Bertrand Russell (1872-1970) belongs to the group of linguistic philosophers who appear in the beginning of the twentieth century. He has exerted unique influence on the contemporary philosophic thinking and development. By the profundity of thought and deciphering intellectual power, he is considered as the strongest spokesman of the philosophic spirit of the English-speaking world of the present time. His long philosophic career extending over more than half a century, producing a large number of works and dealing with a variety of subjects, shows the versatility of his genius.

However, our study of Russell is limited comparatively to a small aspect of his enormous philosophy. Because learning complete philosophy of Russell would have been too mammoth a task for such a brief work. Further, we have limited our study to the learning of only those works, which are relevant to our topic and that too in a limited manner. This is also because Russell is a hard taskmaster as far as the language and composition of his works are concerned; therefore a complete understanding of his works would have been impossible in such a short span of time. However, we are proceeding with the hope that all these limitations will have only a minor influence on what we want to convey through this chapter.

Russell is known as a linguistic philosopher. Linguistic philosophers are mainly concerned with language, because for them, the task of philosophy is to deal with the structure and meaning of language. Consequently, they leave out other aspects of philosophy. But we find that Russell has, in addition to his concern for language, its structure and intentions, also at some stage of his philosophic career advocated epistemology and ontology.

Before embarking upon our analysis of Russell's epistemology and ontology, we find it necessary that we should briefly mention twentieth century
philosophy, its method and also different stages of Russell’s philosophy. We are attempting this with the intention to facilitate a better understanding of Russell’s philosophy. To avoid any hampering of flow of this chapter, we have attached this portion with the Appendix.

I. Knowledge, Causal Theory of Perception, Self

We begin our analysis of Russell’s epistemology as we find it in his book *The Problems of Philosophy* (1912). There is a reason for this. The organization of knowledge in this book provides a nice example of the way in which, Russell thinks, epistemology could be done. Russell remarks, “Doing this book has given me a map of the theory of knowledge, which I hadn’t before. From that point of view it will have been a great help to my own work.”

Russell in the fifth chapter of this book divides knowledge into two: ‘knowledge of things’ and ‘knowledge of truths’, and thereby proceeds to the core of his sense-datum philosophy. ‘Knowledge of things’ again he divides into two: ‘knowledge by acquaintance’ and ‘knowledge by description’ (these are otherwise called immediate and derivative knowledge respectively).

Russell says, “We have acquaintance with anything of which we are directly aware, without any intermediary of process of inference or any knowledge of truth.” For example, sense data of a table, its colour, hardness, etc. which make up the appearance of the table, according to Russell, are things with which we have acquaintance – things immediately known to us just as they are. We have knowledge by acquaintance not only of the particular elements of our experience, but also of universals. That is, we are acquainted, for instance, not just with a red

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1 Russell, in a letter to Lady Ottoline written on 12th July 1911.
3 Russell in the ninth and tenth chapter of this book speaks about universals in details. In this context Russell exhibits his appreciation for Plato. “...such entities as relations appears to have a being which is in some way different from that of physical objects and also different from that of minds and from that of sense data...what is the nature of this kind of being... “Plato’s theory of
patch but also with redness itself. For him, universals include sensible qualities like redness, and relations like space-time, resemblance (e.g., greater than) and apriori knowledge like 2+2=4. Russell feels that error is impossible in knowledge by acquaintance.

But for Russell, the knowledge of the physical object, for instance, the table, is not directly known. He says that it is known through the medium of its sense data. It is knowledge derived from its sense data or it is derivative knowledge. This knowledge is what Russell means as knowledge by description. He feels that we have no knowledge of the table, which is knowledge of truth, we have knowledge of the ‘sense data of the table’, which is knowledge by description. We here find it slightly difficult to proceed, therefore let us further study this point from John Slater who makes Russell’s point explicit: “We know historical figures, for example, by description. If we claim knowledge of, say, Napoleon, our knowledge is based in part upon acquaintance, for we have seen pictures of him, and in part upon knowledge of truths, for we accept the testimony of those who are acquainted with Napoleon’s appearance and who reported that he resembled the likeness with which we are acquainted. When we come upon a descriptive statement which we do not understand, we must, if we want to understand it, research it to the point where we achieve acquaintance with the things the statement is about.”

Knowledge by description, Russell feels, because of its partial dependence on knowledge of truths, is capable of error.

"ideas" is an attempt to solve this very problem, and in my opinion it is one of the most successful attempts hither to made." The Problems of Philosophy, p.142.


5 "The chief difficulty in regard to knowledge, however, does not arise over derivative knowledge, but over intuitive knowledge. So long as we are dealing with derivative knowledge, we have the test of intuitive knowledge to fall back upon. But in regard to intuitive beliefs, it is by no means easy to discover any criterion by which to distinguish some as true and other as erroneous. In this question it is scarcely possible to reach any very precise result: all our knowledge of truths is infected with some degree of doubt, and a theory which ignored this fact would be plainly wrong." The Problems of Philosophy, p. 210.
Russell divides knowledge of truths also into two: immediate and derivative. Truths known immediately are also called intuitive or self-evident truths. Example for this kind of truths is “I am now writing’ or some simple logical truth in the form ‘A is A’. Derivative knowledge of truths is all those truths which are deducible from intuitive truths. This fact makes intuitive or self-evident truths central to Russell’s classification of knowledge.

We argue that Russell’s theory of knowledge comes to rest in intuitive or self-evident truths, because the process of demanding reasons for what we believe cannot go on ad infinitum. This process can be followed until we reach to truths like ‘either q or not q’. The reason for the truth of this is, it is self-evident.

For Russell, induction falls in the category of self-evident truths. This is because of the fact that no proof can be given about the truth of induction. Russell feels that when a doubt about the truth of this principle is raised, we have to agree that no proof of it is possible. Nevertheless, it is an essential premise in scientific arguments, so it has to be admitted into any complete theory of knowledge. Besides, Russell thinks that since induction is not a derivative truth, it has to be considered as an immediate one.

Again, Russell distinguishes two kinds of self-evident truths of perception [see Chapter XI]. Among the two, the first one just asserts the existence of sense-datum without analyzing it. ‘There is a white patch’, is the example for this kind of truths. The other kind originates when the object of sense is a complex one and we try to analyze it. ‘That white patch is circular’, ‘this is below that’, ‘this is to the right of that’, are instances of this kind. In the first instance, our judgment analyses the datum into colour and shape, and then recombines them by stating that the white patch is circular in shape. About the second and third ones, Russell says, "In this kind of judgments the
sense-datum contains constituents which have some relation to each other, and
the judgment asserts that these constituents have this relation". 6

Russell considers memory as a class of intuitive judgment; this is
analogous to those of sense, yet distinct from them. For Russell, "the essence
of memory is not constituted by the image, but by having immediately before
the mind an object which is recognized as past". 7 But, in this sense we should
not come to know there ever was a past at all nor should we be able to
understand the word 'past', any more than a man born deaf can understand the
word 'music'. This way Russell tries to establish the point that there must be
intuitive judgments of memory and it is upon them in the ultimate sense, that
all our knowledge of the past depends. But, now Russell is in a difficulty as
he is accountable for fallacious memory also. Russell replies, ".... cases of
fallacious memory can probably be dealt with in this way, i.e., they can be
shown to be not cases of memory in the strict sense at all". 8

One important point that comes to light by the case of memory is that
self-evidence has degrees. The admission of degrees of self-evidence is an
important characteristic of Russell's theory of knowledge. To quote Russell,
"Truths of perception and some of the principles of logic have the very highest
degree of self-evidence; truths of immediate memory have an equally high
degree. The inductive principle has less self-evidence than some of the other
principles of logic, such as "what follows from a true premise must be true".
Memories have a diminishing self-evidence as they become remoter and
fainter; the truths of logic and mathematics have (broadly speaking) less self-
evidence as they become more complicated. Judgments of intrinsic ethical or
aesthetic value are apt to have some self-evidence, but not much". 9

6 Bertrand Russell, 1926, p. 179.
7 Ibid., p. 180.
8 Ibid., p. 183.
9 Ibid., pp. 183-184.
We argue that the introduction of a scale of self-evidence is important for Russell because it permits him to say that a proposition has a degree of self-evidence even though it is not true. To explain his point he calls attention to another proposition in conflict with it, which has a higher degree of self-evidence. It seems to us that the highest degree of self-evidence is a guarantee of truth for Russell; consequently lower degrees lead only to a presumption of truth.

If self-evidence is not always a guarantee of truth, it requires that there must be a theory of truth to account for our knowledge of truths. Knowledge of truths, according to Russell, has error as its opposite, for it is possible to hold false beliefs. "Our knowledge of truths, unlike our knowledge of things, has an opposite, namely error. So far as things are concerned, we may know them or not know them, but there is no positive state of mind which can be described as erroneous knowledge of things, so long ... as we confine ourselves to knowledge by acquaintance ... we may draw wrong inferences from our acquaintance, but the acquaintance itself cannot be deceptive. Thus there is no dualism as regards acquaintance. But, as regards knowledge of truths, there is dualism. We may believe what is false as well as what is true. We know that on very many subjects different people hold different and incompatible opinions: hence some beliefs must be erroneous. Since erroneous beliefs are often held just as strongly as true beliefs, it becomes a difficult question how they are to be distinguished from true beliefs."\(^{10}\)

Russell assumes that people want to avoid, if they can, false beliefs, but to do so they have to know, as a first step, the meaning of 'true' and 'false'. Any acceptable theory of the meaning of these terms must meet certain conditions, according to Russell. It must allow the instances of both true and false beliefs; it must make 'true' and 'false' predicates of beliefs and statements; and it must require the truth or falsity of a belief to depend upon something external to the belief itself.

\(^{10}\) Ibid., pp. 186-87.
Since the third one is exactly the opposite of the second one, let us bring in Russell's example to elaborate it further. "If I believe that Charles-I died on the scaffold, I believe truly, not because of any intrinsic quality of my belief, which could be discovered by merely examining the belief, but because of an historical event which happened two and a half centuries ago. If I believe that Charles-I died in his bed, I believe falsely: no degree of vividness in my belief, or of care in arriving at it, prevents it from being false, again because of what happened long ago, and not because of any intrinsic property of my belief. Hence, although truth and falsehood are properties of beliefs, they are properties dependent upon the relations of the beliefs to other things, not upon any internal quality of the beliefs".\(^\text{11}\)

Third of these conditions, as we can see, committed him to the correspondence theory of truth. Truth consists in correspondence to fact, and falsity in the absence of such correspondence is the basic idea of correspondence theory of truth. In this theory, propositions point to something other than themselves. For Russell, propositions have objective reference, which is a function of the meanings of the words making them up. It is Russell's view that propositions come in pairs, since every proposition can be denied. Both a proposition and its denial have the same objective, which is a fact, but they differ in their objective reference because one of them points towards the fact and the other away from it. This is because, according to Russell, there are true and false propositions, but not true and false facts. (We will further discuss this issue elsewhere in this chapter).

Coming back to our initial discussion, Russell believes that all our knowledge has acquaintance as the base. "All our knowledge, both knowledge of things and knowledge of truths, rests upon acquaintance as its foundation. It is therefore important to consider what kinds of things there are with which

\(^\text{11}\) Ibid., p. 189.
we have acquaintance. Russell claims that we have acquaintance with sense data, of abstract ideas which we call universals and of introspection. By introspection, Russell means that we are not only aware of things, but we are often aware of being aware of them. ‘When I see the sun, I am often aware of my seeing the sun; thus "my seeing the sun" is an object with which I have acquaintance’.

Russell now explains what he means by ‘knowledge by description’. Among the things with which we are acquainted are not physical objects (as opposed to sense data) and other people’s minds. These are examples for knowledge by description for Russell. To quote Russell, “By a "description" I mean any phrase of the form "a so-and-so" or "the so-and-so". A phrase of the form "a so-and-so" I shall call an "ambiguous" description; a phrase of the form "the so-and-so" (in the singular) I shall call a "definite" description. Thus 'a man' is an ambiguous description and ‘a man with the straw hat’ is a definite description for Russell.

Many universals and many particulars are known to us by description. But here, "...knowledge concerning what is known by description is ultimately reducible to knowledge concerning what is known by acquaintance". This means that when we say that we are acquainted with universals and with particulars, it means that we are acquainted only with a limited number of particulars, those which are directly given to us in experience. It follows from this that particulars of other types exist. Defending Russell’s position A. J. Ayer calls these particulars as objects. Ayer comments, "... but we can refer to them indirectly as objects which

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12 Ibid., p. 75.
13 Ibid., p. 82.
14 Ibid., pp. 90-91.
15 In Russell’s view when we say that we are acquainted with an object, it means both that the object really exists and that it has the properties that it appears to have.
stand in certain relations to those with which we are acquainted".  
Russell argues that logically a sense datum is an object, particular about which the subject is aware.

Russell finally wraps up his discussion of description in the following way. "The fundamental principle in the analysis of propositions containing description is this. *Every proposition which we can understand must be composed wholly of constituents with which we are acquainted*". We are of the view that the sentence in italics suggests that Russell conceives acquaintance as a basic cognitive relation. What are the terms of this relation? As we have seen above, Russell tells us that acquaintance is a relation between a 'subject' and 'object'. We represent this relation by the schema,

\[ S - A - O \]

which has the logical form,

\[ xRy. \]

We argue that in *The Problem of Philosophy*, which serves as an introduction to his sense datum philosophy, Russell's views are similar to those of his predecessor John Locke. Though Russell hardly recognizes this fact, the resemblance is conspicuous. Russell adopts the position called *causal theory of perception* in this work, which in fact Locke introduced in philosophy for the first time. Further, Russell shows conviction in this theory; this is obvious from the fact that after experimenting different views regarding

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18 Bertrand Russell, 1926, p. 91.
19 Some philosophers who have used the above schema have been tempted to take 'A' to stand for an act construed as a mental particular.
knowledge, he comes back in his later works such as An Outline of Philosophy (1927) and My Philosophical Development (1959) to causal theory of perception. To quote Russell, "what is called a perception is connected with its object through the laws of physics. Its realization to the object is casual and mathematical, we cannot say whether or not it resembles the object in any instinctive respect, except, that both it and object are brief events in space and time".20

Sambasiva Prasad also agrees with our view that Russell makes a come back to the causal theory of perception after indulging in constructionism, which is the second stage of his theories. Prasad writes, "For the constructionist, the physical object is identical with a set of sense-data and nothing more. But this is not so. The physical object could exhibit causal properties even in the absence of its sense-data. (For instance, in complete darkness we may not get any sense-data of a wall, but its causal properties are observed while a ball is rebounded on throwing towards it). Therefore the constructionist's identification of the physical object, with a set of sense data alone is not correct. Being alive to this fact, Russell left constructionism and subscribed again to causal theory in his later works.

Moreover Russell's fascination to physics and his attempt to introduce scientific method in philosophical inquiry, made him come back to the causal theory of perception which he professed initially in his PP."21

Now let us discuss Russell's similarity to his predecessors. We argue that Russell shows some similarity to Rene Descartes also in The Problems of Philosophy. We mention Descartes because, in this book Russell begins with the question "is there any knowledge in the world which is so certain that no reasonable man could doubt it?" [See p.9]. Russell appreciates Descartes' method of systematic doubt which reveals that 'subjective things are the most

21 B.S. Prasad, 'Shahjahan Miah on Russell's Constructionism', Indian Philosophical Quarterly, XXVII (1 & 2); Jan-April 2000, pp. 181-86.
certain ones'. We argue that Russell introduced sense data under the influence of two premises of Cartesian dualism. As we have seen in the introduction, they are as follows:

1. Pure mind can directly know only its own ideas.
2. All knowledge must be based upon indubitable premises.

By combining these two premises with empiricism, Russell assumes that only sense data can be given in sense experience and not the material objects. Following Descartes, Russell believes that what can be directly given must be indubitable. And for Russell, since the existence of the material objects can be doubted, they cannot be directly given in experience [See p.17]. Further, what is given in experience are only appearances of objects and not the real objects [See p.15]. [Like Plato, Russell brings in the distinction between appearance and reality in this book]. Russell's arguments regarding why material objects cannot be directly given in sense experience are analyzed by Suman Gupta as follows:

"(i) The real table has one shape, one size and one colour etc.

"(ii) The real table can be immediate object of our experience only if we can experience its real qualities under all circumstances.

"(iii) But what we experience changes with every change in the point of view and the change of conditions under which the object is perceived.

"(iv) So what we experience immediately is not the material object."22

In the chapter entitled 'Appearance and Reality' Russell writes, "Thus it becomes evident that the real table, if there is one, is not the same as what

we immediately experience by sight or touch or hearing. The real table, if there is one, is not immediately known to us at all, but must be an inference from what is immediately known". 23 And Russell defines sense data as, "... the things that are immediately known in sensation, such things as colours, sounds, smells, hardness ... 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 is a sense-datum, not a sensation ... It is plain that if we are to know any thing about the table, it must be by means of the sense-data ... we can not say that the table is the sense-data, or even that the sense-data are directly properties of the table". 24

By now it is evident that what Locke calls as simple ideas is Russell's sense-data. Like Locke, Russell holds that physical objects are the 'causes' of our sense data. We know table as a physical object which causes such — and — such sense-data. This describes the table by means of sense data. Russell says, "In order to know anything at all about the table, we must know truths connecting it with things with which we have acquaintance: we must know that "such-and-such sense data are caused by a physical object". There is no state of mind in which we are directly aware of the table; all our knowledge of the table is really knowledge of truths, and the actual thing which is the table is not, strictly speaking, known to us at all". 26

This way we see Russell's similarity with Locke when he reduces physical object into Locke's 'unknown' and 'unknowable', something which can never be given in immediate experience. Another reason Russell has for believing in physical object is that he claims that we want the same object for different people. Sense data are private in the sense that different people have their own sense data about the same object in different manner, according to

23 Bertrand Russell, 1926, pp. 16-17.
26 Ibid., pp. 74-75.
their perspectives and dispositions. Russell explains, "I bought my table from the former occupant of my room; I could not buy his sense-data, which died when he went away, but I could and did buy the confident expectation of more or less similar sense data ... over and above the sense-data there is a permanent public object which underlies or causes the sense data of various people and various times". 27

Russell gives one more example to show that in addition to ourselves and our sense data, there, really, are objects which have an existence independent of our perception. 28 Russell's example runs as follows: "... if the cat consists only of sense-data, it can not be hungry, since no hunger but my own can be a sense-datum to me. Thus the behaviour of sense-data which represent the cat to me ... becomes utterly inexplicable when regarded as mere movements and changes of patches of colour, which are as incapable of hunger as a triangle is of playing football". 29 In this respect, Russell disagrees with Hume's position that only impressions (which are equivalent to Russell's sense data) exist.

We argue that Russell's concept of sense data which is the intermediary between human mind and objective world prevent us from attaining knowledge. Suman Gupta rightly comments, "... we find that like Locke, Russell, by introducing a wall of sense-data between the knowing mind and the material world, created the problem of the knowledge of the material world. The logical outcome of the introduction of sense-data as the only objects of experience is that either material objects cannot be known or they cannot exist. It is the first alternative which Russell opted for in The Problems of Philosophy. Thus, Russell through his metaphysical epistemology eliminated from his ontology the whole of material objects with

27 Ibid., pp. 32-33.
28 But in his later phenomenalistic position he neither explains nor denies this point.
29 Bertrand Russell, 1926, p. 36.
their multifarious properties leaving the bare waves in motion in certain position as the only existents".  

It is also our view that by maintaining sense data and physical objects as two irreducible entities, Russell in this book keeps a dualistic approach to reality, which is in contradiction with his later view of monism. W.T. Stace appropriately argues, "In The Problem of Philosophy (1912) Russell advocated theories which were remote from neutral monism. In the first place he accepted Moore's distinction between the mental act of being aware and the sense object of which one is aware. The former he called the sensation, the latter the sense datum. This means that Russell was then a psycho-physical dualist, not a monist at all. In the second place, the theory of matter which this book contained was that of generative realism. When we perceive a material object, what we directly sense consists of sense-data. The qualities of these sense data, both primary and secondary, are dependent upon two factors, the physical object on the one hand and the sense-organs, brain, nervous system, etc. on the other." Stace's view, in fact, vindicates our position which we mentioned earlier, that Russell closely follows Descartes' dualism. Descartes is known as a dualist, as he recognizes the reality of both mind and matter (though the latter is secondary to him). Similarly, in The Problem of Philosophy, Russell by maintaining sense data and physical objects as irreducible entities, proves himself to be a psycho-physical dualist.

**Russell's View on Self**

Just as Russell has different views regarding our knowledge of the material world, he has different views of our knowledge of self also. In The Problem of Philosophy, since he admits material substance, he admits self also as a substance distinct from its particular thoughts and feelings. Later when

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30 Suman Gupta, 1983, pp. 81-82.
he interprets material objects on phenomenalistic lines, he gives a phenomenalistic account of the self also. In his article "On the Nature of Acquaintance" (1914), Russell holds a position which is intermediate between these two.

In *The Problem of Philosophy* Russell deals with the self epistemologically i.e., as the subject of knowledge. Since Russell follows Cartesian dualism, instead of regarding the subject of cognition as a biological being who, through his practical activity acquires the knowledge of objective reality, Russell, like Descartes and Locke, considers the self to be a pure mental substance - a substance which can exist independently of the material base. It is an enduring, immaterial, unextended stuff which remains the same while its attributes change.

It seems to us that by accepting Cartesian dualism in *The Problems of Philosophy* and viewing it epistemologically, Russell holds that subject of knowledge and object of knowledge are two distinct and irreducible entities. From the duality of spiritual and material substances Russell further deduces that the subject must be known some other way than the object. The objects of which the subject is aware, according to Russell, are either sense-data or his own inner feelings and sensations. As for the subject, Russell holds, that in an instance not only the object but the subject as well is known. To quote Russell's own words, "When I see the sun, I am often aware of my seeing the sun; thus "my seeing the sun" is an object with which I have acquaintance ... This kind of acquaintance, which may be called self-consciousness, ... but it is not, of course, consciousness of *ourself*: it is consciousness of particular thoughts and feelings. The question whether we are also acquainted with our bare selves, as opposed to particular thoughts and feelings, is a very difficult one, upon which it would be rash to speak positively."

Russell shows similarity to Hume in his conception of 'I'. This is obvious from the following words of Russell: "when we try to took into
ourselves we always seem to come upon some particular thought or feeling, and not upon the "I" which has the thought or feeling.

Nevertheless, Russell gives an explanation for believing that we are acquainted with the 'I'. "When I am acquainted with "my seeing the sun", it seems plain that I am acquainted with two different things in relation to each other. On the one hand there is the sense-datum which represents the sun to me, on the other hand there is that which sees this sense-datum ... when a case of acquaintance is one with which I can be acquainted (as I am acquainted with my acquaintance with the sense-datum representing the sun) it is plain that the person acquainted is myself. Thus, when I am acquainted with my seeing the sun, the whole fact with which I am acquainted is "self-acquainted-with-sense-datum".\(^{32}\)

But, unlike Descartes' view of an enduring self, Russell maintains that the self that is known in this way is a momentary one. Russell writes, "It does not seem necessary to suppose that we are acquainted with a more or less permanent person, the same today as yesterday, but it does seem as though we must be acquainted with that thing, whatever its nature which sees the sun and has acquaintance with sense-data. Thus, in same sense it would seem we must be acquainted with ourselves as opposed to our particular experiences".\(^{33}\)

In this context, we would like to mention that we make a distinction between subject and self. For us subject is not necessarily an enduring one. For the acquisition of knowledge subject is important. Subject should last at least as long as the process of knowledge lasts. Self in our view is a permanent one which has been persisting and which will persist in future also. Self for us is something there in a person right from his birth till his death.

\(^{32}\) Bertrand Russell, 1926, pp. 77-79.

\(^{33}\) Ibid., pp. 79-80.
As we have seen, Russell here holds that knowledge consists of two irreducible entities, the subject and the object. In the act of being acquainted with the momentary object, the subject at the same time, gets acquainted with one's self. Knowledge of the subject, according to this view, is a kind of self-illuminating process in which the subject reveals itself. That is, when I am aware of the object (sense-datum) I, at the same time, am aware that it is I who is aware of it.

He maintains a slightly different position in the article 'On the Nature of Acquaintance' (1914). In this article, instead of holding that in an instance of acquaintance, I am acquainted with the fact "self-acquainted-with-sensedatum", he substituted 'something is acquainted with O'. O here stands for an object. Thus the subject appears here not in its individual capacity, but as an 'apparent variable'. And if 'I' is to be known, it can only be known by description as Russell holds, "when we have recognized that an experience is constituted by the relation to acquaintance, we may define 'I' as the subject of the present experience ...".

In this article he holds that in order to be acquainted with the present experience, it is necessary that there should be an experience whose object is another experience. The second experience is present to the subject in the sense in which sensations and perceptions are present, and memory is not present. Russell symbolizes this as:

\[ S' - P - (S - A - O). \]

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34 Bertrand Russell, 'On Nature of Acquaintance' in R.C. Marsh(ed.), Logic and Knowledge, (London & New York: Routledge, 1994, p. 164). Since Logic and Knowledge, and Mysticism and Logic are collections Russell's articles, hereafter wherever necessary we will be giving as reference name of the article and the year in which it is written, but the page number will be according to the books they belong to.

For Russell S' and S (inside the brackets) need not be identical. He defines present experiences as, "... those experiences that have the relation of presence to the subject using the phrase".36

As we have mentioned earlier, in this article Russell tries to project the views that,

1. Subjects are not known through acquaintance
2. They are known merely as referents for the relation of acquaintance [See p. 164].

Let us now consider, what, according to the symbolic view of Russell, we can know about the nature of the subject or self. Russell writes, "We can not know, for example, that they differ from matter, nor yet that they do not differ. They are known merely as referents for the relation of acquaintance, and for those other psychical relations - judging, desiring, etc. - which imply acquaintance".37 It follows that psychical data - at any rate those that are cognitive - consist not of particulars, but of certain facts (i.e., of what certain propositions assert), and of relations, namely acquaintance and certain others which presuppose acquaintance. Russell distinguishes sensation from perception by saying that the former gives particulars while the latter gives facts; in this case, introspection consists wholly of perceptions, not of sensations.

Russell further explains that the definition of what is 'mental' as what involves subject is inadmissible, in view of the fact that we do not know what subjects are. Russell defines a mental fact as one involving acquaintance or one of those other relations - judging, desiring, etc. - which presuppose acquaintance. 'It may be that subjects are constituents of other facts of the kind we should call physical, and therefore a fact which involves a subject may not be always a mental fact.'

36 Ibid., p. 167.
37 Ibid., pp. 164-165.
Therefore, we come to the conclusion that Russell's views of the self in *The Problems of Philosophy* and 'On Nature of Acquaintance', are related to his views on the knowledge of external world. We argue that for him, self as pure ego, is a passive receiver of sense-data. Suman Gupta aptly criticizes, "This position negates the role of purposive human activity which consists in transforming objective reality on the basis of the reflection of dynamic laws of objective reality. Russell assumed consciousness not to be a dynamic process which itself has evolved out of human social interaction with language playing a crucial role but a mere mental abstraction".\(^{38}\)

We argue that it is because of this abstract self that Russell regards the self or the subject to be only a referent. We also see that from his abstract position of subject and object of knowledge, he deduces an agnostic position, not to stick long enough as he rejects this in *Analysis of Mind* (1921) and adopts phenomenalistic approach which we will deal with shortly.

II. Logical Atomism, Phenomenalism, Neutral Monism

In this section we will be analyzing the empiricist phase of Russell during which he advocates logical atomism ontologically and phenomenalism epistemologically. This period falls roughly between 1914 and 1927, and his views during this period are contained in the book *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1914), and in a couple of articles such as 'On Scientific Method' (1914), 'The Ultimate Constituents of Matter' (1915), 'The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics' (1914), 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism' (1918), 'Logical Atomism' (1924). And in the context of self in *The Analysis of Mind* (1921).

We see this phase of Russell as a result of his attempt to correct his earlier inconsistencies and also his ambition to make use of the method of science in philosophy. Russell being a mathematician and logician feels that

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applying scientific method to philosophy will cure philosophy of its traditional systems and methods and will assign philosophy with a new task; the task of studying the logic of language. Because Russell claims that philosophy does not deal with reality any more, it deals with the logic of language. He asserts, "... every philosophical problem, when it is subjected to necessary analysis and purification, is found either to be not really philosophical at all, or else to be, in the sense in which we are using the word, logical". Russell feels that logic gives the method of research in philosophy just as mathematics gives the method in physics. Keeping all these in view, Russell writes *Our Knowledge of the External World* (1914), as a field of scientific method in philosophy, as he mentions along with the title.

We disagree with Russell's view that all philosophical problems are the problems of logic of language. We appropriately quote Suman Gupta here: "Language is, no doubt, an aspect of philosophy because all knowledge is assimilated, recorded and communicated through language. But, certainly....this is not the sole function of philosophy." We find Russell's position that the essence of philosophy is logic, that is, the logical analysis of language is unsatisfactory. Because, if this is the only business of philosophy, who will address the problems of the world and find solutions? For Russell the job of philosophy is not to solve the problems of the world in which we live, but it is wholly confined to analyzing propositions in our language. Russell writes, "We must, therefore, renounce the hope that philosophy can promise satisfaction to our mundane desires. What it can do, when it is purified from all practical taint, is to help us to understand the general aspects of the world and the logical analysis of familiar but complex things ... But a genuinely scientific philosophy can not hope to appeal to any except those who have the wish to understand, to escape from intellectual bewilderment ..."


But it does not offer, or attempt to offer, a solution of the problem of human destiny, or of the destiny of the universe".\textsuperscript{41}

Here we ask, if it is not the mundane world of practical life then what are those 'general aspects of the world' which are 'complex things' and for which philosophy employs 'logical analysis'?

Now let us begin our analysis of Russell's ontology and epistemology of this phase of his philosophical development, which are respectively logical atomism and phenomenalism. We are of the view that in any consistent philosophical system epistemology and ontology are interlinked. Suman Gupta rightly comments, "In fact, ontology and epistemology are two sides of the same coin, because in any ontological doctrine the epistemological viewpoint is implicit and likewise in any epistemological doctrine the ontological position is implicit. To assert that such and such exists certainly implies the method of knowing it. And likewise what we know or the object of our knowledge has an ontological status".\textsuperscript{42}

Russell's logical atomism is a very important concept. It is a conception of logic which finds a close similarity between the structure of language and the structure of the world. Russell considers logical atomism as a species of realism, characterized by logic. Russell writes, "I hold that logic is what is fundamental in philosophy, and that schools should be characterized rather by their logic than by their metaphysics. My own logic is atomistic, and it is this aspect upon which I should wish to lay stress. Therefore I prefer to describe my philosophy as 'logical atomism', rather than as 'realism', whether with or without same prefixed adjective".\textsuperscript{43} We will show in the course of this thesis whether Russell's philosophy in effect is realism or not.

\textsuperscript{41} Bertrand Russell, 1969, p. 28.
Russell further says that his logic is atomistic because it is, as he claims, opposite of the monistic logic of the Hegelian type. By atoms, any body will understand, Russell feels, that one is speaking of many things, not one. Russell explains, "The logic which I shall advocate is atomistic, as opposed to the monistic logic ... when I say that my logic is atomistic, I mean that I share the common-sense belief that there are many separate things; I do not regard the apparent multiplicity of the world as consisting merely in phases and unreal divisions of a single indivisible Reality".44 We argue that Russell through this explanation makes it obvious his preference for a pluralistic approach to reality. That is, his ontological position (like Hume's) is pluralism as opposed to monism.

Russell elaborates on the nature of atoms which he considers as constituting the reality. Here we should note the point that his reverence for sense datum remains intact even in this phase. "The reason that I call my doctrine logical atomism is because the atoms that I wish to arrive at as the sort of last residue in analysis45 are logical atoms and not physical atoms. Some of them will be what I call 'particulars' - such things as little patches of colour or sounds, momentary things - and some of them will be predicates or relations and so on".46 Here Russell means to say that according to his philosophy of logical atomism the ultimate constituents of the world are logical atoms and not physical atoms. Further, he tries to construct the world out of particulars and qualities and relations (which are simples). In this context while analyzing Russell's position, W.V. Quine writes, "Russell speaks in 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism', of those ultimate simples, out of which the world is built ... that ... have a kind of reality not belonging to

44 Ibid., p. 178.
45 To avoid repetition, we will discuss Russell's conception of analysis as the method of philosophy, along with the discussion of ideal language.
46 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism', 1918, p. 179.
anything else. Simples are of an infinite number of sorts. There are particulars and qualities and relations of various orders, a whole hierarchy". 47

It is Russell's belief that though the world is constructed out of particulars, which are simples that does not hinder them from possessing complex attributes. In his article 'On Scientific Method in Philosophy', Russell discusses that philosophical propositions must be general. It should not only deal with universe as a whole, but, on the contrary, philosophical propositions must be applicable to everything that exists or may exist. According to Russell, the traditional views in philosophy make the universe itself the subject of various predicates, which could not be applied to any other particular things. Russell maintains, on the contrary, that there are no propositions of which the 'universe' is the subject i.e., there is no such thing as the 'universe' [see p. 108]. Russell maintains that there are general propositions which may be asserted of each individual thing, such as the propositions of logic. But, this does not mean that all things form a whole, which could be treated as another thing, the subject of predicates. Russell asserts that it only means that there are properties which belong to each separate things, and not that there are properties belonging to the whole of things collectively. In this context Russell says, "The philosophy which I wish to advocate may be called logical atomism or absolute pluralism, because while maintaining that there are many things, it denies that there is a whole composed of those things. We shall see, therefore, that philosophical propositions, instead of being concerned with the whole of things collectively, are concerned with all things distributively...". 48

Therefore we can see that Russell's belief in external relations automatically leads to pluralism as his ontological position. Because for Russell, reality consists in discrete, un-connected particular simples which are

nothing but, sense-data. As we have seen, for Russell, neither singly nor in combination, the qualities and relations are essential for the subject's identity. This implies that their reality is over and above the reality of the subject (external relations). It is in this respect that 'impressions' of Hume and 'sense-data' of Russell are concepts having identical meaning. To sum up our discussion about logical atomism we can say that while in *The Problems of Philosophy* Russell treats sense-data and material objects as irreducible existents, in *Our knowledge of the External World* and the other articles of this period he treats sense data as logical atoms out of which the (material) world is constructed.

Further Russell attempts to cling to logical atoms for the explanation of reality through his analysis of language. But, the question is 'how the analysis of facts of the material world rests on the analysis of language?' We are of the view that Russell is under the wrong impression that properties of language may help one to understand the structure of the world or reality. We will try to prove this point in a short while.

Now we will deal with Russell's conception that analysis of the structure of language helps us to understand the structure of the world. Russell's epistemology, therefore, at this stage, is concerned with studying the logic of language, instead of reality of the world. Consequently, Russell attempts to construct an ideal, logical, non-natural language, the terms of which are precisely defined and the sentences of which unambiguously reveal the logical form of the facts to which they refer. Such a perfect language, according to Russell, must rest upon atomic propositions. So the fundamental philosophical problem is to describe the nature and structure of these atomic propositions through his method of analysis.

Russell is of the opinion that his belief in the method of analysis is the most important conviction of all his thinking. It appears that Russell's view that analysis is the appropriate method for philosophy is inspired by the role
that analysis plays in mathematics. His method starts from things which are indubitable, but, which cannot be expressed with any precision. Russell compares devotion to the method of analysis to observing something first through naked eye and then through a microscope, which reveals the fine complexities involved. Russell explains, "I find that by fixity of attention divisions and distinction appear where none at first was visible, just as through a microscope you can see the bacilli in impure water which without the microscope are not discernible. There are many who decry analysis, but it has seemed to me evident, as in the case of the impure water, that analysis gives new knowledge without destroying any of the previously existing knowledge. This applies not only to the structure of physical things, but quite as much to concepts".

Here in this context Russell claims that his analytical method aims not only at exhibiting logical forms of propositions, but also indicating the structural similarity between propositions and facts that propositions assert or deny. The concept of 'structure' appears to be fundamental to his method of analysis. Russell by studying the formal or structural or syntactical aspect of language attempts to elucidate the structure of the world also. R. Alam defends Russell in the following words: "Though he has taken analysis of language as an indispensable philosophical technique, nevertheless he has not

49 Analysis as a mathematical method involves commencing with what is to be proved, the conclusion, and moving backwards to some fundamental truths or axioms. By contrast, synthesis combines basic truths or premises to deduce a conclusion. Greek mathematics is synthetic in method. Analysis in mathematical philosophy, which conforms to the modern analytic approach such as dissolving common notions, is found in Russell's idealist phase. Thus, whereas Russell and Moore started the movement that became known as 'analytic philosophy' somewhere around 1899, the analytic method predates that. Also modern mathematics, stemming from 17th century developments in algebra and calculus is generally analytic. [see Paul J. Hager, Continuity and Change in the Development Russell's Philosophy (The Netherlands: Kluwer Publishers, 1994), p. 10.).

conceived it as an enterprise which begins and ends in language and which has as its sole purpose the clarification and classification of different types of linguistic forms. He has been rather convinced that the philosophical significance of language lies in the fact that through the analysis of language one can unfold the basic structure of the reality with which language is concerned.\(^{51}\)

Therefore, Russell claims that the philosophical purpose of his analysis is the discovery of logical forms of propositions leading to the discernment of the basic structure of reality. Russell's ideal language is constituted out of propositions which can be analyzed ultimately into atomic propositions. Corresponding to atomic propositions there are atomic facts outside. What are facts? To quote Russell, "The things in the world have various properties, and stand in various relations to each other. That they have these properties and relations are facts, and the things and their qualities or relations are quite clearly in some sense of the other components of the facts that have those qualities or relations."\(^{52}\)

Russell further says what he means by fact. Facts are not particular existing things such as Socrates, or the rain or the sun. Because these words by themselves do not render any statement, true or false. "I mean" Russell elaborates, "The kind of thing that makes a proposition true or false. If I say 'it is raining', what I say is true in certain condition of weather and is false in other conditions of weather. The condition of weather that makes my statement true (or false as the case may be), is what I should call a 'fact'."\(^{53}\) Russell claims the fundamental constituents of facts as logical atoms. These are of two kinds - particulars (e.g. sense data) and universals. He is of the opinion that facts can be particular like 'this is white' or universal like 'all


\(^{52}\) 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism', 1918, p. 192.

\(^{53}\) Ibid., p. 182.
men are mortal'. Russell maintains, that facts are of different types.\textsuperscript{54} A fact may be affirmative or it may be negative. Some facts are 'completely general' referring not to particular entities but only to the general form (or syntax) of statements - these are the facts of logic. There are also facts about facts, for Russell. There are not, however, true facts and false facts, for only propositions can be true or false and a proposition for Russell is a (complex) symbol\textsuperscript{55} not a fact. Russell explains, "... facts are the sort of things that are asserted or denied by propositions, and are not properly entities at all in the same sense in which their constituents are. That is shown in the fact that you can not name them. You can only deny, or assert, or consider them, but you cannot name them because they are not to be named, although in another sense it is true that you cannot know the world unless you know the facts that make up the truths of the world; but the knowing of the facts is a different sort of thing from the knowing of simples".\textsuperscript{56}

We criticize Russell's view here that although we can know the simples (particulars) we cannot know the facts. Because it is not possible for us to ignore the knowledge of a compound thing, when its components are perfectly known. We feel that if one can know the simples (particulars) it automatically leads to the knowledge of facts also. Therefore, by his above explanation, Russell not only confuses himself but also the readers.

For Russell a proposition is a complex symbol whose meaning is derived from the meaning of the component symbols which constitute it. Russell claims that through analysis he reduces propositions to those component symbols and determine the meaning of the basic symbols, and

\textsuperscript{54} According to Wittgenstein's \textit{Tractatus} there are only atomic facts. By contrast, Russell admits in his 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism', general facts with certainty, and though with some hesitation, negative facts and also 'facts with more than one verb', that is, facts involving propositional attitudes.

\textsuperscript{55} "... propositions are complex symbols and the facts they stand for are complex". [The Philosophy of Logical Atomism', 1918, p. 192.]

\textsuperscript{56} Ibid., p. 270.
thereby obtain a clear understanding of the meaning of the original propositions. As a true proposition corresponds to a fact, a correct analysis of the proposition unfolds the component of the fact which correspond to it, because the meaning of the component symbols are the corresponding constituents of the fact that the proposition expresses. To quote Russell,

"That the components of a proposition are the symbols we must understand in order to understand the proposition."

"That the components of the fact which makes a proposition true or false, as the case may be, are the meanings of the symbols which we must understand in order to understand the proposition." 57

According to Russell there are various types of propositions, consequently facts also. The simplest ones are atomic propositions and atomic facts. Atomic facts form a hierarchy according to the number of terms involved. 58

The propositions expressing them, which are called atomic propositions also form a corresponding hierarchy. Russell speaks of molecular propositions, that are complex in nature compared to atomic propositions. To put it in Russell's words, "I call them molecular propositions because they contain other propositions which you may call their atoms and by molecular propositions I mean propositions having such words as 'as', 'if', 'and' and so forth .... 'If it rains, I shall bring my umbrella', ... is a molecular proposition because it contains the two parts 'It rains' and 'I shall bring my umbrella'. If I say, 'It did rain and I did bring my umbrella', that again is molecular proposition. Or if I say, 'The supposition of its raining is incompatible with the supposition of my not bringing my umbrella', that again is a molecular

57 Ibid., p. 196.

58 The simplest atomic fact is recognized by its virtue of being analyzable into any further constituents.
proposition ... you remember I defined an atomic proposition as one which contains a single verb". 59

Further all propositions, Russell claims, can be expressed as the truth functions of atomic propositions. That is, their truth or falsity is completely determined by the truth or falsity of atomic propositions that construct them. The truth of an atomic proposition on the other hand can be decided only by passing beyond the proposition to the facts it depicts. To cite the simplest case, the molecular proposition ‘p and q’ is true if the atomic propositions (‘p’, ‘q’) both are true, and is false if either of them is false. But, the truth of ‘p’ is independent of the truth of any other proposition. We have as a schema ‘p and q’.

\[
\begin{array}{c|c|c}
\text{p} & \text{q} & \text{p and q} \\
\hline
T & T & T \\
T & F & F \\
F & T & F \\
F & F & F \\
\end{array}
\]

As is obvious now, there are two propositions corresponding to every fact one true and one false. Since there are no false facts, you can not get one fact for every proposition but only for every pair of propositions. And all this applies to atomic propositions.

But when it comes to molecular propositions as p and q, ‘Socrates is mortal and he drinks milk’, here according to Russell, we have two different facts involved in the truth or falsehood of the proposition ‘p and q’. There will be the fact that corresponds to p and there will be the fact that corresponds to

59 Ibid., pp. 207-208
q, and both of these facts are relevant in discovering the truth or falsehood of ‘p and q’. Russell further asserts, "I don't suppose there is in the world a single disjunctive\textsuperscript{60} fact corresponding to ‘p or q’. It does not look plausible that in the actual objective world there are facts going about which you describe as ‘p or q’, but I would not lay too much stress on what strikes one as plausible: it is not a thing you can rely on altogether...you must not look about the real world for an object which you can call ‘or’ (‘and’ in our case), and say, ‘Now, look at this. This is "or", There is no such thing and if you try to analyze ‘p or q' in that way you will get into trouble. But the meaning of disjunction (conjunction, in our case) will be entirely explained by the above schema".\textsuperscript{61}

We criticize Russell here because by making the above statements Russell contradicts his own theory. Molecular propositions are part of Russell's ideal language, in which each of the terms are precisely defined and sentences of which unambiguously reveal the logical form of facts (which are in the external world) which they represent. Here in this case Russell has a fact for ‘p’, and also for ‘q’ or for any such, but not for ‘or’ or ‘and’, or ‘if’ as such in the external world. We ask, what kind of ‘fact’ do they correspond? And if they can not correspond to facts in the external world, can they be a part of his ideal language?

Now we will deal with Russell's conception of ‘naming theory of meaning’. But to discuss this concept we have to clarify certain details about atomic propositions. Incidentally we will come across brief explanations of what Russell means by a ‘term’, ‘particulars’, and ‘proper names’, etc. As we have seen, according to Russell, a proposition is just a symbol. It is a complex symbol in the sense that it has parts which are also symbols. In a sentence containing several words, the several words are each symbols, and the sentence composing them in that sense is a complex symbol. Russell believes

\textsuperscript{60} Please read throughout this discussion disjunctive as conjunctive and ‘p or q’ as ‘p and q’ as we have taken the example of ‘p and q’ instead of Russell's own example of ‘p or q.’
that only complexes can be analyzed, which have parts or components of any kind. Russell says, "All analysis is only possible in regard to what is complex, and it always depends, in the last analysis, upon direct acquaintances with the objects which are the meanings of certain simple symbols". 62

Russell claims that when he speaks of symbols he means something that 'means' something else. Through examples he makes it clear what one means by 'meaning'. The word 'Socrates' means a certain man; the word 'mortal' means a certain quality; the sentence 'Socrates is mortal' means a certain fact. Russell claims that these three sorts of meanings are entirely different. It cannot be the same meaning in each of these three cases. Russell cautions, "It is important not to suppose that there is just one thing which is meant by 'meaning', and that therefore there is just one sort of relation of the symbol to what is symbolized. A name would be a proper symbol used for a person; a sentence (or a proposition) is the proper symbol for a fact" 63

In every atomic proposition there is one component which is naturally expressed by a verb, or in the case of quality, it may be expressed by a predicate or by an adjective. According to Russell if we, for the sake of convenience call quality a 'monadic relation', we can say that, all atomic propositions assert relations of various orders. "Atomic facts contain, besides the relation, the terms of the relation - one term if it is a monadic relation, two if it is dyadic and so on. These 'terms' which come into atomic facts I define as 'particulars'.

Particulars = terms of relations in atomic facts. Df 64

Further, Russell says that there will be one subject in a monadic proposition, two in a dyadic one or so on. The subjects in a proposition will

62 Ibid., p. 194.
63 Ibid., p. 187.
64 Ibid., p. 199.
be the words expressing the terms of the relation which is expressed by the proposition. "The only kind of word that is theoretically capable of standing for a particular is a proper name, and the whole matter of proper names is rather curious.

Proper names = words for particulars. \(Df^{65}\)

Only proper names not other parts of speech can be capable of a being used as particulars. For Russell the names that we commonly use such as Socrates are really abbreviations for descriptions; further 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 can not name anything you are not acquainted with".\(^{66}\)

Russell claims that when one is acquainted with a particular, one has a full, adequate, and complete understanding of the name; and no further information is required as to the facts that are true of that particular, which enable one to have a fuller understanding of the meaning of the name. When we consider the interconnections that exist among Russell's analytic method, empiricism, pluralism and 'naming theory of meaning', we see that Russell, in fact makes use of his empiricism to assign meaning to words apart from acquiring knowledge. In this context Suman Gupta rightly remarks, "... in Russell's view, since material objects are complex and are subjected to analysis through which one arrives at sense-data, one can be "directly acquainted only with the sense-data". And by applying his empiricist theory not only for the acquisition of knowledge but also for assigning meaning to words, he further concluded that only sense-data can have meaning, i.e., can be "named".\(^{67}\)

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\(^{65}\) Ibid., p. 200.

\(^{66}\) Ibid., p. 201.
Following the sense in which Russell has used the word 'particular', Russell himself admits that it is difficult to get an instance of a name in the proper strict logical sense of the word. 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 for Russell. But if one is trying to apprehend the proposition that I am expressing when I say 'This is white' one cannot do it. If you mean this piece of chalk as a physical object, then you are not using a proper name. 'It is only when one uses 'this' quite strictly, to stand for an actual object of sense, that it is really a proper name'.

Naming also helps in indicating objects which are recognized in thoughts. But, the peculiarity of particulars, (They are self-subsistent like substances, with the difference that they persist only for a very short time, as long as our experience lasts) which form the object of genuine atomic propositions, is that they are ever fluctuating. For Russell, a world full of particulars, is a possibility. [See p. 202]

But we argue that if these particulars alone are taken to populate the world, then no world can be discovered in which we can draw out any programme which extends over past, present and future and we are to be fully satisfied with the mere momentary experience. We are of the view that this begets solipsism and saps the very foundation of knowledge if knowledge is viewed scientifically and from its acceptability. Russell realizes the problem and after years of reflection comes to the conclusion that particulars are strictly unthinkable and both terms in the atomic propositions stand for universals.68 For Russell, now, a word is universal, of which the instances are the occasions on which an instance of the word is spoken or heard or written or read. Now Russell defines meaning as follows: "... ‘meaning’ must be a

relation between an individual instance of a word and an individual instance of what the word means". 69

Russell further claims that not only the objects in the world are simple but the words in the ideal, non-natural language are also equally simples or particulars in the sense that there is a one to one relationship70 between a word and the objects denoted by the word. This is known as ostensive definition, which means attaching meaning to a symbol by pointing out to an object or a phenomenon in sense experience. That is meaning of a name is the object for which the name stands. This is what he calls 'naming an object'.

In this context A.J. Ayer interprets Russell's naming theory of meaning as follows: "... that the meaning of a name is to be identified with the object which the name denotes ... for any to be named that it be a term: any term could be the logical subject of a proposition; and anything that could be the subject of a proposition could be named. It followed that one could in principle use names to refer not only to any particular thing that exists at any place and time, but also to abstract entities of all sorts, to non-existent thing like the present Tsar of Russia ..."71

Russell at a later stage of his philosophical development discovers that causal similarities are involved in defining meaning. At this stage he is of the opinion that the relation of a word to its meaning is of the nature of a casual law governing our use of the word and our action when we hear it used. For Russell, an 'object-word' is one that shares some of the properties of what the word means. Russell elaborates, "If you are awaked in the middle of the night by a cry of 'Fire!' you will behave in much the same way as you would if you smelt burning. These are, of course, differences between a word and what it

69 Bertrand Russell, 1959, p. 145.
70 "A relation is said to be "one-one" when, if x has the relation in question to y, no other term x' has the same relation to y, and x does not have the same relations to any term y' other than y". [John G. Slater, 1994, p. 18].
means. The word 'fire' cannot make you hot or cause you to die, but it is the causal similarities, not the differences, that are involved in defining meaning.".\(^\text{72}\) This explanation also vindicates our earlier argument that in his later philosophical stage, Russell makes a comeback to the belief in the concept of causation.

Now let us briefly discuss Russell's theory of definite descriptions. In fact, this would have best served as an example of his use of scientific method in philosophy, but since it involves terms like 'symbols', 'names' and 'objects' in the sense in which Russell uses, and now that we are familiar with these terms we assume that it's discussion here will be appropriate.

After the analysis of general propositions Russell proceeds to discuss the subject of descriptions, 'incomplete symbols' and the existence of the described individuals. Analysis of general propositions are directly about properties (this is considered as existence in plural) that individual objects may possess, and are not directly concerned with the objects (if any) which possess these properties. But in his discussion on the subject of description he is dealing with the analysis of propositions in which the phrase 'the so - and - so' occurs (existence in the singular). e.g.: the man with the iron mask existed.

Russell claims that among propositions, affirmative existential propositions are true (e.g. Homer existed), if and only if descriptive phrases applies to an individual existing in the actual world. Negative existential propositions (e.g. Romulus did not exist) are true even if there is no individual in the actual world to which the descriptive phrase applies. Russell is of the view that a proposition like 'Romulus existed' or 'Romulus did not exist' introduces a propositional function; as the name 'Romulus' is not really a name, in the sense in which Russell uses it, but it is an abbreviated description. According to Russell it stands for a person,

\(^{72}\) Bertrand Russell, 1959, p. 147.
who did such-and-such things,
who killed so-and-so (Remus),
who founded Rome and so on.
It is a short form for these descriptions.
Russell asserts, "If it were really a name, the question of existence could not arise, because a name has got to name something or it is not a name, and if there is no such person as Romulus there cannot be a name for that person who is not there, so that this single word 'Romulus' is really a sort of truncated or telescoped description, and if you think of it as a name you will get into logical errors." 73

Here we see that Russell's analysis of descriptive phrases leads him to realize that some words which seem to function as constituents of propositions do not actually do so and in analyzing a significant sentence one must not assume that each separate word or phrase has significance on its own account. In other words, a word or a phrase has no meaning in isolation, but only in a context [also see R. Alam, 1990, p. 84].

For Russell, there are two sorts of descriptions -

(1) Ambiguous description where we use 'a so-and-so'
   e.g.: A man, a pig, a Cabinet Minister
(2) Definite description
   When we use 'the so-and-so'
   e.g. The number of inhabitants of London.
   The sum of 43 and 34
   The last person who came into this room.
For Russell, it is not necessary that a description should describe, an individual, it may describe a predicate or a relation or anything else.

73 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism,' 1918, p. 243.
Russell asserts, "I want you to realize that the question whether a phrase is a definite description turns only upon its form, not upon the question whether there is a definite individual so described. For instance, I should call 'The inhabitant of London' a definite description, although it does not in fact describe any definite individual". 74

Russell's primary aim is to show that definite descriptions do not function logically as names because a name is a simple symbol, and a definite description, for example, The author of Waverly, is a complex symbol. According to Russell, it contains parts which are symbols; and the meaning of these parts 'the' 'author', 'of', 'Waverly' has already been fixed.

Therefore we see that Russell's analysis of descriptions aims at two points:

(1) To present arguments based on examination of the different ways in which names and descriptions actually function in a language to indicate the logical difference between them.

(2) To show how propositions containing descriptive phrases can be constructed so that their logical form is exhibited.

Now the question is, if descriptions are not names, then what are propositions in which they occur about? This question implies that a proposition having descriptive phrase may assume a subject - predicate form; it is therefore an assertion about some entity designated by the subject term.

Let us illustrate this with the example Russell adopts: 'The author of Waverly was Scott'.

74 Ibid., p. 244.
According to Russell, the grammatical form of the complex sentence makes it look as a subject – predicate logical form, as if the proposition names an entity in the subject and then say something about it in the predicate. If the proposition is freed from its grammatical garb, then it will exhibit a form entirely different from the subject – predicate one. If one analyzes this complex propositions into three component propositions then we will realize that they should not be viewed as a singular proposition at all, but three general existential propositions regarding a property or properties possessed by some (unique) individual.

Therefore, according to Russell, the complex singular proposition ‘The author of Waverly was Scott’, implies three statements. They are:

(1) Some one wrote Waverly
(2) Only one person wrote Waverly
(3) Whoever wrote Waverly was Scott.

(1) and (2) together mean that the (unique) person who wrote Waverly existed; and (3) says that this person was a Scott. According to Russell, in the reconstructed version of the proposition containing the phrase ‘The author of Waverly’, however, no symbol for the phrase, as such, appears. For Russell, this is a clear evidence that it is not a constituent of the proposition at all. As a result it can only be defined continually by translating the whole proposition in which it occurs. Further, if description is a genuine constituent of the proposition, there is no need for a contextual definition to show what they ‘mean’. Consequently it would have had meaning ‘in isolation' and would have remained indissoluble elements in any restatement of propositions in which it occurs. In this context, R. Alam comments, "Because if, Russell believed, his reconstruction of the propositions containing descriptive phrases succeed in clarifying their logical form, it would follow, on his supposition of isomorphism between fact and (clarified) proposition, that those expressions which are genuine constituents will remain in the reconstructed proposition. They are the linguistic correlates of components of facts and without them it
would be impossible to manifest all that is asserted by the original propositions". 75

To sum up, our discussion of definite description, we may quote Russell as, "... the descriptions disappear when the propositions are rightly analyzed in which they occur". 76 As we have seen, descriptions can be completely eliminated and can be shown as "incomplete symbols". Russell explains, "The sort of things that are like these descriptions in that they occur in words in a proposition, but are not in actual fact constituents of the proposition rightly analyzed, things of that sort I call 'incomplete symbols' ... These things, like 'the author of Waverly', which I call incomplete symbols, are things that have absolutely no meaning whatsoever in isolation but merely acquire a meaning in a context ... There are a great many other sorts of incomplete symbols besides descriptions. These are classes ... and relations taken in extension, and so on. Such aggregations of symbols are really the same thing as what I call 'logical fictions', and they embrace practically all the familiar objects of daily life: tables, chairs, Piccadilly, Socrates, and so on. Most of them are either classes, or series, or series of classes. In any case they are all incomplete symbols, i.e., they are aggregations that only have a meaning in use and do not have any meaning in themselves". 77

So far we have discussed the logical significance of definite descriptions. We criticize Russell as far as the ontological significance of theory of descriptions is concerned. By showing descriptions as incomplete symbols Russell asked us not to assume that they designate objects in our ontological world. This should not be read as there are no objects corresponding to the whole lot of descriptive phrases, it is just that this theory has value ontologically, only in the denial of inclusion of "objects denoted" in our ontological world, in order to account for the meaningfulness of

75 R. Alam, 1990, p. 87.
76 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism,' 1918, p. 266.
77 Ibid., p. 253.
propositions containing descriptive phrases. Russell's theory speaks that assumption of 'objects denoted' is an unwarranted one and it in fact, results from confusing logical form with grammatical form. It also implies that we should understand Russell's logical fictions, as entities which have been stripped-off their metaphysical baggage.

In this context, P.F. Strawson rightly criticizes Russell. Strawson remarks, "The source of Russell's mistake was that referring or mentioning if it occurred at all, must be meaning. He did not distinguish B¹ (an expression) from B² (a use of an expression); he confused expressions with their use in particular context; and so confused meaning with mentioning or referring. If I talk about my handkerchief, I can perhaps, produce the object I am referring to out of my pocket. I can't produce the meaning of the expression, "my handkerchief", out of my pocket. Because Russell confused meaning with mentioning, he thought that if there were any expressions having a uniquely referring use, which were what seemed (i.e., logical subjects) and not something else in disguise, their meaning must be the particular object which they were used to refer to". 79

So far we have been discussing Russell's philosophy of logical atomism and its various aspects. We have seen that sense data are the basis of his knowledge and therefore of atomic facts, for he claims, as we have seen, that one can know atomic facts only as the facts of sense experience or sense data. Now we will discuss the view that what Russell consider ontologically and logically as atomic propositions, which he claims to have arrived through logical analysis, is nothing but 'sense datum statements' epistemologically.

As we mentioned in the beginning, this marks the later stage of this chapter. In the most important work of this stage 'Our Knowledge of External World' Russell basically sets his aim to understand the external world. In his

78 This confusion, Strawson thinks, has given rise to the idea of logically proper name - 'this', the meaning of which changes every time it is used.
quest to know the external world he tries to construct a model which has all the properties of the original. Since his primary concern is physical objects, in *Our Knowledge of External World* he develops a model of the system of physical objects. Russell’s aim is to construct a physical world (i.e., an adequate substitute for the physical world) on the basis of actual and possible sense data. Having done an initial sorting of our data according to their certainty (*The Problems of Philosophy*), he now tries to sort them out logically. Here Russell speaks about hard and soft data. “This distinction is a matter of degree”. Hard data is immune to doubt and soft data tends to dissolve when subjected to doubt. The more we reflect upon hard data, it results in our being, more and more certain of them. Russell writes, “I mean by "hard" data those which resist the solvent influence of critical reflection, and by "soft" data, those which, under the operation of this process, become to our minds more or less doubtful. The hardest of hard data are of two sorts: the particular facts of sense, and the general truths of logic”.

As a precaution for future occasions Russell adds, "Also we must remember that the distinction of hard and soft data is psychological and subjective, so that, if there are other minds than our own - which at our present stage must be held doubtful - the catalogue of hard data may be different for them from what it is for us".

Russell, because of its logical certainty, attempts to construct a world out of hard data. Since hard data are limited in number Russell adds some very recent, facts of memory, some introspective facts, some facts of sense perception involving space and time (such as short quick motion which we see

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80 The first application of the technique of logical construction to non-mathematical material are contained in the article ‘The Relations of Sense–Data Physics’ (1914) and in somewhat abbreviated form in *Our Knowledge of External World*.
81 Bertrand Russell, 1969, p. 79. (The distinction is similar to Hume’s distinction of impressions and ideas.
82 Ibid., pp. 77-79.
Russell finds it difficult to include our beliefs that objects persist because it is psychologically derivative, or that other people have minds because this belief arises from observation of their bodily behaviour and is therefore derivative. For the same reason, Russell excludes the testimony of others. Now Russell is all set to consider the problem of the external world: "Can we know that object of sense, or any other objects not our own thoughts and feelings, exist at times when we are not perceiving them?\textsuperscript{83}

As we have seen in \textit{The Problems of Philosophy}, Russell accepts material substance as the cause of sense data. In this stage of phenomenalism Russell rejects both matter and mind as substances. By following the logic of Berkeley and Hume, Russell in \textit{Our Knowledge of External World} concludes that what cannot be known in 'sense experience' cannot exist. And since for him material object cannot be given in sense experience, it can not exist. He advocates that material–object–concept is equivalent to 'collections of sense-data'. To put explicitly, because of his view that only sense data can be known empirically and consequently can exist, he reduces all physical objects like tables, mountains, earth, etc., to a series of classes of sense data\textsuperscript{84} and this way introduces phenomenalism. Alternatively, phenomenalism is the view that a material–object–statement can be reduced to a series of classes of sense datum statements without residue. Russell conceives that material objects are logically constructions out of actual and possible sense data. Russell, the first philosopher to use the concept of logical constructions in philosophy speaks of it as follows:

\textsuperscript{83} Ibid., p. 82.

\textsuperscript{84} "The things that we call real, like tables and chairs, are systems, series of classes of particulars, and the particulars are the real things, the particulars being sense-data when they happen to be given to you. A table or chair will be a series of classes of particulars, and therefore a logical fiction." See 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism,' 1918, p. 274.
"Given a set of propositions, nominally dealing with the supposed inferred entities, we observe the properties which are required of the supposed entities in order to make these propositions true. By dint of a little logical ingenuity, we then construct some logical function of less hypothetical entities which have the requisite properties. This constructed function we substitute for the supposed inferred entities, and thereby obtain a new and less doubtful interpretation of the body of propositions in question."  

The uninferred and less hypothetical entities, for Russell, are the sense data and the inferred, more hypothetical entities are the material objects. The phenomenalists claim to offer an analysis of material objects, without residue, in terms of sense data. For them sense data are the only ultimate constituents of reality.

It appears to us that Russell's phenomenalism is inspired by his belief in the principle, 'wherever possible substitute constructions out of known entities for inference to unknown entities'. Implicitly, for Russell, sense data are known entities and physical objects are unknown entities, therefore the known should be substituted for the unknown. Thus to exclude the permanent things Russell develops the maximum in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, which inspires all scientific philosophizing viz., 'Occam's Razor'. "Entities are not to be multiplied without necessity. In other words in dealing with any subject matter, find out what entities are undeniably involved, and state everything in terms of these entities".  

This way we see that as we mentioned earlier, Russell gives up his earlier position, causal theory of perception, for his phenomenalistic position that physical objects are logical constructions out of actual and possible sense data. A.J. Ayer defends Russell's position in the following words: "in fact, this is a reformulation of John Stuart Mill's view that physical objects are

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85 Ibid., p. 96.
86 Ibid., p. 112.
permanent possibilities of sensation; the form in which it presents it is that statements about physical objects can be faithfully translated into statements about sense data". 87 This makes it clear that Ayer is also a phenomenalist like Russell. We criticize both Ayer and Russell because for them there cannot be any objective reality behind appearances. Suman Gupta aptly criticizes, "The phenomenalists are empiricists who deny the distinction between appearance and reality. They hold that only what is 'given in experience' can exist". 88 These philosophers forget the fact that objective knowledge can be achieved only when we take both appearance and reality into account. Although Russell maintains the difference between appearance and reality in his platonic phase, he completely rejects it for the present phenomenalistic position.

We are of the view that by demolishing the distinction between appearance and reality, Russell questioned the basis of our scientific knowledge. He claims all appearances are real. To quote Russell, "The first thing to realize is that there are no such things as "illusions of sense". Objects of sense, even when they occur in dreams, are the most indubitably real objects known to us. What, then, makes us call them unreal in dreams? Merely the unusual nature of their connection with other objects of sense. I dream that I am in America, but I wake and find myself in England without those intervening days on the Atlantic which, alas! are inseparably connected with a "real" visit to America. 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 "illusions". But what is illusory 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


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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".\textsuperscript{89}

To continue with our discussion on phenomenalism, as we have seen the purpose of logical analysis, for Russell, is to arrive at simple symbols which would picture the ultimate constituents of the world. The view that material objects are complexes, is connected with Russell's metaphysics of logical Atomism. We are of the view that without this kind of metaphysics there is no reason to regard physical objects as more complex than the sense-data.

Here Russell finds the criticism of Berkeley against Locke as valid and designates 'material substance to be a metaphysical assumption of common sense'. He says, "Physics started from the common sense belief in fairly permanent and fairly rigid bodies - tables and chairs, stones, mountains the earth and moon and sun. This common sense belief, it should be noticed, is a piece of audacious metaphysical theorizing; objects are not continually present to sensation, and it may be doubted whether they are there when they are not seen or felt".\textsuperscript{90}

According to Russell, it is these material objects of common sense which are analyzed into sense data. It is also obvious that Russell calls sense datum propositions as atomic propositions. Russell's position is very clear here. Complex propositions are analyzed here into atomic propositions. Atomic propositions correspond to the atomic facts. And, atomic facts are known through sense-perception. The 'things' of Russell here are 'sense-data' or 'particulars' or 'simples'.

Since Russell believes that only objects with which we are directly acquainted in perception are our own private sense-data, it is important to

\textsuperscript{89} Bertrand Russell, 1969 pp. 92-93.

\textsuperscript{90} Ibid, p. 107.
consider how Russell constructs public material objects from private sense data. Russell calls objects of sense experience as sense datum or sensible object. For Russell, as we have already explained, the nature of the object of sense experience (sense datum), is a private one as opposed to a public table, mountain and person. That is, Russell claims that I have a sensation only when I perceive, feel or hear a sense datum. Sense datum does not exist unperceived, that is, sense datum is subjective. Therefore, in order to construct 'public' material object out of 'private' sense data, Russell introduces the concept of sensibilia. Russell compares the relation of a sensibilia to a sense-datum is like that of a man to a husband. "... a man becomes a husband by entering into the relation of marriage, and similarly a sensibilia becomes a sense-datum by entering into the relation of acquaintance". In addition to being physical both sense data and sensiblia endure for short period of time.

Russell, therefore, constructs the public physical objects not only with private, actual sense data with which any single observer is a acquainted but also with sensibilia. He writes, "The 'thing' of common sense may in fact be identified with the whole class of its appearances - where, however, we must include among appearances not only those which are actual sense-data, but also those 'sensibilia', if any, which, on grounds of continuity and

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91 A sense-datum is distinct from a sensation in that a sensation is the relation which relates a subject to a sense-datum, and a sense-datum is a term in this relation. Also see R.M. Sainsbury, Russell, (London:Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1979), p. 242.
92 Russell thinks that ideally, since a single person can know physics, the basis of the construction would be confined to a single person's sense-data. However, he finds the need to broaden this basis in two directions: he includes the sense-data of more than one person, and he includes possible as well as actual sense-data.
93 'The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics', 1914, p. 143.
94 Ibid.
resemblance, are to be regarded as belonging to the same system of appearances, although there happens to be no observers to whom they are data". 95

Here one should not be confused about the status of sensibilia and material substance. Because sensibilia is possible sense data, which can become actual when we sense them.

To sum up, Russell's position of 'logical atomism' is that the common sense world is nothing but a logical construction out of 'particulars' or 'simples' or 'sense-data'. Russell writes, "Classes or series of particulars, collected together on account of some property which makes it convenient to be able to speak of them as wholes, are what I call logical constructions or symbolic fictions. The particulars are to be conceived, not on the analogy of bricks in a building, but rather on the analogy of notes in a symphony. The ultimate constituents of a symphony (apart from relations) are the notes, each of which lasts only for a very short time. We may collect together all the notes played by one instrument: these may be regarded as the analogues of the successive particulars which common sense would regard as successive states of one 'thing'. But the 'thing' ought to be regarded as no more 'real' or 'substantial' than, for example, the role of the trombone". 96

That particulars are identical with sense data is clear when Russell states, "logically a sense-datum is an object, a particular of which a subject is aware, ... when a I speak of a sense-datum, I do not mean the whole of what is given in sense at one time. I mean rather such a part of the whole as might be singled out by attention, particular patches of colour, particular noises, and so on". 97

95 Ibid., p. 148.
The overall problem for Russell is epistemological, to explain how physics is knowable. The solution involves reducing its content, so that it no longer speaks of sense data-transcending physical objects.

The problem arises because the objects of physics, molecules, atoms (and Russell might have added, more mundane things) are not among the things given as immediate data of sense, for the latter are things like 'patches of colour, sounds, tastes, smells, etc. What is known is either immediately given or else inferred from what is immediately given. So, if physics is knowable, there must be some kind of correlation between its objects and immediately given objects, and physics is known through knowledge of this correlation.

Russell not only constructs material objects through his phenomenalism but also human beings. For him a person is a series of his appearances and nothing more. Russell is of the view that when we see a 'real' man, the immediate object that we see is one of whole system of particulars, all of which belong together and make up collectively the various 'appearances' of the man to himself and others.

Through this he makes the subtle difference between sense data and phantoms and hallucinations though he considers the latter's to have the same level of reality as the former. He is of the opinion that when we see a phantom of a man, which an isolated particular, it does not fit into a system like a particular which is an appearance of the 'real' man. Regarding the difference he says, "They (phantom and hallucinations) differ from ordinary sense-data only in the fact that they do not have the usual correlations with other things. In themselves they have the same reality as ordinary sense-data. They have the most complete and absolute and perfect reality that anything can have. They are part of the ultimate constituents of the world, just as the fleeting sense-data are".98

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98 'The Philosophy of Logical Atomism', 1918, p. 274.
Here we should note the point that Russell himself treats sense data as fleeting. That is, Russell constructs a world out of fleeting sense data. This way his sense data resembles Hume's impressions. We will give a complete criticism of Russell including this point at the end of this chapter.

But before passing on to Russell's neutral monism let us quote Russell here about his concept of a person. This illustration he offers with a view to show his distinct metaphysical findings. Russell writes, "Take a person, what is it that makes you say, when you meet your friend Jones, 'why, this is Jones'? It is clearly not the persistence of a metaphysical entity inside Jones somewhere, because even if there be such an entity, it certainly is not what you see when you see Jones coming along the street; it certainly is something that you are not acquainted with, not an empirical datum. Therefore, plainly there is something in the empirical appearances which he presents to you, some thing in their relations one to another, which enables you to collect all these together and say, 'these are what I call the appearances of one person'. This way Russell reduces a human being to a series of his appearances. We regard a human being as much more than his appearances. He is a combination of his mind and body; both these aspects have their own part to play in constituting a person. Moreover, if we consider a person as a series of his appearance alone, how will we account for his accumulated experiences and assimilated knowledge? (In the fourth chapter we will discuss how Russell accounts for the 'subjectivity' of person!)

Neutral Monism

From what has been discussed so far about the construction of material objects, person, etc., out of actual and possible sense data, it is obvious that both sense data and sensibilia presuppose a subject, which is, or can become, acquainted with them. As we have seen in The Problems of Philosophy, and

99 Ibid., p. 276.
'On the Nature of Acquaintance', Russell's attempt to gain knowledge by acquaintance of his own self left him uneasy; his doubt about the self or subject grows encouraged by the arguments of neutral monists, especially of William James, that there is no such thing as consciousness. During his logical atomism days Russell never accepts the theory of neutral monism. At this stage he largely remains undecided whether the theory of neutral monism is true or not. William James's 'pure experience' yields physical objects when it is organized in one way and minds when organized in another way, but the original stuff, pure experience, is neither physical nor mental. It is neutral, and therefore his position is known as 'neutral monism'. (See John G. Slater, 1994, p. 56).

Following this, Russell considers in his article 'On the Nature of Acquaintance', what is the analysis of 'experiencing', i.e., what is the bond which combines certain objects into the group forming a momentary experience. Russell specifically mention that 'here we must first consider the theory which we have called 'neutral' monism, due to William James'.

Russell writes, "Neutral Monism - as opposed to idealistic monism and materialistic monism - is the theory that the things commonly regarded as mental and the things commonly regarded as physical do not differ in respect of any intrinsic property possessed by the one set and not by the other, but differ only in respect of arrangement and context".

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100 William James (1842-1910) known as a radical empiricist, in his essay entitled 'Does 'Consciousness' exist?' denies that subject-object relation is fundamental. According to Russell, the distinction of mind and matter, the contemplative ideal, and the traditional notion of 'truth', all need to be radically reconsidered if the distinction of subject and object is not accepted as fundamental. For James, 'only one primal stuff or material' out of which everything in the world is composed and this is 'pure experience'. Knowing is a particular sort of relation between two portions of pure experience.[See Bertrand Russell, A History of Western Philosophy (London: Routledge, 1996)].

101 See 'On the Nature of Acquaintance', 1914, p. 139.
He compares this theory with a postal directory. According to Russell in a postal directory, "... some names come twice over, once in alphabetical and once in geographical order; we may compare the alphabetical order to the mental and the geographical order to the physical. The affinities of a given thing are quite different in the two orders, and its causes and effects obey different laws. Two objects may be connected in the mental world by the association of ideas, and in the physical world by the law of gravitation...".

"Just as every man in the directory has two kinds of neighbours, namely alphabetical neighbours and geographical neighbours, so every object will lie at the intersection of two causal series with different laws, namely the mental series and the physical series."\(^\text{102}\)

However, for some years Russell believed in this position without accepting it. But, in the 1920s he finally accepts this position. Now he shifts from Logical Atomism to Neutral Monism, a change from phenomenalism to neutralism. This is found in his *Analysis of Mind* (1921) and *Analysis of Matter* (1928). Here he treats James's pure experiences as events. Russell writes in *Analysis of Matter*, ... the objects which are mathematically primitive in physics, such as electrons, protons, and points in space-time, are all logically complex structures composed of entities which are metaphysically more primitive, which may be conveniently called "events" (p.9). In this book, he further tries to connect physical world and the physical world. "... by bringing physics and perception together, we are able to include psychical events in the material physics, and to give to physics the greater concreteness which results from our more intimate acquaintance with the subject matter of our own experience. To show that the traditional separation between physics and psychology, mind and matter, is not metaphysically defensible, will be one of the purpose of this work, but the two will be brought together, not by

\(^{102}\) Ibid.
subordinating either to the other, but by displaying each as a logical structure composed of what ...we shall call "neutral stuff". 103

Russell is indebted to Earnest Mach (1838-1916) also for his idea of Neutral Monism. Earnest Mach is a positivist, empiricist and antimetaphysical in his attitude towards science: This also indicates the great diversity of his scientific interests. Mach's empiricism is of a special variety which may be called sensationalism, for he refers to his epistemological units as "sensations". However, he does not study in detail the possible meanings of sensation. In regard to his sensationalism, his obvious debt is to Berkeley and Hume, since he based his philosophy of science upon the conception of ‘elements' and ‘sensations', which is a developed and refined form 18th century empiricists 'ideas' and 'impressions'. In his book *Analysis of Sensations* (1886), he is of the view that ‘the world consists only of our sensations' (p. 12). For Mach the task of science can only be the following:

1. To determine the law of connection of ideas (psychology),
2. To discover the laws of connection of sensations (physics),
3. To explain the laws of connection between sensation and ideas (psycho-physics). 104

That is, for Mach, only sensations and ideas exist. Russell, advocates the same position in *The Analysis of Mind* (1921).

We have earlier seen that Russell in *The Problems of Philosophy* and ‘On the Nature of Acquaintance’ holds the dualistic position in which material and mental substances are two irreducible entities. But in *On Knowledge of External World* he not only denies the notion of material substance but reduces it to a bundle of sense data. In *Analysis of Mind* he adopts a different

view. "The stuff of which the world of our experience is composed is, in my belief, neither mind nor matter, but something more primitive than either. Both minds and matter seem to be composite, and the stuff of which they are composed are compounded, lies in a sense between the two, in a sense above them both like a common ancestor".  

Therefore Russell considers the stuff of the world as neutral entities - which are neither mental nor physical. He calls here neutral entities as 'sensations', following Mach. Russell explains, "sensations are what is common to the mental and physical worlds, they may be defined as the intersection of mind and matter. This is by no means a new view; it is advocated, not only by the American authors ... but by Mach in his Analysis of Sensations, which was published in 1886. The essence of sensation, according to the view I am advocating, is its independence of past experience. It is a core in our actual experiences, never existing in isolation ... It is not itself knowledge, but it supplies the data for our knowledge of the physical world, including our own bodies".  

Here we see that Russell's neutral entities are pre-eminently on the side of sense data, yet it is a drift towards a new direction. This way neutral monism is Russell's full-fledged metaphysical theory.  

Russell now constructs mental substance. For this purpose in addition to sensations, images are also required, for him. Russell makes the distinction of sensations and images. He says, "The things we see in dreams

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106 E. Mach holds that mind and matter are complexes of sensations and the world is constituted of these neutral elements of experience. Mach reduces the distinction between physical and psychical to what he calls 'functional relations'. Also he regards concepts as symbols denoting complexes of sensations. See Earnest Mach, Analysis of Sensations (Chicago: Longmans, 1987).
108 "There are some who believe that our mental life is built up out of sensations alone ... I think the only ingredients required in addition to sensations are images". (See ibid., 144.)
when our eyes are shut must count as images, yet while we are dreaming they seem, like sensations. ... when we are listening for a faint sound ... a house's hoofs on the road - we think we hear it many times before we really do, because expectation brings us the image, and we mistake it for sensation."  

Russell therefore prescribes three points to distinguish images from sensations. \(^{109}\)

1. Images have less degree of vividness.
2. Our absence of belief in images' physical reality.
3. The fact that images' causes and effects are different from those of sensations.

However, Russell considers only the third one as the universally applicable criterion for the distinction of images and sensations, since the other two, he feels are liable to exception.

We criticize Russell here. It appears to us that Russell's version is not a pure neutral monism. Since in a purely neutral monistic theory there is nothing either in mind or in matter, which is not wholly constructed out of neutral stuff. But, in Russell's version, for the construction of mental world in addition to sensations (which Russell claims to be neutral) he needs images also. Even if we excuse Russell's claim that sensations are neutral, how will we account for images? Images are clearly distinguished from Russell's neutral entities - sensations. It is true that images are never a part of physical world; but they definitely belong to the mental world, they are subjective. We may aptly quote Stace here: "In a pure neutral monism there should, of course, be nothing which is purely subjective. It is true that images are like sensations, and may be derived from them. Still, as being found solely in the

\(^{109}\) Ibid., pp. 144-145.

\(^{110}\) Russell here identifies his similarity with Hume. Russell mentions, "Hume, who gives the names impressions" and "ideas", to what may, for present purposes, be identified with out "sensations" and "images"...". (See ibid., 145)
realm of mind, they constitute a departure from the strict programme of neutral monism".111

We see that, Russell in his neutral monism, holds that both mind and matter are constructions out of entities belonging to one category - neither mental nor physical. In other words, 'atoms' of the construction are 'neutral' between mental and physical. While sensations play a major part in the constructions of both mind and matter, images enter only in the constitution of mind. This implies that, Russell views the difference between mind and matter consists in the operation of different causal laws. For Russell, an entity is material when its relations are determined by the laws of physics and an entity is mental when its relations are determined by the laws of psychology.

In this context, we are of the view that Russell is faced with two genuine problems in the constructions.

1) Since Russell envisages the atoms to be not only mental, but also transitory, we ask, how construction of enduring things, such as selves or physical objects, possible out of transitory entities?

2) How is construction of mental and physical world possible out of some entities which are neither mental nor physical?

For the construction of physical world Russell can not treat sensibilia as mental, because in *The Relation of Sense Data to Physics*, he treats sensibilia as physical. "... all sense data are sensibilia ... I regard sense data as not mental, and as being, in fact, part of the actual subject-matter of physics" [*The Relation of Sense data to Physics, 1914, p. 144.*].

Therefore, we conclude Russell’s position of this period as follows. The same sense data when correlated according to the laws of physics constitute physical objects and when correlated according to laws of psychology constitute minds. We find that this position of Russell carries two, rather, serious consequences:

1) Russell rejects not only the notion of self, but also consciousness as a substantial entity.

2) Russell insists that we are acquainted with our own private thoughts, feelings, images and sense data both present and past (as he accepts memory to be a direct form of acquaintance).

To sum up, Russell thinks that the existence of the objects or events which we claim to remember is not known to us directly but inferred from our past memory images. His denial that one could be acquainted with one’s self is based on the claim that self does not exist as a separate entity. But, he has never given up the view that the objects with which we are directly acquainted in perception are our own private sense-data.\(^{112}\)

Further, we criticize Russell’s constructions as not genuine entities. Because they are designed not so much to recapture our everyday beliefs as to provide epistemologically superior alternatives to them. The alternatives are held to be close in overall import to what they replace, but to be free of the ontological extravagance which makes our unreformed beliefs incapable of achieving the status of knowledge. For instance, Russell considers substances to be unknowable, therefore he replaces beliefs that involve the concept of substance by beliefs that involve, the concept of series of sense data. The latter are offered as the closest knowable approach to the former.

Sainsbury rightly interprets Russell as a reformist, rather than a conservationist. Because, he says, "The conservationist takes himself to be

providing an account of the very things we have been talking about all along. He may require that we repudiate some of our beliefs, but the repudiated beliefs are beliefs about beliefs rather than beliefs about the entities with which the construction is concerned. By contrast, the reformist asks us to abandon the use of certain concepts in favour of others. Russell's ground for reform is that, supposedly, we have no evidence for the existence of objects answering to the old concepts, but ample evidence for the existence of objects answering to the new concepts.”

In a still later stage of his philosophical development in 1940s Russell identifies his so called particulars as qualities. This he attempts when he realizes that reconstruction of objects in terms of events (Analysis of Matter (1928)) does not eliminate substance, in the sense that substance is required for the inherence of properties. Russell realizes that substance could be eliminated only by having qualities as atoms. If construction of objects out of events is justified at all, then construction of events out of qualities is also justified. And this is what Russell tries to do in An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth (1940). He asserts the substitutional nature of construction, relative to objects or what he calls, 'things'. The justification for the substitution is the elimination of unknowable substance. Russell quotes, "What would commonly be called a 'thing' is nothing but a bundle of coexisting qualities such as redness, hardness, etc." That is, qualities are not just any old properties, but are such things as 'redness' hardness etc., properties with which we are acquainted in perception.

III.Concluding Remarks

To conclude our discussion on Russell's epistemology and ontology, we can see that 'sense-datum' remains the core of his theories. We are of the

view that Russell's sense data work as the intermediary between the subject and external material world and thereby causing difficulties for the acquisition of knowledge. Though he accepts in his initial stage that material objects are causing sense data, later on his devotion to empiricism, inspires him to limit the object of knowledge only to sense data, for the exclusion of everything else. A consequence of his transition from causal theory of perception to phenomenalism is conscious human being is separated from his bio-socio-historico basis. Russell's view that the only objects with which we are directly acquainted in perception are our own private sense data leads to solipsism as his position both ontologically and epistemologically. Ontologically, solipsism is the position that only my mind and its ideas exist. Epistemologically, it accepts only private sensations as the absolute source of knowledge.

We argue that Russell distorts and falsifies the basic and essential character of the subject of knowledge, the object of knowledge and there by the character of knowledge. We are of the view that a false view of the analysis of knowledge equally implies a false view of the object and subject of knowledge that is a false epistemology implies a false ontology. Russell claims that by the application of logico-analytic method he arrives at 'simples'. His empiricism forced him to accept as existing nothing but sense-data. The 'simples' of his analysis are nothing but the sense data of his epistemology. These 'simples' or sense data constitute the only stuff of reality. And in his theory of meaning only the 'simples' or sense data can be named or have meaning. This also clearly brings out the relation among methodology, ontology, epistemology and semantic.

The basis of Russell's phenomenalistic position of material objects and self lies in his philosophy of logical atomism where every unit of reality is conceived to be discrete and unconnected. These units of realities are particulars. This pluralistic view of reality helps Russell to believe that each particular 'stands entirely alone and is completely self-subsistent,' except that
they are transitory. Evidently, Russell's sense data are fleeting.\footnote{115} For him the notion that a thing is really real only if it lasts either forever or for a fairly decent length of time, is a mistake. His claim is that things that are really real last a very short time. To make his position safe he adds that there may be things which last for thousands of years, but it is just that they are not within our experiences.\footnote{116} This way he rejects the notion of a permanent substance.

Russell claims that a thing which persists for an hour is to be regarded as composed of many things of less duration. Therefore, human beings and material objects alike are treated as not one single persistent entity, but as a series of entities succeeding each other in time, each lasting for a very brief period, though probably not for a mere mathematical instant [See The Ultimate constituents of Matter, p. 123]. Here he resembles Hume.

We criticize that through Russell's tool of logico - analytic method, not only metaphysics in the sense of super-sensible reality disappears but also the whole material and mental world with its causal laws of development disappear. We are left with isolated, transitory sense data. We may aptly quote Suman Gupta who critically remarks, "... in Russell's phenomenalism his pluralistic ontology is related to his analysis as the only method and sensations as the only source of knowledge. We see that he denied the very basis of science namely the ability of the social man to change through his practical activity, the causally inter related objective reality. That is Russell's phenomenalism fails to explain the relation of the universal laws of development of nature, society and human thought".\footnote{117}

We are of the view that not only that Russell's theories cannot give us the knowledge external world, but also they reduce the existence of human beings into a series of sense data, fails miserably in providing us with the knowledge of reality. The knowledge of the existence of the material world is

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\textit{115} "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism", 1918, p. 274

\textit{116} Ibid., p. 274.
the knowledge of the existence of objective reality that is causally interconnected. Russell's analytic methodology reduces dynamics, complex and causally interrelated objective reality to discrete, unrelated units. This methodology, by assuming external relations leaves no room for interaction and synthesis of different phenomena. Thus his analytic methodology implies a pluralistic ontology. Similarly, when private sensations are assumed as the only source of knowledge, the object of knowledge cannot be the objective dynamic reality. That is, an abstract epistemology implies an abstract ontology. We criticize Russell's concepts and his ideas of the world are atomistic and static as both his logic and his world-view are mere metaphysical-abstractions.

We are of the view that Russell's so called 'particulars' fail to explain the nature of objective reality. Because knowledge of the nature of objective reality is revealed through the knowledge of the unity of particular and universal, cause and effect and appearance and reality etc. Unless we try to grasp the true nature of reality by going beyond appearances, we will not be able to achieve complete knowledge. Russell limits his jurisdiction of knowledge only to appearances and particulars and thereby fails to achieve the aim of a true philosopher. If we ignore the synthesis of above mentioned pairs of categories of understanding that will result in inadequate knowledge. Immanuel Kant rightly teaches us that 'concepts without percepts are empty and percepts without concepts are blind'. True knowledge is the realization of this unity, which Russell rejects throughout.

By combining the Cartesian dualism with British empiricism, Russell repeats the folly of his empiricist predecessors especially Berkeley and Hume. By considering fleeting, separate, subjective sense data as the only entities that constitute reality it is apparent that Russell's ontology and epistemology are similar to David Hume's ontology and epistemology. Though in his initial stages he accepts the realism of Locke, in his later stage Russell resembles

\[117\] Suman Gupta, 1983, p. 98

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Berkeley in treating the objective world as not existing when we are no longer looking at it (The Ultimate Constituent of Matter, p. 123). Therefore, we conclude Russell's position is an empiricist idealist one which does not account for the practical activities of man.