



# The Spinozistic Ethics of Bertrand Russell (Routledge Library Editions: Russell)

*Kenneth Blackwell*

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Bertrand Russell's professional philosophical reputation rests mainly on his mathematical logic and theory of knowledge. In this study, first published in 1985, however, Kenneth Blackwell considers Russell's writings on ethics and metaethics and uncovers the conceptual unity in Russell's normative ethic. He traces that unity to the influence of Spinoza's central ethical concept, the 'intellectual love of God', and then evaluates the ethic which he terms 'impersonal self-enlargement'.

The introduction discusses the metaethical background to Russell's ethic and the difficulties inherent in Russell's view that ethical knowledge is not possible. The first section then examines Russell's writings on Spinoza from 1894 to 1964, dividing them into three periods, the second part analyzes Russell's two interpretations of the main concept, traces 'impersonal self-enlargement' in Russell's own ethical writings, and evaluates the ethic in relation to other ethical theories and on its own merits as a 'way of living'.

This book provides a foundation for a positive re-evaluation of Russell's status in the major philosophical field of ethics and will be welcomed by students of moral philosophy as well as those interested in Bertrand Russell's works.



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