothesis on the relationship between the *comprehension* of Spinoza's metaphysical (or ethical) writing and *the state of mind* of the reader of this work. Unless the reader of the work *Ethics* possesses the appropriate *emotional* state of mind, the full significance of this demanding text will not be grasped. Readers of this text must be emotionally receptive for the work to resonate with them. But Spinoza's *Ethics* is not the only metaphysical text that relies on intricate technical terminology in its attempt to say something significant about the universe and God. This suggests that we can broaden the scope of these observations on reading Spinoza to other metaphysical texts about the universe and God. In that case, a more general version of this implicit view from the correspondence can be articulated as follows:

Metaphysical inquiries into the universe and God cannot be fully understood unless the readers of these metaphysical works possess the appropriate *emotional* frame of mind.

Given that it appears that Russell is its prime author, for convenience I shall refer to this as Russell's implicit hypothesis or 'RIH' for short. In my view, this thesis on the relationship between understanding and the emotions plays a vital role in many of Russell's more obscure philosophical contributions: namely, those writings on religion that adopt a decidedly "mystical slant."

Critics have long struggled with Russell's writing on religion and mysticism. As is well known, Ludwig Wittgenstein expressed his views in no uncertain terms in October 1912, immediately after the publication of Russell's "The Essence of Religion." (*The Hibbert Journal* October 11, 1912) As far as Wittgenstein was concerned, this publication marked Russell's renunciation of his earlier commitment to precision – a commitment that had characterized *Principia Mathematica*. As Wittgenstein saw it, his renowned professor had now become "a traitor to the gospel of exactness...wantonly [using] words vaguely..." Russell was now writing on issues that were "too intimate for print."<sup>9</sup> Critics, like Wittgenstein, that complain about Russell's reliance on imprecise emotional terminology in his writings on religion might do well to reconsider the implicit hypothesis and its role in Russell's religious writing. As I shall now demonstrate, this hypothesis plays a central role in Russell's obscure and challenging mystical writings.

## Section Two: Hypothesis RIH and Russell's Mysticism

In my view, Russell's most mystical works appear between 1901 and 1914. While mysticism seems to be a recurrent interest of his throughout his career, the twenty-one fragments that are part of the unpublished manuscript, *The Pilgrimage of Life* – a work inspired by a traumatic experience with Evelyn North Whitehead in 1901 – seem to be the earliest, admittedly hesitant treatment of the issue. On the other hand, the July 1914 essay "Mysticism and Logic", appears to constitute the apex of the more intense mystical phase of Russell's career. Excluding the numerous references to mysticism in his voluminous correspondence with Lady Ottoline, Russell produced four other major statements on mysticism. A very popular paper, "The Freeman's Worship", was published in December 1903: this paper seems to mark his earliest systematic public treatment of the issue. The unpublished manuscript "Prisons" that he completed in September 1911, the novel *The Perplexities of John Forstice* that he completed in August 1912 and the essay "The Essence of Religion", that was completed in October 1912 all contain numerous references to mysticism – both implicit and explicit. I want to say a little about one of these essays: namely the paper "Mysticism and Logic." Coming as it does at the end of his most ardent mystical phase – remember, that by now Russell has spent thirteen years (on and off) writing about mysticism - this paper is likely to contain the

most sophisticated and developed account of mysticism he produced between 1901 and 1914.<sup>10</sup> As we shall see, a variant of Russell's implicit hypothesis RIH features prominently in "Mysticism and Logic" – an account that must surely rank as one of Russell's most enigmatic essays on religion. The paper was published exactly three years after the exchanges with Lady Ottoline that I have referred to earlier. Let's briefly consider the argument of this paper to see precisely how hypothesis RIH is made explicit in one of Russell's most prominent published writings in religion.

"Mysticism and Logic" opens with a consideration of the metaphysical thoughts of Heraclitus and Plato. The remarks on Heraclitus are especially noteworthy, as they serve to illustrate a variant of the implicit hypothesis on emotion and comprehension (hypothesis RIH) that we are considering. After reminding us of one of the famous assertions from Heraclitus on universal flux – "Time builds and destroys all things" – Russell suggests that many of the Heraclitean metaphysical fragments are likely to be the result primarily of *scientific* observations. For instance, the paradoxical fragment, "The sun is new every day", for Russell "is obviously inspired by scientific reflection, and no doubt seemed [to Heraclitus] to obviate the difficulty of understanding how the sun can work its way underground from west to east during the night." (G & A: 109-10, my insert)

However, in addition to those metaphysical fragments from Heraclitus that are predominantly *scientific*, Russell detects metaphysical fragments that are imbued with a distinctive *emotional* coloring. For instance, in his view, the assertion, "We step and do not step into the same rivers; we are and are not," is an example of a metaphysical fragment that expresses a particularly intense and deep "*feeling* in regard to what is believed about the universe." (ibid 110, my emphasis) According to Russell, we should not regard this as an emotionally neutral statement about reality. No. As he sees it, this is a metaphysical statement that reveals more about Heraclitus's emotional condition than the condition of the universe. Furthermore, the emotional frame of mind, or "*feeling*", that (apparently) is represented by this metaphysical fragment is provocative, in that it ultimately "leads Heraclitus, on the basis of his science, to strangely poignant sayings concerning life and the world, such as: 'Time is a child playing draughts, the kingly power is a child's.'" (G & A: 110)

But this particular emotional frame of mind or feeling that apparently prompts Heraclitus to produce "strangely poignant sayings concerning life and the world" is the very essence of mysticism, according to Russell. For mysticism, according to the argument in "Mysticism and Logic" is "little more than a certain intensity and depth of feeling in regard to what is believed about the universe..." (G & A: 110).<sup>11</sup> So the metaphysical thoughts of Heraclitus, for Russell, are founded on two complementary impulses: namely, the desire to acquire knowledge of the universe and the desire to express emotional feelings about this universe. Science, with its reliance on logic and empiricism, satisfies the first impulse, while mysticism, with its reliance on emotion, satisfies the second. From this it follows that any attempt to fully understand the *metaphysical* thought of Heraclitus – according to Russell – must take into account both the scientific and the *emotional* frame of mind of Heraclitus when he wrote his fragments.

This requirement will be difficult to satisfy, for a number of reasons, two of which strike me as especially pressing. Russell has himself drawn attention to one of the difficulties.<sup>12</sup> The two elements – science and mysticism – are particularly difficult, if not impossible to keep apart in the fragments that Heraclitus has bequeathed to us. As Russell sees it, the greatness of Heraclitus (and Plato, for that matter) "lies in the very intimate blending" he achieved of these elements in his writing. In Russell's view, the facts of science "fed the flame of his soul",

and in its light [Heraclitus] saw into the depths of the world by the reflection of his own dancing, swiftly penetrating fire. (G & A: 110)

Given this characterization of Heraclitus, Russell is suggesting that students intent on fully grasping his metaphysics must attend to both the intellectual aspects and to the ever present emotional components of his thought – a task not easy to accomplish, given "the very intimate blending" of both elements. There is a second, arguably more pressing problem that the reader of Heraclitus must face, if Russell's view of the fragments is correct: the reader of the fragments must acquire an insight of the emotional frame of mind of Heraclitus when he produced his fragments. How are we to accomplish this?

Russell, unfortunately, is not forthcoming on this issue. As it turns out, what he *does* do is provide us with an indication of what it will take to acquire knowledge of another's emotional frame of mind. More

particularly, he helps us to understand what this specific knowledge involves. But his account leaves much to be desired. In the first place, he argues that the search for knowledge of another's emotional frame of mind is not to be equated with the search for intellectual - or as he calls it "analytic" - knowledge of the other person's mind. The knowledge we are after is of a different order, apparently. Relying on an analogy to make his point, Russell identifies emotions with intuitions and instincts, and suggests that a hen with a brood of ducklings no doubt has intuition which seems to place her inside them, and not merely to know them analytically. (G & A: 120)

Rather than seek dispassionate remote (intellectual) knowledge of Heraclitus, we ought -- as with the hen and her ducklings -- immerse ourselves in his thoughts.<sup>13</sup> Taking a cue from Henri Bergson, Russell elucidates his proposal that we must acquire an insight of another's emotional frame of mind by suggesting that we learn to *sympathize* with that person. But not any sympathy will do, unfortunately. What is required, apparently, is a form of *intellectual sympathy*:

the kind of *intellectual sympathy* by which one places oneself within an object in order to coincide with what is unique in it and therefore inexpressible.<sup>14</sup> (G & A: 118)

So the long and the short of Russell's views on the fragments from Heraclitus is that if we are intent on fully understanding these metaphysical fragments, we must transport ourselves into his *gestalt*: we need to foster an intellectual sympathy of Heraclitus *the person* if we intend to fully comprehend his (obscure) metaphysical writings. Without this requisite intellectual sympathy, the texts that Heraclitus produced will not resonate emotionally with us, and they will therefore remain elusive.

But is this not a variant of the implicit hypothesis on the understanding and the emotions that I referred to earlier on; namely, hypothesis RIH? I think so. That is to say, Russell's 1914 views on intellectual sympathy and their role in his account of mysticism appear to be little more than a more elaborate public variant of the views that he earlier implicitly relied on in his correspondence with Lady Ottoline in 1911. If my analyses of the correspondence and the paper "Mysticism and Logic" is correct, we must conclude that Russell's ideas on the relationship between the understanding and the emotions are remarkably consistent -- at least within his "mystical phase." For all the obscurity associated with these ideas, there appears to be a constant thread linking the disparate expressions of Russell's views. So perhaps his thoughts on these issues are coherent. But are they true? Should we accept his ideas on the relationship between the understanding and the emotions? I would like to conclude with a few comments on this important issue. For the sake of brevity, I'll confine myself to *two* issues: the one critical, the other speculative.

## CONCLUSION

### Reflections on Hypothesis RIH

Should we accept Russell's views on the relationship between the understanding and the emotions? To begin with, what reasons has *he* provided us for accepting hypothesis RIH? Given that this is an *implicit* thesis in both the correspondence and the paper "Mysticism and Logic", it is probably unreasonable to demand an *overt* justification of the thesis. But what about some other argumentation from Russell that we accept the thesis on the link between emotion and the understanding?

To the best of my knowledge, Russell is silent on this important issue. For instance, in "Mysticism and Logic", as we have seen, he regards the following paradoxical fragment from Heraclitus as mystical:

We step and do not step into the same rivers; we are and are not. (G & A: 110)

Russell has absolutely no hesitation about the status of this statement. From his point of view, this is definitely not a scientific but a mystical statement. According to him, there can be no doubt that this is a statement that expresses "a certain intensity and depth of feeling in regard to what is believed about the universe." (G & A: 110) But what leads Russell to this assessment? Is there something about the *statement* itself that determines its mystical or emotional character? How are we to judge when any given statement is mystical, as opposed to scientific? Do references to the *context* not play a role in our assessment of the statement? Apparently not for Russell, for in "Mysticism and Logic" he says absolutely nothing about the context in which Heraclitus operated. These, and other related questions on the viability of hypothesis RIH

oblige us to treat Russell's implicit views on the relationship between the understanding and the emotions with a great deal of care.

On the other hand – on a more speculative note – hypothesis RIH and its variants in Russell's writing on mysticism might constitute the precursors to a new research program in philosophy, especially the philosophy of language. The 1911 suggestion that Spinoza's metaphysics, and the later 1914 proposal that the fragments from Heraclitus are essentially connected to the emotional impulses of these philosophers has interesting ramifications for philosophy. What Russell might be suggesting is that we reassess the nature of metaphysical statements – especially where these statements are about God and the universe. More specifically, his writing on mysticism might amount to the proposal that we develop strategies to reveal the emotional frames of mind of the (mystical) metaphysicians responsible for the challenging, often obscure texts on the universe and God. G.J. Warnock has something to say about the history of moral philosophy that might prove useful here in our consideration of Russell's implicit views on metaphysical statements.

In his lucid text *Contemporary Moral Philosophy*, Warnock argues that when philosophers like Carnap, Schlick and Ayer analyzed moral judgments or statements, their suggestions that these were not verifiable assertions of fact, but expressions of commands, rules and feelings respectively, amounted to little more than pot shots to assist others in their attempts to identify the quarry. As Warnock puts it, their ideas on the nature of moral statements were scarcely more than sighting shots, fired off rather hastily as possible preliminaries to a full-blown campaign, by philosophers whose real interests were not in moral philosophy at all. (Warnock 1967, 20)

Perhaps Russell, in his 1911 correspondence with Lady Ottoline and in his later published writing on mysticism, is laying the groundwork for “a full-blown campaign” on the status of metaphysical statements. Perhaps Russell is inaugurating a campaign that, in his opinion, must acknowledge the vital role played by the emotions in the formulation – and hence the full comprehension - of these metaphysical statements. Or as Warnock might have put it, Russell's exchanges about mysticism and religion in 1911 can be viewed not only as a manifestation of his longstanding determination to find a religion, but also as an invitation to us to develop a satisfactory *humane* account of metaphysical statements about God and the universe.

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## ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the 2001 annual meeting of the Bertrand Russell Society at McMaster University (Canada) and at the Wittgenstein/Russell conference at American University (March 2000). I would like to thank the participants at these sessions for their helpful criticisms of my analysis and arguments. I must also thank Guy Oakes for his perceptive responses to one of these earlier attempts.

<sup>2</sup> Russell soon tempered this (overblown) assessment. For instance, on February 10, 1912 he writes the following to Lady Ottoline: "In the summer I thought "Prisons" was great – now I see it was only great in idea, not in achievement." (Letter #339)

<sup>3</sup> Early September 1911 Mother Julian, a nun who was particularly close to Lady Ottoline, died. The death of Mother Julian left emotional scars on Lady Ottoline that took a long time to heal.

<sup>4</sup> In his letter Russell also points out that McTaggart's Idealism ultimately proved equally unacceptable.

<sup>5</sup> Was Lady Ottoline excited merely because Russell had discovered his spiritual vision, or was there more to her exuberance? I think that she was also celebrating *her own* success at converting Russell to her way of viewing matters. On the role of Lady Ottoline in Russell's evolving conception of philosophy see my article, "A Lady, Her Philosopher and a Contradiction" in *Russell* Vol. 19, No 1 (5-28).

<sup>6</sup> In his letter Russell reminds Lady Ottoline of the extent of his interest in Spinoza: "Ever since I first read Pollock's book, which was when I was an undergraduate, Spinoza has been one of the most important people in my world." (Letter #168) Russell is alluding here to Sir Frederick Pollock's biography of Spinoza: *Spinoza: His Life and Philosophy*, London, Kegan Paul, 1880.

<sup>7</sup> Unfortunately, this renewed interest in Spinoza by Lady Ottoline was short lived. As the correspondence between her and Russell makes abundantly clear, within weeks of her euphoric letter to Russell Lady Ottoline expresses serious misgivings about Russell's reliance on the intellect to acquire a philosophy of religion. These misgivings ultimately manifest themselves in a series of sharply worded exchanges between the lovers in December 1911 – coming to a head at the end of the month. After what must have been an especially violent outburst, Russell expresses remorse:

I can't think why I burst out as I did – it was the effect of old times and habits I suppose. I do really believe that my [religious] outlook is narrow and bigoted and not what I want it to be ...

[He continues] It is difficult for you to disentangle what I understand and what I don't understand in your religion. I understand your passion for it and what it is and why you care about it... You... don't understand my allegiance to reason, which seems to you to depend on not seeing something. (Letter from Trinity College, Cambridge)

My, how the world had changed for the two lovers! The warm ecstatic August exchanges had given way to cold accusatory remarks meant to hurt.

<sup>8</sup> Russell refers to Spinoza on a number of occasions in the correspondence between March and August 1911 - generally in a very enthusiastic manner - but Lady Ottoline displays little, if any interest in these references. For instance, on May 24 Russell sends her a letter with an elaborate account of a forthcoming lecture on Spinoza's *Ethics*, and the response from Lady Ottoline is a cursory seven words: "I like your lecture on Spinoza immensely." (Letters # 81 and # 081370 respectively.)

<sup>9</sup> Wittgenstein's objections are dealt with in two letters that Russell wrote to Lady Ottoline. On October 8 1911, he remarks as follows: "Here is Wittgenstein just arrived, frightfully pained by my *Hibbert* article which he evidently *detests*." (#597) Three days later, when he elaborates on Wittgenstein's objections, Russell makes it clear that the objections hurt: "Wittgenstein was really unhappy about my paper on religion... I minded very much, because I half agree with him." [*The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, Volume 12: 111 (ed. Rempel, Brink and Moran)] With strong reactions like this, it is no wonder that Wittgenstein would later formulate his famous proposition #7 from the *Tractatus*: "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence."

<sup>10</sup> *The Principles of Social Reconstruction* (1916) also contains sections on religion that appear sympathetic to mysticism.

<sup>11</sup> In "The Essence of Religion" (1912) Russell expresses similar sentiments when he stresses the centrality of emotion in religion: Indeed, it may be not belief but *feeling* that makes religion: a feeling which, when brought into the sphere of belief, may involve the conviction that this or that is good, but may, if it remains untouched by intellect, be only a feeling and yet be dominant in action. (G & A: 57, my emphasis)

<sup>12</sup> Numerous other difficulties also arise. For instance, how do we possibly recreate the emotional conditions under which Heraclitus produced his fragments? Would we be able to verify the adequacy of our efforts? These are only a few of the issues that Russell does not appear to anticipate in his analysis.

<sup>13</sup> This requirement that we become one with the other that we are attempting to understand is a fundamental tenet of much eastern thought. The philosophy of the Upanishads, for instance, requires us not to attempt to think about reality, but to immerse ourselves in it. Rather than attempt to acquire knowledge about reality, we ought to strive to become it. As S. Radhakrishnan puts it in *Indian Philosophy*, in our attempts to learn about God, for instance,

we allow the mind to settle on the object, penetrate it, and become one with it. The worship of God, the practice of goodness and the pursuit of truth are aids to the building up of the life of truth in the soul. While the speculative mind contemplates the being of God, the emotional nature in its passionate devotion for God loses itself in Him. There is an intense realisation, which pulses through the whole being, a becoming one with God as it were. (231)

<sup>14</sup> Russell objects strongly to Bergson's views and arguments in "Mysticism and Logic." But it seems that where the explication of one of his own positions is concerned, Russell is quite comfortable to rely on Bergson's analysis.