CHAPTER – IV

QUEST FOR EMPIRICAL CERTAINTY
In this chapter my aim is to consider the notion of empirical certainty. Philosophers have not only found out logical necessity in human knowledge, as we have seen in chapter III, they have also searched for empirical certainty. Empirical certainty lies in those propositions which are directly evident in our empirical experience. They provide foundation to our empirical knowledge. The sceptical arguments can hardly refute such immediately given certainty in our knowledge.

1. RUSSELL’S DEFENCE OF SENSE-DATA

Descartes invented the dream argument to meet the sceptic on his own terms. He came to conclude that even if one dreams one thinks. One’s thinking is beyond doubt, because doubting itself is a form of thinking. If one thinks then one exists. Dreaming and doubting led Russell to a very different conclusion. According to Russell, Descartes is wrong in considering the thinking self as an indubitable truth. Dreaming and doubting have led Russell to what he calls sense-data. He describes sense-data as ‘hard-data’, distinguishing them from ‘soft-data’. The hard data are those which are not the result of any kind of inference. Rather, they function as the ground for inference. Soft-data on the other hand, say more than what is given to experience, so they are quite unlike the hard-data. Explaining the meaning of sense-data Russell points out, “What I mean is just that patch of colour which is momentarily seen when we look at the table, or just that particular hardness which is felt when we press it, or just that particular sound which is heard when we rap it.”¹ So sense-data are distinguished from the physical objects that present them. Tables, chairs, books etc present to our senses colours, hardness, softness, sounds etc. In his earlier work Russell defined sense-data in the following way. “Let us give the name of ‘sense-data’ to the things that are immediately known in sensation: such things as colours, sounds, smells, hardnesses, roughnesses, and so on. We shall give the name ‘sensation’ to the experience of being immediately aware of these things. Thus, whenever we see a colour, we have a sensation of the colour, but the colour itself

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is a sense-datum, not a sensation. The colour is that of which we are immediately aware, and the awareness itself is the sensation. It is plain that if we are to know any thing about the table, it must be by means of the sense-data — brown colour, oblong shape, smoothness etc. which we associate with the table.2 This means that, according to Russell, we are not directly aware of physical objects. If physical reality consists of tables, chairs and books, etc. then by definition they become physical, and if they are physical then we are not immediately aware of them. What we are immediately aware of are colours, sounds, smells, etc., are. This means that sense-data are nonphysical. At least, if it is said that colours, sounds, smells too are physical, they are certainly not physical in the same sense in which chairs, books, tables etc. are. For, we are immediately aware of colours, sounds, smells etc. No such immediate awareness has been granted by Russell to tables, chairs, books etc. Our knowledge of physical objects, if we have any such knowledge, depends on the existence of sense-data.

Russell, like Descartes, wishes to save knowledge from the challenge of the sceptic. He rejects the Cartesian proposal, his Cogito. According to Russell, "'I think, therefore I am' says rather more than is strictly certain."3 What is strictly certain? What goes beyond doubt? According to Russell, it is certainly not the self that thinks. As he remarks, "When I look at my table and see a certain brown colour, what is quite certain at once is not 'I am seeing a brown colour', but rather, 'a brown colour is being seen.'4 So it is not my existence but the existence of the brown colour which is free from uncertainty and doubt. The existence of the brown colour is the existence of a sense-datum. Russell fails to doubt the existence of sense-data. As he says, "the more we reflect upon these, the more we realize exactly what they are, and exactly what a doubt concerning them really means, the more luminously certain do they become."5 The introduction of sense-data is the introduction of the kind of entities, which occur equally in dreams. Existence of material objects is denied in dreams. But dreams accommodate sense-data. The difference between a material object and a sense-datum is that the
former is restricted only to waking experience, but no such restriction can be imposed on a sense-datum. As Russell points out, "In dreams a very complicated world may seem to be present, and yet on waking we find it was a delusion; that is to say, we find that the sense-data in the dream do not appear to have corresponded with such physical objects as we should naturally infer from our sense-data."6 This means that the sense-data that occurred in dreams failed to produce physical objects. It is because of their failure to produce physical objects that led us to say that what we saw in the dreams was all delusion. Of course this does not mean that we saw nothing in dreams. We certainly saw lot of things in dreams, only the things seen were not physical. They were sense-data. So sense-data are not prohibited from occurring in dreams.

It might have become clear that Russell brought sense-data into existence to neutralize the dream argument. But the introduction of sense-data and, their distinction from material objects has led to the introduction of two distinct worlds, the world of which the occupiers are sense-data and the world which is occupied by physical objects. If the occupiers of one world are noises, smells, colour patches etc., then occupiers of the other world are books, chairs tables etc. The world of sense-data is a subjective world whereas the world of physical objects is an objective world. As Russell points out, "our sense-data are situated in our private spaces, either the space of sight or the space of touch or such vaguer spaces as other senses may give us."7 So the distinction between private subjective space and the physical objective space must be made. The two worlds have a big gulf between them. The gulf is not physical, it is logical. A table cannot occupy the kind of space that is occupied by sense-data. Similarly, a colour patch cannot occur in the space which is suitable for physical objects. If not impossible, it is quite difficult to bridge the gulf between private subjective space and the physical objective space. There is no such thing as one private subjective space. There are as many private subjective spaces as are the kinds of sense-data. A red patch differs in kind from the sound, though both are sense-data. The red patch is seen whereas the sound is heard.
Similarly, smells are different from hardness, sounds and red patches. Each sense generates its own space. As Russell points out, “The first thing to notice is that different senses have different spaces. The space of sight is quite different from the space of touch.... And besides touch and sight, there are other kinds of sensation which give other, though less important spaces.”\(^8\) One all embracing subjective space is a fiction. Each space is qualitatively different from the other. Therefore there cannot be any common bond with them. Of course, this does not mean that these spaces cannot have correlation. Though visual space is unlike an auditory space and the tactual space, the correlation is established between these spaces. As Russell points out, “it is only by experience of infancy that we learn to correlate them. In later life, when we see an object within reach, we know how to touch it, and more or less what it will feel like; if we touch an object with our eyes shut, we know where we should have to look for it, and more or less what it would look like. But this knowledge is derived from early experience of the correlation of certain kinds of touch-sensations with certain kinds of sight-sensations. The one space into which both kinds of sensations fit is an intellectual construction, not a datum.”\(^9\) So the fact that space of tactual sensation is different from the space of visual sensation does not mean that we would fail in correlating a colour-patch with hardness. Rather it is because of this correlation that a material object statement can possibly be verified. Suppose on the basis of a colour patch I make the statement ‘this is a table’. My statement is not restricted to the colour patch. It also refers to the possible tactual, auditory and other sensations. There is an expectation involved that if I touch the object presented by the colour-patch, I will have the sensation of hardness. If I strike it, it will produce a sound, and so on. Unless different spaces are correlated it would be impossible to verify a material object statement. I may not even be in a position to make such a statement.

Consider now the temporal duration of a sense-datum. Can we sense the sense-data twice? Suppose I sense a colour-patch. Soon there is an interruption in my sensing.

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I hear a noise coming from the other room, so my attention has been diverted. Suppose this diversion is removed after some time. I come back to the colour-patch again. Have I seen two colour-patches, one before the interruption and the other after the interruption, or, I have seen only one colour-patch that involves longer duration with an interruption? If the latter alternative is accepted then it is possible to see the same sense-datum twice. But this would dissolve the distinction between sense-data and physical objects. It is possible to see the same physical object twice, because they continue to exist when we are not seeing them. It is because of the hypothesis that a material object can exist even when we do not see it, that it makes sense to say that a material object can be seen twice or thrice. Interruption in perception does not bring about an interruption in the existence of a material object. Same thing cannot be said about a sense-datum. A sense-datum by definition is sensed. Therefore it would be non-sense to talk about unsensed sense-data, and if it is a necessary condition for a sense-datum that it is sensed, then it impossible for the same sense-datum to be sensed twice. A sound that is heard again is numerically different from the sound that was heard earlier. A colour-patch that was seen again is different from the colour-patch that was seen earlier. A sense-datum is sensed only once, whether it is a visual sense-datum or an auditory sense-datum or a tactual sense-datum. Life of a sense-datum is extremely short. Material objects have longer duration, they are quite unlike sense-data. If they do not have longer duration then they would not be material objects at all. If material objects are complex then a sense-datum is simple. There is a sense in which a material object is complex. It is that which is hard, sweet, and white etc. But neither whiteness nor sweetness nor hardness is complex, which may be constituted out of further simpler constituents.

If the same sense-datum cannot be sensed twice, then it is impossible for the same sense-datum to be sensed by numerically two different persons. The colour-patch that I sense is numerically different from the colour-patch sensed by some other person. Of course, all this follows from the subjectivity of sense-data. The issue of subjectivity
presupposes the possibility of objectivity. The possibility of objectivity on its own turn presupposes the hypothesis of other persons or other perceivers. The objective world contains not only physical objects but also other persons. Since our issue is sense-data, so the other persons have to be considered as perceivers, so they have to have minds. In knowing persons or other minds, we have more difficulties than in knowing physical objects. For, physical objects do not have minds, but other persons have minds. Since other persons are not reducible to physical bodies, they pose a greater challenge than the one posed by the physical objects.

So far we have talked about actual sense-data. But we also sometimes refer to possible sense-data. For we talk about, not only those sense-data that are occurring now, we also talk about sense-data that may occur in future if certain conditions are satisfied. When I see a colour-patch, I also expect that if I touch the object that owns the colour-patch, I will have the tactual sense-datum. When the visual sense-datum is occurring, the tactual sense-datum is only a possibility. Consider Mill’s view. He defined matter in terms of the possibility of sensations. According to him, matter is a “permanent possibility of sensations.” The use of the expression ‘permanent possibility’ means both actual and possible sensations. Mill’s sensations are Russell’s sense-data. If Russell has to define matter in Mill’s idiom, it would be something like permanent possibility of sense-data. Matter is that which involves actual and possible sense-data. As Russell says in connection with verification that “verification consists always in the occurrence of an expected sense-datum. Astronomers tell us there will be an ellipse of the moon: we look at the moon, and find the earth’s shadow biting into it, that is to say, we see an appearance quite different from that of the usual full moon. Now if an expected sense-datum constitutes a verification, what was asserted must have been about sense-data; or at any rate, if part has been verified.” The expected sense-data are possible sense-data, the data that would occur if certain conditions were satisfied. It is in this sense that matter would become a Permanent possibility of sense-data.
However, for Mill there is no matter besides sensations. According to a pure phenomenalist, there is no reality over and above sense-data. There are no such things as sense-data and physical objects. Physical objects are reducible to actual and possible sense-data. But Russell rejects this reduction. For him the total reality consists of both kinds of objects, physical and non-physical. Sense-data are non-physical aspects of reality. They are non-physical for the reason that they can also occur in dreams. His position comes closer to the position of Locke, and deviates from the position of Berkeley and Hume. Russell, like Locke, accepts sense-data as the causal products of physical objects. When the physical objects come in contact with the human mind sense data are generated. It is because sense-data are the causal products of the physical objects, that we can infer the existence of physical objects on the basis of sensing sense-data. According to Russell, it would lead to pure absurdities if one accepts existence of only sense-data. Distinguishing material objects from sense-data Russell remarks, "What can be bought and sold and pushed about and have a cloth laid on it, and so on, cannot be a mere collection of sense-data. If the cloth completely hides the table, we shall derive no sense-data from the table, and therefore, if the table were merely sense-data, it would have ceased to exist, and the cloth would be suspended in empty air, resting, by a miracle, in the place where the table formerly was. This seems plainly absurd, but whoever wishes to become a philosopher must learn not to be frightened by absurdities." The unperceived existence of a table is explained in terms of possible sense-data. The table is hidden under the cloth simply means if the cloth is removed there would have occurred those sense-data which constitute a table. Not the actual but the hypothetical sense-data have been used in order to explain the existence of an unseen table. But the hypothetical or possible sense-data are not occurrences of any kind. The table cloth is supported by some thing that occurs, and not supported by something that would possibly occur, if the table cloth is removed. Unless something exists, something occurs, under the table cloth, the table cloth will fall down. It cannot hang in the empty
space. According to Russell, pure phenomenalism i.e. phenomenalism that accepts only the existence of sense-data without accepting the existence of physical objects, would allow the things to hang in the empty space. Allowing physical objects over and above sense-data would be rejecting pure phenomenalism. If Russell is branded as a phenomenalist then he is an impure phenomenalist. For him physical objects are no less real than are sense-data, which disclose their identity. Instead of closing, sense-data disclose the identity of physical objects.

According to Russell, our knowledge has complexities if it is considered in totality. Russell remarks, “There is something that we only believe because of something else from which it has been inferred in some sense, though not necessarily in a strict logical sense, while other parts are believed on their own account, without the support of any outside evidence.” Primitive knowledge is that which is not displaced by dreams and illusions. It is only the derivative knowledge, which is displaced by delusions. A delusion would question a given derivative knowledge. In search for primitive knowledge, Russell gives equal importance to both dreams and waking experience. So for as the primitive knowledge concerned, it is quite useless to make an appeal to the dream argument. As Russell remarks, “Objects of sense are called “real” when they have the kind of connection with other objects of sense which experience has led us to regard as normal; when they fail in this, they are called “illusion”. But what is illusion is only the inferences to which they give rise; in themselves, they are every bit as real as the objects of waking life. And conversely, the sensible objects of waking life must not be expected to have any more intrinsic reality than those of dreams. Dreams and waking life, in our first efforts at construction, must be treated with equal respect; it is only by some reality not merely sensible that dreams can be condemned.” Suppose on the basis of a certain colour-patch I say that ‘I see a table’. May be I have the delusion of the table, and as a matter of fact there is no table. But this is not to deny the perception of the colour-patch. What does not exist is the table in question. This is not to deny the
existence of colour-patch that I sensed. My sensing of the colour-patch exhibits primitive knowledge. My declaration that I see a table exhibits the case of a derivative knowledge. I am wrong about my derivative knowledge but not about my primitive knowledge. Primitive knowledge is that which remains valid in spite of dreams. It is by going beyond the primitive knowledge that one may fall into the trap of dreams and illusions. Knowledge of sense-data is primitive which functions as the ground for inferring non-primitive knowledge of physical objects. So Russell puts dreams on the same platform as the waking experience in explaining the nature of the primitive knowledge.

Closely connected with the distinction between primitive and derivative knowledge is the distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. Knowledge of sense-data is knowledge by acquaintance. As Russell says concerning sense-data “the sense-data which make up the appearance of my table are things with which I have acquaintance, things immediately known to me just as they are.” So one is acquainted with those things only which are not the result of any kind of inference. Sense-data are not the result of any kind of inference. One has direct knowledge of them. But knowledge of a physical object is not of this kind. As Russell points out, “My knowledge of the table as a physical object, on the contrary, is not direct knowledge. Such as it is, it is obtained through acquaintance with the sense-data that make up the appearance of the table. We have seen that it is possible, without absurdity, to doubt whether there is a table at all, whereas it is not possible to doubt the sense-data.” The distinction between real and illusory holds with respect to material objects but not with respect to sense-data. There can be an illusion about a table. What is seen in illusion is not a table, yet something is seen. That what is seen in illusion is merely a sense-datum. Therefore there is no question of doubting sense-data. Russell considers freedom from doubt as a necessary condition for primitive knowledge and as well as for knowledge by acquaintance. It is only derivative knowledge and knowledge by
description that is open for doubt and uncertainty. Of course the certainty of our knowledge concerning objects with which we are acquainted is empirical certainty. It is not metaphysical or logical certainty. It is not even moral certainty of Leibniz. It is only a contingent fact that there occurs a colour-patch. This colour-patch may very well be imagined not to have occurred. Of course this does not mean that I can doubt the existence of this colour-patch. For the simple reason that even if I consider this colour-patch illusory. It simply means that the colour-patch is an occupant of an illusory world. Only the physical objects cannot be the occupiers of the illusory world. Colour-patches, sounds and smells are bonafide citizens of this world and no less than of the world of waking experience. Colours, noises and sounds succeed in presenting physical objects when one is awake. They fail to present any such objects when one is dreaming. Sense-data appear to be dummies of physical objects. In dreams only these dummies of physical objects are presented.

What would happen to the names of physical objects, if all our knowledge of physical objects were descriptive? What would happen to such names has tables, books, chairs etc.? These words not only denote, they also connote i.e. they are names of many objects at the same time. In the strict sense a name simply denotes i.e. that it refers to one object. There are philosophers who think that all words are names, therefore, there should be no objection for allowing physical objects to have names. Of course, ‘table’, ‘chair’, ‘book’ etc. are not the names in strictly the same sense as ‘Caesar’, ‘London’ and ‘Charminar’ are names. Later three words are supposed to be proper names. They are different from ordinary common names. For proper names are restricted to only one individual. This is the reason why it is said that the proper names only denote, they do not connote. They are conventional. And it would be only an accident of convention that two individuals have the same proper name. Caesar is the name of my dog, and my dog stands for a numerically different individual from the individual who was the Emperor of Rome. But even the universals have names, so there should be no difficulty
in having the names of physical objects. ‘Wisdom’ and ‘honesty’ are names of two different universals; though both of them may characterize the same individual. Socrates was not only wise, he was also honest. Any individual can be named, be it a particle of sand, or as big as a planet. Pragmatic consideration restricts our choice of names. Russell gives the same importance to the name ‘table’ as to the name ‘Caesar’. According to him, all our names, the names that we give to the objects, particulars, are disguised descriptions. Consider the statement about Julius Caesar. According to Russell, “it is plain that Julius Caesar himself is not before our minds, since we are not acquainted with him. We have in mind some description of Julius Caesar: ‘the man who was assassinated’ on the ideas of March, ‘the founder of the Roman Empire’, or, perhaps merely ‘the man whose name was Julius Caesar’. (In this last description, Julius Caesar is a noise or shape with which we are acquainted) Thus our statement does not mean quite what it seems to mean, but means something involving, instead of Julius Caesar, some description of him....”\(^{17}\) Julius Caesar is not a genuine name, it is simply a device for descriptions. A genuine name is that which denotes or refers to a particular. It has no other function. Unless there is a reference to a particular the issue of describing does not arise. As we have already seen earlier, knowledge by acquaintance precedes knowledge by description. A genuine name makes us acquainted with a particular. So naming has primacy over descriptions. According to the common sense view we are directly acquainted with such objects as dogs and cats, books and copies, human being and rats etc. Over and above our acquaintance with these objects, we may also have descriptive knowledge of them. But the fact that we have descriptive knowledge of an object does not mean that we cannot be acquainted with it. For example, we may have descriptive knowledge of a dog. It does not mean that we cannot be acquainted with it. Could one have knowledge of a dog by acquaintance? If such knowledge is possible then there should be no impurities of inference involved in it. Knowledge by acquaintance implies that the object which is given to my sense, reports only what is directly given to my senses. Suppose I say there is a dog. Is this statement a direct record of my experience?
Is this statement which could not be possibly false? A material object statement cannot be a direct record of my experience. As Russell says, “when you think you see a dog, what is really given in perception may be expressed in the words “there is a canine patch of colour”. No previous or subsequent occurrence and no experience of others, can prove the falsehood of this propositions.”

If you wish to describe the world then you must have statements of which the primary constituent is a name. The other constituent may function as a description. This means, we refer to a thing and then describe it. It is only when you are acquainted with things that you can talk about them. This has led Russell to logically proper names. Russell selects ‘this’ and ‘that’ as the examples of logically proper names. They are not proper names in the ordinary sense. They are applied to particulars with which one is acquainted. As Urmson points out, “The names that we commonly use, like ‘Socrates’ are really abbreviations for descriptions; not only that, but what they describe are not particulars but complicated systems of classes or series. A name, in the narrow logical sense of a word whose meaning is a particular, can only be applied to a particular with which the speaker is acquainted, because you cannot name anything you are not acquainted with.” So it is the search for acquaintance with objects that has led to names in the logical sense of the word. As Urmson further points out, “The only words one does use as names in the logical sense are words like ‘this’ or ‘that’. One can use this as a name to stand for a particular with which one is acquainted at the moment. We say ‘this is white’. If you agree that ‘this is white’, meaning the this that you see, you are using ‘this’ as a proper name.” This means that only that word can function as a name which denotes, or designates, or refers to, an object without saying anything else about it. As Russell points out, “The world “this” appears to have the character of a proper name, in the sense that it merely designates an object without in any degree describing it.” What Russell considers as the characteristic of a logically proper name, according to Urmson, Mill considers as the characteristic of all proper names. As Urmson points
out, that a proper name "should indicate an object without ascribing characteristic, is clearly very like what Mill had said of all proper names, that they have denotation without connotation. Russell's view that ordinary proper names did not fulfil this requirement, but were abbreviated descriptions, was not an eccentricity but almost a platitude at this time;"²²

Closely connected is the issue of 'basic propositions'. They are the records of immediate experiences. Therefore, the propositions of sense-data are basic propositions. Russell defines a basic proposition as follows. "it is a proposition which arises on occasion of a perception, which is the evidence for its truth, and it has a form such that no two propositions having this form can be mutually inconsistent if derived from different percepts."²³ He gives the following examples of basic propositions and provides some further information about them. Examples are 'I am hot', 'that is red', 'what a foul smell'. "All basic propositions, in the above sense, are personal, since no one else can share my percepts, and transitory, for after a moment they are replaced by memories."²⁴ This implies that they are the kinds of empirical propositions, which are incorrigible. It is because they do not go beyond the immediate experiences that there is no possibility for them to become false. Dream argument is futile so far as basic propositions are concerned. As Russell points out, "We should note that basic propositions must be just as true when applied to dreams as when applied to waking life; for, after all, dreams do really occur. This is a criterion for discriminating between what is basic and what is interpretative."²⁵ Consider the statement 'I am hot'. It is a record of my present experience. It is not a prediction about my future experiences. It is possible that in the future 'I may not be hot'. But my failure not to be hot in the future does not show that I am not hot at present. Basic proposition makes no predictions about my future experiences. But the physical statements are interpretative. They are a kind of future predictions. When on the basis of a colour-patch presented to my senses I remarked 'this is a tomato.' I expect that if I bring my hand nearer to the colour-patch
there will be an obstruction. If I press my finger it may get smeared with tomato pulp. Afterwards, if I lick my finger I may have a peculiar taste, and so on. So a material object statement involves the having of a present experience. But it also involves having of certain experiences in the future. It can very well be imagined that I do not have those experiences in the future, which I am expecting now. If those experiences do not occur in the future then I would be led to say that I had a hallucination of a tomato. As a matter of a fact there existed no tomato when I had the perception of a colour-patch. So the statement about a tomato is corrigeible, it could possibly be mistaken. But there is no possibility of a mistake in the case of a basic proposition. The reason is that the basic propositions are not the future predictions. Since they are not future predictions, there is no possibility of correcting them in the future. They are incorrigible.

The basic propositions are a sub-class of empirical propositions about which there is no possibility of mistakes. Of course verbal mistakes are possible. Referring to the ‘hard-data’ Russell remarks “verbal doubt concerning even these is possible, but verbal doubt may occur when what is nominally being doubted is not really in our thoughts, and only words are actually present to our minds.”

Suppose I am new at English. When I say ‘there is a red patch of colour’, I may doubt whether I applied the word ‘red’ correctly. May be I see a patch of blue colour. When I consulted the experts of English language they tell me that it is neither red nor blue, it is a white patch of colour. So I corrected myself. I was mistaken. But I was not mistaken about the experience, which I had. I was mistaken only about the use of words. Instead of saying ‘there is a patch of white colour’, I said ‘there is a patch of red colour’. This is only a verbal mistake. Verbal mistakes concerning any statement are possible. Freedom from the non-verbal mistakes is the issue. Only basic propositions are those kind of empirical propositions, which are free from non-verbal mistakes, other kind of propositions involve non-verbal mistakes.
We have already seen that Descartes and Leibniz do not allow the Judgements of arithmetic, geometry and logic to become false when one is dreaming. So dream argument is impotent so far as the mathematical judgements are concerned. Basic propositions are non-mathematical propositions, yet they behave like mathematical propositions. They remain true even when one is dreaming. Russell has made an attempt to bring the notion of certainty to empirical domain. His primitive knowledge, knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge of sense-data, which are recorded in basic propositions, are free from uncertainty and doubt. One can doubt the existence of a tomato, but not the existence of a red patch of colour. One can doubt the truth of ‘this is a tomato’ but not the truth of ‘this is a patch of red colour’. Russell rejects the Cartesian attempt at meeting the sceptic. He has provided an alternative step of meeting the sceptic. Russell presents his own hypothesis against the hypothesis of the sceptic. He makes the following interesting remark. “If we are to continue philosophizing, we must make our bow to the sceptical hypothesis, and, while admitting the elegant terseness of its philosophy, proceed to the consideration of other hypotheses which, though perhaps not certain, have at least as good a right to our respect as the hypothesis of the sceptic.”

2. MOORE ON SENSE-DATA

In his preface to the Problems of Philosophy, Russell acknowledges that he has “derived valuable assistance from unpublished writings of G.E. Moore .... As regards the relations of sense-data to physical objects,... Moore on his own part refers to Russell’s Lowell Lectures delivered in Boston in March and April 1914 for the development of his views on sense-data. So the invention of sense-data is a joint venture of Russell and Moore. Moore developed the notion of sense-data in his “A Defence of Commonsense”. He continued writing on sense-data till late in his life. One may not find much difference between the views of Moore and Russell because they influenced each other’s thought. Moore introduces sense-data by considering a situation in which a person is
‘seeing his right hand as well as something else’. In such a situation Moore thinks that this person ‘must be having a direct visual field which contains at least two objects’. And these objects which are constituents of the direct visual field are, according to him, examples of what sense-data are’. The sense of ‘see’ in which the objects of the direct visual field are seen is ‘the visual variety of what Berkeley called ‘direct perception’ and what Moore himself prefers to call ‘direct apprehension’’. So, according to Moore, ‘directly apprehended smells and tastes and sounds are just as much sense-data as directly seen objects’. Moore describes his method as an operation for ‘picking out’ sense-data. If what Moore holds is legitimate, then in perceiving a physical object, such as, my right hand, I am required to apprehend a sense-datum. The apprehension of sense-data precedes the perception of physical objects.

Moore has given the directions for picking out sense-data in his “A Defence of Commonsense”. Bouwsma feels difficulty in picking out sense-data with Moore’s directions. His main difficulty is that Moore gives directions for distinguishing one sense-datum from the other. But this distinction would be understood only by that person who knows what a sense-datum is. Imagine there are so many varieties of flowers in a garden. You direct someone to pick out two flowers of rose. He can do it only if he knows what a flower of rose is. As Bouwsma remarks, “One who is unacquainted with sense-data, and so has no information with regard to what to pick out, must resort to random picking, and wish for luck.” *Ayer has a slightly different reaction against Moore. According to him, Moore was trying to provide a method of identifying sense-data in general, and not merely of distinguishing one sense-datum from another. He was addressing himself to people who were assumed to understand what was meant by ‘seeing a physical object’ but not to understand what was meant by ‘seeing a sense-datum’ and the point of his example was to show how seeing a sense-datum occurs. But if this is so, the description of a process which consists in concentrating upon one element of a direct visual field is not very helpful, for if the
person to whom one is trying to teach the meaning of the word ‘sense-datum’ does not understand what is meant by a ‘direct visual field’ he will not be any the wiser; and if he understands this, it is sufficient to tell him that a visual sense-datum is a constituent of a direct visual field, without introducing the complication of a selective process which turns out to be a process of discriminating between sense-data.”  

Ayer too accepts that Moore was attempting to provide a method for identifying sense-data in general. But his attempt resulted only into ‘discriminating between sense-data’. So his objection against Moore is only slightly different from Bouwsma’s objection.

Till the philosophers of our age became acquainted with the writings of Russell, and later of Moore, they were ignorant of the entities called sense-data. It is only after readings the writings of Russell and Moore they came to realise that the perception of physical objects is not so simple as they thought earlier. Seeing of a book or a table, involves seeing of something else according to Moore and Russell. That something else which is seen has been named by them as a sense-datum. So Moore in his “A Defence of Commonsense” tries to explain the difference between two different senses of the word ‘see’, the sense in which a physical object is seen and a sense in which a sense-datum is seen. Since people do not know what a sense-datum is, so it was also Moore’s problem to tell them what a sense-datum is. If you succeed in picking out sense-data, you will show that you are aware of them. However, Moore involved himself in a difficulty, because he wishes to make people aware of sense-data by describing a method to pick them out from a certain background. His ‘direct visual field’ is the background that makes sense-data emerge. But, unfortunately philosophers like Bouwsma do not find any help from Moore’s method.

Moore is far clearer in his Reply to Critics than his earlier writings on sense-data. Moore has responded to the attack of Bouwsma, Mace, Murphy, Marchenke and Ducasse. In defending his earlier position he has introduced a new method of picking
out sense-data. So also he has used different examples for distinguishing two different senses of the word 'see', the sense in which a sense-datum is seen and the sense in which a material object is seen. This is an implicit acceptance on his part that his earlier method of picking out sense-data was not free from difficulty. In his reply Moore gives two examples of picking out sense-data which are also the examples for distinguishing the sense of 'see' in which sense-data are seen as distinguished from the sense of 'see' in which material objects are seen. First example refers to the seeing of an after-image; the second example refers to Macbeth's dagger. Referring to the first example he says "It sometimes happens that if, after looking at a bright object, you close your eyes, you have, while yours eyes are shut, an after-image of the object. And it is a quite correct use of "see" to say that you see, though your eyes are shut, e.g., a round blue patch with a red spot in the middle, which is an after-image; though it is also correct to say that you have an after-image, which is a round blue patch with a red spot in the middle."

So there are two senses of the word 'see', the sense in which the bright object is seen and the sense in which the after-image is seen. The after-image is seen even when your eyes are shut. But you cannot see the bright object when your eyes are shut. So, there are two senses of 'see' a normal sense of 'see' and that sense of 'see' which deviates from the normal. Referring to the other example Moore writes, "when Macbeth says 'is this a dagger which I see before me?' the sense in which she is using 'see' is that which I am now calling "directly see"; for it is, it seems to me, obviously the same as that in which we use "see" when we are talking of "seeing" an after-image with closed eyes. Macbeth is represented by Shakespeare as having directly seen an "object" (though, of course, not a physical object, any more than an after-image seen with closed eyes is a physical object) to which he referred by the word "this", and about which he asked. "Is this, which I see before me, a dagger?" and we all understand perfectly well what sort of experience Shakespeare is representing Macbeth as having had." Neither Macbeth's dagger nor the after-images are examples of physical objects. Both of them are directly seen. They are examples of sense-data. With reference to the example of after-image.
Moore says that seeing an after-image is also described as *having* of it. So an after-image is treated like having of a pain, something that occurs to you. Both Macbeth’s dagger and the after-image seen with closed eyes are examples of hallucinatory objects. Since they are not physical objects, they are not real objects. They are not very unlike the objects that occur in dreams. The only difference is that in dreams all the objects that are seen are hallucinatory. The after-image and Macbeth’s dagger, though hallucinatory, are seen while one is awake. Macbeth is not having total hallucination when the dagger is seen. The only hallucinatory object is the dagger. Similarly the after-image is the only hallucinatory object. Objects surrounding it are not hallucinatory.

The real difficulty arises that whenever we see something, there is some object which is seen directly. For example, when we see a dog, according to Moore’s direction, we directly see a canoid patch of colour. It is on the ground of a canoid patch of colour that I am led to say that I see a dog. Apprehension of a sense-datum precedes the perception of a physical object. Similarly, when I taste an apple I have sweet taste. A noise precedes the hearing of a bell. Not only Macbeth’s dagger is directly apprehended object, so is the canoid patch directly apprehended. Directly apprehended noises and tastes are also like directly apprehended after-images and Macbeth’s dagger. No qualitative distinction can be made between directly apprehended objects. Then how can we say that Macbeth’s dagger is hallucinatory whereas a canoid patch non-hallucinatory? Saying that Macbeth’s dagger is not physical does not remove the difficulty. The canoid patch too is not physical. The reply is simple: the distinction between hallucinatory and non-hallucinatory objects is with respect to physical objects, not with respect to sense-data. When it is said that Macbeth’s dagger is hallucinatory, what is meant is that what is presented to senses is not something that is real. Only Macbeth is seeing the dagger and not others. If it had been a common object of perception then it would not have been hallucinatory. An after-image also behaves in the same fashion; it is also not a common object of perception. Macbeth’s dagger as
well as an after-image are seen while one is awake, yet they have qualities of dream objects. One's dreams are private to oneself. Two different persons cannot have numerically the same dreams.

In order to let others know what a sense-datum is, or what a directly seen object is, Moore has taken the examples of hallucinatory objects, Macbeth's dagger as well as the after-image. Moore has to show that sense-data are numerically different kind of objects from physical objects. No one would accept that Macbeth's dagger and after-images are physical objects. So also one should not doubt that the hallucinatory objects too are seen. From hallucinatory sense-data it is easier to have transition to non-hallucinatory sense-data. Directly seen colour-patches, noises and smell are not unlike the directly seen after-images and hallucinatory swords and daggers. The sense-data that occur in dreams, illusions and hallucinations, are not at all different in quality from the sense-data that occur in waking experience. It is the dream situation that led Russell to introduce sense-data. It is again the dream situation that has led Moore to introduce sense-data. The examples of Macbeth's dagger and the after-image seen with closed eyes show that the argument from illusion is the driving force for Moore's introduction of sense-data. Price and Ayer too are driven to sense-data through the dream situation.

3. PRICE ON SENSE-DATA

Though Russell and Moore gave birth to sense-data, Price is supposed to be their guardian. As Ayer remarks about Price, "Professor Price, who has made himself the guardian of sense-data --- he is not their parent but it is he who has chiefly interested himself in their welfare: it is to him more than anyone that they owe their present position of honour in the philosophical world."35 Like Descartes, he uses the method of doubt to arrive at sense-data. Consider his remarks, "when I see a tomato there is much that I can doubt. I can doubt whether it is a tomato that I am seeing, and not a cleverly
painted piece of wax. I can doubt whether there is any material thing there at all. Perhaps what I took for a tomato was really a reflection; perhaps I am even the victim of some hallucination. One thing however I cannot doubt that there exists a red patch of a round and somewhat bulgy shape, standing out from a background of other colour-patches, and having a certain visual depth, and that this whole field of colour is directly present to my consciousness." 36 Thus Price has started like Descartes and ended up like Russell. Instead of reaching the Cartesian self that thinks, Price, not very unlike Russell, has come to accept that there exists a red patch of colour. Like Moore, Price accepts that the red colour-patch is directly present to my consciousness. So what exists without doubt or what indubitably exists is the colour-patch. He extends argument about visual field to other senses. As he says, "When I am in the situations called 'touching something', 'hearing it', 'smelling it', etc., in each case there is something which at that moment indubitably exists—a pressure (or permanent patch), a noise, a smell; and that something is directly present to my consciousness." 37 Price further thinks that the acceptance of sense-data is not the result of any particular theory of perception, because all theories of perception take their start from sense-data. According to Price, all past theories of perception take their start from sense-data. As he remarks referring to sense-data, "The ancients and the School men called them sensible species. Locke and Berkely called them ideas of sensation, Hume impressions, Kant vorstellunggen. In the nineteenth century they were usually known as sensations, and people spoke of visual and auditory sensations when they meant colour-patches and noises; while many contemporary writers, following Dr. C.D. Broad, have preferred to call them sensa." 38 So what Russell and Moore discovered was not something that was new, only the idiom was new.

The fundamental difficulty against Price's method of introducing sense-data is that one could doubt the existence of sense-datum, not very unlike doubting the existence of a physical object. If it is a matter only of my psychology then I cannot be
prevented from doubting the colour-patch. Price is certainly not concerned merely with the psychological state of doubting. As Ayer remarks, "Why can I not doubt it? What prevents me? It is not a question of my psychology. It is not just that I cannot now bring myself to doubt the existence of this bulgy patch, because that leaves open the possibility that I might. If I schooled myself in doubting, I must achieve it. But clearly this is not what Price means. He wants to say that the existence of what he calls the sense-datum is objectively beyond doubt: so that if anyone managed to deny it, he would necessarily be wrong."  

Price himself does not seem to be very happy about the method of doubt. So he introduces another method to make us aware of sense-data. Just as the revised method of Moore is superior to his original method, Price's revised method is superior to his original method of doubt. He says, "To make someone understand the sense-datum terminology, we have to give him suitable instructions. Look at a pencil. Push one of your eyes aside with your finger. There will now be two elongated colour-expanses in your visual field, whereas there was only one before. These two colour-expanses are visual sense-data." In this case Price tries to manufacture sense-data without taking help of one's faculty of doubt; what is required is simply some physical exercise. Price has created an abnormal situation to bring sense-data into existence. It is by pressing one's eyeball the two colour expanses have emerged. Since pencil is only one, only one colour expanse could belong to it, so one expanse had to be illusory. But both the expanses are illusory because both of them are occupying very different spaces in the visual field from the space occupied by the pencil. The difficulty is that the real colour expanse that belongs to the pencil is numerically different from the two colour expanses, which have been created artificially by pressing the eyeball. However, to talk about the real expanse is nonsense, if unsensed sense-data are nonsense. For the real colour expanse, as distinguished from the two-colour expanses, is a fiction. What is sensed is only two colour expanses, which have been abnormally created. Price has taken for granted that once we understand what is meant by sense-data, it would be possible on our part to pick them out even in the
normal situations. It is not only the abnormal situation in which a pencil generates sense-data, it would continue generating them even in normal situations. You cannot see a pencil unless you become acquainted with the colour expanse. You cannot touch a pencil unless you feel hard and so on. Price’s colour expanses connected with the pencil and tomato are not unlike Moore’s Macbeth’s dagger and the after-image seen with closed eyes. Similar is the case of Russell’s dream-cat. Russell says, “Hitherto, when I have ‘seen a cat’, there has usually been a cat to be seen, for if this had not been the case I should not have acquired the habits which I now have. We have therefore inductive grounds for holding (on common sense basis) that when I ‘see a cat’ there probably is a cat. We cannot go beyond ‘probably’, since we know that people sometimes see cats that are not there, for instance in dreams.” The purpose of Russell, Price and Moore is to make us understand the nature of sense-data that are not the result of any hallucination, by bringing to our attention the sense-data, which are the result of hallucination. They have taken for granted that the hallucinatory sense-data are not different in nature from the non-hallucinatory sense-data.

4. A. J. AYER ON THE LANGUAGE OF SENSE-DATA

A. J. Ayer, like his predecessors, Price, Moore and Russell, uses the argument from illusion to establish the existence of sense-data. He argues, “the ordinary way of describing what one perceives appears to make a stronger claim than the perception itself can cover. This follows indeed from the fact that illusions are possible. If I can be undergoing an illusion when, on the basis of my present experience, I judge, for example, that my cigarette-case is lying on the table in front of me, I may, in saying that I see the cigarette-case, be claiming more than the experience strictly warrants. It is logically consistent with my having just this experience that there should not really be a cigarette-case there, or indeed any physical object at all.” So Ayer is in search of that description of experience which does not go beyond what is given to experience. No
element of inference is involved in it. In such a situation the description will not be rejected even if one is undergoing an illusion. So Ayer is in search of a non-physical cigarette-case, a cigarette case that continues to exist even when one is dreaming. Ayer argues, “if I wish to give a strict account of my present visual experience, I must make a more cautious statement. I must say not that I see the cigarette-case, if this is to carry the implication that there is a cigarette-case there but only that it seems to me that I am seeing it.”  But the suggestion to replace the statement ‘I see a cigarette case’, by the statement ‘it seems to me, that I see a cigarette-case’ in no way suggests that the perception of a physical cigarette-case is to be replaced by the perception of a non-physical cigarette-case. Therefore, Ayer takes a further step, “the next step, continuing with our example, is to convert the sentence it now seems to me that I see a Cigarette-case; into ‘I am now seeing a seeming cigarette-case’. And this seeming cigarette-case which lives only in my present experience is an example of a sense-datum.” But this final step is very dubious. Ayer himself accepts that he has brought the seeming cigarette case into existence just by a “stroke of the pen.” We have, however, to see whether Ayers’s argument does or does not allow that one always perceives a sense-datum, whether in delusive or in veridical perception. If Ayer’s view is legitimate, then it is never the case that in some case we may be allowed to perceive a seeming cigarette case, and in others a physical cigarette-case. A physical cigarette case could be perceived in those cases of perception in which there is no possibility that one is dreaming. But, according to Ayer, the possibility that one is not dreaming can never be achieved. One can at the most diminish the probability of a dream, and hence whenever one is perceiving a cigarette case one is allowed merely to be perceiving a seeming cigarette-case.

Ayer’s argument inherits all the defects involved in the general argument from illusion for the introduction of sense-data. There are three steps of this argument. In the first step it is accepted that the object of a veridical perception is physical. The
second step denies that the object of a delusive perception is physical. But the delusive perception is perception of something, if not of a physical object then, to coin a new expression, of a sense-datum. The third and the final step is obvious: the delusive perception is not qualitatively different from a veridical perception; hence if the object of a delusive perception is a sense-datum, then the object of a veridical perception is also a sense-datum. This argument for introducing sense-data is fallacious. Its conclusion clearly contradicts its premise. The premise grants the perception of a physical object in one’s veridical perception, but the conclusion denies it. This argument seems to have converted the veridical perception into a delusive perception; for it prohibits the perception of a physical object even in one’s veridical perception. The objects, which have been brought into existence to occur in dreams, have even replaced those, which occur in waking experience. There is a simple way of refuting this argument. By parity of reasoning one can argue: since the veridical perception is not qualitatively different from the delusive perception, therefore if one perceives a physical object in one’s veridical perception one would as well be perceiving a physical object in one’s delusive perception. But this would eliminate the delusive perception altogether. None of the two arguments can be accepted. It is not possible to allow the existence of public physical objects in one’s dream. But it is equally not possible to allow the private sense-data to exist in one’s waking experience. Both the arguments are defective; for the one seems to have made all perceptions delusive, and the other makes all of them veridical. The absurdity is that a situation of deception presupposes a situation of non-deception. But, for Ayer, the attainment of non-deception is not possible. As Austin remarks, "it is important to remember that talk of deception only makes sense against a background of general non-deception. (You can’t fool all of the people all of the time). It must be possible to recognize a case of deception by checking the odd case against more normal ones." But, for Ayer, the general background of non-deception is missing. For him the possibility that one is not dreaming can never be removed. Austin’s further remark in this context is also relevant. He says “I recognize indeed that people are sometimes
deceived by their senses, but this does not lead me to suspect that my own sense-perceptions cannot in general be trusted, or even that they may be deceiving me now. And this is not, I believe, an exceptional attitude. I believe that, in practice, most people agree with John Locke that "the certainty of things existing in rerum natura, when we have the testimony of our senses for it, is not only as great as our frame can attain to, but as our condition needs". Ayer rejects the testimony of our senses. One could reject the testimony of senses if some superior testimony is available. Senses provide the only testimony, and no better testimony is needed for the existence of things in general.

We have shown above how Russell, Moore, Price and Ayer have introduced sense-data. They have certainly introduced sense-data with the help of words, which stands for material objects. Russell's 'cat', Moore's 'right hand', Price's 'tomato', and Ayer's 'cigarette-case' are words, which stand for physical or material objects. But this shows that we have come to understand what sense-data are with the help of words which stand for physical objects. This implies that we already know the language of physical objects prior to our knowing the sense-datum language. So, knowledge of the physical object language is independent of the knowledge of sense-datum language. If the perception of physical objects depends on the apprehension of sense-data, as the sense-data philosophers maintain, then it is the physical object language that requires to be taught in terms of the sense-datum language. It is surprising how we remain ignorant of sense-datum language, when sense-data have a prior claim for their apprehension than the perception of physical objects. Our ignorance of the terminology of sense-data and its explanation in terms of the terminology of physical objects implies, in the words of Price himself, that "the material object language of common sense must be understood already." This leads Price to the question "how can we have learned to understand it, unless some material-object words have ostensive definition?" But if they have ostensive definition, then they are "empirically cashable by a direct awareness of the objects which are instances of them." And if these words are cashable by a direct
awareness of the objects, which are instances of them, then the concept of a sense-datum is eliminated; for this concept prohibits one's direct awareness of physical objects. However, Ayer does not find any difficulty in overcoming this objection as he says. "It is, in fact, only by the use of expressions which refer to the perception of physical objects that we have given any meaning to talking of sense-data at all. And it is hard to see how else we could have proceeded, if we were to have any hope of being intelligible. This seems to me however to be a matter of psychology rather than logic. If one has to describe the use of an unfamiliar terminology, the description, in order to be informative, must be given in terms of what is already understood." Ayer accepts that some of us, if not all of us, are unfamiliar with the terminology of sense-data. But all of us seem to be familiar with the terminology of physical objects. Therefore those who are unfamiliar with the terminology of sense-data are taught this new terminology with the help of physical objects terminology with which we are familiar. Price's objection has only psychological implication. It puts no logical difficulty.

In what sense are we not familiar with the terminology of sense-data, and are familiar with the terminology of Physical objects? We are as familiar with 'colour patches', 'sounds', 'smells' etc as with 'cats', 'tomatoes', 'hands' and 'cigarette-cases'. And if we are ignorant of the analysis of the former group of expressions then we are also ignorant of the analysis of the later group of expressions. Suppose it is said that we were ignorant of the fact that the colour-patches, smells, sounds, are apprehended directly, then we were also ignorant of the fact that cats, hands, tomatoes, cigarette-cases etc., are perceived indirectly. The distinction between direct and indirect perception is the innovation of philosophers. It seems that we were ignorant of not only sense-data but also of material objects. As Austin points out, "The trouble is that the expression 'material things' is functioning already from the very beginning, simply as a tool for 'sense-datum'; it is not here given, and is never given, any other role to play." In order to bring sense-data to our notice, material things have been converted into the unnoticed
things. The situation is like this: either one notices sense-data or one notices material objects, but not both.

Is it possible that one is unfamiliar with the terminology of sense-data, as one is unfamiliar with the terminology of science? Such a possibility cannot be ruled out. It is possible that the terminology of sense-data, having ‘colour-patches’, ‘noises’ and ‘smells’ is of the same type as the terminology of physics, having ‘atoms’, ‘sound-waves’ and ‘electrons’. Our unfamiliarity with the terminology of sense-data cannot be like our unfamiliarity with the terminology of physics. Sense-data are not hypothetical entities like atoms, sound-waves and molecules. They are not such entities, for it is the occurrence of sense-data that justifies the acceptance of any hypothetical entities. So if sense-data themselves are hypothetical entities they will fail to justify the acceptance of any hypothetical entities. To talk about ‘colour-patches’, ‘noises’ and ‘smells’ is unlike talking about ‘electrons’, ‘atom’, and ‘sound-waves’, for the latter set of terms derives its meaning from the former. Hence, the teaching of the terminology of sense-data through the medium of the terminology of physical objects is unlike the teaching of the terminology of science through the medium of the terminology of ordinary language.

5. G. A. PAUL ON THE PROBLEM OF SENSE-DATA.

We have already seen that the views of sense-datum philosophers like Russell, Moore, Price and Ayer have been expressed in such a fashion that sense-data appear to be a novel discovery. This idiom, according to Urmson, “makes it sound as though philosophers had discovered a new kind of object to which they had given the name ‘sense-datum.’”52 Was sense-datum really a new kind of object that some philosophers have succeeded in discovering? It was certainly a new kind of discovery. A teacher of philosophy had reported “that she had often observed her pupils’ having the sense-datum experience for the first time.”53 This is not very unlike the students of Physics who are

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observing the movement of electrons for the first time. The discovery of scientific entities like electrons is the discovery of the internal structure of physical objects. Similarly sense-data may be considered as exhibiting the external structure of physical objects. The sense-datum philosophers are responsible for bringing into existence a special set of objects, different from the physical objects. If electrons are described as scientific entities, then sense data can be called as philosophical entities. The credit goes to the philosophers for discovering them.

The view that sense-data are novel discovery has been attacked by Paul. According to Paul, sense-data are a verbal novelty rather than a factual discovery. Explaining the view of Paul, Urnson writes, “If one genuinely discovers a new sort of object, say a virus, or, to use Paul’s own example, the fovea in the eye, then thereafter any account of the world which does not mention these objects can be seen to be incomplete. Further, it will be possible to give directions for singling out these objects from the rest, e.g. directions for taking a photograph of the virus with an electron microscope. But, said Paul, this is not the case with regard to sense-data. For those who introduce sense-data say such things as ‘if it appears to you that you are seeing a red tomato, then you are having a red sense-datum’. That is, if it appears to you that you see a red tomato then it is logically necessary that you are having (sensing) a red sense-datum. This may be contrasted with ‘if you look through such a telescope in such a direction you will probably see such and such a star’. Genuine discoveries are not logical consequences of what is already known. Colour-patches, sounds and smells, which are supposed to be sense-data, are certainly not like virus and fovea. The sense-datum philosophers never claim that people were ever ignorant of sense-data. So long they have the ability to perceive material things they would also be bound to sense sense-data. So, we were never ignorant of sense-data. But though people suffered because of virus, only recently they came to know what virus and fovea are. Paul is right in saying that genuine discoveries are not logical consequences of what is already
known. Then what is the achievement of a sense-datum philosopher? Their achievement is introducing a new terminology, and a new way of looking at objects. As Urmson writes about Paul’s view, “what philosophers have in fact done is to introduce a new expression ‘having a sense-datum’ which is defined in terms of the way objects look. To talk about sense-data will therefore be just another way of talking about the way objects look.”55 Paul finds the sense-datum terminology merely as an alternative to physical object terminology. And saying that they are alternative terminologies means that both are meant to describe the same perceptual situation, that they are simply two different ways of describing it. “We can say a thing this way and we can say it that way.”56 But these different ways of saying do not imply that there are different objects in view. Paul finds the terminology of sense-data misleading, as he says, “I wish to deny that in order to give a complete and accurate account of any perceptual situation it is necessary to use a noun in the way in which ‘sense-datum’ is used, for this leads to the notion that there are entities of a curious sort over and above physical objects.”57 Thus Paul accepts the terminology of sense-data without accepting the ontological implications which this terminology suggests. If Paul’s view is legitimate, then one should reject the views of Moore and Price, for their views clearly lead us to think as if sense-datum terminology involves a factual discovery. The sense-datum philosophers of post-Moorean era were attracted by Paul’s view, for his view expresses a golden mean. It neither rejects the use of sense-datum terminology nor adds any extra furniture to the world, the furniture which the world did not already have. Welcoming Paul’s view, Ayer says “the philosopher who says that he is sensing a sense-datum in a case where most people would say that they were seeing a material thing is not contradicting the received opinion on any question of fact. He is not putting forward a new hypothesis, which could be empirically verified or confuted. What he is doing is simply to recommended a new verbal usage.”58 The theory of sense-data does not involve more than the elaboration of a special terminology for describing our perceptual experience. The solution of the current philosophical problems about sense-data depended, not upon
our discovering the properties of a strange sort of object, but rather upon our establishing the use of a new set of technical terms... the terminology of sense-data, though philosophically convenient, did not enable us to express any propositions about our perceptual experience that we were not already able to express in the language of commonsense, by referring to physical objects. Perhaps these quotations are sufficient to show that Ayer is speaking with the voice of Paul.

From what Paul and Ayer say it follows that our unfamiliarity with the sense-datum terminology is not our unfamiliarity with a new set of non-verbal objects. When a sense-datum philosopher says that he sees a sense datum in the situation in which we say that we see a physical object, it is not the case that the sense-datum philosopher sees some object which we don’t see, or that we see some other object. Had our disagreement been of such a type its settlement would have required merely an empirical investigation. When we describe a certain experience by the form of words ‘I see a tomato’ the sense-datum philosopher prefers, for philosophical reasons, to say, ‘I see a red patch’. But the departure of the sense–datum philosopher from our mode of description- which may be described as the ordinary common-sense mode-should not lead us to think that some sudden change has occurred in the experiences of a sense-datum philosopher, as if instead of seeing a tomato he has started seeing colour-patches.

If the use of the sense-datum terminology involves such a change in the experiences of a philosopher, then what is required for him is not a philosophical argumentation but a medical adviser. And so also when we are successful in seeing tomatoes and hands we have not achieved something, which we could not have achieved without a medical adviser. Neither the sense-datum philosopher has become abnormal by seeing sense-data, nor have we become normal by seeing physical objects. By describing our experiences of objects differently neither the objects nor the experiences correlated with them have become different. Perhaps this is a sufficient explanation of what is meant by
saying that the sense-datum terminology is an alternative to the terminology of physical objects.

The sense-datum philosophers very reluctantly accept Paul's view. Paul's view saves them from the attack of the philosophers like Ryle and Strawson. Ryle considers sense-data as myths, and Strawson gives secondary importance to them. Paul functions as a good mediator. He wishes to give equal importance to both, physical objects and sense-data, using material object expressions as one way of describing reality, using sense-datum expressions as another way of describing reality. So, they are merely alternative ways in which reality is described. Neither physical objects nor sense-data are cancelled. However, sense-datum philosophers like Ayer continue holding the superiority of sense-datum terminology over the physical object terminology. Referring to the reaction of Price on his *The Foundations of Empirical Knowledge*, Ayer says, "the possibility of applying the 'physical object language' depended upon the constancy of certain relations between sense-data, which might conceivably not have obtained. That is to say, I held it to be a contingent fact that the structure of our sensory experience was such as to make it possible to 'construct' out of it the world of material things: with this Price says that he agrees. Thus, as he remarks "our visual and tactual sense-data might have an eurhythmic rather than a thing-like order, arranging themselves, as it were in visible or tangible tunes". From what Price, suggests Ayer concludes that the sense-datum language is more comprehensive than the physical object language. "For whereas in every case in which it is possible to apply the physical object language, it is also possible, at least in principle, to apply the sense-datum language, one can conceive an order of experience to which the sense-datum language would have application but the physical object language would not." If the sense-datum language is more comprehensive than the language of physical objects, then how can the former be an alternative to the latter? One language can be an alternative to the other, if all that is described by one language is also described by the other. Before Paul intervened it was
held that sense-data are superior to material objects, because material objects can not occur in dreams. So the application of material object is quite limited, it is restricted to the waking experience. Sense-data occur in both, waking as well as dream experiences, so the application of sense-data is more comprehensive. Even after Paul's intervention the superiority of sense-data over material objects is retained. Now the retention is in terms of two terminologies, that the sense-datum terminology is superior to material object terminology. Even now sense-data continue constructing material things. Sense-datum philosophers are paying only lip service to the concept of the alternative terminology. Sense datum terminology is certainly not an alternative to physical object terminology.

6. J. L. AUSTIN'S REJECTION OF SENSE-DATA

'The chief stalking horse' of Austin's Sense and Sensibilia is Ayer's Foundations of Empirical Knowledge. This book has particularly been chosen for attack by Austin because it claims to lay down the foundation of whatever knowledge we have of reality. Obviously our knowledge of reality is empirical. Foundation of a building is supposed to be stronger than the other storeys of the building. If foundation is not strong, the building will collapse. In his quest for the foundation of empirical knowledge Ayer was led to discuss sense-data, basic propositions etc. Austin's criticism of Ayer is certainly not exhaustive, because he did not care to look into the other works of Ayer. Ayer's views have continuously been changing. To defend himself from the critics, from time to time, he was forced to change his views. As a matter of fact Austin attacks all the sense-datum philosophers beginning from Russell down to Warnock. In Sense and Sensibilia other than Ayer, Austin has mentioned Price and Warnock. Russell and Moore have also been attacked but only under the garb of Ayer and Price. Of course nothing is wrong with this procedure. If Ayer is closer to Russell then Price is closer to Moore.
While discussing Russell it has already been pointed out that some empirical propositions function as foundation for obtaining other empirical propositions. These foundational propositions were described as basic propositions. It was also pointed out that they were incorrigible. According to Austin, "The pursuit of the incorrigible is one of the most venerable bugbears in the history of philosophy. It is rampant all over ancient philosophy, most conspicuously in Plato, was powerfully re-animated by Descartes, and bequeathed by him to a long line of successors." Russell and Moore were two important successors of Descartes. As Mundle points out about Russell and Moore "The philosophers who introduced the term "sense-datum" (though not the notion in question) were G.E.Moore and Bertrand Russell. Both made it clear from the start that their main motive was that of Descartes-the quest for incorrigible statements, which could provide foundations for a reconstruction, or a justification, of human knowledge." Sense data are those incorrigible entities that were introduced by Moore in his lectures in 1911 and by Russell in his Problems of Philosophy published in 1912. The propositions which were restricted to the description of sense-data were described by Russell and Ayer as basic propositions. They were considered incorrigible. Empirical knowledge was considered as a structure, having foundations. As Austin points out, "it is a structure the upper tiers of which are reached by inferences, and the foundations are the data on which these inferences are based (so of course-as it appears-there just have to be sense-data)."

In the first edition of Language, Truth and Logic, Ayer expresses very different views from the views expressed in the Foundations of Empirical Knowledge. It is the latter work, which has been attacked by Austin. In the earlier work the incorrigible propositions were missing. As he remarked in his earlier work "Empirical propositions are one and all hypotheses, which may be confirmed or discredited in actual experience. And the propositions in which we record observations that verify these hypotheses are
themselves hypotheses, which are subject to the test of further sense experience. Thus there are no final propositions. Rejection of ‘final propositions’ means the rejection of propositions, which are direct records of experiences. Rejection of direct records of experiences means that the verification process does not terminate at any stage. This means that one and all empirical propositions are only weakly verifiable. But saying that a proposition is mere probable hypothesis means the same as that there always exists the possibility of being mistaken about it. It is because of this possibility that the process of verification does not come to a terminating point. But believing that all empirical propositions are merely weakly verifiable dissolves the contrast of ‘strong’ and ‘weak’ verification. Since all empirical propositions are merely weakly verifiable, the term ‘strong verification’ loses its meaning. And if ‘strongly verifiable’ loses its meaning ‘weakly verifiable’ also becomes a meaningless term. It is to avoid this awkward situation that in the second edition of Language, Truth and Logic, Ayer came to accept the existence of ‘basic propositions’, not very unlike Carnap and Braithwaite. Carnap maintained that “science is a system based on direct experience and controlled by experimental verification. Verification is based on protocol statements.” Carnap’s protocol statements are the same as the final propositions. The process of verification terminates in them. Braithwaite makes a bolder claim concerning knowledge expressed by the basic propositions. As he says, “This knowledge is incorrigible in the sense of not merely being such that it never will in fact be corrected but of being such that its correction is a logical impossibility.” In what condition do we say that the correction of knowledge expressed by a proposition is logically impossible? Correction would be logically impossible when it would be logically impossible to doubt or to be mistaken about the proposition in question. So, saying that the knowledge of a basic proposition is incorrigible or that its correction is logically impossible means the same as that it is logically impossible to be mistaken about it. Ayer affirms our conclusion when he says concerning basic proposition in the second edition of Language, Truth and Logic, “What is meant by their being incorrigible is that it is impossible to be mistakes about them.”
C.I. Lewis, like Braithwaite, accepts the possibility of basic propositions. Lewis thinks that a basic proposition, being merely the report of the directly given is "neither verifiable nor stands in any need of verification." When Lewis thinks that a basic proposition is neither verifiable nor stands in any need of verification, he is proposing a correct definition of the notion of 'verifiable'. This notion implies the possibility of a mistake or doubt, revision or correction of a proposition. But the possibility of a mistake or doubt in connection with a basic proposition does not make any sense. As Lazerowitz points out, "there is no sense in saying 'it is probably the case that it looks to me as if there is an elephant in the distance.' Similarly, Wittgenstein thinks, "it seems to me that I have a headache' is nonsense." The use of such phrases as 'it seems to me' and 'it is probably the case' etc, which symbolise doubt in connection with a proposition, is impossible in connection with a basic proposition. The remarks of Lazerowitz and Wittgenstein support the view of Lewis that basic propositions can not be doubted, therefore, there is no question of correcting, revising or verifying them. It simply does not make sense to prescribe a method of verifying a basic proposition. It is clear that the meaning of a basic proposition does not depend upon the method of its verification.

It does not improve the position if it is accepted that the basic propositions are strongly verifiable. In order to establish the contrast of 'strong' and 'weak' verification, Ayer made the philosophical move of accepting that basic propositions are strongly verifiable. Obviously, non-basic empirical propositions will be weakly verifiable. So 'weak' had its contrast in 'strong'. But Lewis and Lazerowitz reject the possibility of verifying a basic proposition. And if a basic proposition is not verifiable then how could it be strongly or conclusively verifiable. The concept of verification has no application with respect to the concept of a basic proposition. As Lazerowitz points out, "It makes no sense to say 'I have established that I have a pain', any more than it makes sense to
say, 'I probably have a pain'. "There is not getting to know, or conclusively establishing that you have pain by feeling it, as if in addition to having it, you have to feel the pain in order to know that you have it. Knowledge of the truth of a basic proposition is had without being arrived at by a process of verification. By test you can satisfy yourself that your tooth or your ankle is the cause of our your pain." What Lazerowitz means to point out is that to keep a genuine contrast between 'strong verification' and 'weak verification', Ayer must accept the possibility of some non-basic empirical propositions to be strongly verifiable.

Since the publication of first edition of *Language, Truth and Logic*, Ayer continued to have the hangover of the corrigibility thesis, the thesis that all empirical propositions can be revised and restated. Even when he revised his position by accepting that basic propositions are strongly verifiable, he continued holding that they too could be revised like other empirical propositions. When he wrote *The Problem of Knowledge* he made an attempt to reconcile the corrigibility thesis with the incorrigibility thesis. In his *Problem of Knowledge* Ayer accepts on the one hand that revisions and corrections regarding basic propositions are possible, and on the other that they are in a certain sense incorrigible. He introduces a new sense of 'incorrigibility' after demolishing its old sense. And according to this new sense the word 'incorrigible' does not necessitate that an incorrigible proposition be free from revisions and corrections. After showing that basic propositions can be corrected and revised he says, "In what sense then is it at all plausible to claim that these statements are incorrigible? Only I think, in the sense that one's ground for accepting them may be perfect." Since the expression 'perfect ground' is unclear he goes on to say that statements are known incorrigibly "when they are made by the right person in the right circumstances and at the right time." And this is explained further by giving an actual case where a statement can be said to be used on the 'perfect ground' or by the 'right person in the circumstances and at the right time'. Ayer says, "the sentences 'He has a headache'
when used by someone else to refer to me, ‘I shall have a headache’ used by me in the past with reference to this moment, and ‘I have a headache’ all express the same statement; but the third of these sentences alone is used in such conditions as makes it reasonable for me to claim that the statement is incorrigibly known." Ayer means to say that ‘I have a headache’ is the only sentence, out of the three, which has been used in such conditions that it is reasonable for me to claim that it is incorrigibly known. But this is certainly not to give any new meaning to the word ‘incorrigible’. Ayer has expressed merely an old view in a new fashion. The conditions, which Ayer has prescribed, are the same as those in which, if a sentence is used, we are reasonable in saying that it expresses a basic statement. So what Ayer really means to say is simply that if a sentence is used as a basic statement its truth is incorrigibly known. Is it giving a new meaning to the word ‘incorrigibility’? It is only in connection with basic statements that philosophers have claimed that their truth is incorrigible. Neither Ayer, nor those who oppose Ayer, grant that the sentences ‘I shall have a headache’ and ‘he has a headache’ express basic statements. Has Ayer demolished the old sense of ‘incorrigibility’? In making explicit the conditions in which a basic statement is used, Ayer is not even giving a new sense to the concept of a basic proposition. He has attempted to reconcile the position of the corrigibilist with that of incorrigibilist. His attempt has failed.

Austin discusses the issue of incorrigible propositions in the tenth chapter of his Sense and Sensibilia. His attention is specially devoted to Ayer and Carnap, though rejecting both, at times favouring one over the other. ‘The official doctrine’ that has been subjected to criticism is the doctrine that “the material–object language must somehow be ‘reducible’ to the sense-datum language. Why? Because in fact sense-data makeup the whole of ‘our resources.’” They are not our ordinary resources, for “in their case no doubt is possible, no mistake can be made. So to find the data, the foundations, look for the incorrigible.” We have already seen that Ayer’s revised view
implies that there are two distinct classes of empirical propositions, those that are verifiable and those in terms of which verification is done. The later class of propositions is direct records of experiences. They are the same as basic propositions. If Lewis and Lazerowitz are right then these propositions are not of the verifiable kind. When a proposition is said to be verifiable, it is legitimate to ask what are those other propositions, called its verifiers, which are used in order to verify the truth of the proposition in question. For no proposition can be verified by itself, it requires other propositions for its verification. For example, consider the proposition, ‘This is a cat’. In order to verify this proposition we require such other propositions as, ‘this is stripped’, ‘this is smooth’ etc. These propositions may be described as the verifiers of the original proposition. So if a proposition is verifiable there must be other propositions which are its verifiers. What are the verifiers of ‘This looks round’ or ‘I have a pain’? If no such verifiers could be conceived, then it is misleading to say that these propositions are verifiable. Though not verifiable, these verifiers are the direct records of experiences; therefore they can be described as observational propositions. And the propositions that they verify can be described as empirically testable propositions. Austin favours Carnap against Ayer on the question of observational propositions. According to Carnap, the choice of observational propositions is an arbitrary convention. But, for Ayer, it is not an arbitrary convention. It is only through reductive analysis that one reaches an observational proposition. According to Austin, there is no special class of propositions that can function as verifiers. Even a proposition that is not a record of observation can function as a verifier. According to Austin, the distinction between the verifiable propositions and propositions that are its verifiers, is really the distinction between the propositions which are in need of evidence and the propositions which provide evidence. According to Austin, "what kind of sentence is uttered as providing evidence for what depends, again, on the circumstances of particular cases; there is no kind of sentence which as such is evidence-providing, just as there is no kind of sentence which as such is surprising, or doubtful, or certain or
incorrigible, or true."78 So Austin is not against the distinction between propositions that are verifiable and those that function as the verifiers. What he opposes is the view that only sense-data statements are considered as verifiers. As he remarks, Ayer is wrong 
"in holding, as he evidently does hold, that the evidence-providing kind of sentences are always sense-datum sentences, so that these are the ones that ought to be picked out."79 Suppose I doubt the truth of 'that is a giraffe', because I have never seen one earlier. In this case it is certainly not the sense-data statements connected with the giraffe that would remove my doubt. My doubt will be satisfied if I consult the zoological authorities. The relevant statements that would function as evidence are the statements of the zoological authority. If my doubt about giraffe in question is genuine, then it could be removed not by sense-data statements but by the statements of zoological authorities. Of course Austin does not deny that the sense-data statements do sometimes function as evidence. But then they are not the only statements which function as evidence.

According to Austin, it is the circumstances in which we make a statement that leads us to say that the statement is incorrigible. And the circumstances do not always favour only sense-data statements to be described as incorrigible. Sometimes circumstances also favour material object statement to be described as incorrigible. Consider Austin's remarks on this issue. "If I carefully scrutinize some patch of colour in my visual field, take careful note of it, know English well, and pay scrupulous attention to just what I'm saying, I may say, 'It seems to me now as if I were seeing something pink'; and nothing whatever could be produced as showing that I had made a mistake. But equally if I watch for some time an animal a few feet in front of me, in a good light, if I prod it perhaps, sniff, and take note of the noises it makes, I may say, 'That's a pig'; and this too will be 'incorrigible', nothing could be produced that would show that I had made a mistake. Once one drops the idea that there is a special kind of sentence which is as such incorrigible, one might as well admit (what is plainly true
anyway) that *many* kinds of sentences may be uttered in making statements which are *in fact* incorrugible—in the sense that, when they are made, the circumstances are such that they are quite certainly, definitely, and un-retractably *true*. The material object statement ‘that is a pig’ is also incorrugible like the sense-datum statement ‘it seems to me now as if I were seeing something pink’. Austin means to say that any statement could be incorrugible. It is the circumstances, which decide about its incorrugibility.

According to Austin, when the sense-data philosophers say that the material object statements entail sense-data statements, they are using the term entailment not in its usual literal sense. We learn the meanings of words standing for material objects not by referring to sense-data. It is by referring to material objects themselves that we learn the meanings of those words. As Austin remarks, “we learn the word ‘pig’, as we learn the vast majority of words for ordinary things, ostensively – by being told, in the presence of the animal, ‘That is a pig; and thus, though certainly we learn what sort of thing it is to which the word ‘pig’ can and can’t be properly applied, we don’t go through any kind of intermediate stage of relating the word ‘pig’ to a lot of statements about the way things look, or sound, or smell. The word is just not introduced into our vocabulary in this way.” Austin refers to ostensive definition of words. Ostensive definition of words is possible in the presence of the object. It is by showing or exhibiting the object that the word or the name is ostensively defined. Unless one is directly acquainted with the object there is no question of understanding the ostensive definition. We have already seen Russell rejecting the possibility that we can ever be acquainted with material objects. According to him, we are always acquainted with sense-data only. This implies that the ostensive definition of material object expression is impossible. Austin is opposing Russell and all those who are following him. According to him it is not through sense-data that we come to know about material objects. We have direct knowledge of material objects. There are no intermediate entities between us and the material objects. Rather the sense-data, if there are any, are
identified in terms of material objects. When Russell refuses to have acquaintance with a dog, his refusal is pointless. The substitute of the dog is the canoid patch of colour. So one is acquainted with the patch through one’s acquaintance with dog. Identity of the colour-patch depends on the identity of the dog.

Since one has been made not to be acquainted with material objects, one can very well doubt about their existence. One cannot doubt only those objects with which one is acquainted. So one is free from doubt only in the case of sense-data. So far as material objects are concerned, one would always remain in doubt about them. So knowledge about them is logically impossible. Austin is simply not convinced that one can never know about the existence of material objects. He remarks, “I look at a chair a few yards in front of me in broad day light, my view is that I have (only) as much certainty as I need and can get that there is a chair and that I see it. But in fact the plain man would regard doubt in such a case, not as far-fetched or over-refined or some how unpractical, but as plain nonsense; he would say, quite correctly, ‘Well, if that’s not seeing a real chair then I don’t know what is.’” This means according to the common man one could possibly be acquainted with the objects like dog, cat, chair, pig, etc. Guaranteed knowledge is possible only of objects with which one is acquainted. Sense-datum philosophers have withdrawn material objects from their natural habitation. In their new habitation they have been dressed with sense-data. So it is not only the sense-data to which we have been introduced, we have also been introduced to material objects. The material objects that were known to us, prior to our acquaintance with sense-data, had altogether a different nature. According to Austin, “one of the most important points to grasp is that these two terms, ‘sense-data’ and ‘material things’, live by taking in each other’s washing – what is spurious is not one term of the pair, but the anti-thesis itself.” Material objects have been redefined in terms of sense-data and sense-data are the result of new meaning given to colour-patches, noises’ smell, etc. Therefore what is spurious, according to Austin, is the very distinction between sense-
data and material objects. To make this distinction rigid, even the sense in which a
sense-datum is seen has been distinguished from the sense in which a material object is
seen. Austin condemns this spurious distinction by taking an analogous case. "If I am
asked 'What did you kick?' I might answer 'I kicked a piece of painted wood', or I
might say 'I kicked Jones's front door'; both of these answers might well be correct; but
should we say for that reason that 'kick' is used in them in different senses?" Similar
is the case of 'seeing'. It is one and the same sense of 'seeing' in which sometimes I see
a colour-patch and other times I see pigs and cats. As Austin remarks, "I may say, 'I
see a silvery speck' or 'I see a huge star'; what I see- in the single, ordinary 'sense' this
word has- can be described as a silvery speck, or identified as a very large star." Perhaps
the fear that sense-data may be confused with material objects, that two
different senses of 'seeing' were introduced, one sense in which a sense-datum is seen
and another in which a material object is seen.

We have already seen that both Lewis and Lazerowitz consider it nonsense to
talk about doubting or verifying a sense-statement like 'I am hot'. Austin extends this
possibility also to the statements about material objects. As he remarks, "It is, of
course, not true in general that statements about 'material things', as such, need to be
'verified'. If, for instance, someone remarks in casual conversation, 'As a matter of fact
I live in Oxford,' the other party to the conversation may, if he finds it worth doing,
verify this assertion; but the speaker, of course, has no need to do this- he knows it to be
ture (or, if he is lying, false). Strictly speaking, indeed, it is not just that he has no need
to verify his statement; the case is rather that, since he already knows it to be true,
nothing whatever that he might do could count as his 'verifying' it." When Lewis and
Lazerowitz deny doubt and verification in connection with such a sense-datum statement
as 'I am hot' these remarks are restricted to the speaker. According to Austin, there are
situations in which it may not make any sense for a speaker even to doubt or verify a
material object statement. Freedom from doubt and verification are not restricted to
sense-data statements, sometimes this freedom is also extended to material object statements.

7. SENSE–DATA AND PHENOMENALISM

Phenomenalism is the philosophical theory, which reduces reality to phenomena. There is no reality over and above the reality of phenomena. Therefore there is no distinction between appearance and reality. Appearances are numerically identical with reality. Phenomenon is what appears. Sense-data are phenomenal entities: they are constitutive of phenomena. Berkeley without his God is supposed to be a phenomenalist. Russell too would be a phenomenalist, if he gives up his view about the public physical reality. Moore and Price would be phenomenalists, if they give up their views concerning the physical occupants. Other than the Vienna circle philosophers, Ayer is the only important philosopher of the English speaking world who is committed to phenomenalism.

Consider Berkeley's case. Berkeley remarked that "the table I write on, I say, exists, that is, I see and feel it; and if, I were out of my study I should say it existed, meaning thereby that if, I was in my study I might perceive it, or that some other spirit actually does perceive it." In this passage Berkeley explains the existence of the table in terms of his perceptions, his seeing and feeling. He further explains the existence of an unperceived table in terms of his possible perceptions and the possible perceptions of other persons like him. So Berkeley has reduced the existence of a material table to the existence of actual and possible perceptions. Consider now his second remark, "The question whether the earth moves or not amounts in reality to no more than this, to wit, whether we have reason to conclude...that if we were placed in... such or such a position and distance, both from the earth and sun, we should perceive the former to move among the choir of the planets."

Not only the physical bodies but also their
movement, i.e., the occurrence of their movement, depends on our perceptions. Berkeley reduces the existence of physical reality to the reality of the self and its actual and possible perceptions. Of course in Berkeley’s philosophy, God plays a major role. In the absence of the human perception Berkeley makes appeal to God’s perception. We have quoted from Berkeley by avoiding his God. But we could not avoid the use of ‘I’, i.e., the owner of perceptions. Berkeley’s use of ‘idea’ for perceptions makes essential the existence of the owner of ideas. The invention of sense-datum in place of ‘idea’ has this superiority that it requires no owner. While criticizing Descartes, Russell pointed out that ‘I’ is superfluous in reporting about the existence of a sense-datum. Saying ‘there is a colour-patch’ would do where Berkeley would have said; ‘I see a colour-patch’. Superiority of ‘sense datum’ over ‘idea’ consists in the fact that ideas require the existence of those who have them. But sense-data are neutral. They require neither the physical objects nor the spiritual perceivers. A consistent phenomenalist would reject every thing that lies behind the phenomenon, be it a human self or a material not-self. As Mundle points out “All types of entities other than sense-data are dismissed as ‘fiction’ or ‘logical constructions’.” Phenomenalists could, and perhaps should, retain minds to be aware of, and to interpret, sense-data; but usually they have deemed minds to be a theoretical luxury, talk about which is to be analysed, like talk about tables, in terms of talk about sense-data.” So a phenomenalist rejects the common sense view that distinguishes us from tomatoes and cigarette-cases. We are supposed to have a self-whatever its interpretation—which is lacking in the case of a tomato or a cigarette-case. And when it is said that a tomato or a cigarette-case does not possess a self what is meant is merely our ordinary common sense view. It is not denied that a philosopher may come to discover a self even in a tomato or a cigarette-case. For Leibniz a tomato shared in having a self with a human being. A phenomenalist stands on the other pole. For him a human being is not very unlike a tomato. Both lack self. According to Ayer a self is a “logical construct out of sense-experience.” And Ayer explains the nature of sense-experiences in terms of ‘sense-contents’. The term ‘sense-content’ stands for what
is commonly known as 'sense-datum'. This becomes clear from Ayer’s remarks on Berkeley’s use of the term ‘idea’. He writes, “we replace the word ‘idea’ in this usage by the neutral word ‘sense-content’ which we shall use to refer to the immediate data not merely of ‘outer’ but also of ‘introspective sensation’, and say that what Berkeley discovered was that material things must be definable in terms of sense-contents.” So Ayer’s analysis of self involves three other terms for explanation, viz., ‘self-content’, ‘sense-experience’ and ‘logical construction’. Concerning the relationship between the former two terms, if a sense-content is not taken as a part of a sense-experience, it has to be taken as an object of the latter. And to accept the former as an object of the latter is to accept the legitimacy of the act-object analysis of sense-experiences. According to Ayer, such an analysis cannot be legitimate, for it involves the metaphysical assumption of acts of experience. Such an assumption could be granted, with suitable formulation, if sense-experiences failed to be explained without it. But sense-experiences can be successfully explained without it, and hence this assumption has to be rejected. Now, if a sense-content is a part of a sense-experience, then the relation of the former to the latter is that which holds between a part and the corresponding whole. This relation cannot be the same as the relation of the former to a logical construction. As Ayer says, “...when we refer to an object as a logical construction out of certain sense-contents, we are not saying ... ... that the sense-contents are in any way parts of it.” So Ayer means that when certain sense-contents enter as parts into the construction of an object, the object is a non-logical construction out of them, whereas when they do not enter as parts into the construction of an object—though in some sense, they are able to construct the object in question—then the object is a logical construction out of them. This implies that sense-contents have two different relations to their objects. Their relation to an experience is different from their relation to a logical construction. Let us describe these relations as ‘being the parts of’ and ‘being the elements of’. Thus sense-contents are parts of an experience but elements of a logical construction. This is supposed to imply that the notion of ‘logical construction’ is not applicable either to a sense-content or to a
sense-experience. As Ayer says, "... one can not significantly speak of a sense-
experience, which is a whole composed of sense-contents, or of a sense-content itself as
if it were a logical construction out of sense-contents." A sense-experience, therefore,
can be described as a non-logical construction, out of certain sense-contents.

Ayer wishes to remain Humean with a difference. For Hume the human self is
as much a fiction as a physical tomato, therefore he reduces both of them into the
occurrences of experiences. The only difference is that human self involves in its
construction certain experiences, which are not involved in the construction of tomatoes
and cigarette-cases. For example, pleasure and pain are not ascribed to tomatoes and
cigarette-cases. They are ascribed only to human self. Ayer wishes to give the sense
content analysis to both human selves and tomatoes, yet also wishes to distinguish them.
If tomatoes and cigarette-cases are the logical constructs out of sense-contents then the
human self too should be the logical construction out of sense-contents. Consistency
demands it. Like Hume, Ayer considers self as a logical construction out of sense-
experiences. And a sense-experience for him is a non-logical construct out of sense-
contents. Sense-contents are parts of sense-experiences. One would feel that if self is a
logical construction out of sense-experiences, it would mean the same as saying it is a
logical construction out of sense-contents. Ayer has introduced a qualitative difference
between sense-contents. The sense-contents which are parts of sense-experiences have
to be distinguished from these sense-contents which are no such parts. Sense-contents
which create the fictions of tomatoes and cigarette-cases are not parts of experiences. If
they are parts of experiences then tomatoes and cigarette-cases would become
conscious. It is only in the case of a human self that sense-contents are parts of
experiences. But in making them such parts the neutrality of sense content is given up.
To retain their neutrality, the sense-experiences themselves would become neutral,
thereby converting human self into a tomato or a cigarette-case. If a human self is not
like a tomato or a cigarette-case then the neutrality of sense-content has to be given up. They had to become subjective.

Though Ayer does not accept that sense experiences are logical constructions, for the sake of consistency he would very well have accepted that sense experiences are logical constructions out of sense-contents. Logical constructions can be arranged in a hierarchical order-primary logical constructions, secondary logical constructions and so on. Sense-contents may be taken as the elements of a primary logical construction. And by saying that an object is a primary logical construction it is meant that its elements themselves are not logical constructions. Following this convention one can define a sense-content as simple, in the sense that it cannot be analysed further. It can be taken as the basic epistemological unit. And if a logical construction is a complex-if it can be analysed further-then the sense-contents would be excluded form being logical constructions. To be logical constructions sense-contents are required to be complex, which they are not. But none of these assumptions is applicable to the case of a sense-experience, for a sense-experience is complex because it is a whole 'composed of sense-contents'. It is possible to maintain that a self is a higher order logical construction of which the elements i.e. experiences, themselves are logical constructions out of sense-contents. Self can be analyzed in terms of experiences, and experiences themselves can be analysed in terms of sense-contents. The immediate elements of a logical construction may themselves be logical constructions, as is the case of the object denoted by the word 'army'. An army is a logical construction out of this and that soldier, and a soldier is a logical construction out of this and that sense-content. There are several other objects, which are higher-order logical constructions. An army, a nation, a club and a gang are higher-order logical-constructions. So it is not essential that the immediate elements of a logical construction are to be sense-contents. However, it is essential that the ultimate analysis of all logical-constructions must reveal sense-contents as their elements. If we analyse a secondary logical construction, we
arrive at the elements which are primary logical constructions. And if we go further we arrive at the sense-contents which can not be analysed any further.\textsuperscript{94}

The relevant question is concerning the qualitative difference between different logical constructions. If the self is a logical construction, the question arises (as expressed in the traditional terminology)- how is the self distinguished from the not-self, i.e. how is a person distinguished from, say, a tomato? In a sense there is no fundamental distinction between the two; the distinction is of secondary importance, for both of them are logical constructions. The distinction of one logical construction from another has been explained by Ayer in terms of sense-contents which are elements of these constructions. One logical construction is distinguished from the other, because at least some of the elements of one logical construction are different from the elements of the other, or, in case the elements are the same, the elements of one logical construction are related differently from those of the other. As Ayer says, "what differentiates one such logical construction from another is the fact that it is constituted by different sense-contents or by sense-contents differently related."\textsuperscript{95} And concerning the nature of sense-contents he says that they are neither mental nor physical. "....The distinction between mind and matter applies only to logical constructions."\textsuperscript{96} Ayer's explanation of the meanings of 'logical construction' and 'sense-contents' implies that the difference between the self and a tomato is as if merely a difference as to the sense-contents involved and the relations between these sense-contents. So a self is not very different from a tomato. If the tomato's physical occupancy is a fiction, so is the self's spiritual occupancy a fiction.

The difference between Berkeley and the recent phenomenalists is that phenomenalism has been given a linguistic turn by our philosophers. A phenomenalist is not interested in the existential questions. His concern is not to show that sense-data exist when a common man says that a material object exists. As Austin points out, that
the phenomenalists "are concerned with logical relations obtaining between two different languages, the 'sense-datum language' and 'material object language' and are not to be taken literally as concerned with the existence of anything." Phenomenalists of our time claim that a statement about a material object is translatable in terms of statements about sense-data. Such a translation is possible if the statement about a material object entails, as we have already pointed out while discussing Austin, sense-data statements. For a singular material object statement one requires many sense-data statements. No definite number of sense-data statements is possible. We have already seen while discussing Ayer that an empirical proposition that is not a basic proposition is only weakly verifiable. And it is weakly verifiable because the process of verification does not terminate; non-termination of the process implies that the sense-data statements which verify a given material object statement do not have a definite number. This means that a material object statement entails an indefinite number of sense-data statements. Then how can a material object statement be equivalent to the sense-data statements? The equivalence presupposes definite numbers. Suppose a material object statement is 'this is a table'. To translate this statement in terms of sense-data statements one says such thing as 'this is hard', 'this is coloured'...and so on. The expression 'so on' signifies that the translation requires indefinite number of sense-data statements. But if someone requires indefinite number of steps to achieve something, then it is a recognition on his part that the goal can not be achieved. If the translation of a material object statement in terms of sense-data statements requires an indefinite number of sense-data statements then it is recognised that no such translation is possible. If a material object statement would genuinely entail sense-data statements then the number of sense-data statements must be definite. So also it is not possible to establish the equivalence of a material object statement with the sense-data statements because of the indefinite character of sense-data statements. This shows that the material object language is precise and the sense-datum language is imprecise. How can a precise language be translated into an imprecise language?
Statements about sense-data which are supposed to be entailed by a material object statement refer to both actual and possible sense-data. Talking about possible sense-data is taking in terms of hypothetical statements, so the translation in question would include both categorical and hypothetical statements. The categorical statements assert the existence of sense-data, whereas the hypothetical statements only entertain their possibility. As Ayer remarks, "the inclusion of possible as well as actual sense-data among the elements of the material things must be taken only to imply a recognition that some of these statements about sense-data will have to be hypothetical." Consider the material object statement 'this is a table'. This would be translated in terms of such sense-data statements as 'this is brown', 'this is hard' etc. The existence of the table has been described in terms of the occurrence of sense-data. Suppose I make the statement about the existence of an unperceived table, such a statement as 'there is a table next door'. The logical nature of this statement is not at all different from the earlier statement about the table. The expression 'there is' performs the function of 'this is', both are categorical statements and both refer to the existence of a table. The only difference is that one of them asserts the existence of a perceived table and the other asserts the existence of an unperceived table. If 'there is a table next door' has to be translated in terms of sense-data statements, then those statements have to be hypothetical. One would be saying something like this: if someone opens the next door then he would obtain sense-data connected with a table. The difficulty is that a categorical statement can not be equivalent to a hypothetical statement. A hypothetical statement is not meant for an unconditioned assertion of existence. Isaiah Berlin opposed the reduction of a categorical statement about the existence of a physical object in terms of the hypothetical statements about sense-data. As he points out, "Existential propositions expressed categorically-in indicative sentences tend as it were to 'point' towards their 'objects': and demonstratives which appear in existential propositions, like 'this is' 'there is', 'here we have', etc., often function as substitutes for such acts of
pointing to things or persons or processes. The characteristic force of the categorical mode of expression is often exactly this—that it acts in lieu of a gesture, of an ‘act of ostension’. But hypotheticals normally do the opposite of this. Hypotheticals, whatever they describe or mean, whatever they entail or convey or evince, in whatever way they are verified, or fail to be verified, do not as a general rule directly assert that something has been, is being, or will be occurring, or existing, or being characterised in some way. This is precisely the force of the conditional mood. Berlin means to say that reference to something that is occurring now cannot be reduced to something that would possibly occur if certain conditions were satisfied. Thus the difficulty is not only that the number of sense-data statements is indefinite. There is an added difficulty created by the possible sense-data. Corresponding to actual and possible sense-data are categorical and hypothetical statements. A categorical statement about a material object can not be equivalent to hypothetical statements about sense-data. The linguistic turn that phenomenalism took has increased the difficulties in accepting phenomenalism.

8. P.F. STRAWSON'S REFUTATION OF PHENOMENALISM AND SCEPTICISM.

We have shown above that most of the sense-datum philosophers give secondary importance to persons and material bodies. They consider them as some kind of fictions generated by the non-fictitious entities called sense-data. Sense-data have been given primary importance, material objects and persons secondary importance. Strawson succeeds in giving primary importance to those objects, which were given no respect by the sense-datum philosophers. Strawson opposes the sense-data philosophers by focussing his attention on material objects and persons, showing that they are the primary or basic particulars, which have to be identified in order to identify anything else in the world. How can the priority of sense-data over material objects be accepted? Reference to sense-data presupposes reference to material objects. Price introduced
sense-data with the help of a tomato. Similarly Moore uses his right hand and Ayer his cigarette-case. The 'tomato', the 'right hand' and the 'cigarette-case' are the physical object expressions. So they were already known before knowing sense-data. This clearly shows that the existence of sense-data depends on the existence of material bodies, that material bodies are primary particulars and sense-data are the secondary particulars. So the objects that are given secondary importance by the sense-datum philosophers have been given primary importance by Strawson. The objects that are given primary importance by sense-datum philosophers have been given secondary importance by Strawson. There is a clash of two metaphysical systems.

Strawson describe his metaphysics as descriptive metaphysics, of which the function is to make explicit the structural features of human understanding. The kind of metaphysics with which he is involved is the kind of metaphysics that was done by Kant and Aristotle. He distinguishes his kind of metaphysics from the other kind that he calls reversionary metaphysics. Sense-datum philosophy would appear as propounding reversionary metaphysics. One may object that sense-data philosophy is not involved in any metaphysics whatsoever. It is to eliminate metaphysics that Ayer evolved verification principle, and Ayer is a sense-datum philosopher. But phenomenalism, to which sense-data philosophers are committed, itself is a metaphysical system. Reducing everything to what is given in immediate experience is certainly a very attractive metaphysical move. An immediate experience is what is occurring here and now. If a sense-datum reports an immediate experience, then this would lead to momentary phenomenalism. So a revision was made and the possible sense-data were introduced to make phenomenalism more enduring. The metaphysics of phenomenalism comes directly in conflict with Plato, for whom momentary objects have hardly any significance. Strawson constructs his metaphysical system by rejecting both Plato and the phenomenalism. If Plato is committed to permanence, phenomenalism is committed to change. Both extremes are to be rejected. Strawson starts with the four dimensional
spatio-temporal structure, one temporal and three spatial dimensions. Material bodies
and persons, who own material bodies, completely fit into this spatio-temporal frame.
For a material body accommodates itself in all the three dimensions of space. And since
it is found in this or that place, at this or that moment, the dimension of time is also
satisfied. This would have created a difficulty if the persons were not owners of bodies.

Just as Russell makes sense-data the objects of acquaintance, Strawson makes
material bodies as objects of acquaintance. Of course he does not use the expression
acquaintance, he invents his own idiom. He does not say we are acquainted with
material bodies. He says that we identify material bodies directly. Just as Russell uses
demonstratives like ‘this’ and ‘that’ for exhibiting his acquaintance with sense-data,
Strawson uses these demonstratives for identifying material bodics. However, one’s
reference to material bodies cannot always be in terms of demonstrative identification.
Demonstrative identification is possible only in the presence of the object. But we also
refer to objects, which lie outside our experience. As Strawson says, “But now consider
the case where demonstrative identification, in the sense I have given to this phrase, is
not possible, because the particular to be identified is not within the range of those
sensibly present. What linguistic means of identification have we available? .... it may
seem, in the non-demonstrative identification of particulars, we depend ultimately on
description in general terms alone.”100 These remarks produce smell of Russell’s
distinction between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. Where
acquaintance fails, we have only knowledge by description. For Strawson, where
demonstrative identification fails, we have to resort to descriptions. And just as Russell
connects knowledge by description to knowledge by acquaintance, Strawson maintains,
“the situation of non-demonstrative identification may be linked with the situation of
demonstrative identification.”101 Russell too links descriptive knowledge to knowledge
by acquaintance. In this connection we to have to remember that Russell considered
‘names’ as disguised descriptions. So using a name is as good as using a description.
Strawson too exhibits Russell's influence on his thought when he says, "A name is worthless without the backing of descriptions." The only significant difference between the view of Russell and the view of Strawson is that Russell accepts, sense-data as primary particulars whereas Strawson accepts material bodies as primary particulars. By using demonstratives 'this' and 'that' Russell succeeds in picking out only sense-data. But by using the same demonstratives Strawson succeeds in picking out material bodies. Consider the following analogy: a hunter is in search of a tiger. He observes a striped colour-patch, he aims his gun at that colour-patch, and fires. The tiger is dead. This means that the hunter knows very well that the colour-patch is identical with the skin of the tiger. So firing at the colour-patch would lead to the killing of the tiger. Would the Strawsonian hunter do anything else? Would he be observing the tiger directly in order to aim at it and consequently to kill it? If he wishes to fire after ascertaining whether the striped colour-patch does or does not belong to the tiger then he may not get a chance to kill the tiger. There is every likelihood that the tiger may kill the hunter when the hunter is busy in ascertaining whether the striped colour-patch does or does not belong to the tiger. Russell's hunter is far more intelligent than the Strawsonian hunter is. Even if we ultimately succeed in identifying material bodies, we cannot escape the prior identification of colour-patches, noises, smells etc.

Strawson succeeds in eliminating sense-data by introducing the condition of re-identification of a particular which was identified earlier. Unless a particular is re-identified it cannot function as a primary or a basic particular. Re-identification presupposes the continued existence of an object, even if we do not perceive it. Since a sense-datum cannot be re-identified, it cannot be sensed twice, it cannot be considered as a primary particular. Only material objects and persons can satisfy the condition of re-identification. Therefore only they can function as primary or basic particulars in Strawson's ontology. To ensure that sense-data never acquire the honour that is given to the material bodies and persons, Strawson introduces the distinction between
independent identification and dependent identification. If a given particular ‘x’ depends for its identification on the particular ‘y’ then ‘y’ is a primary particular and ‘x’ is a secondary particular. According to Strawson, sense-data are the particulars of dependent type, hence they can never become primary particulars. As he says, “The dependent type is the class of what might be called ‘private particulars’—comprising the perhaps overlapping groups of sensations, mental events and, in one common acceptance of this term, sense-data. The type on which it is dependent is the class of persons.” Strawson has clearly converted sense-data into private particulars i.e., they are particulars which occur to a given person and are restricted to that person. All this follows from the definition of a sense-datum. Strawson is aware of the fact that sense-data are primary particulars according to sense-datum philosophers. He turns the table against the sense-datum philosophers. As he remarks, “On other criteria than the present, private experiences have often been the most favoured candidates for the status of ‘basic’ particulars; on the present criteria, they are the most obviously inadmissible. The principles of individuation of such experiences essentially turn on the identities of the persons to whose histories they belong. A twinge of toothache or a private impression of red cannot in general be identified in our common language except as the twinge which such-and-such an identified person suffered or is suffering, the impression which such-and-such an identified person had or is having. Identifying references to ‘private particulars’ depend on identifying references to particulars of another type altogether, namely persons.” Strawson is sufficiently clear. Since identification of sense-data depends on the person to whom they appear, the sense-datum philosophers are wrong in considering sense-data as basic particulars. They are particulars of dependent type.

It is through introduction of the concept of re-identification that Strawson has tried to meet Hume’s scepticism. For Hume, the objects that occur in one observational stretch are numerically different from the objects that occur in the succeeding
observational stretch. Each stretch of observation would have its own spatial system. Strawson shows that Humean doubt is self-refuting. As Strawson remarks, "Each new system would be wholly independent of every other. There would be no question of doubt about the identity of an item in one system with an item in another. For such a doubt makes sense only if the two systems are not independent, if they are parts, in some way related, of a single system which includes them both." So Humean doubt makes sense only in a unitary spatial system. But his doubt is aimed at the production of multiple spatial systems. As Strawson argues against Hume that "his doubts are unreal, not simply because they are logically irresoluble doubts, but because they amount to the rejection of the whole conceptual scheme within which alone such doubts make sense." Thus Strawson succeeds in refuting scepticism.

To sum up: though Russell and Moore were responsible for introducing sense-data for the first time, they did not give up material objects. More attention was paid by Price for trying to see whether sense-data coincide with the surfaces of material objects. It is only at the stage of Ayer that sense-data became quite independent and self sustaining. Material objects were converted into pure fictions. Austin subjected Ayer's views to an exhaustive criticism. But he had no metaphysical system of his own. He took the help of language analysis. Strawson builds up his own metaphysical system to counter the metaphysics to which sense-datum philosophers were committed. He attempted to show that the Humean doubts are self refuting. For the 20th century philosophers Hume stands as the only sceptic worth considering. So refuting Hume is considered as refuting scepticism. Strawson refutes Hume to enable us to discover external reality.

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13 Russell, Our Knowledge of The External World, p.75.
14 Ibid., p. 93.
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17 Ibid., p.32.
20 Ibid., p. 83.
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23 Russell, An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth, p. 139.
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25 Ibid., p. 151.
26 Russell, Our Knowledge of the External World, p. 78.
27 Ibid., p. 78.
32 see The Philosophy of G.E.Moore, pp. 627-659.
33 Ibid., p.629.
34 Ibid., p. 630.
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46 For these steps see Ayer's, The foundations of Empirical Knowledge, London, 1940, pp. 1-18, Also H.H. Price's, Perception, pp. 31-2.
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6 Price, *Perception*, p. VIII.
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6Carnap, *Unity of Science*, University of Chicago, 1938, p. 38.
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6Ibid., p.53.
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96 Ibid. p. 123.
97 Sense and Sensibility, p.107.
101 Ibid. p., 21.
102 Ibid., p. 20.
103 Ibid., p. 41.
104 Ibid., p. 41.
105 Ibid., p. 35.
106 Ibid., p. 35.