Appendix

In surveys of 20th century-contemporary philosophy, it is customary to distinguish two main currents: Analytic and Continental.¹ Analytic philosophy is again divided into two: One inspired by logic, of which Frege and Russell are chief patrons, and the second one is oriented towards ordinary language in which G.E Moore, Later Wittgenstein and J.L Austin are the central figures. Analytic philosophy is so called because of its method. Analysis is the method through which they study language. G.E Moore adheres to conceptual analysis and Russell to logico-analytic method. Year 1903 is treated as the year of birth of analytic philosophy, because of the simultaneous publication of Russell’s *Principles of Mathematics* and Moore’s *Refutation of Idealism*. But, in 1879 Gottlob Frege had already published his work *Begriffsschrift*, which in fact marked the beginning of analytic philosophy. In fact Russell’s greatest inspiration for philosophy of logic and analytic method is Frege; so mentions Russell in *Principia Mathematica*, along with Whitehead: “...in all questions of logical analysis, our chief debt is to Frege.”² However, Frege claims that his attempts to clarify language do not constitute his real aim. Because he never believed that philosophical problems could be solved through the analysis of language; but only that such analysis can help us to understand the problems better.³ This makes it clear that Frege would never have shared what earlier Wittgenstein maintains that linguistic analysis provides the solution to philosophical problems.⁴

As a whole analytic philosophers differ in their opinions regarding the aim of philosophy and its purports; though they stick to the same method adopted in

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¹ Continental Philosophy, by contrast, comprises trends such as phenomenology, existentialism, hermeneutics, structuralism, de-constructionism, etc.
different garbs. For some, linguistic analysis is necessary to avoid ambiguities and unclarities, which may be crucial for the validity of a line of argument. They even stick to the point that linguistic analysis or conceptual analysis is the only aim of philosophy. They contrast science with philosophy. Thus Mortiz Schlick writes in his well-known essay, ‘The turning point in philosophy’, which is introduced in the first volume of the Journal *Erkenntnis*. “By means of philosophy, statements are explained, by means of science, they are verified. The latter is concerned with the truth of statements, the former with what they actually mean.”\(^5\) Other analytic philosophers, who are in majority hold that philosophy is concerned with truth. Many among them believe that it resembles science. Therefore in the 1920s Russell writes, philosophy is, “essentially one with science, differing from the special sciences merely by the generality of its problems.”\(^6\)

Russell has had four different periods in his philosophical career. They are,

1. A neo-Hegelian phase (till 1899) – Revolt against idealism.
3. An Empiricist phase (1914-1918)

1. Neo-Hegelian Phase (till 1899)

In this phase, Russell is deeply influenced by J. Ward, McTaggart and Bradely. During this time Russell undertakes the project to analyze the nature of various sciences and the dialectical relationship between them. Russell’s idealist thinking is partly influenced by McTaggart, who is a contemporary in Cambridge and is a leader of the pluralist strand of the British Idealism. McTaggart’s view that Absolute is knowable is in stark opposition to Bradley, who leads the monist strand of Idealism. Russell’s views are akin to McTaggart’s, because he hopes through the project of analyzing the nature of various sciences and their dialectical relationship

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to reveal some thing of the nature of the Absolute. His reaction against idealism started in 1898 under the stimulus of G.E. Moore. He later writes in *My Philosophical Development*, "I felt [the new philosophy] as a great liberation, as if I had escaped from a hot-house on to a wind-swept headland. I hated the stuffiness involved supposing that space and time were only in my mind. I liked the starry heavens even better than the moral law, and could not bear Kant's view that the one I liked best was only a subjective figment. In the first exuberance of liberation I became a naïve realist and rejoiced in the thought that grass is really green..."\(^7\)

One important outcome of this phase is Russell's belief in three concepts which are to be carried forward to his later phases also.

First is his commitment to pluralism and/or belief in external relations. Russell believes that recognition of external relations not only liberates philosophy of mathematics, it also abolishes the monism of the Absolute and admits that reality consists of plurality of things.

Second aspect is that of reductionism. This is inherent within Russellian analysis which is the third aspect. The general idea of the backwards moment from common knowledge (the results) to abstract propositions (the premises), followed by the return journey to propositions which capture the truths of common knowledge whilst advocating the errors of the latter (the analyzed results) already carries with it a seed of reductionism. Common knowledge can be regarded as reduced to the analyzed results. Similarly, if the results are mathematics and premises turn out to be logic, then mathematics is reduced to logic.\(^8\) In his *Principles of Mathematics* (written in 1900 and published in 1903), inspired by Giuseppe Peano (1858-1932)\(^9\) Russell makes his first attempt to carry out his

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\(^9\) "It was at the International Congress of philosophy in Paris in the year 1900 that I became aware of the logical reforms for the philosophy of mathematics. It was through hearing discussions between Peano of Turin and other assembled philosophers that I became aware of this. I had not previously known his work, but I was impressed by the fact that, in every discussion, he showed more precision and more logical rigour than was shown by anybody else. I went to him and said, 'I
logistic programme, attempting to show that arithmetic is reducible to purely logical notions alone.

Thirdly, Russell's adoption of the method of analysis, as opposed to the neo-Hegelian synthesis associated with Absolute Idealism. Russell's study of the works of German Mathematicians happened simultaneously of his abandonment of Absolute Idealism under Moore's influence. This has been a source of his conception of philosophical analysis. Russell writes that the work of German Mathematicians, in analyzing or defining mathematical concepts pertaining to the calculus such as limits or continuity helps to take out the veil of metaphysics that obscured mathematics so far. Russell writes that analysis and definitions of mathematical concepts by German Mathematicians "swept away great quantities of metaphysical lumber that had obstructed the foundations of mathematics ever since the time of Leibniz". This in fact, takes Russell out of the clutches of Kantian and Hegelian mis-construals of arithmetic and geometry, liberating his conception from any dependence upon apriori intuitions of space and time, and enabling him to repudiate the synthetic apriori of mathematical propositions. Russell comes to be convinced that the ultimate road to truth in philosophy is analysis. Russell later writes that ever since he abandoned the philosophy of Kant and Hegel, he has solutions of philosophical problems by means of analysis; and that he remains firmly persuaded that only by analyzing progress is possible.

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11 In his preface to Our Knowledge of the External World written in 1914, Russell genuinely characterizes the writings of Frege (1848-1925) as 'the first example' of 'the logical-analytical method in philosophy.' It is indeed true that Frege's philosophy of mathematics can be characterized, as a complete example of the 'logical-analytical method' as 'Russell understands it in the second decade of the century'. However, Russell evolved his conception of analysis independently of Frege and the application of the 'analytic method' to philosophy in general (specifically to epistemology, ontology, metaphysics and ethics), in his phase (second decade of the century) of the evolution of analytic philosophy is the work of Russell (and Moore).
Like Moore, Russell replaced Absolute Idealism not by empiricism but by unbridled Platonist realism. This marks the second phase of his philosophical development and the phase which we are also trying to analyze.

2. Platonist phase (1899-1913)

The reason for naming this phase, Platonist, is because throughout this phase Russell posits a densely populated world of abstract objects that have their being independently of knowing subjects. Principles of Mathematics and The Problems of Philosophy are among the books written during this period. In the Principles of Mathematics he explains Being as, "that which belongs to every conceivable term, to every possible object of thought". "Numbers, the Homeric gods, relations, chimeras and four-dimensional spaces" are some of the denizens of this world of Being. "Existence, on the contrary, is the prerogative of some only amongst beings".\(^\text{12}\)

In Russell's Platonist phase, all objects are unchanging, independent and subsistent. Objects that exist are (e.g. non-abstract objects) are special cases in the realm of objects. Opposing the doctrines of idealism, Russell opts for thoroughgoing anti-psychologism in which proposition or judgements are completely independent of any human act of judging and analyzing. Thus, propositions are treated as independent, objective entities. Russell feels that acquaintance with abstract objects like propositions are as easy as acquaintance with non-abstract objects. Here Platonism means something more than mere realism about universals. But, throughout his philosophic career, Russell maintains a realist theory of universals and in this weaker sense he remained a Platonist.\(^\text{13}\)

However, there are no major changes in the ontology of the period. This is evident from the fact that throughout this period his ontology includes: universals, sense data, material bodies, minds, points and instants. According to Russell, sense


\(^{13}\) See Paul J. Hager, 1994, p.36.
data and one's own mind are known through acquaintance and others by description. However, some sort of ontological reduction happens in this period. They are, in 1901 Russell's logicism reduces numbers and mathematical entities to sets of sets. In 1905 denoting concepts are dispensed with, through the theory of descriptions. In 1906-1908 he labours to dispense with classes and propositions through the substitutional theory. In 1910, propositions are reduced to multiple relation theory. The hallmark of this phase is Russell’s notion of a logical subject, that is, the notion of an entity that can be named, mentioned or denoted and also, about which something can be asserted. In *Principles of Mathematics*, Russell assumes propositions, relations and properties as logical subjects. They all have being as the concrete particulars, i.e. they are all individuals also as concrete particulars. And they are all values of individual variables. This world of being extends to mathematics: "Arithmetic must be discovered in just the same sense in which Columbus discovered the West Indies, and we no more create numbers than he created the Indians." 14

Russell treats the term 'term' as 'the widest word in the philosophical vocabulary'. (Para 47 of POM). As we have mentioned earlier, inspired by Peano, logic becomes a calculus of terms, for Russell. Consequently, there arises sharp contrast with traditional logic and the subject-predicate doctrine that underpins it. Russell rejects that there is a distinction in kind between subjects and predicates, treating both alike as terms. The metaphysical implication of this is put forward by Griffin as follows: The old theory in which quality $q$ is inhering in a substance $p$, is now to be treated on the new theory as the combination of two terms $q$ and $p$ into a complex terms $q-p$. Consequently, the distinction between substance and accident is overlooked because items in both categories are terms now.

To sum up the achievements of this phase, Theory of Descriptions (1905) facilitates him to cut down the number of subsistent entities, which had been unchecked so far. But, the side effect is, it gives rise to a possible antagonism between the grammatical structure of a sentence that expressed a proposition and the logical structure of the proposition expressed. So far Russell has been under the

impression that the linguistic expression for a proposition is a transparent medium, which will reveal the true subject matter of philosophical reflections, namely propositions. For only propositions are bearers of truth and falsehood and for Russell they are mind independent, non-linguistic objects which contain not words but objective entities or terms (terms are similar to Moore's concepts). Therefore, Russell comes to the conclusion that theory of descriptions shows that 'the grammatical form of expression may conceal the true 'logical form' of the proposition expressed'.

Nevertheless theory of description helps Russell to pare down his ontological commitments. To quote P.M.S. Hacker, "It strengthened his adherence to the principle of Ockham's Razor - that entities should not be multiplied beyond necessity. This set Russell on the high road to reductive analysis in various forms, later articulated in 'the supreme maxim of all scientific philosophizing wherever possible, logical constructions are to be substituted for inferred entities. Analysis enabled one to show that apparent entities are actually mere logical constructions out of familiar items of which we have direct experience. Harnessed to Russell's distinction between knowledge by description and knowledge by acquaintance, it became an apparently powerful tool in epistemological as well as ontological investigations."

Hacker's last sentence has significance to our work. We will be discussing in this chapter that two important concepts of Russell, Logical Atomism and Phenomenalism, result from the application of Occam’s Razor.

3. Empiricist phase (1914-1918)

This phase find its place in the book ‘Our Knowledge of the External World (1914)’ and a couple of articles including, ‘The Philosophy of Logical Atomism’ (1918). In this phase Russell gets away from his realm of subsistent entities. Theory of descriptions helps Russell a lot to find a new dimension in meaning of

the world of being. But, the real impetus for transition is supplied by Whitehead, as Russell mentions in the Preface of 'Our Knowledge of the External World'. "The central problem by which I have sought to illustrate method is the problem of the relation between the crude date of sense and the space, time and matter of mathematical physics. I have been made aware of the importance of this problem by my friend and collaborator Dr. Whitehead to whom are due almost all the differences between the views advocated here and those suggested in The Problems of Philosophy. I owe to him the definition of points, the suggestion for the treatment of instants and "things", and the whole conception of the world of physics as a construction rather than inference."¹⁶ Such logical constructions appear in his writings from 1914. This phase also marks an emphasize to sense data and sensibilia. We are of the view that a shift from Platonist phase was inevitable because of the imposition of the separation of appearance and reality. However, this phase will hold a similarity, as we will see in the chapter, as far as the basic notions of epistemology and ontology are concerned, because now every entity has to be constructed out of sense data. In this period Russell tends to project that all and only logical atoms are ontological atoms. In other words, this is the essence of logical atomism. It is the epistemological properties of sense data that build the gap between logical and ontological atoms, for Russell.

In this phase there are also attempts to project the view that “Subjects¹⁷ are not known through acquaintance”, they “are known as the referents for the relation of acquaintance”.¹⁸ That is, “when two objects O and O’ are given as parts of one experience, we perceive the fact 'something is acquainted with both O and O’. Thus two instances of acquaintance can be given as having a common subject, even

¹⁷ In the Platonist phase, Russell, though not really convinced, speaks of direct acquaintance with self.
when the subject is not given."¹⁹ This way in 'On the Nature of Acquaintance' (1914) Russell concludes that the self or subject is an entity²⁰ (see p. 168).

This is followed by Russell's (initial) denial of neutral monism as sensations and perceptions, for instance, are irreducible two term relations between subjects and particulars and facts respectively. But, after four years, Russell in 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism' (1918) shows some signs of denying dualism (of subjects- particulars/ facts) by feigning ignorance whether neutral monism is true or not. According to neutral monism self or subject is a logical fiction.

In empiricist phase Russell also applies logical-analytic method to the study the problem of knowledge of external world. Further, there is a discussion about the occasions, which are appropriate to use his logically perfect/ideal language. However, the problem, of other minds and sensibilia remains intact. And, an additional problem of solipcism also comes to the scene.

4. The modified empiricist phase (1919 onwards)

The transition to this modified phase is facilitated by the indispensable necessity of imposing inferred entities (non-experienced entities). Russell employs them in the empiricist phase with a hope to dispense with them in the ultimate analysis. But, they remain there intact, leading him to pass on to another phase of his philosophy. *Analysis of Matter* (1927) contains all that Russell wants to convey in this phase. Russell's inferred entities in this phase are called *events*. They are "entities or structures occupying a region of space-time which is small in all four dimensions."²¹ Here the sense data and sensibilia of previous phase become a subclass of these events. The use of the word sense datum is considerably diminished. The modified empiricist phase witnesses the limits of analysis reached by Russell. Here *events* are the basic particulars. They together with universals constitute the ontological entities to be assumed by the premises. At the moment we are not

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¹⁹ Ibid., p.165.
²⁰ We will be discussing the distinction between Self and Subject elsewhere in this chapter.
concerned whether a future analysis will reveal some other basic particulars, as at present events are the only particulars assumed by the premises, whereas the results (propositions of science, common sense etc.) assume a variety of kind of particulars. This points finger at the possibility of premises having the potential to be simpler, more abstract, more precise, less obvious than the various results.

Thus, we have explained the four phases of Russell’s philosophical development and it is our job now to begin with our task of analyzing and criticizing Russell’s epistemology and ontology.