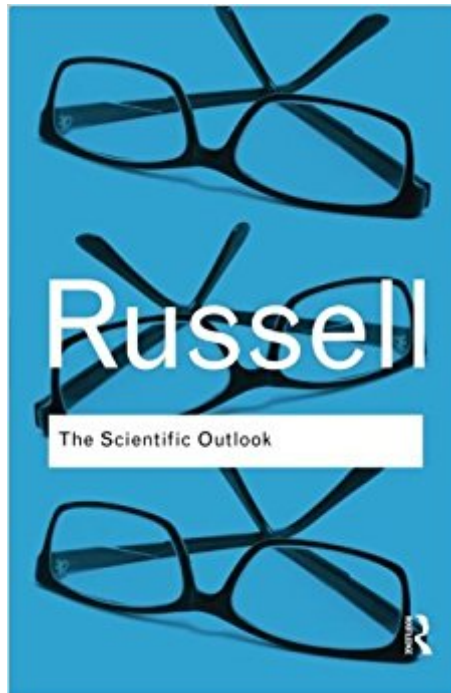




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# The Scientific Outlook (Routledge Classics) (Volume 26)



## Synopsis

According to Bertrand Russell, science is knowledge; that which seeks general laws connecting a number of particular facts. It is, he argues, far superior to art, where much of the knowledge is intangible and assumed. In *The Scientific Outlook*, Russell delivers one of his most important works, exploring the nature and scope of scientific knowledge, the increased power over nature that science affords and the changes in the lives of human beings that result from new forms of science. Insightful and accessible, this impressive work sees Russell at his very best.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A scientific opinion is one which there is some reason to believe is true; an unscientific opinion is one which is held for some reason other than its probable truth.&#150;Bertrand Russell --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Bertrand Russell (1872â1970) was one of the most formidable thinkers of the modern era. A philosopher, mathematician, educational innovator, champion of intellectual, social and sexual freedom, and a campaigner for peace and human rights, he was also a prolific writer of popular and influential books, essays and lectures on an extensive range of subjects. Considered to be one of the most controversial figures of the twentieth century, Bertrand Russell is widely renowned for his provocative writings. These definitive works offer profound insights and forward-thinking perspectives on a changing western society progressively shaped, most significantly, by two world

wars, the decline of British imperialism and an evolving moral landscape.

This is a Bertrand Russell deep-track that explores how science has affected the world (up to 1931 when this was first published), and his prophecies of how science would affect the future world. His assessments are keen, albeit at times seemingly a bit rambling. His predictions have proven, so far, to be a tad pessimistic, but they are still great food for thought. This book deserves a spot on every Russell reader's bookshelf, but it may be a bit "non-epic" for anybody looking for some of Mr. Russell's more notable and heroic works.

Bertrand Arthur William Russell (1872-1970) was an influential British philosopher, logician, mathematician, and political activist. In 1950, he was awarded the Nobel Prize in Literature, in recognition of his many books such as *A History of Western Philosophy*, *The Problems of Philosophy*, *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, *The Analysis of Matter*, *Our Knowledge of the External World*, *Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits*, *Mysticism and Logic*, etc. He wrote in the Introduction to this 1931 book, "In considering the effect of science upon human life we have therefore three more or less separate matters to examine. The first is the nature and scope of scientific knowledge, the second the increased power or manipulation derived from scientific technique, and the third the changes in social life and in traditional institutions which must result from the new forms of organization that scientific technique demands... In the following pages we will be concerned with science rather than with wisdom. It is well to remember, however, that this preoccupation is one-sided and needs to be corrected if a balanced view of human life is to be achieved." He suggests, "the theory of evolution might have been admitted by some people without too great a struggle, but in the popular mind Darwinism became identified with the hypothesis that men are descended from monkeys. This was painful to our human conceit... As it is, people have always been able to defend their self-esteem, under the impression that they were defending religion. Moreover, we know that men have souls, whereas monkeys have none. If men developed gradually out of monkeys, at what moment did they acquire a soul? The problem is really not any worse than the problem as to the particular stage at which the fetus develops a soul, but new difficulties always seem worse than old ones..." (Pg. 43) He states, "The limitations of scientific method may be collected under three heads: (1) doubts as to the validity of induction; (2) the difficulty of drawing inferences from what is experienced to what is not experienced; and (3) even allowing that there can be inference to what is not experienced, the fact that such inference must be of an extremely abstract character, and gives, therefore, less information than it appears to do when

ordinary language is employed." (Pg. 74)He asserts, "It is easy to invent a metaphysic which will have as a consequence that induction is valid, and many men have done so; but they have not shown any reason to believe in their metaphysic except that it was pleasant. The metaphysic of Bergson, for example, is undoubtedly peasant: like cocktails, it enables us to see the world as a unity without sharp distinctions, and all of it vaguely agreeable, but it has no better claim than cocktails have to be included in the technique for the pursuit of knowledge." (Pg. 76)He explains, "In metaphysics my creed is short and simple. I think that the external world may be an illusion, but if it exists, it consists of events, short, small and haphazard. Order, unity, and continuity are human inventions just as truly as are catalogues and encyclopedias. But human inventions can, within limits, be made to prevail in our human world, and in the conduct of our daily life we may with advantage forget the realm of chaos and old night by which we are perhaps surrounded." (Pg. 98)He comments, "[Sir James] Jeans argues [inÂ The Mysterious Universe] that the world must have been created by a mathematician for the pleasure of seeing these laws in operation... if God were as pure a pure mathematician as His knightly champion supposes, He would have no wish to give a gross external existence in His thoughts... The world, ">Read more

This book written by the nobel prize winning writer,is interesting! I wont go into what the book is about but he does go into how science developed,and how it progressed and the type of scientific world we have today and he offers a surprising conclusion,but not for readers who are used to him. As a philosopher Russell is a writer i read from my early youth,and he is someone whoose papers i believe are now in mcmaster in hamilton, who is quite different. The type of scientific world he describes,is a world where science is manipulated by people,and if those aims are good all is fine and if those aims are bad the opposite is true? Whether our world is heading towards a world of aldous huxley or george orwell is for others to judge. There is an old maxim that as the world becomes one in nature and as science advances this will be true,the advances of society must be felt at the community level,since that is the world of science we experience. An important point he mentions is people dont really try to study or research before they begin they manipulate things to their or some perceived advantage...science are bestadvanced by people he sais at books end filled with love,the poetic or mystic mind,not the manipulator who before he begins his procedure already has in mind what he wants to do,to the advantage of this or that. Of course that view has nothing to do with science,it is a result of all that was going wrong in life...at the beginning of the book he states all people even adults,have child like or scientific minds,there really is not a middling ground. I do believe given the development of society,the absence of religious consciousness is sorely felt

throughout our world, to those worlds ultimate demise, and that's my Christian view...the writer admits the attempt to build a scientific society based on reason even love has failed...so I don't know where the future of the world will go...but the world each year is increasingly Orwellian...and my own view is the departure from a Christian consciousness...as the author says science goes through and is interpreted through a person's mind, and it's best practiced by those filled with love...not be those who manipulate and interfere with the scientific process...manipulators just confirm their own conclusions

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