Chapter IV

DOCTRINE OF NEUTRAL MONISM (1)

(Non-Relational Theory of Perception)

Preliminary Remarks

Russell's fundamental problem in the theory of perception, as we have seen, was to bridge the gulf between the world of sense and world of physics. Russell could not accept the Humean solipsism to which a logically consistent analysis of the phenomena of knowledge ultimately led. On the other hand, he also found it difficult to entertain the belief in the existence of permanent and objective physical things only on the ground of its being natural and instinctive. A viable alternative seemed to him the doctrine of phenomenalism in which he could dispense with the inferred and otiose physical things while yet retaining a physical world with all its characteristics of permanence, persistence and objectivity. Physical things were replaced by the assemblages of the objects which were or were able to be presented to senses. These assemblages of sensibles in relation to mind constituted the knowledge according to Russell's doctrine of phenomenalism.

But in having adopted the doctrine of phenomenalism, Russell had already travelled a half distance towards neutral-
monism. Doctrine of neutral monism is the ultimate destiny towards which the phenomenalistic analysis of knowledge logically leads. In phenomenalism we abandon material thing due to its inferred and precarious character. But is not mind, as an independent substance, amenable to same treatment? Is not its character as much inferred and therefore precarious as that of matter? We are never introspectively aware of our bare selves; we always infer it from the bits of experiences which it is supposed to abide and inhere. The belief in mind as an independent substance is therefore psychologically not primitive but derivative. This implies that we should also replace it by the sensa which it is supposed to be presented to. The definition of knowledge that stems from this theory is that knowledge consists simply in coming of one sensible object in relation with another one and not with some mind or self.

It is clear that the doctrine of neutral monism has both its metaphysics and epistemology. Metaphysically it rejects the materialistic and idealistic monism as well as psychophysical dualism, maintaining that the world is composed of a stuff which is neither material nor mental but neutral. Epistemologically it denies the causal or relational theory of knowledge in which the material object's confrontation with the mind through mediating 'idea' or 'content' is said to be as constituting knowledge.
Russell's relation to the doctrine of neutral monism was very peculiar. His switching over from the doctrine of phenomenalism to neutral monism was not due to any sudden change in his views but was of the nature of a gradual transition. His first encounter with this doctrine was in 1914 when he was working as a lecturer of philosophy in Harvard. His reaction however was, altogether hostile. His article "On the Nature of Acquaintance" was indeed a polemic against Mach and Jones who were the first propounders of this doctrine. The subsequent article "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" marks a gradual realisation about the inefficacy of certain objections that Russell made against the doctrine. Finally when he wrote The Analysis of Mind, (published in 1921) he fully acquiesced in it. But again in the ensuing years he made radical changes in his epistemological ideas while being within the framework of this doctrine, (this will be discussed in the following chapter). All through this period of rejection, gradual acceptance, full endorsement and then partial reversal, he kept himself very close with the writings of Mach and William James. It will be therefore in order if we dwell at some length upon the theory as it existed prior to Russell. This will also help in understanding the distinctive features that Russell's own formulation of it in comparison to those of his predecessors had.

Neutral Monism before Russell

Ernst Mach in his work Analysis of Sensations (first
published in 1897) asks the question what grounds, do we have for our belief in substance-concepts —— physical as well as mental?

The table upon which I write is one that I have purchased five years ago. It has lost much of its shine. It has become a bit rough and contains/number of patches of ink. It varies its colour according to the colour of light in the room. It completely disappears when I shut my eyes or when the light goes off. But despite all the changes that it has undergone, I believe it is the same table which I purchased five years ago. Similarly the coat that I have today is, I believe the same coat that I wore five years ago although it has become a little shabby and is no longer as fit as it was earlier. We do not say that the present table or coat is exactly same as it was earlier. We believe however that despite all alterations and variations, it is the same table or coat.

But where is that unchanged and permanent thing (table, coat). Is it not that it is our sheer habit of thinking as well as speaking and writing in a certain way that leads us to reify an otherwise non-existant entity.

What is true to body substance is also true to mind-substance. Suppose I am thinking over some philosophical problem. A new idea occurs to me, then comes another idea and then still
another, and then it stops. I exert my mind but nothing happens.
I feel a little embarrassed. But then it suddenly comes to me like
a flash of light and I feel relieved and happy. Now I say that
there is a permanent and persistent 'I' which is busy in philo-
sophising which thinks one idea after another which feels em-
brassed and then happy. But where from this permanent I came
in. What actually happened is merely a connected and concatenated
series of bits of sensations, which we falsely claimed as belonging
to a subsisting entity I. 'I' is absolutely inexperienced
and therefore utterly non-existent.

A critical reflection, in this way, eliminates both 'mind'
and matter and leaves only 'sensations' about whom it was hitherto
supposed they were presented to former and produced by latter.
This sort of analysis may roughly be called as neutral monistic
analysis of knowledge. As is clear, it reduces the 'relation
that is said to be holding between the knowing, mind and matter.
There is no matter to produce sensations and there is no mind
to receive them. Sensations themselves are the sole material
out of which the universe is built up. These sensations when
arranged in one way constitute the subject matter of physics
and when in a different way, that of psychology.

According to Mach a physical body consists entirely of
'sensations' or what he himself prefers to call 'elements' such as colours, sounds, taste etc. and nothing beyond. But
from the very fact that they are sensations modifiable by our sensing them, he says, it can be concluded that they are also mental. Mach also argues for the neutrality of sensations by invoking the fact that the so-called mental and physical phenomena can interact assuming obviously the cartesian idea that two substances of entirely different kind and character cannot interact.

"Let us denote the above-mentioned elements (colour, sounds, smells etc.) by the letters ABC .... KIM..... $\alpha \beta \gamma$ ... Let those complexes of colours, sounds and so forth, commonly called bodies, be denoted, for the sake of clearness, by ABC...; the complex, known as our body which is a part of the former complexes distinguished by certain peculiarities, may be called KIM....; the complex composed of volitions, memory-images, and the rest we shall represent by $\alpha \beta \gamma$ .... Usually, now, the complex $\alpha \beta \gamma$ .... KIM ....; as making up the ego, is opposed to the complex ABC.... as making up the world of physical objects; sometimes also, $\alpha \beta \gamma$ .... is viewed as ego, and KIM... ABC.... as world of physical objects. Now at first blush, ABC.... appears independent of the ego, and opposed to it as a separate existence. But this independence is only relative, and gives way upon closer inspection. Much, it is true, may change in the complex $\alpha \beta \gamma$... without much perceptible change being induced
in ABC ... ; and vice versa. But many changes in $\alpha \beta \gamma \ldots \ldots$ do pass, by way of changes in KLM ... , to ABC ... , and vice versa (As, for example when powerful ideas burst forth into acts, or when our environment induces noticeable changes in our body).

At the same time the group KLM ... appears to be more intimately connected with $\alpha \beta \gamma \ldots$ and with ABC ... , than the latter with one another; and their relations find their expression in common thought and speech.

Precisely viewed, however, it appears that the group ABC ... is always codetermined by KLM. A cube when seen close at hand, looks large; when seen at a distance, small; its appearance to the right eye differs from its appearance to the left; sometimes it appears double; with closed eyes it is invisible. The properties of one and the same body, therefore, appear modified by our own body; they appear conditioned by it. But where, now, is that same body, which appears to different? All that can be said is, that with different KLM different ABC ... different ABC are associated.

But there may be raised the objection that if sensations are only reality known to be existing how can we account for the two, functionally aradically different phenomena namely physical and mental psychical. We have a vivid and conspicuous knowledge of the bodies of our fellow men but we have not even the faintest idea of their minds which, we think, must be
attached to their bodies as our's is attached to our own. Is it possible to deny the difference between the one domain to which we have an effortless access and the other to which we have altogether no access. For Mach to be sure, there is no such necessity. We can diffuse the physical and psychical phenomena into each other while yet retaining the distinction between the two. This can be accomplished by forming two groups in which the same elements occur with relation of a different nature. The element A (say, colour) is physical as long as it is studied and observed in its relation to various other colours (B) or sounds (C). But the same A becomes psychical when it is abstracted from its relation to B and C and observed in its relation to some previous knowledge (memory) of colour (α) or corresponding memory of sound (β), Mach says:

"A colour is a physical object as soon as we consider its dependence upon other colours, upon temperatures, upon spaces, and so forth. When we consider, however, its dependence upon the retina (the elements K.M....), it is a psychological object, a sensation. Not the subject-matter but the distinction of our investigation, is different in the two domains."

Ernst Mach approached the doctrine of neutral monism from the standpoint of physicist. William James, his younger American contemporary approaches it from the standpoint of a psychologist. A full-blooded statement of this doctrine was given by James in his work Essays in Radical Empiricism, though
in germinal form it can also be seen present in his *Psychology* written about twenty years before the former. In *Psychology* although James does not reject 'consciousness' as an independent substance, and even regards it as a fundamental datum of psychology, an unconscious urge to dispense with it is fairly discernible in him. For example when he says: "If we could say in English 'it thinks', as we say, 'it rains' or 'it blows', we should be stating the facts most simply and with the minimum of assumptions".5

In the same book, James described four important characteristics of consciousness. Firstly every state of it is subjective. Secondly, it is in a state of constant flux. The flux or continuity of consciousness is experiential and lastly it never comprehends its objects in their entirety but always chooses the appropriate parts of them.6 It will be seen that while the first and last characteristics later constituted the bases of James famous pragmatic theory of truth, the second and third in which the changeable and fluctuating character of consciousness has been emphasized, paved the way for his future abandonment of consciousness as an independent substance.

The central idea of his new philosophy, James put in following words:

*My thesis is that if we start with the supposition*
that there is only one primal stuff or material in the world, a stuff of which everything is composed, and if we call that stuff "pure experience," then knowing can easily be explained as a particular sort of relation toward one another into which a portion of one experience may enter. The relation itself is a part of pure experience; one of its 'terms' becomes the subject or the bearer of the knowledge, the other becomes object known.7

James claims to explain in terms of his theory a paradox which, he says, "the whole philosophy of perception from Democritus' time downwards has been one long wrangle over." The paradox is this. On common parlance the experience is considered to be a simple confrontation of mind with its object. At present I am seeing the room, table, pen, book etc. which I think belong to outside world. But in so far as I am perceiving them they are also inside my mind. The problem is how what appears to be only one reality can simultaneously exist at two places. Dualistic or Representative theorists concoct an idea which they say represents the outside thing and belongs to mind. But according to James this 'idea' is never experienced; mind unmediatedly encounters its objects in every case of experience.

The puzzle, James says, can be easily unravelled if we abandon our habit to think mind and material things as being two opposite realms of being. There is only one identical room i.e. its pure experience upon which two different sorts of processes converge. Just as the point of intersection of two lines
is virtually one but yet can be said to be belonging to two
different lines, in the same way one identical room can be
said to be existing at two places at once.

There are two processes going on simultaneously in our
universe. One of these consists of sensations, emotions, volitions,
in short, of what we call ordinarily as mental occurrences. This
process belongs to the personal biography of perceiver. The
room experience, when it enters into this process is loosely
called mental. The other process in which the same room-experience enters comprises a number of physical operations such as
carpentering, furnishing, papering etc. This process is utterly
independent of any one's experiencing them and is the physical
history of the room.

Occurring in these two processes the experience also
changes its characters. As a physical room, it can be experienced
by any number of people; as a mental room it is strictly per-
sonal and private. As physical room it will take a certain
amount of time and labour to demolish it but as a mental room
it can be destroyed in a second — simply by closing the
eyes. As a physical room you have to pay a certain amount of
money to live in it but as a mental room, "you may occupy it
for any length of time rent-free". And so on and so forth.
Revolutionizing thus the whole notion of mind and matter, James proceeds to explain various sorts of 'knowing' e.g. perceptual, conceptual, memorial etc., in the light of his theory. Perceptual knowing, according to him, as explained above, consists in the occurrence of self same piece of experience twice over in two different context. Conceptual knowing, although somewhat different from perceptual knowing, can be nevertheless defined in purely experiential terms. It is, as James says, "leading towards" and "Terminating in" percepts "through a series of transitional experiences which the world supplies". Our knowledge of a dog, when we have only an 'idea of it in our mind, consists entirely in the ideas ability to lead to and terminate in through certain intermediary experiences, percepts, e.g. barking, black and hairy body which we commonly ascribe to the dog.

Or let us take another example given in detail by James himself, "Suppose me", he says, "to be sitting in library at Cambridge at ten minutes walk from 'Memorial Hall' and to be thinking truly of the latter object". "My mind", he goes on "may have before it only the name, or it may have a clear image, or it may have very dim image of the hall, but such intrinsic differences in the image make on insinac difference in its cognitive function". Now, says James, "if I can lead you to
Hall and tell you of its history and its present uses; if in its presence I feel my idea, however imperfect it may have been, to have led hither and to be now terminated; if the associates of the image and of the felt hall run parallel, so that each term of the one context corresponds serially, as I walk, with an answering term of the others .... my idea must be ... called cognizant of reality." In case all these are accomplished, in case I fail to tell you what hall I mean by my image; or "if I fail to to point or lead you towards the Harvard Delta; or if, being led by you, I am uncertain whether the hall I see be what I had in my mind or not", my claim of knowing the hall will be sheer pretens

In sum, according to James, knowledge is either a direct confrontation of one experience with another one, or a process in which one experience passes through certain intermediary experience into another experience. In any case, it is the experience itself that is knower and that is known; the transcendental mind (to experience) and the transcendental thing-in-itself (to be experienced are both non-existent. But here it may be objected that if it is the experience itself which functions at one time as thing and at another, as thought, then how the two phenomena are qualitatively so different. A 'thing' is extended, colored, hard or soft, smooth or rough, but the thoughts can never possess these qualities. Jam however, disposes of this objection by saying that thoughts do possess the qualities that the things are said to possess. The thought of fire is as hot, as hot is the actual fire and the thought of river is as wet as wet is the actual river. The two phenomena
differ only in that while the experience qua thing is active and effective, qua thought it lacks these characteristics. The physical triangle and the mental one are same in their intrinsic nature; their difference lied only in the fact that while the point of former can wound, that of latter cannot.  

A very important point to be realised in this connection is that James' neutral-monism was at the bottom an epistemological and not a metaphysical doctrine. His 'pure-experience' was not a metaphysical substitute of mind or matter or both in conjunction. Metaphysically, he was a pluralist believing in the multiplicity of experiences all as the ultimate ontological constituents of the universe. He, indeed denied in very clear words any metaphysical status to his pure-experience.

It were, in fact, some of James' disciples later known as New-Realists who transformed it from a theory of knowledge into a theory of reality. It were they who first used the phrase "neutral stuff" and called its philosophy as "neutral monism" contrasting it with idealistic and materialistic kinds of monisms to whom mind and matter are respectively the ultimate underlying substances of the universe.

**Bertrand Russell as Neutral Monist**

Mach approached the theory of neutral monism from the side of physics and William James, from the side of psychology. Russell
approaches it from both physics and psychology, but, interestingly enough, a physics unknown to Mach and a psychology unknown to James. The first two decades of the present century witnessed a great revolution in physics whose repercussions and ramifications were also felt in the other domains of knowledge, particularly philosophy. Quanta physics and theory of Relativity metamorphosed the traditional notions of space, time and matter. The notion of absolute time and absolute space was replaced by a relative space-time and the matter ceased to an extended, indestructible substantial entity; it came to be considered as mathematical constructions out of inconceivably abstract entities (or non-entities).

On the other hand a corresponding revolution was created in the realm of psychology by Behaviourists. Behaviourism was a culmination of reductive tendency in psychology which made its first appearance in the late nineteenth century in Germany. Psychology got rid of "consciousness" which it has hitherto regarded as its fundamental datum. There were thus at that time two opposite tendencies in the domain of science—one eviscerating matter of its 'materiality' and other eviscerating mind of its 'mentality'. Russell thought himself to find in the doctrine of neutral monism a meeting ground, a conflux of these two confluent tides of modern knowledge. In the preface of his Analysis of Mind, he said:

"The view that seems to me to reconcile the materialistic tendency of psychology with the anti-materialistic tendency of physics is the view of William James and the other American new realists, according to which the "stuff" of the world is neither
mental nor material, but a "neutral stuff" out of which both are constructed.\footnote{13}

It is also to be noted that for Mach, neutral monism was more a methodological principle than anything else. William James emphasised its epistemological aspect while denying any metaphysical status to it. Prof. Perry and others made it into a full-blooded metaphysical doctrine. Russell, on the other hand, takes it in all its three aspects. It is for him a perfect methodological model to be applied in all the branches of science. Epistemologically, he contrasts it with the causal theory of knowledge to which he himself was committed before accepting it. On metaphysical plane, he considers it to be a viable substitute of idealistic and materialistic monisms on the one hand and psycho-physical dualism on the other. Presently, we shall confine our discussion only to the epistemological aspect of Russell's theory. The scope of our discussion will be further narrowed as we shall emphasise only his theory of perception ignoring his views about 'memory', 'sensations', 'image' etc (except where necessary) which he developed in the light of his new doctrine.

As is already mentioned, Russell's reaction to doctrine of neutral monism was that of rejection and he only gradually came to believe in it fully. Here we shall first discuss the grounds upon which he rejected the doctrine and then see how could he surmounted those grounds. In the last we shall discuss his definition of perception which he derived from his fresh approach.
There are epistemologically two sources of the doctrine of neutral monism. One is the assumption that what is presented to mind unmediatedly must be part of it and the other is the belief that physical things can be unmediatedly present to the mind. It was this assimilation of physical things with mind which led Mach and James to their belief in the neutrality of the world stuff. Neutral monists, by emphasising first, rejected the 'content theory' and by emphasising the second, refuted the idealism. Russell, for his part, confutes the 'assumption' but confirms the 'belief'. As a matter of fact, both Russell's phenomenalism and the doctrine of neutral monism were half way houses between the content theory and subjective idealism. Russell's preference of former upon the latter owed to his belief that the former was free from the Berkeleyan fallacy in which the latter was bristled viz. the fallacy of identifying the act of sensation with its object.

It may be seen that the real issue was the existence of mind. If mind existed, neutral monism was wrong and if it did not exist, Russell's phenomenalism was incorrect. Russell's main objection against neutral monism was based upon its inability to explain the mental occurrences. And as soon as he was able to explain these purely in physiological terms, he abandoned phenomenalism and accepted neutral monism.
Russell first criticises the James' view that in a case of experience, what is experienced comes into contact of another experience and not of any subsisting mind. That whether a given patch of colour is experienced or not, depends according to his view, upon whether or not it is related to some other experienced object. One could experience the colour only when he had already in his life at least one other experienced object. Accordingly, it was logically impossible for one to have only one experience.

But Russell thinks it to be absurd. "It seems to me (he says) possible to imagine a mind existing for only a fraction of a second, seeing the red and ceasing to exist before having any other experience." There is involved in my seeing the red at this moment a cognitive element which was absent in preceding moment when I was not experiencing it and will vanish after a moment, never to recur, though I shall be able to recollect it. The difference between the presence and absence of this cognitive element does not consist in the colour's being and not being a part of a system of experiences, but "in some way more immediate, more intimate, more intuitively evident".

This difficulty being generalised can be put thus. We may ask what it is that makes the objects of my experience at this moment distinct and isolated from the objects that I
experienced earlier or will experience in moments to come?

My present experience, according to Russell, logically, is cut off from my past and future experiences and also from the experiences that other people might be having at the same moment. Clearly it is its being my experience i.e. the mental content that is added into it after coming into relation with me that provides it with its unique and isolated character. It is true that the same object can enter into two minds simultaneously. But the fact that minds cannot experience each other's experiences shows it beyond doubt that an experience to its mind is its exclusive possession.

The same applies to logical and mathematical formulas. My thinking of $3+3=6$ at a given moment and your thinking of the same at the same moment are two distinct events although the contents overlap. There is something necessarily existing in all the different experiences which separates them. This something is obviously mental content or consciousness which the neutral monists deny.

It is possible for neutral monists to take recourse to physiological considerations in order to explain the privacy of the thoughts while not admitting their mental character. The thoughts are subjective in the only sense that they are bound up with one's biological organism. Russell however doubts the validity of this argument. His reason is simply that to know
that I know something it is not at all necessary to be aware of the physiological processes that are involved in the knowing. Russell says, "...those who have never learned physiology and are unaware that they possess nerve, are quite competent to know that this or that comes within their experience." But, clearly, this is not an argument. Obviously, every person who is alive, knows that he knows something, but there are only a few (Russell, of course, being one of them) who have theories which they say explain the problem of knowledge.

Another difficulty which prevented Russell to accept the neutral monistic theory of knowledge was its inability to explain "beliefs". "Belief" is different from the 'sensation' in that whereas the latter has always a reference to some outside object, the former lacks any such reference. For instance, when I believe in the proposition "Today is Tuesday", there is no such entity called 'today is tuesday' to which my belief is directed. Indeed, belief is always about 'propositions' or 'judgements' not about 'things' or 'facts' as is generally believed. Although we speak of our belief or disbelief in God or Adam or Eve, as if they are some objects. But actually they are not objects in the logical sense of the word. They are descriptions and our belief in them simply means that we believe that there is an entity answering these descriptions. Beliefs, thus, in all cases are 'objectless'. But yet they
perform a cognitive function. It follows therefore that there is necessarily a mind which knows something although no physical presentation of any kind is involved.

Analogous cases in which the supposition of a mind seems to be necessary are those of memory and thoughts of non-temporal objects. When I recall an event which occurred an hour earlier, it is clear that the same event is not presented to me now. It is a replica of the previous event and being so it must be at least slightly changed. Now the alteration in the character of the event recollected can either be explained by assuming a mind whose contact to event is responsible for the change or believing that our present knowledge is mediated by some idea which represents the original event. The latter possibility is upheld by the protagonists of content-theory and neither Russell nor neutral monists can believe in it. Neutral monists reject the former possibility too and thus fail to explain this important phenomena.

James' saying that things and thoughts differ only in their being and not being active and effective respectively cannot be acceptable. For, there remains the question that if they are made of the same substance, why are they so radically different in their qualities? For Russell, the phenomena of memory can be explained only by admitting the mental element in our knowing, if we are to avoid the precarious content-theory.
Likewise, if we say that in our believing \(2 \times 2 = 4\) no mental element is involved, then we are compelled to assign some natural status to the constituent numbers which existed at the time of our believing in them but which did not exist when we ceased to believe. But the reification of mathematical numbers amounted to believing an ontology which at least for Russell, was preposterous. From the very fact that we know at a certain moment the proposition \(2 \times 2 = 4\), although none of the components are temporal, it follows that there comes to be attached some mental element which enables the proposition to be known at that moment.\(^{16}\)

Russell is also dissatisfied with James' definition of knowledge as a process of 'leading to'. My idea of a dog, according to this view, would be a genuine idea if it is capable of leading me, through certain intermediary ideas, to the perception of "a jumping, barking, hairy body". But, Russell says that the bare idea, not accompanied by some intention or purpose cannot be treated as tantamount to the knowing of the actual dog. It is possible that I come across the dog in the street by accident while I am in search of him. In this case the effect is no doubt what was ultimately intended, but as the encounter is wholly by chance and unintended it is not possible to say that my original idea led me to the dog and was therefore cognitive.
Besides this, there is also involved according to Russell in James' treatment of an idea of a thing as cause and the actual experience of that thing as effect, what he calls "a certain naive towards science", "a certain uncritical acceptance of what may be called scientific commonsense. Which seems to me largely to destroy the value of their speculations on fundamental problems". He, however says that if is not a vital objection to James view; "it is not unlikely that it could be avoided by restatement".

There is also, Russell points out, a confusion on James' part as to the knowledge of things and knowledge of propositions. James speaks as if we can know directly the things as such. But according to Russell's theory what is strict sense I can know are 'simples'; knowledge of all other things is knowledge through descriptions. Thus when I claim to know Memorial Hall, when it is not presented to me, my knowledge is actually about a proposition. I can know, for example, that 'Memorial Hall is a building which is reached at by taking the first turning on the right and second turning on the left hand and then traversing a distance of 200 yards' But in this proposition, the 'Memorial Hall' is not an object that I can actually experience after taking the two turns and then going 200 yards. It is instead, a description which applies to an entity called Memorial Hall. I can know this proposition (for instance, by the help of a map) without ever having seen the Memorial Hall.

In the last there are considerations about what Russell call
'emphatic particulars' (viz. 'this', 'I', 'now') which render the theory of neutral monism unacceptable. 'This' is a proper name which applies to an object to which I attend at a given moment. The subject that attends to 'this' is called 'I' and the time at which 'I' and 'this' come in relation to each other is called 'now'. Now there is observed a peculiar intimacy and immediacy between 'I' and 'this' and 'I' and 'now' which is quite absent in 'I's relation to other objects and at other times. Neutral monism does not offer any satisfactory explanation of this peculiar relationship. Were James and his followers true in their contention that there is no specifically mental content in the knowledge, there would have been found in the world a complete impartiality, "an evenly diffused light, not the central illumination fading away into outer darkness which is characteristic of objects in relation to mind". The phenomena of emphatic particulars suggest the selectiveness of mind and neutral monism which denies it is surely false.

Russell concludes this whole discussion in following words:

"For these reasons ...... I conclude that neutral monism though largely right in its polemic against previous theories, cannot be regarded as able to deal with all the facts and must be replaced by a theory in which the difference between what is experienced and what is not experienced by a given subject at a given moment is made simple and more prominent than it can be in a theory which wholly denies the specifically mental entities."
Transition to Neutral Monism

These objections apart, there were certain things in neutral monism to lure Russell. Foremost among them was that it conformed to his Occam's razor, which he took as the supreme methodological maxim in philosophizing. It has been repeatedly pointed out that Russell's main aim in philosophy was to dispense with the inferred entities so that sciences may have logically safe and secure bases. He had already banished 'substance' from physics in his phenomenalism. Acceptance of neutral monism amounted to nothing but to further carrying out of this plan. That is, by its means, he could have banished the 'mind' as well, which was admittedly a soft data. The theory that could dispense with both mind and material substance was indeed such as to satisfy best to Russell's scientific temperament. "That the things given in experience should be of two fundamentally different kinds, mental and physical said Russell, "is far less satisfactory than that the dualism should be merely apparent and superficial."

The other reason to make this theory acceptable for Russell was that it conformed to the results of various emergent trends in sciences. The new physics asserted that the matter is not a substantial, extended entity, but "a remote supersensuous construction connected no doubt with sense, but only through a long chain of intermediate inferences". Physiological psychology, on
the other hand, said that the immediate data of sense should be a subjectmater of psychology rather than physics. Sense-objects were thus the sole things which we could approach through new physics and psychology.

Besides, a logical analysis of phenomena of perceptual knowledge also leads to asserting only sense-objects. It of course led to solipsism but, as we have seen in the preceding chapter, Russell found reason and rhyme for admitting the hypothetical sense (sensibilia) besides those actual. An aggregate of closely resembling sensea constituted the 'physical thing' and its relation to mind constituted knowledge. He admitted mind, because he thought it unavoidable in explaining the essentially relational character of knowledge. Now if the theory of neutral monism were true, the supposition of mind was also unnecessary. The sensea themselves would do the function of a thing as well as mind. Knowledge of a chair, for example, does not consist in the presentation of a physical thing or its representation by something else to mind. There are merely certain sensations which in relation to each other constitute the chair and the knowledge of it. These sensations are neutral in regard to their 'physicality' or 'mentality' but being subject to two different kind of laws they are studied separately by the two sciences. One law pertains to physics which makes them a thing to be experienced and the other is psychological which makes them an experiencing subject. Only sensations are real and actual entities; mind and matter are both hypothetical constructions.
Clearly, since there were in neutral monism minimum of assumptions to be made in explaining knowledge, Russell felt strongly inclined to believe in it. But there were at this stage, as we have just seen, certain difficulties which he thought insurmountable in the light of this doctrine. Important among them were those derived from the considerations about "emphatic particulars" and 'beliefs'. Russell's relation to this theory at this stage, is indeed very intricate. There appears to be in him a clash between what he wish he believed and what he ought to believe. In time, it was the former which got upper hand. He strived hard to find arguments which may enable him to dispense with the various difficulties. He is even willing to abandon some objections on grounds which he himself on other occasions, would have regarded as being not so sound. In the lecture IV of his 'Philosophy of Logical Atomism (delivered in 1918), he said:

"..... Therefore the whole theory of neutral monism is pleasing to me, but I do find so far very great difficulty in believing it. You will find a discussion of the whole question in some article I wrote ....... I should really want to rewrite them rather because I think some of the arguments I used against neutral monism are not valid. I placed most reliance on the argument about emphatic particulars, 'this', 'I', ....... I think it is extremely difficult, if you get rid of consciousness altogether, to explain what you mean by such a word 'this', what it is that makes the absence of impartiality ....... But what really happens is that we pick out certain facts, past and future and all that sort of thing; they all radiate from 'this', and 'I' have not myself seen how can one deal with the notion of 'thing' on the basis of neutral monism ....... " 21
But when he comes to his concluding lecture which number eight in series, he abandons this objection. He says:

There is, on the other hand, the argument from emphatic particulars .... But the argument from emphatic particulars is so delicate and so subtle that I cannot feel quite sure whether it is valid or not and I think the longer one pursues philosophy, the more conscious one becomes how extremely often one has taken in by fallacies, and the less is one to be quite sure that an argument is valid of there is anything about it that is at all subtle or elusive, at all difficult to grasp. That makes me a little cautious and doubtful about all these arguments and therefore although I am quite sure that the question of the truth or falsehood of neutral nonism is not to be solved except by these means, I do not profess to know whether neutral nonism is true or is not .... "22

Russell abandoned the objection from emphatic particulars, but the problem of belief remained perplexing him. In the immediately preceding lines of the above passage, he says:

..... Having said that, I ought to proceed to tell you that I have discovered whether neutral nonism is true or not, ..... But I do not profess to know whether it is true or not. I feel more and more inclined to think that it may be true. I feel more and more that the difficulties that occur in regard to it are all of the sort that may be solved by ingenuity. But nevertheless there are a number of difficulties. ..... One is the question of belief and the sorts of facts involving two verbs. If there are such facts as this, that, I think, may make neutral nonism rather difficult, but as I was pointing out, there is the theory that one calls behaviourism, which belongs logically with neutral nonism and that theory altogether dispenses with those facts containing two verbs, and would therefore dispose of that argument against neutral nonism .... "23

It is clear from this passage that the problem of 'beliefs' was for Russell a genuine difficulty in the way of his acceptance
of neutral monism. But it is also clear that he, at this stage, was contemplating about a possible solution of the problem in the light of behaviouristic psychology. He, however, eschewed making any categorical statement because he had not found so far enough time to study and think upon the various issues and intricacies involved. The opportunity was however, afforded to him when, in succeeding year he was sent to jail for his opposition to war. There he read extensively about behaviourism and reflected upon its bearings upon the problem of knowledge. These reflection he compressed in his paper entitled 'On Propositions' published in 1919.

The question was what do we mean when we say we believe something. According to the theory which Russell formerly advocated, it consisted in a certain kind of relation between the subject and the 'content' of belief. The relation is such that it makes us say that we are 'believing' the object as against 'desiring', 'wishing' etc. of the same. In all cases of what we call mental occurrences, the content remains same; only the 'act' i.e. the nature of subject's relation to content is different. We may, for example, believe that the servant I have recruited is honest, or we may wish that he be honest, or merely consider whether or not he is honest. In all these cases, the content is same; what differentiate one occurrence from another is the peculiar nature of relation in which mind stands with it.
Now according to the Behaviouristic psychology which avoids the notion of 'subject', belief consists merely in the causal efficacy of the content which is believed and not in its relation to the mind. A content will be said to be believed when it is capable of producing certain appropriate actions in the body of believer. Suppose e.g. that someone hears it being said that an escaped tiger is in the street. Now if he displays certain changes in his behaviour e.g. if he trembles or runs away he will be said to be believing the proposition. But if the proposition comes before him in the form of a question vis. supposing if there is an escaped tiger in the street, he will certainly not run away or show any sign of fear. In this case he will be merely 'considering' the content. Similarly about other so-called mental phenomena.

Russell agrees with behaviourists in their reduction of subject. He, however disagrees with them in their contention that it is the causal efficacy of a content which makes it to be a belief-object. It is said that in believing a content and considering it, the content is same. But if content is same how can at one moment it produces drastic changes in the person's body and at other moment no change at all. The theory goes against the principle of same cause-same effect. It follows that there must be some additional element either only in belief or only in consideration or otherwise one sort of additional element in belief and
other sort in consideration to make them two distinct kind of phenomena. 25

For Russell, this additional element is what he calls 'belief feeling' which is not necessarily mental. As will be seen shortly, Russell believes 'images' and feelings as intrinsically of the same nature as sensations. Sensations are neutral and so are feelings. There are according to him three kinds of belief pertaining to memory, expectation and bare assent. Each of these consist in a certain feeling or complex of sensations. A belief occurs only when any one of them is attached to the content believed. We may remember that it was raining, or expect that it will rain or merely assent that it is raining. In all these cases the content believed is same; what differentiates one sort of belief with other sort is the particular belief-feeling which is attached to content. 26

Reduction of Mind

After explaining belief, in this way, in purely physiological terms, Russell proceeds to make an all over attack upon the notion of mental self as independent substance. It may be recalled that in Problems of Philosophy, Russell admitted, though hesitatingly, the possibility of being acquainted with bare self. His argument was that when we perceive any object, what we perceive is the complex 'self-acquainted with object'. Hence both the
object and self are in some sense my objects of awareness. But in *Our Knowledge of External World*, he denied this possibility saying that it is not introspectively revealed to us. He however, admitted its knowledge as knowledge by description. He was then quite convinced about its indispensibility in explaining various mental occurrences. But, as soon as he was able to explain these mental occurrences in non-psychical terms, he rejected the phenomena altogether. In *Analysis of Mind*, he surveys 'recent criticism of consciousness' and concludes that it cannot justly be claimed as existing.

What characterises in the main, the mental phenomena is consciousness. There are different ways of being conscious vis. by perceiving, by remembering etc. What is common in all these different ways of being conscious is their object-directedness. We are always conscious of something. The consciousness and its object seem to be two distinct terms the relation therebetween being irreducible. The consciousness is always mental while the objects need not necessarily be so. In traditional psychology, the knowledge consisted of three elements: the act (i.e. consciousness), the content and the object. Russell had already assimilated the object into content by saying the former a function of latter. He now endeavours to give a similar treatment to the remaining element i.e. act or subject. The act or subject is also
rendered a construction out of different bits of sensations which it was hitherto considered to be presented to.

Consciousness should be disbelieved because it is not an object of acquaintance; nor is it indispensable in explaining facts. Following Mach and James, Russell too seeks our faith in consciousness as a persisting entity aside the fleeting and fragmentary experiences in a false language habit. We say: "I think so and so", and it seems that there is something 'I' which is transcendently related to some object. But this is a false conclusion. There are, in fact, only thoughts collected into bundles, such that one bundle is my thoughts, other that belonging to another person is his and so on. Thoughts of one collection are related to each other and it is their relation that constitute the consciousness. A thought as subject comes in the contact of another thought which functions as an object to the former thought and in this way the event called knowing occurs. 'I' as a permanent substance is not an element in this relational system and therefore its supposition is superfluous. As a matter of fact the ver, grammatical forms "In think", "You think", "he thinks" are misleading. The more correct way of stating it would be "it thinks in me" or "there is a thought in me" etc.

It is important to note here that Russell, in denying mind and consciousness, does not deny the mental phenomena altogether.
Behaviourists deny wholesale the presence of images, feelings etc. reducing them into some physiological change in body. Russell does not go to this extent. According to him we can deny images of other minds. But we cannot deny our own images. The presence of 'images' is unquestionable on purely experiential grounds. We can think of a friend sitting in the chair although the chair is empty. He however says that talking of images as mental does not imply that they belong to some transcendental substance.

Images, in their essential nature, are not distinct from sensations. Traditionally it was believed that sensations are vivid and active whereas the images are faint, fleeting and momentary. But Russell thinks that although these are characteristics which usually distinguish images from sensations, they do not do so invariably. What in the last analysis differentiates them is the difference of context. Sensations are caused by stimuli external to nervous system or brain. Images, on the other hand, are caused by their association with sensations. Images too, like sensations, have causal relation to outside physical object. But the object in this case belongs to past not to present. They are copied of sensations which we experienced of an object in past. 23

Moreover images are private in a sense in which the sensations are not. A sensation seems to give us knowledge of some external thing while images appear to be internally excited. They
therefore give knowledge of what is within ourselves. Images are thus quite alike with sensations in their intrinsic nature; they differ only in their being inside the brain. In other words it can be said that they observe causal laws different from those observed by sensations.

Russell indeed says that there are operating two kinds of laws in our universe. There are things subject to physical laws (such as physical things) and there are things subject to psychological law (such as images). Sensations are subject to both laws and are therefore neutral physically and psychologically. There are no material or mental substances. The world is made of the same stuff vis. experiential particulars. It is only different sorts of laws that make one particular called mental and the other physical. Russell says:

"My own belief .... is that James is right in rejecting consciousness as an entity, and that American realists are partly right, though not wholly, in considering that both mind and matter are composed of a neutral stuff which, in isolation, is neither mental nor material. I should admit this as regards sensations; what is heard or seen belongs equally to psychology and to physics. But I should say that images belong only to mental world, although those occurrences (if any) which do not form part of any "experience" belong only to physical world. There are, it seems to me, prima facie different kinds of causal laws, one belonging to physics and the other to psychology. The law of gravitation is, for example, a physical law while the law of association is a psychological law. Sensations are subject to both kinds of laws, and are therefore truly "neutral" in the Holt's sense. But entities subject only to physical laws or only to psychological laws are not neutral, and may be called
respectively purely material and purely mental. Even those, however, which are purely mental will not have that intrinsic reference to objects which Brentans assigns to them and which constitutes the essence of "consciousness" as ordinarily understood .......

**Definition of Perception**

After rejecting mind as transcendental substance what remain ed for Russell was to construct a logical substitute which could do all the functions that were previously done by the subject. He was moreover to evolve a new definition of perception which would not admit the duality of subject and object in the above sense. In other words, he has to replace his former epistemology of sense-data by a non-relational epistemology which admitted only sensations and its mental analogues.

Russell, in *Our Knowledge of External World*, while constructing a logical substitute of material thing, devised two ways of collecting together the particulars (i.e. sensibilia). One way was to group them according to what he called the 'laws of perspective'. Given any particular, we find that there are around it a number of other particulars which differ from it in gradually increasing degrees; and this change is due to the change in perspective. A chair, at a given moment gives a number of appearances when seen by a number of persons. The appearances differ from each other following the laws of perspective. Russell would call the set of these appearances, a 'momery chair'. In respect
to anything there can also be conceived a whole series of such sets of appearances in temporally successive moments which are related to each other by the laws of dynamics. This series of sets of particulars constituting momentary chair would be the 'chair' as a physical thing.

Now reversing this two-fold way of arranging particulars we may build up a construct which will be a substitute of mind-substance. That is, instead of first collecting together all the appearances constituting a momentary thing and then forming a series of them, we might first arrange in a series the successive appearances of a thing and then make a set of such series by including appearances occurring in other perspectives. In the case of chair, for example, the first plan would be to collect together all the aspects which it presents to different observers at a given moment and then to form a series of such collections or sets belonging to other moments. The other plan is to collect together all the aspects which it presents in successive moments to a given observer and then to do the same with other observers. A set of such series would be the 'mental chair', or 'biography' in Russell's words. The second plan in which, we form a set of series instead of a series of sets will be a concern of psychology instead of physics. For it tells us not what the chair is but what impressions it is producing to me.\textsuperscript{31}
It is clear that according to Russell every particular has a two-fold location; it is simultaneously a member of two groups. On the one hand it is a member of the group which constitutes the objective physical thing and on the other it belongs to 'biography'. For example when I see a star, my seeing of it has a dual reference. On the one hand it belongs to a group of particulars which is objectively existing in the perspective space and is studies by physics. And on the other hand it is a part of observers' personal biography and is a subjectmatter of psychology.

It is to be noted that when Russell speaks of biography, he does not necessarily mean by it mind. The observer may be a human person or a camera or a dictaphone. A camera will record the occurrences on its plate in the same manner as they are recorded by us in our brain. The 'experiences' of photographic plates will be as much subjective as our own.

The only difference between the nature of experience by a photographic plate and that of a human organism is that while in the former the occurrence is mere occurrence, in the latter it leads the observer to recall some previous occasion on which he had experienced the same occurrence, or some occurrence which is related to it. For example when we have smell a flower we immediately recall a similar odor which we have experienced on some earlier occasion. Or when we look at a penny, the sensations are of colour.
and roundness. But at the same time we also come to know that if touched it would be hard. We have not touched the penny. The impression of its being hard spontaneously arises when we just see it. Clearly, what makes us so believe has its source in past experience. In the past whenever we touched the penny it was hard and the experience of this hardness always accompanied the experiences of its usual colour and roundness.

This fact of an experience of present moment being correlated with a similar experience occurred in past is what Russell calls 'mnemic phenomena'. And it characterises the experiences of living organisms as against those of photographic plates or animals. Human beings perceive while the photographic plates only sense. And this perceiving of human beings consists only in the capacity of given occurrence giving rise to mnemic phenomena. But perceptions not only give rise to mnemic phenomena, they are also affected by them. When a word is uttered before a person the meaning of which he does not know, he would not exhibit appropriate bodily reactions. In other words his perception of the word would be different from what it would have been if he had already known the meaning of word.

Perception, according to Russell consists in "the appearance of the object from a place where there is a brain with sense-organs and nerves forming part of the intervening medium." It is not that the appearance is before some mind. The particular
itself accompanied with certain other like phenomena which it
spontaneously arouses being in contact with a human organism
that constitutes perception. Every case of perception has its
sensational core and an extra-sensational accretion. Theoretically
the two are distinguishable though practically it might
not be possible to do so. 35

It may further be clarified that although Russell speaks,
especially in the case of experiences of photographic plates,
as though the object (e.g. star) is at one place and the
experiencing biography at a different place which would imply
that star is an independent object which makes its imprints
upon plates. But this impression is illusory and is due to
the limitations of our language. Russell's point is that what
we call a star, is, in fact, a conglomerate of an innumerable
aspects that it can present at an infinite number of points
(biographies) in space. Every regular appearance is an actual
member of the system which is the star and its causation is
entirely internal to that system. True appearances of star at
a certain place, if they are regular, do not require any cause
or explanation beyond the existence of the star. We may express
this by saying, says Russell, "that a regular appearance of star
is due to star alone, and is actually a part of star, in the
sense in which man is a part of human race". 36 It goes without
saying that 'human race' is not by itself an entity. It is
merely a name, a construction which stands for a collection
of individual men. Therefore the star itself is not an
entity except in the sense of being a system of its appearances
and aspects. That the physical objects do not have any
independent existence is stated clearly by Russell when he says:
"In our own case the one group is our body (or our brain),
while the other is our mind, in so far as it consists of percep-
tions. In the case of photographic plate, the first group is
the plate as dealt with by physics, the second the aspect of
the heavens which it photographs."^7

It is clear that the theory of knowledge above developed
is non-relational and non-causal in its character. Physical
things are reduced to their appearances which are not presented
to any subsisting mind but themselves constitute mind. In
subsequent phase of philosophy, Russell retains his position
of the neutrality of ultimate occurrences constituting the
universe. He however makes the knowing a three term process.
An occurrence in the physical world causes an occurrence on
the nervous system of the perceiver's body and this, in turn,
causes an occurrence in the brain. And it is this occurrence
in the brain that constitutes the knowing.