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DIPLOMOVÁ PRÁCE

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Dědictví filosofického behaviorismu: pojem mysli bez myslí

The Legacy of Philosophical Behaviorism: The concept of
Mind without Minds

Vojtěchu Kolmanovi děkuji za podnětné připomínky.

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Abstrakt

Práce se věnuje epistemologickému problému jednoty na pozadí vývoje filosofie Bertranda Russella. Nejprve se zabývám naivním realismem, který Russell přijal od G. E. Moora, kde kromě argumentů proti idealismu představuji především doktrínu objektivní jednoty propozice. V druhé kapitole rozebírám důvody, které Russella dovedly k opuštění naivně realistického východiska a vypracování mnohorelační teorie soudu. Tuto teorii Wittgenstein ale ukázal jako neschopnou vyřešit problém syntetické jednoty soudu. Podle interpretace, kterou hájím, tato okolnost přiměla Russella k radikálnímu odvratu od tradičního epistemologického paradigmatu, podle kterého je esenciálním rysem mentálního fenoménu přítomnost vědomí jako entity. Russellovým obratem k naturalismu se zabývám v poslední kapitole. Zvláštní pozornost věnuji regresivnímu argumentu, který předložili v různých verzích Moore, L. Wittgenstein a G. Ryle.

Klíčová slova

realismus, neutrální monismus, behaviorismus, jednota soudu, vědomí

Abstract

The epistemological problem of unity and its development in the philosophy of Bertrand Russell is the main subject of this essay. The first chapter is devoted to naïve realism developed by G. E. Moore and adopted by early Russell. I explain the notion of objective unity of proposition. The second chapter concerns Russell's departure from naïve realism and the multiple relation of judgment which Wittgenstein's criticism rendered as fatally unable to handle the problem of synthetic unity. The breakdown of this theory led Russell to naturalism, which is the topic of the last chapter. I pay special attention to the regressive argument proposed in slightly different versions by Moore, L. Wittgenstein and G. Ryle.

Keywords

realism, neutral monism, behaviorism, unity, consciousness

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Abbreviations

AM	The Analysis of Mind
CPR	The Critique of Pure Reason
JL	The Jäsche Logic
MTCA III.	Meinong's Theory of Complexes and Assumptions (III.)
NJ	The Nature of Judgment
NL	Notes on Logic
OD	On Denoting
ONT	On the Nature of Truth
ONTF	On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood
PL	The Principles of Logic
PoM	The Principles of Mathematics
PM	Principia Mathematica
PP	The Problems of Philosophy
RI	The Refutation of Idealism
TK	Theory of Knowledge: The Manuscript.

Introduction

The objective which I wish to meet in this essay is to show that the epistemological problem of unity belongs among the central topics of early analytic philosophy. I shall argue that this problem eventually led to rejection of the traditional paradigm of epistemology followed by naturalisation of this philosophical discipline.

The essay consists of three chapters. The first chapter will be for the most part devoted to the criticisms which G. E. Moore directed against idealist philosophy. The first of Moore's two arguments which I shall discuss is of great importance for us, since, according to my reading, it *resembles* in a relevant respect Ryle's regress and early Wittgenstein's argument against Russell's multiple relation theory of judgment. All these arguments, as I shall propose in the last chapter, can be taken as arguments against homuncular analysis of mental phenomena – the analysis which was by W. James and later B. Russell treated as the very heart of the traditional epistemology. But before I say more about the content of the last chapter, let me clarify what I mean by the problem of unity.

The problem of unity was crucial for the development of Kant's system of transcendental idealism; and it was probably Kant who first made philosophers to pay attention to this problem. According to him, there are two sorts of unity with respect to the *internal* constitution of judgment: the analytic unity and the synthetic unity. The first of these principles is concerned with the origin of concepts (general representations); the second one is concerned with the logical structure of a particular judgment. The third sort of unity pointed out by Kant concerns *external* (or contextual) constitution of judgment – it is the synthetic unity of knowledge, the principle which makes the thoughts which occur in my mind to be *my* thoughts (Kant's "I think" which must be able to accompany each of my thoughts). I do not want to say that these principles are the only principles of unity, but that they are the principles which I shall discuss.

Russell adopted Moore's naïve realism and elaborated it in his early book on philosophy of mathematics, "The Principles of Mathematics" (1903). In this book he formulated the doctrine of relational unity. I shall show that the problem of synthetic unity was solved in naïve realism by an appeal to a sort of objective unity which was supposed to be a property of *objective* complexes called "propositions".

Russell's abandonment of naïve realism and the doctrines which he subsequently developed will concern us in the second chapter. Russell's adherence to naïve realism was a short episode of his career. After the development of the famous theory of denoting (1905), he started doubt that entities which are truly said to be unreal (e.g. "the present king of France" or "round circle") have *in fact* some sort of being. I will show that this particular problem led Russell in a certain indirect way to develop the multiple relation theory of judgment which is distinctive for his epistemological views between his naïve realist episode and later naturalism. So far as I know, this connection was not sufficiently clarified in the secondary literature on Russell yet.

Concerning the multiple relation theory, I will extensively discuss the problems of this theory which were the problems with the *synthetic* unity. The two problems will be important to us: the problem of distinguishing between judgments like "A loves B" and "B loves A", i.e. the judgments that have the same constituents but different orderings (or different direction

with regards to the verb) and the problem of the logical structure of a judgment. The second problem was pointed out by early Wittgenstein who insisting on his objection made Russell to abandon the multiple relation theory. Russell's theory was thus shown to be unable to account for the synthetic unity of judgment.

The last chapter is a sketch of the ideas of James, Russell and J. B. Watson, the pioneer of behaviorist psychology. As I noted above, I shall be mostly interested in the rejection of the subject of traditional epistemology and the relation of this rejection to the problem of unity. Russell decided, under the influence of James and Watson, to elaborate a causal theory cognition which will be briefly introduced. I consider this theory as his final attempt to solve the problem of unity. As for the problem of unity, the influence of James whose views were in many respects close to behaviorism and the influence of Watson whose philosophy of psychology was implacably hostile to any postulation of entities which cannot be observed and tested in accordance to the standards of empirical sciences is what I mean by the *legacy* of philosophical behaviorism.

1. In defence of naïve realism

It was in 1898 when Russell, under the influence of G. E. Moore, put an end to his adherence to the modern British idealism represented by F. H. Bradley or J. M. E. McTaggart. Russell abandoned the idealist philosophy based on a combination of Kant's and Hegel's doctrines, and instead adopted Moore's naïve realism which will occupy us in this chapter. At first I shall focus on Moore's argument against Kantian principle that cognition, the object of judgment is a result of some mental operations. Moore, however, did not argue against this general proposition, but against its special case, namely, the thesis that concepts (general terms) are *acquired* by certain operations of mind which Kant subsumed under the title "the analytic unity of apperception" (abstractionism). Another specific of the argument is that he argues *primarily* against Bradley whose view on abstraction Moore identifies with Kant's "the analytic unity of apperception" which is, therefore, attacked indirectly. We shall see that Bradley did not state his theory in a sufficiently precise way, which will make us to shift our scrutiny onto Kant's exposition of abstraction suggested in "The Jäsche Logic" [JL]. Moore's argument itself is explained later. The attack on idealists' abstractionism was a part of the article "The Nature of Judgment" [NJ] (1899); this article was followed by famous "Refutation of Idealism" [RI] (1903) where Moore sets forward quite different criticism against idealism (which is treated, in the most general way, as any philosophical conception based on the principle "esse est percipi") and where he also explains in a detail his view on the nature of conscious phenomena. I shall attempt to reconstruct the core of the argument and, then, focus on stating some of Moore's doctrines: the theory of diaphanous consciousness associated with the binary account of judgment and so-called primitivist theory of truth according to which truth and falsehood are properties of mind-independent propositions (the objects of judgments).

The final part of this chapter will be devoted to a discussion on the problem of the synthetic unity of apperception (as opposed to the analytic one). We shall see that within the framework of the naïve realism defended by early Moore and Russell it was transformed into the synthetic unity of *proposition*. The conceptual shift here is an instance of what I call "reification", i.e. an assertion of the form "the structure of the sort *X* is not a product of the processes our cognizing consists of, but it is a genuine part of the nature of the mind-independent reality". The clarification of this point will justify Moore's peculiar use of the word "synthesis", which, as I have had an opportunity to find out, is baffling for those who for the most part of their philosophising, if not entirely, remain within idealist framework. Finally, I shall examine Russell's argument for the unity of proposition set forth in "The Principles of Mathematics" [PoM] (1903).

1.1 Regressive argument against the analytic unity of apperception

1.1.1 The notion of concept

Moore started with the study of Classics at Trinity¹ in 1892 and soon he made acquaintance with Russell and McTaggart. Influenced by them, he took on the study of philosophy in 1894. "After graduating in 1896, Moore began work on a dissertation to submit for a Prize Fellowship at Trinity. His first attempt, in 1897, was unsuccessful so he submitted a second

¹ Trinity College is a constituent college of the University of Cambridge in England.

version, which was successful, in 1898."² A part of the dissertation was published as "The Nature of Judgment". In the article Moore argues against abstractionism *presupposed by Bradley's and Kant's theory of judgment*. I shall examine the argument and explain its nature, but before I do that, it will be worth to examine the criticised view in a detailed way.

The first doctrine Moore refers to in *NJ* is Bradley's theory of truth, which is (at least partially) based on the correspondence dictum: "truth and falsehood [of a judgment, MS] depend on the relation of our *ideas* to reality [...]"³ From all the possible ways of arguing against this doctrine he chooses the one which rests in an attack on the notion of *idea* which, by the way, belongs to the central notions of idealism *as such*. The term "idea" is, however, highly ambiguous as to its philosophical meaning, therefore a specification is necessary. Bradley's usage of the term is in the relevant respect identical to Kant's usage of the term "Begriff" or "conceptus communis"; "idea" in Bradley's sense is neither "mental state" stipulated by empirical psychology, nor is it "*singular* representation" (or "*representatio singularis*" in Latin); an idea is a concept, i.e., a *general* representation, something that is capable of being *shared* by some representations (which need not be singular, but must be *more* specific than the general representation in question), which is explicitly expressed by the Latin equivalent "*conceptus communis*". In *JL* which will be the key source for our subsequent considerations, Kant also uses as equivalent-terms the following terms: "*representatio per notas communes*" and "*representatio discursiva*".⁴ Concepts (I shall use this term henceforth) are for both Bradley and Kant necessary for knowledge, for one cannot exercise *judging* without them. It is true that Bradley held quite a different theory of judgment than Kant did, but we need not discuss these differences here, since both of them treat concepts as *abstractions* from representations and it is just *this* doctrine what Moore combats in the article.

1.1.2 F. H. Bradley on abstraction

In §4 of *The Principles of logic* [PL] Bradley says that a concept "consists of a part of the content (original or acquired), cut off, fixed by mind, and considered apart from the existence of' a singular representation."⁵ In §7 of *PL* he opposes concepts to mental events: "When I talk of an idea [i.e., a concept, MS] which is the same amid change, I do not speak of that psychological event which is in ceaseless flux [i.e., stream of consciousness, MS], but of one portion of the content which the mind has fixed, and which is not in any sense an event in time [...] The mental event is unique and particular, but the meaning [of the event, which is a concept, MS] in its use is cut of the existence, and from the rest of the fluctuating content."⁶ Mental events have, according to Bradley, contents; we may speak of mental images or singular representations. A mind having such a representation *can fix* a part of its content and *create* a concept; the concept is by Bradley understood (perhaps a bit misleadingly) as the "meaning" of the singular representation.

² Hylton, P., *Russell, Idealism and the Emergence of Analytic Philosophy*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1990, p. 118.

³ Bradley, F. H., *The Principles of Logic*. Kegan Paul, Trench, & Co., London 1883, p. 2 (italics mine).

⁴ Kant, I., *Logik: Ein Handbuch zu Vorlesungen*. Königsberg 1800; I use the English translation: *Lectures on Logic*. trans. and ed. by J. Michael Young, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1992, §1.

⁵ Bradley, F. H., *The Principles of Logic*, c.d., p. 4.

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 7.

What is, according to Bradley, the nature of abstraction? This is a crucial question, but, unfortunately, there is no satisfying answer in *PL*. In the third book, the second section of the chap. two, §§23-24, Bradley speaks of abstraction as of an ideal experiment: "it is an ideal experiment which procures a new result. We start here with a given whole *abcd*; we operate on this by the neglect of or by the removal of *bc*, and *ad* is left; and we then predicate this *ad* of the reality [i.e., of the original *abcd*, MS]. The real was *abcd*, and in consequence of our action we know that it is *ad*."⁷ We have, e.g. a singular representation of Big Ben and, *removing* everything except brownness, we get a concept; after this we (truly) predicate brownness to the original representation, or precisely to the object represented by the original representation, i.e., to Big Ben itself. Of course, this does not answer our question, albeit it reveals a wider context of the topic. Immediately after the cited passage, Bradley states that he is not interested in answering the question after the nature of abstraction: "The nature of the process by which we remove what seems unessential, need not at present be discussed, but it is certain that there is some process, and that the result of this process is accepted as truth for no other reason."⁸ So let us turn our attention to Kant who is more expansive on the subject.

1.1.3 Kant's theory of abstraction in "The Jäsche Logic"

One of Moore's remarks may help us with opening the discussion. Moore says that for Kant "it is the 'analytical unity of consciousness' which *makes* a [singular] 'Vorstellung' [...] into a 'conceptus communis' or 'gemeinsamer Begriff'."⁹ Thus we may ask: what is the nature of analytical unity of consciousness? The answer has two parts; each of them belongs to different area of investigation, the first one to general, while the second one to transcendental logic. Let us start with the former. In Kant's notes for his public lectures on general logic which were systematized on his assignment by G. B. Jäsche in 1799, long after the elaboration of his transcendental idealism, we find the distinction between material and formal *origin* of concepts; the distinction is set forth in §5 and §6 of *JL* respectively. A concept is as to its matter (or we may say "content") *given*, but as to its form it is *created*; therefore, if we inquire about how concepts are created, we actually want to know the nature of their *formal origin*. §6 of *JL* reads:

"The logical *actus* of the understanding, through which concepts are generated as to their form, are:

1. *comparison* of representations among one another in relation to the unity of consciousness;
2. *reflection* as to how various representations can be conceived in one consciousness; and finally
3. *abstraction* of everything else in which the given representations differ.

To make concepts out of representations one must thus be able *to compare*, *to reflect*, and *to abstract*, for these three logical operations of the understanding are the essential and universal conditions for generation of every concept whatsoever."¹⁰

⁷ Ibid., p. 383.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Moore, G. E., The Nature of Judgment. *Mind*, New Series, 8, n. 30, 1899, pp. 176-193, p. 177.

¹⁰ Kant, I., *Lectures on Logic*, c.d., p. 592.

The triad is explained by the following example: "I see, e.g., a spruce, a willow, and a linden. [(1)] By first comparing these objects with one another I note that they are different from one another in regard to the trunk, the branches, the leaves, etc.; [(2)] but next I reflect on that which they have in common among themselves, trunk, branches, and leaves themselves, and [(3)] I abstract from the quantity, the figure, etc., of these; thus I acquire a concept of tree."¹¹

Abstraction is, for Kant, a *part* of the whole act of generating a concept, not the whole act. It is "only the *negative* condition under which universal representations can be generated, the positive condition is comparison and reflection. For no concept comes to be through abstraction; abstraction only perfects it and encloses it in its determinate limits."¹² In §15 of *JL* Kant returns to abstraction and describes it as the way by which we acquire higher concepts from lower ones, that is, abstraction is defined as the opposite of determination.¹³

1.1.4 Analytic and synthetic unity of apperception

Let us turn our attention to the relevant passages in "The Critique of Pure Reason" [CPR].¹⁴ At the outset of §10 of *CPR* in the chapter on transcendental analytics we read that (singular) representations are transformed into concepts analytically, i.e., by decomposing a whole into its parts. (A76/B102) This point is repeated later when Kant explains the difference between the subjects of general and transcendental logic: "Different representations are brought under one concept analytically (a business treated by general logic). Transcendental logic, however, teaches how to bring under concepts not the representations but the pure synthesis of representations." (A78/B104) The distinction between transcendental and general logic is based on Kant's theory of the "pure" intuition (of space and time), which he considers as the *source* of synthetic a priori. General logic is solely formal, but transcendental logic is in a specific manner material because it deals with the *manifold* of pure intuition. Our understanding processes representations not only in the (formal) manner so that it generalizes or determines them, but it also processes them so that knowledge of *objects* arise; transcendental aesthetics and transcendental logic are set forth to explain the preconditions of objectivity (or intentionality, if we want to use the term more common in phenomenology or, e.g., in Searle's theory of consciousness) as such; the former deals with the preconditions of the *receptivity* of cognitive agent, while the later deals with the preconditions of its *activity*. The same point elsewhere: "General logic abstracts [...] from all content of cognition, i.e., from any relation (*Beziehung*) of it to the object, and considers only the logical form in the relation (*Verhältnisse*) of cognitions to one another, i.e., the form of thinking in general." (A55/ B79)¹⁵ However, with transcendental logic it is different: "one did not abstract from all content of cognition; for that logic that contained merely the rules of the pure thinking of an object would exclude all those cognitions that were of empirical content. It would therefore concern the origin of our cognition insofar as that cannot be ascribed to the objects." (A56/ B80)

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid., p. 593.

¹³ Ibid., p. 596-7.

¹⁴ Kant, I., *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. Hartknoch, Riga 1781/1787; I use the translation into English: *The Cambridge Edition of the Works of Immanuel Kant: The Critique of Pure Reason*. Trans. and ed. by Paul Guyer and Allen Wood, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1998; B XIII.

¹⁵ cf. Kant, I., *Lectures on Logic*, c.d, p. 14.

As for the preconditions of activity, Kant distinguishes between (i) the function of *synthesis* and (ii) the one of *unity*: “The first thing that must be given to us *a priori* for the cognition of all objects is the manifold of pure intuition [which is the precondition of the receptivity, MS]; [(i)] the synthesis of this manifold by means of the imagination is the second thing, but it still does not yield cognition. [(ii)] The concepts that give this pure synthesis unity, and that consist solely in the representation of this necessary synthetic unity, are the third thing necessary for cognition of an object that comes before us, and they depend on the understanding.” (A78-9/B104-5) These two functions of understanding belong to the “synthetic unity of apperception” which is elsewhere called as the supreme principle in the whole of human cognition. (B135)¹⁶

One of the most important principles of Kant’s idealism states that every relation (*Verbindung; conjunctio*) results from the activity of understanding. (B129) Realizing that “to synthetise” is “to make a relation” it is easy to ascertain why the synthetic unity of apperception is supreme. Returning to the §10 of *CPR*, in the chapter on transcendental analytics we read about this function: “The same function that gives unity to different representations in a judgment also gives unity to the mere synthesis of different representations in an intuition [...] The same understanding, therefore, and indeed by means of the very same actions through which it brings logical form of a judgment into concepts by means of the analytical unity, also brings a transcendental content into its representations by means of the synthetic unity of the manifold in intuition in general, on account of which they are called pure concepts of the understanding [...]” (A79/105) Kant claims that there are certain actions of understanding which appear in two different levels: they serve for the development of representations out of intuition by means of pure concepts of the understanding (categories) as well as for the development of judgments out of concepts. Before Kant sets forth his table of categories, he says that categories “apply to objects of intuition in general *a priori*,” – *in general*, i.e. to objects of pure intuition (e.g., numbers) as well as to objects of empirical intuition (e.g., trees) too.¹⁷

Kant’s picture of cognition, as I understand it, is fundamentally based on the distinction between receptivity and activity. Understanding is the active part of a cognitive agent (sensibility is the passive one) and the ability to judge is a *mere part* of understanding: before we can judge, the understanding must “construct” singular representations out of intuitions. About this I only say that it rests in the application of categories to intuition in accordance with the *schemata*. Kant’s theory of schemata is perhaps the most difficult part of his theory and any effort to give an interpretation of it would take us too far from our topic. The synthetic unity of apperception is the ability to construct singular representations

¹⁶ One may be confused by Kant’s statement that the synthesis of pure intuition is carried out by *imagination*. But imagination is for Kant a “blind” function of the understanding.

¹⁷ Commenting on A79/105, Hylton says: “Experience for Kant is thus judgmental through and through. Even the simplest kind of experience, on Kant’s account, involves bringing intuitions under concepts, and is therefore subject to categories.” (Hylton, P., *The Nature of Proposition and the Revolt Against Idealism*. In: Hylton, P., (ed.) *Propositions, Functions and Analysis*, New York, Oxford University Press, 2005, p. 12.) Experience is judgmental through and through, but in the restricted sense that it is *categorical* through and through. The synthesis of intuition carried out by “blind” imagination serves to create *singular* representations and does not bring “intuitions under concepts”; imagination, the lower function of understanding, does involve *no* general representations (concepts), and therefore *no* judgments.

out of intuitions, while the analytic unity of apperception is the ability to judge. As it is stated in the passage above, by means of the analytic unity the understanding “brings logical form of a judgment into concepts.” (A79/105)

The “analytic unity of apperception (or consciousness)” as a compound word indicates *three* abilities (of a cognitive agent *qua* transcendental ego). The first one is the ability to analyse singular representations so that one acquires a concept. The account of it which was given in 1.1.2 belongs to the field of general logic. The two remaining abilities are shared with the *synthetic* unity of apperception. The word “unity” indicates the ability to keep two or more concepts as terms of a uniting relation, where uniting relations are for Kant the forms of judgments. And finally “apperception” indicates the presence of “I think” giving the unity of knowledge; without this “something would be presented in me that could not be thought at all, which is as much as to say that the representation would either be impossible or else at least would be nothing for me.” (B 132)

1.1.5 G. E. Moore: concepts are not abstractions! (Moore’s Regress)

Moore did not agree with Bradley and Kant that concepts are results of a certain mental activity and endeavoured to show that “the ‘idea used in judgment’ [i.e. a concept, MS] is not a part of [a singular representation, MS], nor produced by any action of our minds, and that hence truth and falsehood are not dependent on the relation of *our* ideas to reality.”¹⁸ (It is to be remembered that the criticism is originally an attack on the correspondence account of truth suggested by Bradley in *PL*).

According to Bradley and Kant, I acquire a concept, say the one of red, by means of certain actions made upon (less general, but ultimately singular) representations. The differences between Bradley’s and Kant’s account of these actions are not of importance now. It is important that both agree on the thesis that every concept is *a part* of an original representation, a part that was separated from the original whole and handled in isolation by a mind. Accordingly, when I have the concept of red, I must have isolated a certain part of a whole: either a part of this *or* that singular representation, or the one that is *common* to this *and* that singular representation. Leaving undecided whether such an action of my mind needs to be related to one or more singular representations, one may doubt together with Moore *whether such an action is possible without making a judgment*. Using Bradley’s terminology, Moore puts the question this way: Can we “thus cut off a part of the character [i.e. content, MS] of our ideas [i.e., singular representations, MS], and attribute that part to something else, unless we already know, in part at least, what is the character of the idea from which we are to cut off the part in question?”¹⁹

Let us see the contention on an example. Suppose that I judge that this rose is red. In order to be able to make this judgment, I must have acquired the concept of red. According to Bradley and Kant, I acquired it by certain actions made upon one or more singular representations of red things. I had, for example, a representation of this car and a representation of this apple, I found that they have in common the property of being red and I isolated this property from the rest. Moore’s question here is this one: Could I effect this action without *judging* about the contents of these presentations? If not, then I must

¹⁸ Moore, G. E., The Nature of Judgment. *Mind*, New Series, 8, n. 30, 1899, pp. 176-193, p. 177.

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 178.

have made judgments among which were certainly “this part of this representation (of a car) is *red*” and “this part of that representation (of an apple) is *red*.” Because how could I have knowledge about the contents of the representations in question without acknowledging these truths? However, to make any of these (true) judgments presupposes that I have already acquired the concept of red. Bradley’s and Kant’s theory of concepts is thus accused of circularity which, as Moore explains us, is vicious. The theory is supposed to explain the origin of concepts which are necessary for judgments, but it (tacitly) requires that one *cannot* acquire any concept, unless he already employed it in one, or rather more judgments. This circularity is vicious, for it demands “the completion of an infinite number of psychological judgments before any judgment can be made at all. But this completion is impossible; and therefore all judgment is likewise impossible. It follows, therefore, if we are to avoid this absurdity, that the ‘idea used in judgment’ must be something other than a part of the content of any idea of mine.”²⁰

1.1.6 Bradley’s reply to Moore’s regress

The regress evoked by Moore resembles Ryle’s regress. In “The Concept of Mind” G. Ryle argues against the view that every *intelligent* action must be preceded by assertion of some regulative propositions (the intellectualist thesis). “The consideration of propositions,” says Ryle, “is itself an operation the execution of which can be more or less intelligent, less or more stupid. But if, for any operation to be intelligently executed, a prior theoretical operation had first to be performed and performed intelligently, it would be a logical impossibility for anyone ever to break into the circle.”²¹ Thus, e.g., before I can assert a proposition (i.e., to make a judgment), I have to acknowledge the rules governing the action I am to execute; but if any acknowledgment of rules has involved assertions of some (regulative) propositions, the process would fall into an infinite regress. The regress evoked by Moore resembles Ryle’s regress in the respect that it involves an infinite series of judgments, a job that cannot be done by a finite mind.

Bradley protested against Moore that he illegitimately supposes that advocates of abstractionism are committed to the thesis that the acts by which a mind gets concepts form a *conscious* process.²² This thesis is in some sense an analogue of the intellectualist thesis attacked by Ryle. The obvious difference is surely that the thesis that Moore ascribes to Bradley and Kant concerns a material, not a formal aspect of the action which is to be performed: it does not concern the rules that regulate judging, but the *origin of concepts* which are the *matter* of judgments; the ‘intellectualist’ aspect of the thesis that Moore ascribes to the abstractionists is that the mind - which is to compare some representations as to their differences, reflect on their similarities and abstract a common part of them from the rest - cannot effect these actions without making judgments about the contents of the representations. However, according to Bradley, we can *plausibly* hold that the mind acts *unconsciously*, i.e., without making any judgment at all.

The point made by Bradley and the moral drawn by Ryle from the critical consideration of the intellectual thesis is basically the same: our actions must be *primarily unconscious* in the sense that they are executed without previously making any judgments. Ryle defends this

²⁰ Ibid.

²¹ Ryle, G., *The Concept of Mind*. (1949), Oxford, Routledge, 2009, p. 19.

²² See Hylton, P., *Russell, Idealism and the Emergence of Analytic Philosophy*, c.d., p. 132-3.

thesis in general, while Bradley (and probably Kant as well) at least with restriction to the mental acts that are constitutive for our experience. Nonetheless, this hardly closes the file. Moore's argument is not a solitary attempt to undermine idealism, but it is a part of the advocacy of a diametrically different philosophical conception, the conception which differs from Kant's conception "chiefly in substituting for sensations, as data of knowledge, concepts; and in refusing to regard the relations in which they stand as, in some obscure sense, the work of mind."²³ The work of mind which is supposed by Kant and Bradley to constitute one's knowledge was for Moore "obscure". Saying that it is an unconscious reasoning does not help much. Using Ryle's terminology, it must be some kind of para-mechanical activity of which nature neither Kant, nor Bradley did explain. Indeed, Moore's argument points to *this* obscurity.

What is the nature of the acts that constitute one's experience? Are they really *acts* and is transcendental ego as the agent really *mental* – or the psychological terminology used here in some sense analogical? Concerning this line of criticism, I am convinced, that there is an answer that can preserve the framework; it rests in the attempt to replace mental acts by bodily acts, the theory of mind by the theory of behaviour and to seek the area of a priori not in the subjective mind, but in a collectivity represented by the 'rules' governing behaviour of competent members of that collectivity. (This topic shall occupy us in the last chapter) However, Moore did not seek this alternative; instead he embraced a form of direct realism, and Russell followed him. As for the nature of concept, once we accept that there is *not* any plausible way of treating concepts as abstractions, i.e., mental creations of a certain sort, we arrive at the conclusion they are rather ultimate constituents of reality. From this Moore infers that the truth of a judgment is not based on a correspondence relation of a judgment to reality. Instead he embraces a version of identity theory according to which a true judgment is identical to a *fact*; it is to be noticed that Moore abandons the term "judgment" and speaks of "proposition" in order to reflect that the true-false entities are primarily mind-independent complexes of concepts, *not* outcomes of certain mental acts. Moore put the objects of our cognition into the area of mind-independent reality, and thus he refuted the very fundament of idealism.

1.2. The argument of "The Refutation of Idealism"

1.2.1 Moore's clarification of idealists' "esse est percipi"

The subject of *RI* is to combat the thesis which Moore considers as common to all idealist philosophies. It is the thesis that "esse est percipi" which is taken to be an equivalent to "whatever is, is experienced" or "whatever is, is something mental".²⁴ At the beginning of the paper Moore analyses this thesis in order to clarify it. Quite reasonably, he rejects that the thesis asserts the synonymy between "esse" and "percipi". Another option is that "what is meant by 'esse', though not absolutely identical with what is meant by "percipi", yet *includes* the latter as a *part* of its meaning."²⁵ Therefore if A was real, we may infer that A was experienced *and* that there were some other properties besides the one of being experienced; but if some other thing, say B, was experienced, we cannot infer that B was real; "esse est percipi" as "whatever is, is experienced" is, thus, interpreted as a case of

²³ Moore, G. E., *The Nature of Judgment*, c.d., p. 183.

²⁴ Moore, G. E., *The Refutation of Idealism*, *Mind*, New Series, Vol. 12, No. 48 (Oct., 1903), pp. 433-453, p. 436.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 438.

quantified material implication. But this interpretation also does not suffice, since it applies to the case where the term "esse" used in the thesis is regarded as "a convenient name for a union of attributes which *sometimes* occur."²⁶ If we define "esse" as a set of attributes among which is "percipi", the thesis merely says that if something has "esse", it has (due to the definition) "percipi"; e.g. if we consider a set of attributes belonging to the entities which were perceived by someone and name it "esse", it follows *trivially* that "esse est percipi", that is, the thesis is an *analytic* truth. However, idealists do not wish to propose an analytic truth. What is meant by them is that there are some attributes defining "esse" where *percipi* is not among them, that there is the attribute of being perceived and that whatever has the former, it *necessarily* has the later. In Moore's own words, the thesis "asserts a necessary connexion between *esse* on the one hand and *percipi* on the other; these two words denoting each a distinct term, and *esse* denoting a term in which that denoted by *percipi* is not included." "We have, then in *esse* is *percipi*," he continues, "a *necessary synthetic* proposition which I have undertaken to refute."²⁷

1.2.2 Refutation of the theory of organic whole[—]

Moore proposes three options: (1) the thesis is put as a self-evident truth, in which case one may argue that it is not self-evident for him, or (2) it is a conclusion of an argument, or finally (3) it is an unfounded assumption. The only admissible option is the second one and Moore maintains that the thesis is a falsehood in that case, for the premises of which it is the conclusion are contradictory. The idealist thesis is sometimes, according to him, formulated in this way: "the object of experience is inconceivable apart from the subject". This hints at the conception of *necessity* grounded in the notion of inconceivability which is traditionally understood in the sense that a proposition is necessary, if and only if it can be proved by a law of contradiction alone, i.e. it can be proved that its negation is self-contradictory. But this notion of necessity applies to analytic propositions, not to synthetic ones! For modern idealists, however, according to Moore, "it has become more fashionable to assert that truths are both analytic and synthetic."²⁸ The distinction analytic-synthetic is defined in terms of the law of contradiction so that the "fashionable" contention is really contradictory: the negation of a proposition which is both analytic and synthetic is rendered both self-contradictory and not self-contradictory.

Prima facie one may doubt if someone actually held such an absurd doctrine, but when Moore supplies his consideration with the explanation that the theory of analytic-synthetic propositions follows from the monistic theory of "organic whole", the matter becomes more serious. It is a doctrine "which by a simple reduction may be seen to assert that two distinct things both are and are not distinct."²⁹ Philosophers who hold the doctrine accept that the denotations of "the sensation of yellow" and "yellow" *differ* and accordingly that "this yellow (patch) is perceived" is *not* an analytic proposition, but they immediately hasten to supplement their contention by arguing that, however they differ, being parts of an organic whole they form an "inseparable unity" what accounts for the necessary connection between them. "Forming such a unity," Moore paraphrases their creed, "it is held, each

²⁶ Ibid., p. 439.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 440.

²⁸ Ibid., p. 441.

²⁹ Ibid., p. 442.

would not be what it is *apart from its relation to the other*. Hence to consider either by itself is to make an *illegitimate abstraction*.³⁰

What it is to make an illegitimate abstraction? It happens when one attributes something to a part of an organic whole. What is (truly) attributed, according to the doctrine, is not true of the part, but it is true of the whole. When we consider the fact that my mind (or consciousness) is related to this yellow (patch), whatever I say (truly) about the former or the latter is not valid of the former or the latter respectively, but of the whole they form. This leads to the consequence that there are *in fact* no parts, but merely the whole itself. If the parts of an organic whole are in fact identical to the whole, they are in fact identical to each other. Thence we have two *incompatible* propositions: "the *object* of the perception" and "the *subject* of the perception" denotes *distinct* things so far as the former denotes a part of the whole that is different to the part denoted by the latter, but they are *identical*, since each of them is identical to the whole.

The doctrine of organic whole is a device proposed by some to establish that for any x being experienced (percipi) is *necessarily* a necessary condition for its having being (esse) (See (i.) below). Two four theses were assumed so far:

- i. "Esse est percipi" is equivalent to " $\forall x (x \text{ is } \rightarrow x \text{ is experienced})$ ".
- ii. If "esse est percipi" is to be an interesting proposition, it must be a synthetic proposition, not an analytic one.
- iii. If it is a synthetic proposition, the notion of necessity by means of which analyticity is defined cannot be applied to it unless on pain of contradiction.
- iv. The theory organic whole cannot serve, for it is self-contradictory.

Moore refutes the thesis that being experienced is necessarily, i.e. in all possible worlds, a necessary condition for having being. "Esse" and "percipi" are, as he proposes, logically independent so that "anybody who saw that 'esse and percipi' were distinct as 'green' and 'sweet' would be no more ready to believe that whatever *is* is *also* experienced, than to believe whatever is green is also sweet."³¹

The present exposition begs an important question to answer. Does Moore maintain that the argument concludes (a) that "esse est percipi" is false, or rather (b) that a certain argument in favour of this thesis is false? As far as I know, Moore always carefully differentiates between these two forms of which the conclusion of an argument may be the case. As for the argument we inquire into he says that both may be the case: if "esse est percipi" is essentially taken as necessary in the sense of asserting a relation between some parts of an organic whole, then his argument concludes (a), but if "esse est percipi" is taken as necessary synthetic proposition and without any definite interpretation *of the notion of necessity assumed in it* (actually the starting point Moore explicitly assumes), his argument concludes (b). More interesting is the later variant, (b), for, as we will see, it motivates another important question to answer.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 442-443.

³¹ Ibid., p. 444.

Every argument of which conclusion shares the form with (b) is weaker than the one of which conclusion shares the form with (a). But sometimes it is necessary to start with a conclusion of the weaker form, since one is not sure whether there is another, presently unknown and valid argument in favour of the thesis; to found such an argument leads to the conclusion that the thesis is true, which is actually the last remaining option how to conclude an argument. So let us express this third possibility with regard to thesis we examine: (c) "esse est percipi" is true. It is clear that neither (a) nor (c) does follow from (b), i.e. one may discover that a certain argument proposed as being in favour the thesis is actually false (or even self-contradictory) *without* discovering the truth-value of the thesis itself. Therefore a purely systematic question arises, whether Moore tried to decide the truth-value of "esse est percipi" or left this task undone.

Moore takes quite a defensive stand in the end. He concludes the argument in the following way: "I admit, it [i.e. 'esse est percipi', MS] cannot be directly refuted. But I believe it to be false; [...] We can and must conceive that blue might exist and yet the sensation of blue not exist. For my own part I not only conceive this, but conceive it to be true."³² The argument merely shows that "esse est percipi" is an unfounded assumption, since the theory of organic whole is untenable (a conclusion of the form (b)), and the thesis is rejected rather dogmatically after all. Concerning the arguments in favor of his view, what we can find is only an emphatic appeal on reader's *introspection*, which accords with his overall defence of *intuicionism* at that time, later recognized mostly due to "Principia Ethica". (But this will be for many still a dogmatic position.)

1.3. Naive realism

So far we have seen Moore's rejection of Kantian idealism with its robust apparatus of analytic and synthetic acts and Hegelian monism based on the doctrine of organic whole; concepts, spatiotemporal complexes and sensational simples, all entities of these sorts and, generally, all entities whatsoever are, for Moore, epistemically mind-independent. Now, let us see Moore's conception in more detail.

1.3.1 Diaphaneity of consciousness

Concerning, e.g. a particular sensation of a blue patch, there is besides the blue patch also a consciousness involved. The consciousness, the subject is, however, difficult to recognize, "it seems, if I may use a metaphor," says Moore, "to be transparent – we look through it and see nothing but the blue [...]."³³ "The moment we try to fix our attention upon consciousness and to see *what*, distinctly, it is, it seems to vanish: it seems as if we had before us a mere emptiness. When we try to introspect the sensation of blue, all we can see is the blue: the other element is as if it were diaphanous."³⁴

In order to explain the nature of the relation between the object and the consciousness Moore argues against the thesis that the object is a part of the content of the consciousness. He says that, perceiving a blue flower, we can claim that the blue we perceive is a part of the

³² Ibid., p. 444-5.

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., p. 450.

content of the flower, but it is absurd (at least for Moore³⁵) to claim that there is a blue consciousness. The only admissible sense of the phrase “the blue is a part of the content of the consciousness” is, according to Moore, that the consciousness is the *stable* element in the history of one’s conscious life whereas the blue belongs among those entities that *vary* across the history. Of course, this claim is admissible for realists as well as for idealists. Moore’s analysis of conscious states terminates in a clear-cut rejection of any intermediary between the object and the consciousness. My sensation of a blue patch, according to him, involves three elements: my consciousness, the blue patch and a certain relation between them called “experiencing” or “being aware of”; this relation is essential to every conscious state and is an *external* binary relation:

“[...] that peculiar relation which I have called ‘awareness of anything’ [...] is involved equally in the analysis of every experience – from the merest sensation to the most developed perception or reflection, and that *this* is in fact the only essential element in an experience – the only thing that is both common and peculiar to all experiences – the only thing which gives us reason to call any fact mental; [...] this awareness is and must be in all cases of such a nature that its object, when we are aware of it, is precisely what it would be, if we were not aware [...]”³⁶

Moore thus accepts naïve and direct realism across the *whole* variety of conscious life: whether we recall something, perceive something or suppose something without asserting it etc., we are in a state of direct cognition of a *mind-independent* entity. It is possible that one is aware of his own awareness in which case the object *is* mind-dependent but not *epistemically* mind-independent, i.e. the object does not depend as for its structure and existence on the act of awareness of which it is the object.³⁷ Moore’s view is an extreme one: on the one hand, it is a clear-cut rejection of idealism, but on the other hand, it also repudiates any form of the representative theory of cognition which is compatible with realist philosophy (indirect realism).³⁸

1.3.2 The binary theory of judgment and the primitivist theory of truth

Concerning the cases of awareness, we speak of judgments where there the question of truth and falsehood arises. Therefore we do not speak of a judgment, e.g. when one feels a pain or when one merely imagines pink elephants playing a game of chess. But when one believes or asserts that there are pink elephants playing a game of chess in his living room, there a case of judgment comes about.

Moore’s theory of judgment can be for the most part derived from what have been already said in this chapter: judgment is a *binary* relation between a consciousness (the subject) and

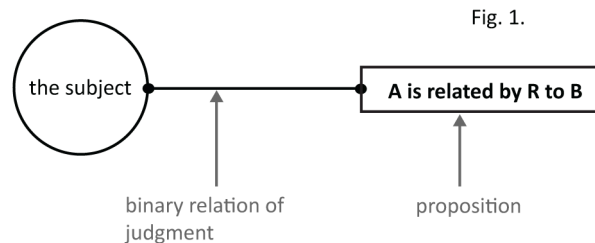
³⁵ The view which rejected by Moore as absurd was later defended as the adverbial theory of consciousness by C. J. Ducasse, see his “Moore’s Refutation of Idealism” in Schlipp, P. A. (ed.), *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, Evaston and Chicago, Northwestern University, 1942, pp. 223-51.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 452-453.

³⁷ When I speak of mind-independency of objects, I use this term always in this specific sense.

³⁸ We will see in the next chapter that Russell eventually realized that some sort of representative realism as regards judgment is needed if a reasonable account of t/f be possible. Moore later refuted his contention in *RI* at least with regard to feelings like tooth-ache (Moore, G.E, Replies to my Critics. In: Schlipp, P. A. (ed.), *The Philosophy of G. E. Moore*, c.d., pp. 533-677, p. 653); an interesting argument in favour of the thesis that pain is a case of the object of which *esse* implies *percipi* is proposed in Malcolm’s essay “Consciousness” (In: Malcolm, N. and Armstrong, D. M., *Consciousness and Causality: A Debate on the Nature of Consciousness*, Basil Blackwell Publisher Limited, Oxford, 1984, pp. 3-45).

a mind-independent object; the concepts employed in a judgment are not abstract but the genuine constituents of the mind-independent reality: "Concepts are possible objects of thought [...] It is indifferent to their nature whether anybody thinks them or not. They are incapable of change; and the relation into which they enter with the knowing subject implies no action or reaction;"³⁹ and finally, truth and falsehood of a judgment cannot be defined in terms of correspondence.



Objects of judgments are called "propositions". "A proposition is composed not of words, nor yet of thoughts, but of concepts."⁴⁰ The realist aspect here is also emphasized by Russell in *PoM*, where he says that "a proposition, unless it happens to be linguistic, does not itself contain words: it contains the entities indicated by words."⁴¹ Moore in *NJ* treats propositions as close to concepts as possible, they are just complex concepts where the complexity obtains due to the two relations which Moore calls "truth" and "falsehood". Owing to the simplicity of the binary account of judgment, there is *no* other place where to localize truth and falsehood unless in the proposition; the truth and falsehood are, therefore, constituents of propositions. "A proposition is constituted by any number of concepts, together with a specific relation between them; and according to the nature of this relation the proposition may be either true or false. What kind of relation makes a proposition true, what false, cannot be further defined, but must be immediately recognized."⁴² This theory of truth is a sort of the identity theory and is sometimes called the "primitivist" theory, since the truth and falsehood are treated as indefinable, primitive terms. The relations which make some propositions true and some false, however, differ in a significant way from the other propositional constituents (concepts) – they are, in Moore's conception, the principles of the unity of proposition, and as such they are the only relating relations (to use Russell's term) among the furniture of reality.

1.3.3 Relational unity of proposition and further development

Platonism with regard to concepts is Moore's answer to the question of the analytic unity. Moore *reified* what Kant and Bradley supposed to be a product of certain processes in the subject. The synthetic unity, one might expect, undergone a similar change. We have already seen that Moore characterizes his position (among other qualifications) as based on "refusing to regard the relations in which they [concepts] stand as, in some obscure sense, the work of mind" (see 1.1.6). Relations, including spatial and time relations and also logical relations like the relation of implication, are mind-independent concepts. Moreover, Moore

³⁹ Moore, G. E., *The Nature of Judgment*, c.d., p. 179.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

⁴¹ Russell, B., *The Principles of Mathematics*. (1903), London and New York, Routledge, Taylor & Francis e-library, 2009, p. 48.

⁴² Moore, G. E., *The Nature of Judgment*, c.d., p. 180.

rejected Kant's theory of the forms of judgment (together with the theory of categories) replacing it by much more simple theory according to which any proposition is just a connection of *certain* concepts, supposing, most likely, that the (twelve) forms listed by Kant can be accounted for by specification of certain *logically relevant* concepts – Moore himself did not propose such an attempt, but Russell's theory of denoting concepts in *PoM*, for example, is clearly an attempt to explain the difference of judgments in quantity within the framework of naïve realism.⁴³ Such particular problems, however, are not of importance for us now. The important is, again, the reification: the structure of the object of a judgment is the structure of the proposition judged, and, accordingly, the unity of what is judged is an *objective*, not a subjective unity.

In *NJ* Moore speaks of propositions as "syntheses" of concepts. This may seem odd to those who, confining themselves to Kant's or Kantian philosophy, can admit that synthesis is mind-independent only on pain of contradiction. But, if we release ourselves from the bonds of idealist paradigm, what is, then, the objective synthetic unity? It was a specific act of understanding, for Kant, what preserved the synthetic unity of judgment; propositions, in contrast to judgments, are genuine and eternal constituents of reality; therefore there are no acts of which propositions are effects and results. The unity by act, accordingly, is replaced by the unity by relation – the *relational unity*. Russell explains this unity in widely known passage from §54 of *PoM*:

„Consider, for example, the proposition 'A differs from B'. The constituents of this proposition, if we analyze it, appear to be only A, difference, B. Yet these constituents, thus placed side by side, do not reconstitute the proposition. The difference which occurs in the proposition actually relates A and B, whereas the difference after analysis is a notion which has no connection with A and B. It may be said that we ought, in the analysis, to mention the relations which difference has to A and B, relations expressed by *is* and *from* when we say 'A is different from B'. These relations consist in the fact that A is referent and B relatum with respect to difference. But 'A, referent, difference, relatum, B' is still merely a list of terms, not a proposition. A proposition, in fact, is essentially a unity, and when analysis has destroyed the unity, no enumeration of constituents will restore the proposition. The verb, when used as a verb, embodies the unity of the proposition, and is thus distinguishable from the verb considered as a term, though I do not know how to give a clear account of the precise nature of the distinction."⁴⁴

A proposition "is essentially a unity", and, being such, it is not identical to the list of its constituents. Once we break up a proposition into its constituents, no addition of further entities can help to reconstitute the original whole. The source of the unity is a certain, peculiar property of the relation with regard to the rest of the terms – it is an *actually relating* (or, for short, just "relating") relation. (For Russell in *PoM*, relations may occur either as relating, or non-relating in a proposition; e.g. the relation of similarity occurs in "A is different to B" as relating, whereas in "Similarity is a symmetric relation" as non-relating.) Moore in *NJ* ascribes the property a being a relating relation solely to the relations which make a proposition true and false.

⁴³ Ibid.

⁴⁴ Russell, B., *The Principles of Mathematics*, c.d., p. 50-1.

Moore's intermingling the problem of unity with the account of truth and falsehood was rejected by Russell in *PoM*. According to Russell in *PoM*, a proposition is not just a connexion of concepts, but it has an inner logical structure which differentiates between the logical subject and the attribute (be either a relation or a property); besides Moorean concepts there are also *particulars*. The important consequence is that a concept is not supposed to be "bundled" with other concepts in a proposition, but instead *it is supposed to be something like a function which, having been saturated by an appropriate term, yields a proposition*. Russell was obviously influenced by Frege at this point. According to this change, it is, quite naturally, the relation or property indicated by the verb in the sentence that expresses the proposition what gives the unity of proposition, not some special relation which serves also as the truth-maker. Russell, accordingly, held the primitivist theory of truth in a slightly different version. The truth and the falsehood are not relations internal to the proposition but rather properties of propositions. In "Meinong's Theory of Complexes and Assumptions (III.)" [MTCA III.] (1904) Russell explains his theory by these words: "there is no problem at all in truth and falsehood [...] some propositions are true and some false, just as some roses are red and some white."⁴⁵

1.3.4 Naïve semantics

Moore's and Russell's early realism deserves the attribute "naïve" because of the associate semantics according to which whatever can appear in the logical subject of a sentence, it has being. (Russell in *PoM* speaks of sentences as "propositions", since a sentence as a sensible sign is taken as a proposition used linguistically so it expresses another proposition. Every reader of Russell's early works must keep this in mind.):

*„Being is that which belongs to every conceivable term, to every possible object of thought—in short to everything that can possibly occur in any proposition, true or false, and to all such propositions themselves. Being belongs to whatever can be counted. If A be any term that can be counted as one, it is plain that A is something, and therefore that A is. [...] Numbers, the Homeric gods, relations, chimeras and four-dimensional spaces all have being, for if they were not entities of a kind, we could make no propositions about them [i.e. to make them logical subjects, MS].“*⁴⁶

As we shall see in the next chapter, it was this generous approach to ontology which made Russell to abandon naïve realism.

⁴⁵ Russell, B., Meinong's Theory of Complexes and Assumptions (III.). In: *Mind*, New Series, 13, č. 52, 1904, pp. 509–524, p. 523; the same doctrine in *PoM*, p. 456.

⁴⁶ Russell, B., *The Principles of Mathematics*, c.d., p. 455.

2. Russell's abandonment of naïve realism

2.1. The theory of incomplete symbols

2.1.1 The theory of descriptions

Russell's departure from naïve realism came in 1905 with the development of new analysis of denoting phrases (the phrases that we use to refer to objects by means of descriptive information, e.g. "the smallest man on Earth" or "every rat in this city") – the analysis based on so-called theory of incomplete symbols.⁴⁷ The theory was introduced (and argued against the rival theories of Frege and Meinong) in "On Denoting" [OD] of which content I shall not discuss except one point. Besides other things (for example, distinguishing between primary and secondary scope of the phrase) Russell valued his theory for dispensing with entities which we *feel*, according to him, that they have no being whatsoever. He showed that the old parmenidian puzzle dealing with the question "How can we speak of what is not?" can be solved without assuming, as Meinong did and as Russell and Moore as naïve realists did, that non-beings in a certain sense *have* being.

A denoting phrase, whether definite or indefinite, is an incomplete symbol, i.e. has no meaning in isolation. As K. Bach aptly stated, a denoting phrase has no meaning in isolation "because its semantic contribution to sentences in which it occurs is not its denotation but its quantificational structure."⁴⁸ The context that makes a denoting phrase meaningful is a *sentential* context, thus, e.g. "the round square" must be supplemented so that it occurs as a part of a sentence, for instance, "The round square is triangular"; then the question what it *means* can be raised, and it can be answered, according to Russell, only after we reveal the (underlying) logical structure of the analysed sentence which is, in the given example, the structure of the following existential formula:

$$\exists x (x \text{ is round} \ \& \ x \text{ is square} \ \& \ \forall y (y \text{ is round} \ \& \ y \text{ is square} \ \rightarrow x=y) \ \& \ x \text{ is triangular})$$

As we can see, the phrase "the round square" does not occur in the formula, which shows the *reductionist* aspect of the theory. The theory, as Russell put it, "gives a reduction of all propositions in which denoting phrases occur to forms in which no such phrases occur."⁴⁹ This is philosophically an important point: the theory allows us to account for the meaning of the sentences which *seems* to assert something (whether truly or falsely) about entities that do not have being. Without the above reduction, that is, if we insist on the *grammatical* structure of the sentence (in which the phrase occurs), we face the following paradox. If it is true that "The so-and-so has no being", then there is no such thing, however, there must be something to which we truly attribute non-being, something *about* which the sentence is; therefore the-so-and-so has and has not being at the same time. Moreover, it is difficult to explain how the phrase contributes to the meaning of the whole sentence when we suppose

⁴⁷ The notion of incomplete symbol is defined as follows: „By an ‚incomplete symbol‘ we mean a symbol which is not supposed to have any meaning in isolation, but is only defined in certain contexts [...] Such symbols have what may be called a ‚definition in use‘.” (Whitehead, A. N., and Russell, B., *Principia Mathematica* to *56. (1910), Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1997, p. 66).

⁴⁸ Bach, K., *Thought and Reference*. New York, Oxford University Press, 1987, p. 93.

⁴⁹ Russell, B., On Denoting, *Mind*, vol. 14, no. 56, 1905, pp. 479-493, p. 481.

that there is nothing for which it stands; if there is nothing which “the round square” contributes to the meaning of “The round square does not have being” and there is nothing which (e.g.) “the present king of France” contributes to the meaning of “The present king of France does not have being”, then the two sentences have the *same* meaning; but they have not. Therefore any such phrase must *somehow* contribute to the meaning of the sentence in which it occurs; but it cannot be the object for which a given description stands, since there are descriptions that do not stand for anything. Returning to Bach’s remark, the contribution is a certain quantificational structure which we can make explicit by the use of quantified variable – but, to be more precise, the contribution is the quantificational structure *and* the concepts that are embedded in the structure.⁵⁰ This is Russell’s solution to the paradox and some other associated problems. As we can see, it is a reductionist solution. What makes the theory philosophically important is the answer that it implies to the question “Are there non-being entities?” “With our theory of denoting,” says Russell in *OD*, “we are able to hold that there are no unreal individuals; so that the null-class is the class containing no members, not the class containing as members all unreal individuals”⁵¹ As Russell put it later in “Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy” (1918), in the theories that ascribe (some sort of) being to non-beings “there is a failure of that feeling for reality which ought to be preserved even in the most abstract studies.”⁵² —

Concerning the theory of incomplete symbols, there are many interesting questions to ask. For example, accepting the theory, can we preserve that it actually makes sense to say that a phrase (if denoting) *stands for* something? And can we preserve that it makes sense to say that the sentence is *about* the thing which is so-and-so if “the so-and-so” denotes? I skip these questions, however, since what will interest us in the following consideration is another difficulty, the one which led Russell to develop the multiple-relation theory of judgment and which, if not solved, would undermine the chief moral that there are no entities which we feel to be unreal.

2.1.2 The question of objective falsehoods

Let us suppose that Russell is right about denoting phrases and about definite descriptions in particular. Therefore we do not have to assume that there is an entity which the phrase “the round circle” stands for in order to explain the contribution of the phrase to the meaning of the sentences in which it occurs. Now, the sentence “The round square is triangular” is false and also its logically proper equivalent (the existential formula above). This way we sweep away entities like the round circle or the present king of France, but what if we pass on to the question of propositional meaning?

It is to be remembered that Russell accepted the binary theory of judgment (originally developed by Moore) and the naïve semantics according to which every indicative sentence expresses a proposition which is its meaning. The constituent parts of the sentence (words

⁵⁰ If we treat conceptual part of the meaning of a denoting phrase as consisting of propositional functions, that, according to Russell, denoting phrases “should be viewed simply as a collection of quantifiers (such as “all” and “some”) and propositional functions (such as “x is a number”).” Irwine, A. D., Bertrand Russell’s Logic, In: Gabbay, D. M., Woods, J. (eds), *Logic from Russell to Church*. Amsterdam, Elsevier, 2009, pp. 1-25, p. 22. The notion of propositional function is discussed in Whitehead, A. N., and Russell, B., *Principia Mathematica* to *56, c.d., pp. 38-41.

⁵¹ Russell, B., *On Denoting*, c.d., p. 491.

⁵² Russell, B., *Introduction to Mathematical Philosophy*. (1919), New York, Dover Publications, 1993, p. 169.

and phrases) indicate entities which make up the proposition expressed. Propositions of Russell's early realism are not representations, and particularly they are not mental representations, as we have seen in the preceding chapter (1.3.2). *The theory of denoting did not change this view*. The only change in the notion of proposition which the theory gave rise to was that we *cannot* identify the grammatical structure of a sentence with the structure of the complex which is supposed to be expressed by the sentence if a denoting phrase is involved (the distrust of grammar). However, the epistemological part of the notion of proposition (the binary theory of judgment) as well as the semantical one remained the same; and (as a part of those two views) also the primitivist theory of truth remained also completely untouched.

The theory of incomplete symbols put an end to naïvely realistic the supposed denotations of definite descriptions placed in the grammatical subject, but the same kind of attitude towards propositions was left untouched. On Russell's early realism the formula " $\exists x (x \text{ is round} \ \& \ x \text{ is square} \ \& \ \forall y (y \text{ is round} \ \& \ y \text{ is square} \ \rightarrow x=y) \ \& \ x \text{ is triangular})$ " expresses the proposition which is composed of the entities indicated by the constituents of this formula. Furthermore, the complex expressed is epistemically mind-independent (i.e. objective) and it is objectively false. To say this is, of course, incorrect if we wonder what structure exactly the proposition expressed is suppose to have, since to answer this question would make us to deal with the fact that the propositional logic of *PoM* differs importantly from the modern propositional logic. Let us consider this point in brief.

Russell's calculus in *PoM* (which is not explicitly formulated though in this book) is based two logical constants, the rest of logical connectives is defined: the dyadic predicate constant " \supset " which symbolises *material* implication and " $\supset_{x_1, \dots, x_n}$ " which stands for *formal* implication. Formal implication is used to express generality; thus, e.g. " $H(x) \supset_x M(x)$ " is the analog of the modern-like formula with universal quantifier " $\forall x (Hx \rightarrow Mx)$ ". If "*M*" means to be a man and "*H*" means to be mortal, the proposition is to be read, according to Russell, this way: "x is a man implies x is mortal for all values of x".⁵³ I used the word "analog", instead "equivalent", for *PoM*-implication differs from the modern implication. G. Landini explains this point: "Readers should be wary not to confuse ' \supset ' with the modern conditional sign ' \rightarrow ' which is flanked by well-formed formulas not terms. [...] The fundamental doctrine of the work [*PoM*, *MS*] is that whatever is, (be it proposition or otherwise) is an individual. Thus, there are no special primitive propositional variables in the work."⁵⁴

PoM's " \supset " stands for an *absolutely* unrestricted relation. "Socrates \supset Obama" is (in *PoM*) is not a nonsense, but a sentence expressing a false proposition. "Logic, in Russell's early view, is a synthetic a priori science of propositions."⁵⁵ Logic contains the principles (axioms) about propositions, *and therefore a rider which restricts the variable to propositions is needed*. Russell presents his solution by the following words:

⁵³ Russell, B., *The Principles of Mathematics*, c.d., p. 37.

⁵⁴ Landini, G., Logic in Russell's Principles, *Notre Dame Journal of Formal Logic*, vol. 37, n. 4, 1996, p. 561.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 555; This accords with Moore's sketch of philosophy in *NJ* wherein philosophy is seen as based on the logic which is transcendental, i.e. a priori science, but it is objective, i.e. not about the structure of judgments, but about the structure of (mind-independent) propositions.

"The propositional calculus is characterized by the fact that all its propositions have as hypothesis and as consequent the assertion of a material implication. Usually, the hypothesis is of the form " p implies p ", etc., which (§16) is equivalent to the assertion that the letters which occurs in consequent are propositions. Thus the consequents consist of propositional functions which are true of all propositions."⁵⁶

Thus the formal definition of proposition in *PoM* is:

X is a proposition =def $x \supset x$.

E.g. the axiom of simplification is in the *PoM*-calculus is:

$x \supset x : \supset_{x,y} y \supset y . \supset. (x \& y . \supset. y)$ ⁵⁷

We can see that to translate the formula like " $\exists x (x$ is round & x is square & $\forall y (y$ is round & y is square $\rightarrow x=y)$ & x is triangular)" into the *PoM*'s notation would be not an easy task, however, let us say that it is achievable. There is another problem though, the one which concerns the notion of quantification.

As for the logical connectives, implication being of two kinds (material and formal) is for Russell primitive symbol which a referring expression, i.e. other connectives are defined and " \supset " refers to a relation – the relation which sometimes forms a true proposition, if its relata are propositions, otherwise it always forms a false proposition. But how to interpret " $\exists x$ " and its connection to the propositional functions in the formula? In *PoM* Russell explains quantification by the theory of denoting concepts which is exactly the theory that was to be replaced by the theory of denoting of *OD*! According to the theory of denoting concepts, a denoting phrase stands for the *denoting concept* which is a part of the proposition expressed, and this concept denotes to the *denotation* which is the entity the predicate is asserted of (the relation of denoting is very close to the relation which Frege assumed between a Sinn and the Bedeutung of a proper name):

"If I say 'I met a man', the proposition is not about *a man*: this is a concept which does not walk the streets, but lives in the shadowy limbo of the logic-books. What I met was a thing [i.e. the thing denoted, MS], not a concept, an actual man with a tailor and a bank-account or a public-house and a drunken wife."⁵⁸

Any denoting phrase indicates to two distinct things; it is a class concept (e.g. *man*) and a quantificational device of which there are six kinds corresponding to these six words: "all", "every", "any", "a", "some" and "the". Russell actually wonders whether a quantity-word indicates a part of the denotation or rather a kind of the relation which holds between a class concept and what is denoted.⁵⁹ *One way or the other, there is an objective counterpart for the words expressing quantity of a sentence.* This theory, surely, was not available to Russell after *OD* because it is based on the grammatical (subject-predicate) form of the

⁵⁶ Russell, B., *The Principles of Mathematics*, c.d., p. 13.

⁵⁷ See Landini's reconstruction of *POM*-calculus in Landini, G., *Logic in Russell's Principles*, c.d., p. 561.

⁵⁸ Russell, B., *The Principles of Mathematics*, c.d., p. 54.

⁵⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 63

sentences containing a denoting phrase; such sentences, according to Russell in *OD*, must be translated what reveals that they are *in fact* molecular, i.e. they are complexes of more than one elementary propositions (namely, existential formulas); class concepts are, accordingly, replaced by propositional functions with the variable bounded by a quantifier. Or to put it straightforwardly: the theory of denoting concepts was not available to Russell after *OD* because in *OD* Russell replaces it by the theory of denoting. On these grounds it is quite clear that it is difficult to explain what formula like “ $\exists x (x \text{ is round \& } x \text{ is square \& } \forall y (y \text{ is round \& } y \text{ is square} \rightarrow x=y) \& x \text{ is triangular})$ ” is supposed to mean – what proposition exactly it is supposed to express. Is the expression “ $\exists x$ ” a referring expression? It the proposition expressed a bundle of propositional functions tight by the peculiar “power” of the logical entities expressed by “ $\exists x$ ” and “ $\&$ ”?

The question of semantical interpretation of quantified formulas was not settled until “*Principia Mathematica*” (1910). However, it is not necessary to examine Russell’s solution to this problem now, I just wanted to show that after the publication of *OD* Russell must have dealt with his *PoM*-theory of proposition, and in particular with his naïve realist stance to indicative sentences (including logical formulas). According to the theory of propositions the sentence “The round circle is triangular”, whether true or false, expresses a mind-independent complex – and replacing it by “ $\exists x (x \text{ is round \& } x \text{ is square \& } \forall y (y \text{ is round \& } y \text{ is square} \rightarrow x=y) \& x \text{ is triangular})$ ” does not change this claim. The question whether of the structure and content of the proposition expressed by this (false) formula must have been pressing, but much more pressing matter was the question whether the ontological commitment to objective falsehoods does not ruin the central moral of the theory of denoting proposed in *OD*. As we will see, Russell took this problem seriously and eventually replaced his former (*PoM*-) propositional realism by the alternative theory which included three co-related parts: the multiple-relation theory of judgment (the epistemological part), the theory that the phrases formerly expressing propositions are incomplete symbols or, more precisely, they are concealed definite descriptions (the semantical part) and a version of correspondence account of truth.

2.2. Towards the multiple-relation of judgment

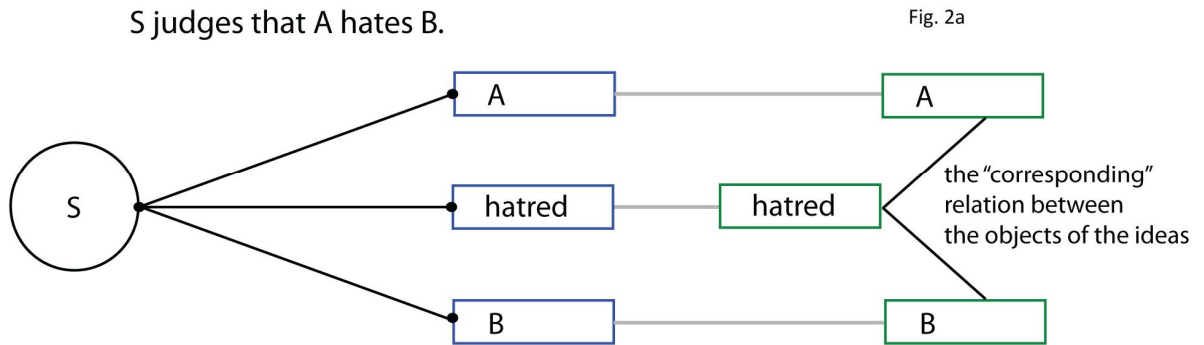
2.2.1. 1906: An alternative theory of judgment

Russell started to challenge the ontological commitment to what he calls “objective falsehoods” (but more precise is to speak of epistemically mind-independent falsehoods) in the article “On the Nature of Truth” [*ONT*] (1906). He says that *PoM*-theory of proposition associated with the primitivist theory of truth is “rather difficult to defend against objections of various kinds, tending to show [the doubtful consequence, MS] that there are not only mistaken beliefs, but also non-facts, which are the objectively false objects of mistaken beliefs. The main reason for this view is the difficulty of answering the question: ‘What do we believe when our belief is mistaken?’”⁶⁰

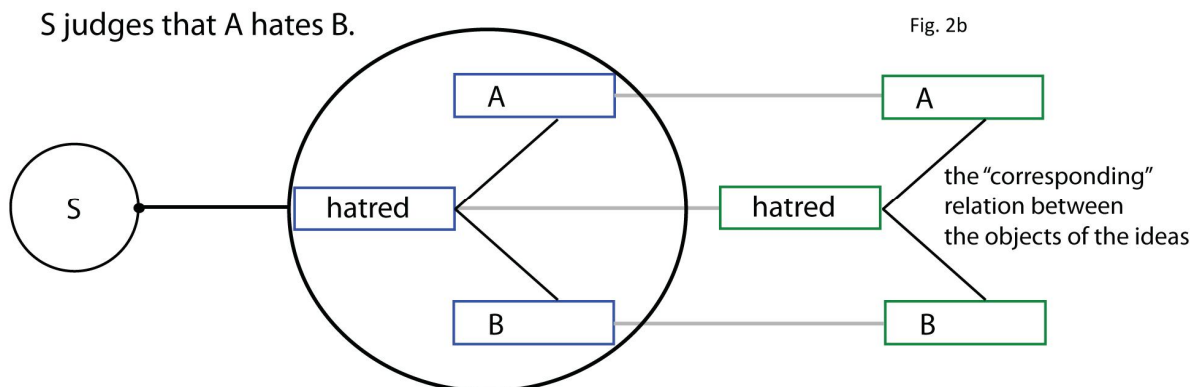
(i) This passage suggests the implausibility of the view which commits one to assert the existence of objective falsehoods. (ii) Moreover, a few pages later Russell accuses

⁶⁰ Russell, B., On the Nature of Truth, *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, 7, 1906 - 1907, pp. 28-49, p. 45.

propositional realism of inability to distinguish between perception and judgment, or, as he also put it, between intuition and discursive knowledge.⁶¹ Taking these objections seriously, Russell tries to formulate an alternative theory in *ONT*, actually a proto-version of the multiple-relation theory of judgment, and he explains that *this* theory together with the correspondence account of truth avoids *both* difficulties. The following schema, say (a), is an interpretation of Russell's theory:



We see an analysis of a true judgment, i.e. a judgment for which there is corresponding complex. The theory differs from the other versions of MRTJ in employing *ideas* of entities (particulars, properties, relations). Russell makes in *ONT* clear that he seeks a theory of judgment compatible with the correspondence theory of truth, but his exposition contains an inconvenient ambiguity. Russell assures reader that a judgment on his alternative account "will not consist of one idea with a complex object, but will consist of several related ideas",⁶² that is, the objective side of judgment will *not* be one in the sense of being a unified entity (an idea of fact) – this is actually one of the tenets which has this proto-theory in common with the later versions of MRTJ. But in the footnote on the same page Russell says that "the belief that A and B have the relation R must be a three-term relation of the ideas of A and B and R."⁶³ If this remark is right, there *is* before the mind one entity, not several ideas – the one which consists of the ideas of A and B and R as terms and of a three-term relation as relation. Moreover, this entails that a judgment is *not* based on a multiple-relation. Accordingly, there is another interpretation, say (b):



⁶¹ Ibid., p. 47.

⁶² Russell, B., *On the Nature of Truth*, c.d., p. 46 (emphasis is mine).

⁶³ Ibid., (emphasis is mine).

N. Griffin refers to the alternative theory in *ONT* as a version of MRTJ and many others followed him,⁶⁴ but it is a biased conclusion. The word “multiple-relation” in fact does not occur in the article and Russell is, as showed, ambiguous between two *incompatible* views, (a) and (b). The schema of (a) above is as biased as Griffin’s remarks on the 1906 theory, and all of it comes out of Russell’s insistence on breaking up the object of a judgment into several parts (there is not one entity before the judging mind, but “several interrelated ideas”) which is, to say it again, one of the tenets of MRTJ. But it must be taken into our account that the grounds for this statement in *ONT* differ significantly from the grounds which Russell supplies for it later when defending the multiple-relation theory. For this moment, however, let us leave the discussion about the architecture of MRTJ and focus on the objections against propositional realism.

2.2.2. Russell’s objections against propositional realism

The alternative theory of judgment and the theory of truth sketched in *ONT* eventually grew up into the epistemological basis of Russell’s logical atomism. Albeit he presents the theory as just a try, he formulated persuasive objections against propositional realism. Let me repeat the desiderata: There are not objective truths and falsehoods *and* any theory of knowledge which cannot differentiate between intuition and discursive knowledge is false. In order to move on, I shall expand on this topic by comparison of the discussion in *ONT* with the writings that followed: it is the essay “On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood” [ONTF] and some passages in the first volume of “Principia Mathematica” [PM], both published in 1910, that is, four years after *ONT*; Russell then continued to discuss the topic in “The Problems of Philosophy” [PP] and in the unfinished manuscript bearing the title “Theory of Knowledge” [TK], *PP* was published in 1912, the manuscript which was the last writing wherein Russell defended MRTJ was written in the beginning of the summer in 1913. Between the 1910 writings and *TK* MRTJ undergone some changes, but the development of the theory is quite independent on the criticism of propositional realism, that is, Russell’s objections against his early view remained basically the same. Therefore, we can leave out the development of MRTJ in this section.

ONFT in fact resulted from the last part of *ONT*. Four fifths of *ONT* is occupied by Russell’s arguments against the monistic theory of truth and the doctrine of internal relations, only one fifth (the last part which is the third section of the article) covers the topic discussed above. I say this because Russell later split up *ONT*, the part on monistic theory published unchanged separately and the rest (the third section) revised, expanded and published as *ONTF* in the same volume – *Philosophical Essays* (1910). In the later article Russell summarises his objections as follows:

“To this view [propositional realism, MS] there are, however, two objections. [(1)] The first is that it is difficult to believe that there are such objects as ‘that Charles I died in his bed’, or even ‘that Charles I died on the scaffold’. It seems evident that the phrase ‘that so and so’ has no complete meaning by itself, which would enable it to denote a definite object as (e.g.) the word ‘Socrates’ does. We feel that the phrase ‘that so and so’ is essentially incomplete, and only acquires full significance when words are added so as to express a judgment, e.g. ‘I believe that so and so’, ‘I deny that so and so’, ‘I hope that so and so’. [...] This argument is not decisive, but it must be allowed a certain weight. [(2a)] The second

⁶⁴ Griffin, N., Russell’s Multiple Relation Theory of Judgment, *Philosophical Studies*, 47, 1985, p. 214.

objection is more fatal, and more germane to the consideration of truth and falsehood. If we allow that all judgments have objectives [objective complexes, i.e. propositions, MS], we shall have to allow that there are objectives which are false. Thus there will be in the world entities, not dependent upon the existence of judgments, which can be described as objective falsehoods. This is in itself almost incredible: we feel that there could be no falsehood if there were no minds to make mistakes. [(2b)] But it has the further drawback that it leaves the difference between truth and falsehood quite inexplicable. We feel that when we judge truly some entity 'corresponding' in some way to our judgment is to be found outside our judgment, while when we judge falsely there is no such 'corresponding' entity. [...] we shall do better, if we can, to find some view which leaves the difference between truth and falsehood less of mystery."⁶⁵

2.2.3. (1) Propositions are incomplete symbols

Russell speaks of two objections, but as we can see, they are actually three. The first one concerns a significant change in Russell's semantical views. The opening passage of early Wittgenstein's "Notes on Logic" [NL] (1913) may help to explain which views: "Frege said 'propositions are names'; Russell said 'propositions correspond to complexes'. Both are false, and especially false is the statement 'propositions are names of complexes'."⁶⁶ Wittgenstein here takes propositions as linguistic entities (as opposed to facts). This may be slightly confusing because early Russell reserved the term "propositions" for objective complexes (where those that are true are facts), as we saw in the preceding chapter, and he took them as semantic analogues to Frege's Gedanken. Concerning Frege's and early Russell-Moore's semantics, there were no linguistic propositions! By "propositions" Wittgenstein clearly means indicative sentences. Indeed, an indicative sentence, according to Frege, is the *name* of its own truth-value; Russell's view before 1906 was very similar: an indicative sentence is also a name of the complex (proposition) consisting of the entities that are indicated by the constituent-parts of the sentence – this is the third and "especially false" item of Wittgenstein's list. And the remaining view is the view Russell held after abandoning propositional realism, i.e. after 1906: the view that propositions correspond to complexes – but more precisely: *may* correspond to complexes. But this does not exhaust the semantic nature of post-1906 russellian propositions yet.

Russell's propositions in 1906 onwards are linguistic. This is most probably why Wittgenstein uses the term "proposition" recklessly as equivalent to "indicative sentence". But even this is misguided, for propositions_L are *not* indicative sentences, but the phrases "that so and so", i.e. subordinate parts of the sentences that contain intensional operator of a propositional attitude indicated by the connective "that" (e.g. "I believe *that* he is dead" involves the proposition "that he is dead").⁶⁷ A have already emphasized that MRTJ is based on the tenet there is not a single entity on the objective side of a judgment, but several entities isolated one from each other. This tenet is the epistemological correlate of the semantical tenet that the phrases "that so-and-so" are incomplete:

⁶⁵ Russell, B., On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood. In: *Philosophical Essays*. (1910). London, George Allen & Unwin 1966, pp. 147-159, p. 152.

⁶⁶ Wittgenstein, L., Notes on Logic. (1913), In: Wright, G.H. and Anscombe, G. E. M. (eds), *Notebooks 1914-1916*. 2nd ed., The Univ. of Chicago Press, 1961, pp. 93-107, p. 97.

⁶⁷ I shall subscribe "L" to indicate that I mean propositions as linguistic entities.

"Owing to the plurality of objects of a single judgment, it follows that what we call a 'proposition' (in the sense in which it is distinguished from the phrase expressing it) is not a single entity at all. That is to say, the phrase which expresses a proposition is what we call incomplete symbol; it does not have meaning in itself, but requires some supplementation in order to acquire a complete meaning."⁶⁸ —

In this passage of *PM* Russell keeps using the term "proposition" as a term for the objective part of a judgment; but other passages clearly show that propositions are primarily the *phrases* expressing the objective parts of judgments, i.e. the phrases "that so and so"; the former usage of the term was provisional and as soon as in *PP* (1912) Russell introduces term "complex object" for the objective part. But let us skip these subsidiary peculiarities in favour of explaining the core idea. We have already seen that the development of MRTJ was to start at the point where the theory of denoting of *OD* ends: Having an existential formula, what is its meaning? And especially, what is the meaning of a false existential formula, or, in general, any false sentence whatsoever? Russell had taken the fact that any elementary sentence can be transformed into a form of definite description, e.g. "Socrates is wise" into "Socrates' wisdom" or "the wisdom of Socrates" as semantically significant: it shows that the theory of denoting of *OD* applies to elementary propositions. Without making any change to the theory of denoting, this claim appears fatally circular: a definite description is supposed to be completed by a sentential context, but sentences are taken to be analysed as concealed definite descriptions. But Russell changed his view, he said, as we have already seen in the passage from *ONTF*, that the context of a propositional attitude completes the symbol, e.g. "I believe that Socrates is wise". The context is, according to *ONTF*, verbal, but according to *PM* is primarily *practical*:

"This fact [that propositions are incomplete symbols, MS] is somewhat concealed by the circumstance that judgment in itself [i.e. as an actual performance of a certain person, MS] supplies a sufficient supplement, and that judgment in itself makes no *verbal* addition to the proposition. Thus 'the proposition 'Socrates is human'' uses 'Socrates is human' in a way which requires a supplement of some kind before it acquires a complete meaning; but when I judge 'Socrates is human,' the meaning is completed by the act of judging, and we no longer have an incomplete symbol."⁶⁹ —

To be correct, Russell does not say here that the propositional attitude as a cognitive act or linguistic performance (the practical) is *primary* to the symbol for this attitude – it seems that he treats the practical context on a par to the verbal context. However, this cannot be so on the grounds of the plain fact that the sentence "I judge that Socrates is wise" can be transformed into a definite description in the same way as the sentence "Socrates is wise", namely, the description "My judgment that Socrates is wise" results; we may still say that what we face here a phrase "that so and so", namely, "that I judge that Socrates is wise". Supplying a proposition_L with a symbol for a propositional attitude yields a symbol which is still incomplete – another proposition_L. The extension of the theory of denoting onto those phrases that can be terms of the functions like "I judge that x" is ultimately the extension of the theory onto indicative sentences.

⁶⁸ Whitehead, A. N., and Russell, B., *Principia Mathematica* to *56, c.d., p. 44.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

No sentential context can be, then, semantically completing! Appealing to the performance itself is the way of escaping the circularity, and also it makes sense regarding the motivation of the whole proposal. Russell wanted to have such an account of propositional meaning which would not entail the existence of objective falsehoods. Claiming that the phrases “that so and so” are incomplete, he pursued the intuition that when we have an indicative sentence, say p , provided we do not know its truth value, p is meaningful (we understand it) and the fact that it is meaningful does not imply that there is an objective complex except the complex (fact) that I judge that p . Saying that p is meaningful since it expresses a certain mind-independent complex was to be replaced by saying that p is meaningful since there is a judgment that p and p expresses a certain mind-independent complex only where the judgment is true, otherwise it does not *express* anything. Therefore it is the fact that someone judges that p where the ground for the meaning of p is to be found – not in a mere addition of symbol “I judge that”.⁷⁰

2.2.4. (2) Truth and falsehood is a subjective phenomenon

That the ontological commitment to objective truths and falsehoods is implausible Russell expresses in *ONTF* much more emphatically than in *ONT*, he says, to repeat the main claim, that it “is in itself almost incredible: we feel that there could be no falsehood if there were no minds to make mistakes.”⁷¹ And in *PP* he continues in a similar vein:

“It seems fairly evident that if there were no beliefs there could be no falsehood, and no truth either, in the sense in which truth is correlative to falsehood. If we imagine a world of mere matter, there would be no room for falsehood in such a world, and although it would contain what may be called ‘facts’, it would not contain any truths, in the sense in which truths are things of the same kind as falsehoods. In fact, truth and falsehood are properties of beliefs and statements: hence a world of mere matter, since it would contain no beliefs or statements, would also contain no truth or falsehood.”⁷²

Russell sets forth the desideratum that urges us to reject the ontological commitment to objective falsehoods, his attempt to ground the desideratum by appealing to “our” intuitions or feelings should be taken with a grain of salt, though. How he knew that his intuition gives the same ideas as the one of any other person? And how it is possible that his intuition failed to lead him to the (now supposedly) correct view of truth and falsehood for so many years? Is intuition fallible then? But if fallible, is it an intuition any more? And can we rely on it? For aught I know, Russell did not explain what exactly such appeals mean, hence we shall do better to take them rather as rhetorical means and/or manifestations of how strong his certitude was that time. Another objection is to point out that these appeals (at least *prima facie*) go against Russell’s methodological distinction between the grammatical and the logical, i.e. apparent and real structures. He was eager to show by means of the theory of incomplete symbols which rests on this distinction that there are no sets, numbers, no material objects and, as we shall see later, no minds among the *ultimate* constituents of

⁷⁰ This interpretation is mine. Many commentators, unfortunately, keep repeating Russell’s dictum “propositions are incomplete symbols” without trying to examine it. G. Landini, however, offers an interesting commentary suggesting the relation of this semantical doctrine to the recursive definition of truth proposed also in *PM*; see Landini, G., c.d., *Russell*, Lond and New York, Routledge, 2011, p. 129-135. My interpretation is compatible with Landini’s account, but I focus on rather different aspect of the doctrine.

⁷¹ Russell, B., *On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood*, c.d., p. 152.

⁷² Russell, B., *The Problems of Philosophy*. Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1912, p. 120-121.

reality – all of these plurals stand for logical constructions. If these results of Russell's philosophical logic were intuitive, they would not be interesting at all. And once we admit that intuition may be distorted by discursivity, we may ask how one can get to know infallibly that it is this or that intuition which is not distorted. Perhaps there are philosophers who are friendlier to the appeals to common sense, our feelings or something alike; I am certainly not among them, so I cannot assess this part of Russell's objections against propositional realism positively. I agree with Wittgenstein who wrote in 1914 to his diary the following remarks on Russell's appeals to self-evidence:

"Then we can ask ourselves: Does the subject-predicate form exist? Does the relational form exist? Do any of the forms exist at all that Russell and I were always talking about? (Russell would say: 'Yes! That's self-evident.' *Ha!*"⁷³

"[...] that 'self-evidence is and always was wholly deceptive.'"⁷⁴

Is the appeal to "our" feelings everything Russell wanted offer in his second and "more fatal" objection? Fortunately, it is not. There is a claim which is, on the contrary, very persuasive against propositional realism. Russell says that "there could be no falsehood if there were no minds to make mistakes." This entails that *falsehoods are mistakes or errors. Truths are, accordingly, achievements.* The theory that judging is grasping of a proposition which contains either truth or falsity among its constituents is so simple that *it makes impossible to explain fallibility of judging.* Owing to simplicity, propositional realism allows *only one* kind of failure which is the failure of grasp (or apprehension). This failure, unfortunately, explains only what it does mean to *lack* cognition.

Russell did not propose this objection directly. However, it can be derived easily from his adherence to the doctrine of fallibility of judgment as opposed to infallibility of perception (but more precisely: acquaintance with a complex) which developed since *ONT*. This doctrine draws its plausibility by meeting the desideratum that considerable part of our cognitive activity is making well justified assertions at best and unwarranted guesses at worst about the things we are *not* acquainted with. Discursive thought, that is, making judgements enables us to step out of the sphere of given, e.g. sitting in my room in Prague I do not perceive whether it is raining in Amsterdam, but I can immediately make a judgment about the weather in Amsterdam. This always puts the judger under the risk of being mistaken about what is going on. A judgment may be mistaken even if it follows immediately after the perception of which it is an analysis, as Russell hurries to add in *ONTF*.⁷⁵ Moreover as early as in *ONT* Russell realizes that between perceiving and judging is a systematic connection, he says that his new theory "has also the merit of explaining the puzzling fact that perceptions, though they are not judgments, may nevertheless give grounds for judgments."⁷⁶ Taking into account Russell's later comments on the coherence theory of truth in *PP*,⁷⁷ we may say that a judgment passes the *test* as for its truth-value when it is recognized as compatible with the

⁷³ Wittgenstein, L., *Notebooks 1914-1916*, c.d., p. 3e.

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 4e.

⁷⁵ Russell, B., *On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood*, c.d., p. 157.

⁷⁶ Russell, B., *On the Nature of Truth*, c.d., p. 47.

⁷⁷ Russell, B., *The Problems of Philosophy*, c.d., p. 123: "[...] coherence cannot be accepted as giving the *meaning* of truth, though it is often a most important *test* of truth after a certain amount of truth has become known."

believes the judger actually holds, but it is *verified* (that is, grounded as for its truth-value) when confirmed or falsified by an appropriate piece of perception. Russell's picture of cognitive activity after he abandoned propositional realism is (at least) based on the sequence of these three acts: (1) judging that *p*, (2) coherence testing of *p*, (3) verifying *p* by perception. Now, Russell's contention that his post-1906 epistemology distinguishes perception from judgment was not neutral. He considers it as a merit. And what merit it would be if the criticised theory had the same explanatory impact? Therefore it is reasonable to maintain that Russell implicitly accused propositional realism of inability to distinguish between perception and judgment.

Concerning the difference between perception and judgment, in *PP* Russell exposes the doctrine *in general*⁷⁸ as the difference between the knowledge of things (acquaintance) and the knowledge of truths (judgment):

"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, at any rate, as we confine ourselves to knowledge by acquaintance. Whatever we are acquainted with must be something; we may draw wrong inferences from acquaintance, but acquaintance itself cannot be deceptive."⁷⁹

Judgments are in propositional realism understood as a sort of knowledge of things, hence everything said about knowledge of things here applies to judgments as they are understood in propositional realism: concerning propositions, we may know them or not know them, but *there is no positive state of mind which can be described as erroneous knowledge of propositions* – so long as we confine ourselves to knowledge by acquaintance by treating judgments as knowledge of this sort.

In their early writings Russell and Moore treated false judgments as errors, but in a purely verbal way. Moore in "Truth and Falsity" says that "*error* denotes false belief" and that "*falsehood*, however, or falsity, and not error, is used to denote that property of a false proposition in virtue of possessing which it is called an error."⁸⁰ Russell in *MTCA III*. says that judgment "is a certain attitude towards propositions, which is called knowledge when they are true, error when they are false."⁸¹ Neither of them, nonetheless, does explain what makes a judgment of a false proposition *erroneous*. To fail in something means to do not achieve a certain objective, the one which is supposed to be achieved by the performance of the act or operation which he is said to fail in. It is worth noting that the explanation of this aspect of cognitive activity involves *two* distinct questions, a descriptive one and a normative one. The descriptive one: Provided that judging is an act, what *consequence* of judging exactly makes a judgment a truth-achievement, if it obtains, and a truth-failure, if it does not obtain? The normative one: Provided that the descriptive question is settled, what makes truth-achievements preferable to truth-failures? Concerning the descriptive issue, the terms

⁷⁸ Perception is just a kind of acquaintance.

⁷⁹ Russell, B., *The Problems of Philosophy*, c. d., p. 119.

⁸⁰ Moore, G. E., Truth and Falsity. In: *Dictionary of Philosophy and Psychology*, J. Baldwin (ed.), London: Macmillan, 1901–2; reprinted in Moore, *Selected Writings*, Thomas Baldwin (ed.), London and New York: Routledge, 1993.

⁸¹ Russell, B., Meinong's Theory of Complexes and Assumptions (III.), c.d., p. 523.

“achievement” and “failure” are taken here in normative-neutral way (thus we may say that, e.g. to *achieve* causing a world war is not preferable, and, e.g. that in the case where the unbearable pain made John Doe who *failed* to seek out a drug dealer to put himself into a rehab the failure was preferable for him).

As for binary cognitive relation between a mind and an object (acquaintance), there are only two ways how to settle the descriptive issue: we may focus on either *the act* of grasping (or apprehending), or on *the object* of the act, provided the act was performed successfully. Taking judging as binary relation, we saw that the first possibility is useful for the differentiation between cognition and lack of cognition, but not for the differentiation between true and false cognition. *Therefore it remains to focus on the objects, that is, the propositions judged, and to take judging a true proposition as the objective of judges.* Let us decide whether it is a tenable view.

False judgments are mistakes or errors and, according to the definition suggested here, a judgment is mistaken or erroneous if and only if it is a judgment of a false proposition. But why it is a mistake or an error to “get in touch” with the object of a certain nature – the *false* proposition? Falsity (or falsehood) is a *constituent* of a false proposition: “some propositions,” says Russell in *MTCA III*, “are true and some false, just as some roses are red and some white.”⁸² When one grasps a proposition, he/she grasps it with all its constituents, since it is essentially a unity. Then *mere* judging a proposition involves knowledge of its truth-value. Therefore it is impossible to judge propositions without knowing their truth-values. Now, understanding a sentence is based on grasping the proposition expressed – but then we can know the truth-value of a sentence *merely* on the basis of understanding it, which is absurd. Judging as a binary relation as well as understanding a sentence based on this theory is *truth-transparent*. We are mistaken if we judge or assert something which is not true without knowing that it is not true – this is what cannot be accounted for in propositional realism, for any case of false judgment entails the true judgment about the truth-value of the original judgment. This is why judgment of a false proposition cannot be erroneous in propositional realism.

The difficulty can be solved by treating *act* of judgment as involving an active act of *creation*, not as something wholly passive (grasping). The epistemology of propositional realism was, according Russell in *ONT*, grounded on the idea that “knowledge is of the nature of discovery rather than of creation”; indeed, in *PoM* there is practically the same claim: “[...] all knowledge must be recognition, on pain of being mere delusion.”⁸³ “Recognition” is just another term for passive act of grasping a proposition. This, as I have shown, is untenable, since it entails truth-transparency which makes impossible to account for the possibility of error. Russell, therefore, decided to change his view in favour of representational realism and the correspondence theory of truth, assuming that it is possible for judging to be *more* than recognition without being mere delusion.

2.2.5. (3) Definability of the Truth and Falsehood

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Russell, B., *The Principles of Mathematics*, c.d., p. 457.

Russell says in *ONTF* that propositional realism has “the further drawback that it leaves the difference between truth and falsehood quite inexplicable” and that “we shall do better, if we can, to find some view which leaves the difference between truth and falsehood less of mystery.”⁸⁴ But this objection is not serious, since every theory introduces some primitive terms. Indefinability of a term *as such* is not an objectionable property unless we wish to criticize theorizing as such. If one wishes to object to primitiveness of a term, it is necessary to introduce some reasons besides pointing out that the term is primitive – concerning the critique of propositional realism; such reasons were explained above. Therefore, this objection makes sense only as a part of the second objection according to which truth and falsehood must be taken to be subjective.

2.3. The multiple-relation theory of judgment

So far I have examined Russell’s reasons for abandoning the version of realism he (for the most part) adopted from Moore. Russell realized that judging must involve act of *creating* cognition, but no exact definition of “creating” was proposed yet. Truth and falsehood should be, according to him, taken as genuine properties of judgments which are described in terms of *correspondence to fact*, but no exact definition of “correspondence to fact” was proposed yet. In this section I supply the above considerations by an exposition of Russell’s views between 1906 and 1913: the multiple-relation theory of judgment with a specific version of correspondence theory of truth.

A brief discussion on the 1906 “alternative theory of proposition”, however incomplete and vague this theory was, partly concretized the above epistemological considerations. The theory, it is to be recalled, was based on the assumptions (1) that the judging mind is *somehow* related to the ideas of the entities which make up the corresponding fact if the judgment is true, and (2) that the object of judgment is not *one* idea, but *several* ideas. I explained that Russell’s proposal was ambiguous between two incompatible theories one of which takes the relation between the judge and the ideas as a multiple-relation. The contradistinction between “one” and “several” is, accordingly, a part of the distinction between the binary relation between the mind and *one* object and the multiple-relation between the mind and *several* objects. If we reconstruct the 1906 theory this way, as N. Griffin does, it is the first version of the multiple-relation theory. The second version set forth in *ONTF* is based on rejection of ideas.

2.3.1 Propositions are broken up

The multiple-relation theory of judgment rests, in the second version onwards, on breaking up the proposition (assumed on the binary theory) into its constituents and relating each of them separately to the judge. “When we judge [truly, MS] that Charles I died on the scaffold, we have before us, not one object, but several objects, namely, Charles I and dying and the scaffold.”⁸⁵ The same applies to false judgments and the objects of a false judgment “are not fictions,” as Russell emphasises.⁸⁶ Generally, the objects of any judgment, whether true or false, are not ideas standing for mind-independent entities, but they *are* mind-independent entities. N. Griffin speaks of the “realist thesis” here, the thesis according to

⁸⁴ Russell, B., *On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood*, c.d., p. 152.

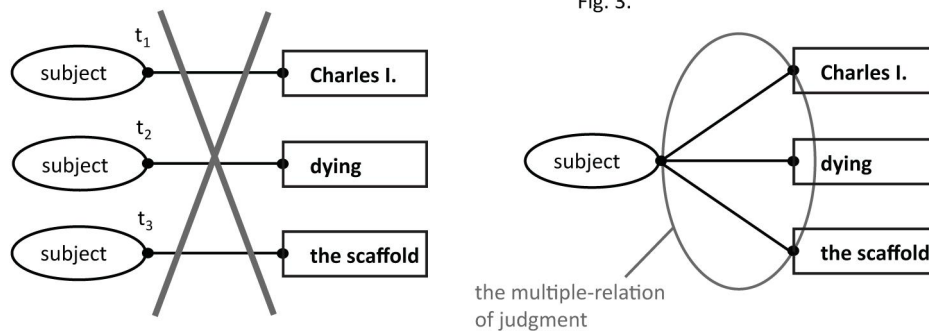
⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 153.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

which “every genuine object has being.”⁸⁷ But this formulation is inconveniently ambiguous: in order to specify what is meant by “genuine” and “being”, I like to speak of the “thesis of direct realism”, the thesis according to which every *immediate* object of a cognitive relation is epistemically mind-independent.

2.3.2 The relational unity of judgment

Judgment is not identical to a sequence of several binary relations between the mind and an object. Russell admits that such a sequence is necessary condition of a judgment, but it is not a sufficient one. The fact that I am acquainted successively with *Karel I*, *dying* and *the scaffold* does not suffice for being there my judgment that Karel I died on the scaffold. “In order to obtain this judgment,” says Russell, “we must have one single unity of the mind and Charles I and dying and the scaffold, i.e. we must have, not several instances of a relation between two terms, but one instance of a relation between more than two terms.”⁸⁸ The element which is needed in addition to an appropriate series of binary relations of acquaintance is the *unity of judgment*.



The thesis about the unity of judgment is an analogue to the thesis about the former unity of proposition (see 1.3.2). Russell contended that the unity of proposition is given by the fact that the relation contained is “relating”. Propositions are abandoned now in favour of judgments, but the explanation of unity goes in a similar vein! The unity of judgment is to be explained by the nature of a certain relation, namely, the multiple-relation of judgment which is the *relating* relation of the whole judgment-complex, that is, of *the fact* that there is such-and-such judgment.

Russell’s theory of the unity consists in two qualifications of the judgment relation. (1) *The judgment-relation is a multiple relation*; he expands on this point quite self-assuredly: “Such relations, though familiar to mathematicians, have been unduly ignored by philosophers. Since they appear to me to give key to many puzzles about truth, I shall make a short digression to show that they are common and ought to be familiar.”⁸⁹ (2) *Judgments themselves are facts*, the ones of which relating relation is the multiple-relation of judgment. This part occurs in the article “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description” (1910): “If, e.g., I judge that A loves B, the judgment as an event consists of a specific four-term relation, called *judging*, between me and A and love and B. That is to say, at the time

⁸⁷ Griffin, N., Russell’s Multiple Relation Theory of Judgment, c.d., p. 213.

⁸⁸ Russell, B., On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood, c. d., p. 154.

⁸⁹ Ibid.

when I judge, there is a certain complex whose relating relation is *judging*.”⁹⁰ I consider these qualifications to give what I call the *relational unity of judgment* – this is, to say it again, an analogue of the unity of proposition. The reason why I dwell on this point is that the relational unity is too weak in the sense that if we identify the unity of judgment with its relational unity, fatal consequences follow. But this is the point of Wittgenstein’s objection which shall be analysed at the end of this section.

2.3.3 The correspondence theory of truth and falsehood

“We therefore escape,” concludes Russell in *ONTF*, “the necessity of admitting objective falsehoods, or of admitting that in judging falsely there is nothing before mind. Thus in this view judgment is a relation of the mind to several other terms: when these other terms have *inter se* a ‘corresponding’ relation, the judgment is true; when not, it is false.”⁹¹ This is Russell’s specific version of the correspondence theory of truth; in order to understand it fully, let me set forth some useful definitions.

At first, we should adopt Russell’s notation. Judgments are to be symbolised as follows; e.g. “S judges that A precedes B” is equivalent to:

$$J(S, A, \text{preceding}, B)$$

Generally, “ $J(Y, x_1, x_2 \dots x_n)$ ” is an open sentence expressing the multiple relation (n -relation) of judgment, where n is a natural number; Y is the argument place for a subject-name and $x_1, x_2 \dots x_n$ the places for object-names.

Embracing Russell’s correspondence theory, the truth of the judgment considered above is to be defined as follows:

$J(S, A, \text{preceding}, B)$ is true	☐	$\exists p (p \text{ corresponds to } J(S, A, \text{preceding}, B))$
$J(S, A, \text{preceding}, B)$ is false	☐	$\neg \exists p (p \text{ corresponds to } J(S, A, \text{preceding}, B))$

“ p ” is a variable ranging over the domain of complexes.

Regarding the passage cited from *ONTF*, it may seem problematic to speak of corresponding facts or complexes; we saw that Russell speaks of the “corresponding relation”. However, the difficulty is merely verbal, since in the first vol. of *PM* which was published in the same year as the essay (and, as we will see, also in later texts), Russell speaks of “corresponding complex”, a passage from *PM* reads:

“We will call a judgment *elementary* when it merely asserts such things as ‘ a has the relation R to b ,’ ‘ a has the quality q ’ or ‘ a and b and c stand in the relation S .’ Then elementary

⁹⁰ Russell, B., Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description, *Proceedings of Aristotelian Society*, New Series, vol. XI., 1910-11, pp. 108-128, p. 117.

⁹¹ Ibid.

judgment is true when there is a corresponding complex, and false when there is no corresponding complex."⁹² —

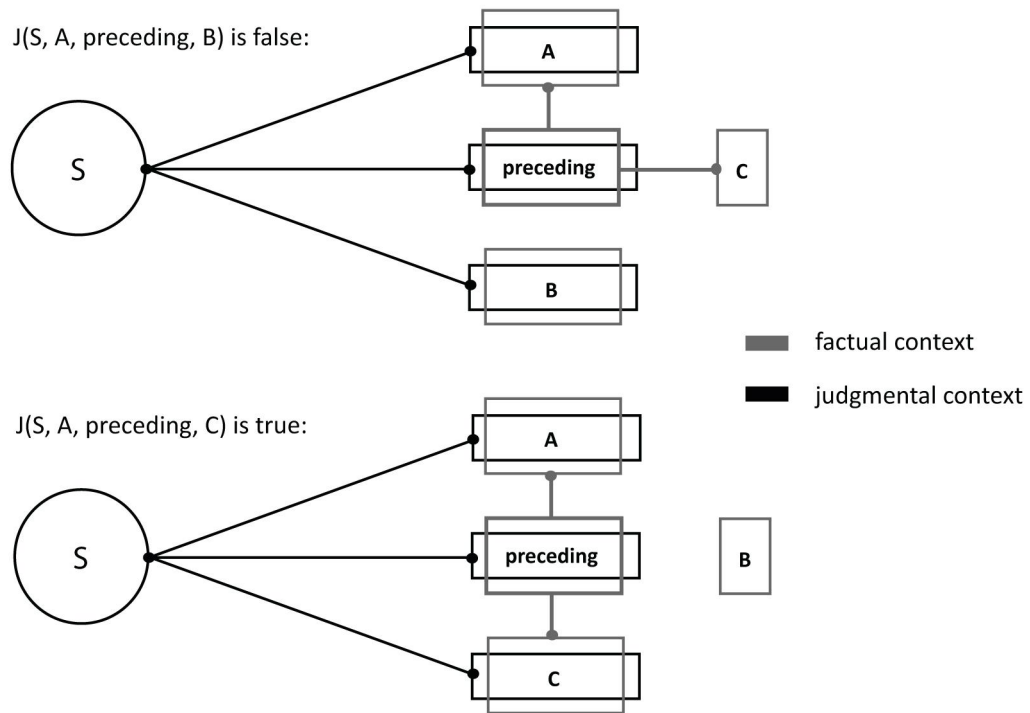
Existence of corresponding complex and the existence of the corresponding relation are logically inter-dependent matters in Russell's framework, which makes both definitions equivalent. It is important that Russell's new theory of truth, being modelled so that it is compatible with the thesis of direct realism, is very close to the criticised primitivist theory (which is a version of identity theory). There is no representation in a judgment, and especially no mental representation. The immediate objects of a judgment are the entities *identical* to those that are supposed to form the corresponding fact which has the truth-making function in this context. If the correspondence theory is the one which distinguishes truth-bearer (cognitions) from truth-maker (facts), the right question is *how* Russell furnishes his theory with this distinction.

The idea is ingenious, Russell uses the doctrine he developed as early as in *PoM*, the doctrine that any relation can occur *as relating* in which case it forms together with its terms a complex or *as a term* related by another relation in which case it is one of the non-relating parts of a complex, as Russell put it in *PP*, "it is a brick in the structure, not the cement."⁹³ — A relation cannot be relating and a term with one and the same complex; there are actually three exhaustive possibilities for any relation: it is with regard to a definite set of entities either (i) a relating relation, or (ii) a term, or finally (iii) it does not form a complex together with them. But it is logically possible for any relation to be relating in *one* complex, e.g. p is deducible from *T*, and a term in *another*, e.g. 'deducibility' is what John wants to define. Russell uses this doctrine for defining the notion of correspondence while retaining the thesis of direct realism. Let us consider, again, the judgment that S judges that A precedes B, and let us assume that it is true; the relation of preceding is a relating relation with regard to {A, B} and it is also a term with regard to {S, J(Y, x₁, x₂, x₃), A, B}. The later complex is a judgment-complex, that is, it is an event of a discursive thought, and there is no representational level between the entities judged (A, B and preceding) and the judging subject; the former complex is a fact of non-mental nature, by Russell's definition the fact *corresponding* to the judgment-complex.

⁹² Whitehead, A. N., and Russell, B., *Principia Mathematica* to *56, c.d., p. 44.

⁹³ Russell, B., *The Problems of Philosophy*, c. d., p. 128.

Fig. 4.



This schema should make Russell's idea clearer. The truth-bearer is the judgment-complex and derivatively object-“complex” which is the collection of the objects. The objects figure in two contexts, the judgmental and the factual context; the judgment is true if the object make up a complex in factual context.

2.4. The direction problem

Russell's account of discursive knowledge suffered from the problem of accounting for the difference between propositions which have the same constituents but differ in so-called direction or sense of the subordinate relation. “It is essential that any theory of judgment be able to distinguish

S believes that *a* precedes *b*.

from

S believes that *b* precedes *a*.

The problem of doing so I shall call the 'direction problem'. This problem is common to all theories of judgment, but is more easily solved for some than others. The multiple relation theory is one for which it is not easy”⁹⁴ Already in *ONTF* Russell realized that he must deal with this problem. However, he fatally failed to address it reasonably. He proposed to treat direction (or sense) as a property of relations, which, unfortunately, contradicts with the tenet that the subject grasps the relation (let us speak about the “object-relation” or the “subordinate relation”) *in isolation from the rest of the objects*. Russell misguided solution in *ONTF* is as follows. Consider, e.g. the true judgment that A loves B which is different from

⁹⁴ Griffin, N., *Russell's Multiple Relation Theory of Judgment*, c.d., p. 219.

the judgment that B loves A, then, "the relation must not be abstractly before the mind," says Russell, "but must be before it as proceeding from A to B rather than from B to A."⁹⁵ The introduction of direction led Russell to *enrich* his definition of truth with the additional requirement as regards the direction:

"We may distinguish two 'senses' of a relation according as it goes from A to B or from B to A. Then the relation as it enters into the judgment must have a 'sense', and in the corresponding complex it must have the same 'sense'. Thus the judgment that two terms have a certain relation R is a relation to the mind to two terms and the relation R with the appropriate sense: the 'corresponding' complex consists of the two terms related by the relation R with the same sense."⁹⁶

The direction of a relation, as Russell's wording suggests ("it goes from X to Y"), is a spatial property. Relations, therefore, have spatial nature. A verb-token has certainly spatial nature, and in some cases the direction of verb bears the function of determining the direction of the subordinate relation; of course, in a case like "A is similar to B" the direction of the verb is not significant. This, on the one hand, supplies Russell's notion of truth as correspondence by the notion of congruence: if the direction is a spatial property signified by a spatial property of the sentential/judgmental constituents, then we require congruence for a judgment to be true. On the other hand, *the whole theory is incompatible with the multiple relation theory which requires the judger to be related to the objects separately, i.e. in each case in isolation from any other constituent*. Direction, if taken as a property of relations, is a *relational* property of a relation, i.e. a relation has a direction only with regard to something else, not as such, namely, with regard to the terms with which it forms a complex. Assuming this theory of direction and holding the thesis of direct realism lead us back to Russell's early theory of proposition and the binary judgment.⁹⁷

2.4.1 The 1912 attempt to solve the direction problem

In the chap. 12. of *PP* Russell offers new solution to the direction problem:

"We may say metaphorically, that it [the multiple-relation of judgment] puts its objects in a certain *order*, which we may indicate by means of the order of the words in the sentence. (In an inflected language, the same thing indicated by inflections [...]) Othello's judgement that Cassio loves Desdemona differs from his judgement that Desdemona loves Cassio, in spite of the fact that it consists of the same constituents, *because the relation of judging places the constituents in a different order in the two cases*."⁹⁸

The theory of direction suggested in *ONTF* as such remains the same, that is, *it is still valid that direction is a property of relations and that complexes (facts) have spatial dimension*. It is the theory of judgment that undergoes a change in *PP*: Russell says that the judgment that A loves B differs from the judgment that B loves A in orderings of the objects within the judgment-complexes, where the orderings are determined by the direction of the judgment relation, not the subordinate relation!

⁹⁵ Russell, B., *On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood*, c. d., p. 158.

⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁹⁷ Stout, G. F., *The Object of Thought and Real Being. Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, New Series, 11, 1910, s. 187-20, s. 203.

⁹⁸ Russell, B., *The Problems of Philosophy*, c. d., p. 126-7 (italics is mine).

It is worth noting that the theory of direction as a property of relation is an extension of Russell's concept of the relational unity. A relating relation is what makes the terms related to be parts of a complex rather than of a collection or a list and, moreover, it is what makes them to be parts of an *ordered* complex rather an unordered one. In particular, then, "when an act of believing occurs," says Russell in *PP*, "there is a complex, in which 'believing' is the uniting relation, and subject and objects are arranged in a certain order by the 'sense' [or direction] of the relation of believing."⁹⁹

2.4.2 The direction problem and the synthetic unity of judgment

Transferring the "responsibility" for direction from the subordinate relation to the judging relation (a "slight" change as Russell put it¹⁰⁰) appeared eventually unsatisfying. In *TK* Russell put against his view in *PP* this objection:

"I held formerly that the objects alone sufficed, and that the 'sense' of the relation of understanding would put them in the right order; this, however, no longer seems to me to be the case. Suppose we wish to understand 'A and B are similar'. It is essential that our thought should, as is said, 'unite' or 'synthetise' the two terms and the relation; but we cannot *actually* 'unite' them, since either *A* and *B* are similar, in which case they are already united, or they are dissimilar, in which case no amount of thinking can force them to become united. The process of 'uniting' which we *can* effect in thought is the process of bringing them into relation with the general form of dual complexes."¹⁰¹

It is clear that Russell challenges the *whole* idea of judgmental unity as based on the relating modus of the judgment relation. He challenges derivatively his 1912 theory of direction, since it was a part of this account unity. This is a very interesting point, because it is, indeed, a pressing question how exactly MRTJ accounts for "constructing or forming a cognition which is supposed to be corresponding to fact" – the necessary requisite of any robust correspondent theory of truth. Were we considering a representational theory, it would not be so hard to account for the unity, but Russell adheres to the thesis of direct realism, the immediate objects of a judgment are not representations but the very entities that do or do not make up the truth-maker (corresponding fact). The judging mind cannot construct cognitions in the sense of *manipulating* with the objects, since if it was so, the mind would psychokinetically create facts.¹⁰² Russell realizes this and says that "no amount of thinking can force them [the objects, MS] to become united." *The synthetic unity of judgment cannot be in the multiple relation theory accounted for by assuming that the judgment relation has the function of synthesizing the objects!* So far as the account goes, the constituents of judgment-complex, i.e. the subject (mind) and the objects (and a moment of time, since a judgment is an event, but let us leave this constituent aside now) *are* synthesized. But the judgment-complex, whether taken as a complex or broken up into a list of entities, is by no way what is judged, for neither the judging mind nor the multiple-relation of judgment belongs into the constitution of what is judged (cognition).

⁹⁹ Ibid., p. 127.

¹⁰⁰ See Griffin, N., Russell's Multiple Relation Theory of Judgment, c.d., p. 220.

¹⁰¹ Russell, B., *Theory of Knowledge: The Manuscript*. (1913). E. R. Eames and K. Blackwell (eds), London, Routledge, 1992, p. 116.

¹⁰² For the discussion of this problem see Candlish, S., *The Russell/Bradley Dispute and its Significance for Twentieth Century Philosophy*, New York, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007, p. 66-67.

This objection, which Russell put forward himself in *TK*, was suggested in an inarticulate way by G. F. Stout and it is closely connected with Wittgenstein's objection, as I read it. But this is the topic on which I shall expand later in this section. What concerns us here eminently is that the rejection of the account of synthetic unity of apperception as the relational unity (belonging to the relation of judgment) led also to the rejection of the theory of direction which was suggested in *PP*. The last sentence of the above citation reveals how Russell planned to account for the synthetic unity of judgment – it was through the introduction of logical forms. According to this theory, judging is (to paraphrase Russell) the process of bringing the objects into relation with the appropriate general form. Again, this is the topic of the next chapter, and the only relevant part of it, which must be addressed here is the connection of this account to the direction problem. The account of the synthetic unity of judgment through logical forms meant the divorce between the direction problem and the problem of the synthetic unity, for, to say it briefly, *logical form, i.e. general form of a complex itself does not determine the direction*, e.g. the judgment $J(S, xYy, \textit{love}, a, b)$ where "xZy" denotes the general form of a triadic complex remains ambiguous between the propositions_L "a loves b" and "b loves a".

2.4.3 The 1913 theory of position

In *TK*, the chap. VII. that bears the title "On the Acquaintance Involved with Our Knowledge of Relations" Russell offers entirely new notion of direction putting forth so-called theory of position. The former doctrine of direction as a property of relations is shown to be based on a mistaken analogy between a verb and relation, and thus flawed. But before I explain the objection, let me clarify the notion of direction.

Some relations, owing to the peculiarity of their content, differentiate between active and passive term, e.g. the relation of commending: A behaves in a certain manner *towards* B, at least in the sense that the cause of the event (A's commending B) is or involves as a part the decision of A. Thence we say that the relation in "A commends B" goes *from A to B* while in "B commends A" the other way around. "But this is a peculiarity of certain relations of which others show now trace. Right and left, up and down, grater and less, for example, have obviously no 'natural' direction."¹⁰³ It does not make sense to state that the relation in, e.g. "C is on the left of D" goes from \overline{C} to D; perhaps my attention reflected by the motion of my eyes proceeds from C to D. *But this movement which is a part of my particular perception is not a part of the relation asserted*, which can be easily argued by pointing out that the judgment that C is left of D is verified by the perception which is based on proceeding from looking at D to looking at C as well as by the perception which is based on proceeding from looking at C to looking at D. Generally, "perceptual direction" is not a part of the perceived complex. Returning back to the what Russell calls "natural direction", the direction which belongs the relation of commending (which is clearly an empirical property) is *not* involved in the relation of being on the left (and in many other relations). However, the problem of direction concerns the propositions_L involving the verb indicating the former relation as well as those that involve the verb indicating the later one. This consideration as such, of course, does not refute the notion of direction as a property of relations, but, having the merit of

¹⁰³ Russell, B., *Theory of Knowledge: The Manuscript*, c.d., p. 87.

disposing of the misleading empirical connotations of the term "direction", it is a prerequisite of any reasonable criticism.¹⁰⁴

The sentences like "A is before B" and "B is before A" are semantically different and the difference is indicated by the difference in the word order or equivalently by the difference in the orientation or direction of the verb (which is the same in both sentences) with regard to the other words. Now, Russell notices that the propositions which are expressed by the sentences "A is before B" and "B is before A" can be also expressed by the sentences which do not indicate that element which makes the propositions different by the difference in the direction of the verb, *but by using two different verbs*. We may, according to Russell, decide in advance that the first term of the sentence will be always "A", thus fixing the word order, and accordingly express the difference of the propositions alternatively by the difference of verbs: "A is before B" and "A is after B".¹⁰⁵ The direction of verb is, therefore, something arbitrary, something linguistic. But also the difference in verb in this case is something arbitrary and linguistic. There is a non-linguistic difference which can be linguistically indicated either by the sameness of the verb accompanied by the difference in direction or by the sameness of direction accompanied by the difference in the verbs. The question is: which non-linguistic difference is indicated?

Russell emphasizes that "there are not two different relations, one called *before* and the other called *after*, but only one relation, for which [concerning the second couple of sentences, MS] two words are required because it gives rise to two possible complexes with the same terms."¹⁰⁶ There is *one and the same* subordinate-relation involved in the judgments associated to the coupled sentences, no matter which linguistic form we choose. Is, then, the difference in the direction of this relation? This solution was rejected on the basis of the problem discussed above – this way out, therefore, was closed for Russell in *TK*. "To solve this problem," says Russell in *TK*, "we require the notion of *position* in a complex with respect to the relating relation."¹⁰⁷

The idea is quite simple and ingenious: let us suppose that the judgment that A precedes B is true and, accordingly, there is the complex that A precedes B. The relating relation of this complex (which is *also* the subordinate-relation of the judgment) has no direction at all, but A and B have distinct positions in the complex with respect to the relation. These positions are to be accounted by other two relations, *the positional relations* which holds, one between A and the complex and the relation of preceding, the other between B and the complex and the relation of the preceding:

"With respect to time-sequence, for example, two terms which have the relation of sequence have recognizably two different positions, in the way that makes us call one of

¹⁰⁴ To summarize this complicated discussion, following Russell I have distinguished "natural" direction which belongs, for example, to the relation of commending, from the logical direction which concerns judgments involving the relations *with* the natural direction as well as the ones which does a relation *without* this peculiar kind of direction (e.g. J(S, A, being on the left of, B) contains a relation which has no natural direction, but the direction problem which is the problem of "logical" direction applies to it). Moreover, I have supplied Russell's consideration with the refutation of "perceptual" direction.

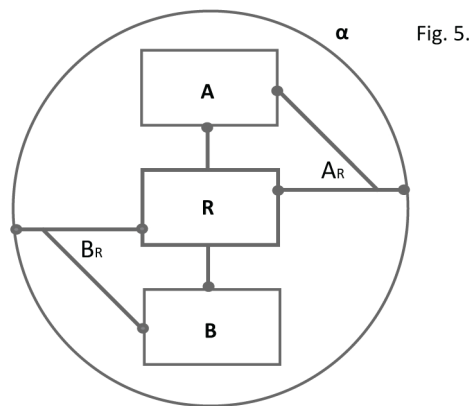
¹⁰⁵ Russell, B., *Theory of Knowledge: The Manuscript*, c.d., p. 86.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 86.

¹⁰⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 88.

them *before* and the other *after*. Thus if, starting from a given sequence, we have recognized the two positions, we can recognize them again in another case of sequence, and say again that the term in one position is *before* while the term in the other position is *after*. That is, generalizing, if we are given any relation R , there are two relations, both functions of R , such that, if x and y are terms in a dual complex whose relating relation is R , x will have one of these relations to the complex, while y will have the other. The other complex with the same constituents reverses these relations. Let us call these relations A_R and B_R . Then if we decide to mention first the term which has the relation A_R to the complex, we get one sense of the relation, while if we decide to mention first the other, we get the other sense. Thus the sense of a relation is derived from the two different relations which the terms of a dual complex have to the complex." ¹⁰⁸ —

The following schema shows the structure of the complex. I keep "A" and "B" as the names for the terms instead Russell's "x" and "y" and the name " α " is the name of the complex; following Russell's example, " A_R " and " B_R " are the names of positional relations and "R" stands for the relating relation of the complex.



Complexes (facts) are still said to have a spatial nature, but now *their spatiality is accounted for by the position-relations of the terms to the complex*, rather than by the direction or orientation of the relating relation with regard to the terms. *Russell explicitly contends that direction as a property of relations is dismissed:*

"Sense is not in the relation alone, or in the complex alone, but in the relations of the constituents to the complex which constitute 'position' in the complex. But these relations do not essentially put one term *before* the other, as though the relation went *from* one term *to* another; this only appears to be the case owing to the misleading suggestions of the order of words in speech or writing." ¹⁰⁹ —

As for the terminology, Russell speaks of "sense" defining this term in entirely new way. Having the couples of propositions like "A is before B" and "B is before A" or "A is before B" and "A is after B", there is *a difference in the sense* – in the first case indicated by the direction of the verb, in the second one by the difference of the verbs. The sense, whatever counterpart it has on the side of the linguistic device, is analysed in terms of the positions of

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

the terms within the complex. E.g. “*a* is before *b*” is, accordingly, analysed as equivalent to the following existential proposition:

$$E!(\exists\alpha) (A_R(A, \alpha, R) \& B_R(B, \alpha, R))$$

It is important that the propositions asserting a position, e.g. “ $A_R(A, \alpha, R)$ ”, are unambiguous with regard to the sense. *A* cannot be permuted with *R*, since it is not a relation which can be significantly asserted as holding between *R* and *B* and *R* is not a term that can significantly asserted as be related by *A* to *B*; both *A* and *R* cannot be permuted with α , since neither of them is a complex. The structure of the fact “ $A_R(A, \alpha, R)$ ” is analogous to the structure of the fact, e.g. “John, being in the middle of the room, is before the television” – here John, the relation of being before something and the room *cannot* be permuted on pain of making a categorical mistake (it may be difficult to accept that “being in a middle of” is a triadic relation having, in our example, the relation of being before something as one of its terms, but I do not consider it as problematic). The fact that the propositions like “ $A_R(A, \alpha, R)$ ” are not unambiguous with regard to the sense is important, since if it was not so, the analysis would fall into an endless regress.

2.5. Wittgenstein’s objection

Russell met Wittgenstein for the first time at Cambridge in 18. Oct. 1911.¹¹⁰ Their relation developed very fast and Russell soon started to discuss the problems of the multiple-relation theory of judgment (which was supposed to be the epistemological foundation of the logic of *PM*) with Wittgenstein. The correspondence suggests that the central issue Wittgenstein was working on was the problem of molecular complexes, i.e. the question of how to analyse propositions_L which contain logical connectives. He was, right from the start, persuaded that logical connectives do not refer, but this is not the topic we shall discuss. Wittgenstein in 1912 realized that first he must deal with the analysis of atomic judgments, and thus he shifted his focus on the multiple-relation theory. Let me open the discussion by Russell’s remark from “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” [PLA] (1918) on the problem which he and Wittgenstein found at that time:

“[...] the impossibility of putting the subordinate verb on a level with its terms as an object term in the belief [...] is a point which I think that the theory of judgment which I set forth once in print some years ago was a little unduly simple, because I did then treat the object verb as if one could put it as just an object like the terms [...]”¹¹¹

What does it mean to treat “object verb” on a level with its terms? According to Russell in 1912, a phrase like “*A* loves *B*” is an incomplete symbol; once it is supplied by a context of a propositional attitude we may define its meaning by the recourse to the objects of the judgment. It is to be remembered that the objects do not make up a complex in the judgmental context, i.e. they figure one by one, separately from each other in the judgment. Thus, if there is a judgment, e.g. “*S* judges that *A* loves *B*”, the meaning of the phrase

¹¹⁰ Eames, E. R., Introduction. In: Russell, B., *Theory of Knowledge: The Manuscript*, c. d., pp. vii-xxxvii, p. xliii.

¹¹¹ Russell, B., *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*. (1918), Taylor & Francis e-Library, 2009, p. 59.

(proposition_L) is the objects separately, namely, A, loving, and B. This leads to a fatal consequence that nonsensical sentence-like expressions are semantically identical with the sentence which contains the same words, e.g. "A B loves" (or "loves A B" etc.) is, according to the theory, semantically identical to "A loves B". The subordinate relation is treated on a level with the other objects, and consequently the verb in the associate proposition_L is treated on a level with the other verbs.

2.5.1 Logical forms and appeal to the theory of types

The moral of the difficulty is that the subordinate-relation must have a certain status which is not shared with the other objects. N. Griffin calls this difficulty the "wide" direction problem pointing out the similarity to the direction problem discussed above.¹¹² Indeed, the present problem is similar with the direction problem, for it also shows that the meaning of proposition_L *must* have a certain structure for which it is difficult to account by means of the multiple relation theory – the direction problem concerned the spatial structure, the present problem concerns the logical structure.

In order to account for the logical structure of judgment, Russell decided to include entity of a specific kind among the objects of a judgment – *the logical forms*. He thought that we can derive by means of substitutional analysis of a proposition_L a certain symbol which is the name of a logical form; e.g. "Socrates precedes Plato", "x precedes Plato", "x precedes y" and, finally, "xZy". The symbol "xZy", then, was supposed to be a name for the logical form which is shared by all the complexes containing a binary relation and two terms related by the relation (dual complexes). The judgment "S judges that A loves B" is to be analysed so that the logical form of dual complexes occur among the objects, namely, as being equivalent to "J(S, A, loving, B, xZy). But let us ask: How exactly this refinement account for the special status of the subordinate relation?

Russell was aware that he *could not* state that the relation of loving differs from A and B by the fact that it is relating, since the multiple-relation theory would collapse back into the binary theory of judgment; Russell was aware that he cannot drop the tenet that the objects appear in a judgment separately. The solution, he had in his mind by the time he introduced logical forms, involved an appeal to the theory of types. When we get (by substitutional analysis "xZy", the difference between capital letters and small letters is to indicate difference in logical type; also the symbols replaced by variables differs in logical type ("Socrates" and "Plato" differs from "precedes"). In an unpublished manuscript "What is Logic?" (1912) Russell acknowledges that the introduction of logical form *alone* does not solve the problem with logical structure:

„In a complex, there must be something, which we may call the *form*, which is not a constituent, but the way the constituents are put together. If we made this a constituent, it would have to be somehow related to the other constituents, and the way in which it was related would really be the form; hence an endless regress."¹¹³

Well, there is a logical form among the objects. But how the judging mind *knows* that Socrates and Plato stand to the relation of preceding in the same way as x and y stands to Z

¹¹² Griffin, N., Russell's Multiple Relation Theory of Judgment, c.d., p. 219.

¹¹³ The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell, Vol. 6: *Logical and Philosophical Papers, 1909-13*. Slater, J. (ed), London and New York, Routledge, 1992, p. 54.

in the logical form xZy ? Should we introduce *another* form which would preserve the correct connection between all these entities? Certainly, we should not, since if we did so, the analysis would fall into an endless regress.

The introduction of logical forms is, therefore, effective only if the subject knows *in advance* the logical types of the objects and the logical nature of the appropriate logical form. The answer to the question above is, accordingly, that the subordinate relation is treated differently on the basis of the subject's *knowledge* that it is of the logical type different to the logical type which applies to its terms.

2.5.2 Wittgenstein's copula theory

The manuscript "What is Logic?" was supposed to be developed and published, but Russell finally abandoned this idea, probably due to the problems I suggested in the preceding section. He wrote to Ottoline Morell:

"I can't get on 'What is Logic?', the subject is hopelessly difficult, and for the present I am stuck. I feel very much inclined to leave it to Wittgenstein."¹¹⁴

The letter was sent on 13 Oct. Wittgenstein really did take the reigns and developed an alternative theory, probably the only decompositional analysis of knowledge he have ever proposed – the *copula-theory*. The copula theory is "typically Fregean", as D. Hyder points out in his book, and it is not surprise that it is so, since Wittgenstein visited Frege before he sketched the theory in a letter to Russell.¹¹⁵ The visit came about in December 1912 and the letter to Russell reads as follows:

"I have changed my views on 'atomic' complexes: I now think that qualities, relations (like love) etc. are all copulae! That means I for instance analyse a subject-predicate proposition, say, 'Socrates is human' into 'Socrates' and 'something is human', (which is not complex). The reason for this is a very fundamental one: I think that there cannot be different Types [i.e. logical types, MS] of things! In other words whatever can be symbolised by a simple proper name must belong to one type."¹¹⁶

The idea which Wittgenstein proposes here is to replace the difference in logical type by the difference in the inner structure of the symbolised. As we shall see, this is a proposal to mechanize the act of judgment. Wittgenstein continues emphasising the idea that the theory of types is not necessary:

"And further: every theory of types must be rendered superfluous by a proper theory of symbolism: For instance if I analyse the proposition Socrates is mortal into Socrates, mortality and $(\exists x,y) \epsilon_1(x,y)$ [– Wittgenstein's symbol for the logical form of subject-predicate complexes, MS] I want a theory of types to tell me that 'mortality is Socrates' is nonsensical because if I treat mortality as a proper name (as I did) there is nothing to prevent me to make the substitution the wrong way around."¹¹⁷

¹¹⁴ Ibid.

¹¹⁵ Hyder, D., *Mechanics of Meaning: propositional content and the logical space of Wittgenstein's Tractatus*. New York, Walter De Gruyter 2002, p. 78.

¹¹⁶ Wittgenstein, L., *Notebooks 1914-1916*, c.d., 121-122.

¹¹⁷ Ibid.

Russell's remark in *PLA* which opened the discussion clearly goes along with this passage because treating the subordinate verb on a level with its terms equals to treating "mortality" as a proper name. The multiple-relation, according to Wittgenstein, is build upon a wrong theory of symbolism; using the symbols like "mortality" or "dying" or "love" is misleading since such symbols do not reflect the logically relevant structure of the relation they are supposed to indicate. Hence the necessity of appealing to the theory of types: the theory of types must be called upon to supply the subject with the information about the structure of the entity indicated by the verb. However, if we replace the verb by a symbol with an appropriate structure – a copula, the theory of types is not needed. Let us see this solution written in Wittgenstein's notation:

"But if I analyse (as I do now) into Socrates and $(\exists x). x$ is mortal or generally into x and $(\exists x) \phi x$ it becomes impossible to substitute the wrong way round because the two symbols are now of a different *kind* themselves."¹¹⁸

The symbol "mortality" is to be replaced by the copula " $(\exists x). x$ is mortal" which by its *functional* aspect reflects the *kind* of the object. It is obvious that this solution is "fregean": Wittgenstein had discussed the problems with Frege before the letter was written and probably had been given the advice that predicates express entities that are *unsaturated* by their very nature – they are concepts (Begriffe) as opposed to objects (Gegenstände) which lack this peculiar property.

2.5.3 The breakdown of the multiple relation theory and the problem of unity

Wittgenstein's attempt to meet the "wide direction" problem in terms of copulae appeared finally futile. Russell decided to develop some solution during the planned work on a major book on epistemology, *Theory of Knowledge*. The work begun on 7 May 1913 and he proceeded very fast – he did until Wittgenstein repeated again the familiar objection clearly implying that no solution proposed so far including the copula theory succeeds in meeting the difficulty. Wittgenstein wrote to Russell:

"[...] I can now express my objection to your theory of judgment exactly: I believe it is obvious that, from the proposition 'A judges that (say) a is in a relation R to b ', if correctly analysed, the proposition ' aRb .v. $\neg aRb$ ' must follow directly *without the use of any other premiss*. This condition is not fulfilled by your theory."¹¹⁹

" $p \vee \neg p$ " expresses formally that the proposition p is meaningful. Wittgenstein formalises the requirement that any theory of judgment must avoid nonsensical cases. Otherwise it is not a correct theory. The multiple-relation theory, even if restated so that verbs are replaced by copulas still must appeal to the theory of types, that is, it must use an additional premiss to avoid nonsensical cases. Why? The idea behind the copula theory is not only a fregean attempt, but most importantly it is an attempt to mechanise the act of judgment: when the mind judges, it deals with objects of various kinds or, to be more expressive, "shapes"; some object fit together, some not. *But there is no fitting together where there is no synthesis!* This is the very problem of Russell's theory.

¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

When we have two pieces of a jigsaw, provided that these pieces fit together, then even if we do not actually put (by our bodily movements) the pieces together, the recognition of the fact that they fit together is conditioned by a sort of synthesis at the level of our imagination or discursive thought. Holding those two pieces in our hands, we can decide whether they fit together or not, but we cannot do so if we are unable to consider the shapes of those pieces in a certain, perhaps, geometrical relation to each other; here is an imaginal or conceptual synthesis presupposed. Thus we have return back to the old kantian problem of the synthetic unity of judgment. The fundamental problem of multiple relation theory was not an appeal to the theory of types, as some commentators thought; this peculiarity was merely a drawback of the more fundamental difficulty with the synthetical unity. Holding the tenet that the subject conceives the object of judgments one by one, separately, there is no chance to preserve the synthetical unity. Both, the direction problem (the “narrow” direction problem) as well as the problem of the logical ordering (the “wide” direction problem) points out certain structural properties which must the object of judgment (which is the meaning of propositions_L) have. But the object can have a structure, no matter what structure we think of, only when there is a unity. Embracing the multiple-relation theory Russell rejected his *PoM*-notion of the relational unity with regard to the object of the judgment; moreover, holding the thesis of direct realism, he could not appeal to kantian synthetic unity *by act* – to repeat the reason: if the subject actually synthesizes the objects, he/she creates psychokinetically complexes.

Russell eventually found an appropriate solution to the problems discussed in this chapter by returning to the notion of proposition as a unity. But it was neither the return to propositional realism he developed with Moore before 1906, nor adoption of a sort of kantian analysis of cognition, but a naturalistic conception of mental phenomena in which he combined neutral monism mostly adopted from W. James and the analysis of “intelligent behavior” adopted from J. B. Watson. This later development of Russell’s philosophy will be sketched in the last chapter.

3. Towards the concept of mind without minds

In his intellectual biography Russell says that his „philosophical development since the early years of the present [20th, MS] century, may be broadly described as a gradual retreat from Pythagoras [...] My general outlook, in the early years [...] was profoundly ascetic. I disliked the real world and sought refuge in a timeless world, without change or decay or the will-o'-the-wisp of progress.“¹²⁰ The realist stance to mathematics (but, more correctly, to logic to which mathematics was supposed to be reduced) was a prototype part of Russell's broader platonism; spatial relations, properties like redness, or, generally, the properties which were taken as constituents of so-called sense-data, all these entities were claimed to reside in "platonian heaven", i.e. to be mind-independent entities being variously inter-related so that they make up various particulars (sense-data). Returning the problem of analytic unity of consciousness discussed in the first chapter, it is worth noting that the multiple relation theory (as based on the thesis of direct realism) was compatible with platonism, and thus with the rejection of ideas as abstractions.¹²¹

Russell's retreat from platonism begun after the breakdown of multiple relation theory (1913). It was a gradual retreat towards what he called "scientific philosophy". The timeless world consisting of discrete elements variously interrelated was replaced by the world as experienced continuum which empirical sciences cut into pieces to discriminate causes and effects or the arguments of differential equations where measuring and a mathematical model was developed. Concerning epistemology, Russell rejected direct realism once for all and, under the influence of James' pragmatism and Watson's behaviorism, decided to treat cognition as a phenomenon that is to be accounted for by methods of empirical sciences rather than by a philosophical speculation.

In 1919 Russell published the essay "On Propositions: What They Are and How They Mean" in which he outlined a new theory of belief (or judgment) developed along the lines of the "scientific" philosophy: philosophy of which essence is logic serves as conceptual analysis which, in its preoccupation by an empirical phenomenon, ought to give such a description of the phenomenon so that it provides (nothing more than) a basis for the subsequent development of *testable* hypotheses.

As we shall see, Russell proposed to treat propositions as *results* of mental activity. Russell was, therefore, led to the notion of the *unity by act* which Moore and he rejected once. We saw, in the first chapter, that Kant held that the synthetic unity of judgment is to be understood as the unity of *this* sort. Russell, however, starkly rejected the way of accounting for the unity by act which is actually present in Kantian theories of cognition. His rejection, as we shall see, was based on the rejection of "homuncular" analysis of conscious phenomena. My exposition shall begin with Russell's account of consciousness in "The Analysis of Mind" [AM] (1921) and this rejection. Next, I shall examine the two most important sources of his ideas, James' theory of neutral monism as it was set forth in the

¹²⁰ Russell, B., *My Philosophical Development*. London, Allen & Unwin 1959, p. 154-155.

¹²¹ In *PP* Russell aptly expresses his adherence to platonism: "Plato's 'theory of ideas' is an attempt to this very problem [of universals, MS], and in my opinion it is one of the most successful attempts hitherto made. The theory to be advocated in what follows is largely Plato's, with merely such modifications as time has shown to be necessary." (*The Problems of Philosophy*, c. d., p. 91.)

article "Does is 'consciousness' exist?" (1904) and Watson's objectivism proposed in the article "Psychology as Behaviorist views it" (1913). Finally, I shall sketch Russell's causal theory of belief and meaning which will be derived from *AM* where Russell practically repeats and refines his claims in "On Propositions: What They Are and How They Mean" without any significant change.

3.1. Analysis „consciousness“ and neutral monism

In the opening passage of the first chapter of *AM* Russell says: "I shall be concerned to refute a theory which is widely held, and which I formerly held myself: the theory that the essence of everything mental is a certain quite peculiar something called 'consciousness', conceived either as a relation to objects, or as a pervading quality of psychical phenomena."¹²² This theory of consciousness was fundamental to Moore's and Russell's early epistemology as well as to Russell's views based on the multiple relation theory. And it present in Kantian theories (based on psychological reading of Kant. As a matter of fact, Russell combats the very fundament of traditional epistemology as such: the view that belief consists of a relation between an object/objects and a subject that *acts "judgmentally"* so that a judgment as a certain mental fact occurs.

Exploring Russell's reasons for abandoning this view, I shall follow the exposition of the first chapter of *AM*. Very important for us is the positive answer to the problem which Russell found in neutral monism developed (among others) by W. James. I shall explain neutral monism by means of an exposition of James' article "Does 'consciousness' exist?", focusing, later, on the question *how* it is able to be combined with behaviorist psychology. Russell's post-1919 theory of belief is (at least partially) resulted from such a combination. As I shall show at the end of this essay, this shift in Russell's views bears importance to the problem of judgmental unity which, as we saw in the preceding chapter, rendered the multiple relation theory hopelessly unworkable.

3.1.1 Rejection of the homuncular analysis of conscious states

Belief belongs among occurrences that we are in habit calling "mental". Belief is, according to Russell, a form of consciousness which differs from, e.g. perception, memory or thought in the respect that it may be either true or false, and, having this peculiar property, "it gives 'knowledge' in the strict sense, and also error."¹²³ Belief is, in a sense, not separable from the other forms of consciousness, since it is a form of consciousness which applies to memories, expectations, thoughts or in some cases even to images combined with actually received sensations, as we shall see later. Believing generates *cognitive* states of mind. Desire, pleasure and pain or, generally, emotions (*per se*) are taken as non-conscious. Conscious states are *directed to something*, or to use another phrase, to be conscious (perceive, recall, think or believe) is always to be conscious *of* something. "This direction," says Russell, "towards an object is commonly regarded as typical of every form of cognition, and sometimes of mental life altogether."¹²⁴ It was F. Brentano who proposed this tenet, and, in the context on modern debates, it was reinvented by J. Searle. It is important that Russell in *AM* does not attack the contention itself, but the associate thesis (defended both by Brentano and Searle, and accepted by Russell before his 1919 turn to neutral monism and

¹²² Russell, B., *The Analysis of Mind*. (1921), London, George Allen & Unwin, 1949, p. 9.

¹²³ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 14.

behaviorist analysis) that intentionality, i.e. directedness toward an object is an *ultimate* and *irreducible* datum about consciousness.

"Until very lately I believed, as he [Brentano, MS] did, that mental phenomena have essential reference to objects, except possibly in the case of pleasure and pain. Now I no longer believe this, even in the case of knowledge."¹²⁵

It was typical for Brentano's followers (Meinong, Twardowski, Husserl and others) to analyse conscious states into *three* parts, distinguishing between the act, the content and the object. The act (the acting subject) is what is constant in one's history of consciousness; the object may be shared by more than one thought, but it is not necessary that all thoughts have the same object; and finally, the content - which is a way how the object is cognized or presented - is what particularises conscious states of one's mind.

Moore in *NJ* and *RI* established his realism on the rejection of content and Russell followed him. The conceptual manifold was *reified*, i.e. moved into the object (proposition, when judging is concerned) and the mental occurrences were supposed to be particularized simply by their relation to a moment. Now, Russell, still seeking a realist theory, exercises quite a different strand of thoughts, he reject the act:

"[...] the *act* seems unnecessary and fictitious. The occurrence of the content of a thought constitutes the occurrence of the thought. Empirically, I cannot discover anything corresponding to the supposed act; and theoretically I cannot see that it is indispensable. We say: 'I think so-and-so,' and this word 'I' suggests that thinking is the act of a person. [...] 'act' is the ghost of the subject, or what once was the full-blooded soul. It is supposed that thoughts cannot just come and go, but need a person to think them."¹²⁶

The question whether there is an act when someone thinks is not an empirical question but a theoretical one. *Russell's objection is, then, grounded on the diagnosis that the criticised view takes conscious states as conative occurrences.* E.g. "I am riding the bike now", expresses a conative occurrence and, e.g. "I am wondering whether it is raining in Paris now" is *wrongly* supposed also to express a conative occurrence. In the former case there is a flesh-and-blood agent riding the bike, in the later there is also an agent acting some way, not, presumably, a flesh-and-blood one though.

Proceeding to the objection itself, we should ask: "Is taking conscious states as conative acts a correct theory?" According to Russell, it is not – I think, at least, regarding Brentano-like theories which do not identify mental activity with observable behaviour (i.e. they remain within so-called *mentalist* framework). The objection is founded on the assumption that it is *unnecessary* to refer to the act, namely, unnecessary when we want to account for the unity of consciousness (Kant's "I think" which must be able to accompany all my thoughts); Russell says: "Now, of course it is true that thoughts can be collected into bundles, so that one bundle is my thoughts, another is yours thoughts, and a third is the thoughts of Mr. Jones. Bu I think the person is not an ingredient in the single thought: he is rather constituted by the relations of the thoughts to each other and to the body."¹²⁷ The appeal to "bundling" of thoughts is not much explanative here, but the central claim is quite clear: no entity which

¹²⁵ Ibid., p. 15.

¹²⁶ Ibid., p. 17-18.

¹²⁷ Ibid., p. 18.

can be truly called "person" and which can be understood as the subject of a conative occurrence figures within the constitution of a conscious state. Stated this way, the objection is an application of Occam's razor supplied by the additional diagnosis that the conative or homuncular analysis of consciousness is residue of some religious or ethical considerations based on the concept of soul. Moreover, there is a language factor which, according to Russell, may be the root of the criticized analysis. When one says "I think that so-and-so" it seems that the referent of "I" is a part of the single thought expressed by the sentence, but it is not. Therefore, it would be more correct to say that "it thinks in me," like "it rains here," or "it is a thought in me."¹²⁸

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Wittgenstein's objection to the multiple relation theory, according to my reading, was partly established as a rejection of the homuncular understanding to conscious phenomena. We saw that Wittgenstein spoke of appeals to the theory of types this way: "I want a theory of types to tell me that 'mortality is Socrates' is nonsensical [...]"¹²⁹ We also saw that he *rejects* such appeals as implausible. However, it is not explicit what reason exactly for this opinion was. But this lacuna in Wittgenstein's argument can be reasonably filled by assuming that he thought that *undestanding* what the theory types "tells" *me* is an occurrence of judgment, which triggers an endless regress. This part of Wittgenstein's argument resembles Moore's argument against Bradley's and Kant's abstractionism: any analysis of judgment cannot presuppose in its explanation an act of judgment (or more such acts); if it does, using Moore's words, then it demands "the completion of an infinite number of psychological judgments before any judgment can be made at all. But this completion is impossible; and therefore all judgment is likewise impossible."¹³⁰ It is interesting, in the context of Russell's rejection of homuncular analysis, to notice the role of the pronoun "me" in the passage from Wittgenstein. *Who* is supposed to be given an advice as for the logical types? Is it a flesh-and-blood person? Is, then, a flesh-and-blood person a constituent of a judgment – is this *sort* of entity what Russell and many others meant by the term "subject"? Certainly, it is not. It is a mind which is possessed by a flesh-and-blood man what was meant by this term and what was supposedly a part of a judgment. But, then, another question must be answered: Does the mind, then, judge before a judgment is completed? Again, this cannot be admitted on pain of triggering an endless regress. This strand of thoughts is, I think, instructive: *we should drop the idea that analysis of mental phenomena and conscious phenomena, in particular, can be accounted for by stipulating an entity which exercises acts of judgment and, therefore, behaves intelligently*; as I showed in the first chapter, this is also the moral of the regressive argument developed by Ryle.

This objection differs from Russell's objection in *AM*, but it shares the same diagnosis in its grounds. Russell professes that his objection is not *logical*, it is objection that "the act seems mythical, and not to be found by observation."¹³¹ Indeed, Russell's objection is derived mostly from methodological behaviorism about which I shall say something later. Now, let us turn to neutral monism which is a specific sort of realism in which Russell found a satisfactory analysis of consciousness.

¹²⁸ Ibid., p. 18.

¹²⁹ Wittgenstein, L., *Notebooks 1914-1916*, c.d., 121-122.

¹³⁰ Moore, G. E., *The Nature of Judgment*. *Mind*, c.d., p. 177.

¹³¹ Russell, B., *The Analysis of Mind*, c.d., p. 21.

3.1.2 William James on "consciousness"

According to the doctrine attacked by James, that which is thinking (consciousness) and that which is thought is taken to differ in *substance*. To be a substance of a certain sort means, for James, to be built of the stuff of a certain sort – in the case of consciousness it is a "spiritual" stuff, something which the contents of consciousness are supposedly made of. James traces this approach from the ancient spirit-body distinction up to the neo-kantian subject-object distinction pointing out that the complexity of consciousness gradually shrank in favor of the complexity of content:

"In the hands of such writers as Schuppe, Rehmke, Natorp, Münsterberg – at any rate in his earlier writings – Schubert-Soldern and others, the spiritual principle attenuates itself to a thoroughly ghostly condition, being only a name for the fact that the 'content' of experience *is known*. It loses its personal form and activity – these passing over to the content – and becomes a bare *Bewusstheit* or *Bewusstsein überhaupt*, of which in its own right absolutely nothing can be said."¹³²

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We saw this tendency in the case of Moore's *RI*-theory of consciousness as a diaphanous entity of which one can say merely that it is or it is not in a certain cognitive relation to another entity, or possibly even to itself. Moore's case fits well James' diagnosis in the respect that it is based on replacing "operational" complexity of consciousness by the structural complexity of its contents: the kantian logical principles employed by the synthetic unity of apperception are replaced by the logical forms that are *inherent* to mind-independent propositions. Of course, we cannot, after this reification, say that the contents of the consciousness are made up from the spiritual stuff of consciousness. But even after this change, it remains valid that consciousness is a substance – a primitive one having no inner complexity, particularized externally and contextually. In this case consciousness resembles the nature of geometrical point.

James famously contends that "'consciousness,' once it evaporated to this estate of pure diaphaneity, is on the point of disappearing altogether. It is the name of nonentity, and has no right to a place among first principles. Those who still cling to it are clinging to a mere echo, the faint rumor left behind by the disappearing 'soul' upon the air of philosophy."¹³³ Consciousness is to be dismissed as an "entity", which may sound very confusingly, *for James is eager to replace one definition of consciousness by another, not to claim that there is no entity at all which could be reasonably called "consciousness"*. His objective is the one of a reconstruction, not of a demolition. In response to C. S. Pierce who was confused by James' usage of the term "entity", he wrote:

"In my article it meant a constituent principle of all experience, as contrasted with a certain function or relation between particular parts of experience. The distinction seems to me plain enough."¹³⁴

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This reveals that for James something is an entity if and only if it is a constituent principle, i.e. something that bears properties including relational ones and *which itself is not a property, especially not a relational one*. Consciousness is to be dismissed as an entity in this

¹³² James, W., Does 'consciousness' exist?, *Journal of Philosophy*, 1904, p. 477.

¹³³ *Ibid.*

¹³⁴ The passage cited in Harrison, S., Was James a Reductionist?. *Streams of Williams James*, Vol. 6, 3, 2004, pp. 19-24, p. 19.

peculiar sense and redefined so that it is "a function in experience which thoughts perform, and for the performance of which this quality of being is invoked." He continues: "The function is *knowing*. 'Consciousness' is supposed necessary to explain the fact that things not only are, but get reported, are known."¹³⁵

3.1.3 Neutral stuff and the contextual ambiguity

Neutral monism *qua* monism is based on assumption that the substance or stuff of which reality is made is ultimately of *one* sort. The significant difference between neutral and absolute monism (represented, e.g. by F. H. Bradley) is in that *plurality* is considered as real, which is the tenet usually couched as a rejection of so-called axiom of internal relation.¹³⁶ James calls the stuff of which everything is ultimately made, perhaps quite misleadingly, as "pure experience". "Knowing can be easily explained as a particular sort of relation towards one another into which portions of pure experience may enter."¹³⁷ The relation of knowing itself is supposed to be a part of the manifold of pure experience, where one of its terms is to be coined by the term "knower", the other by "object known". The dualist nature of cognitive (and conative) facts is *not* to be seen as relation between something which is not a part of pure experience and something which is a part of pure experience. Let us see what James' term 'pure experience' means.

The notion of pure experience or neutral stuff can be derived in its substantiality in the two following ways: (a) either by evoking phenomenal qualities (or sense-data) and riding them of their phenomenal or sensual aspect, or (b) by evoking the emergent properties of material objects and riding them of the property of being parts of the constitution of material objects. James describes that what remains as "the instant field of the present." *It is an entity systematically ambiguous between subjective and objective context.* "For the time being, it is plain, unqualified actuality or experience, a simple *that*. In this *naïf* immediacy it is of course *valid*; it is *there*, we *act* upon it; and the doubling of it in retrospection into a state of mind and a reality intended thereby, is just one of the acts."¹³⁸ A piece of pure experience is a *motivator* to an action (this is the pragmatic element of James' theory), where distinguishing between its being a part of a certain cognitive context and its being a part of a certain objective context (e.g. distinguishing between my perceiving this red patch and the redness of the pen before me), which may be called "interpreting", is itself a thus motivated action. However, we must not be misled and suppose that there is something *external* which interprets the pieces of pure experience.

The neo-kantian doctrine of diaphanous consciousness, according to James, treats consciousness as a substantial part of the experience, even if it is so airy and diaphanous that it is very difficult to "see" it. James assimilates it to a menstruum which must be subtracted from the paint to become visible. This analogy makes one mistakenly to believe that there is beside physical subtraction also mental subtraction performed by psychologists. But it is other way round: "*Experience, I believe,*" James says, "*has no such inner duplicity; and the separation of it into consciousness and content comes, not by way of subtraction, by way of addition* – the addition, to a given concrete piece of it, of other sets of experiences, in

¹³⁵ James, W., *Does 'Consciousness' exist?*, c.d., p. 478.

¹³⁶ See the statements in: The Program and First Platform of Six Realists. In: *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, Vol. 7, No. 15 (Jul. 21, 1910), pp. 393-401.

¹³⁷ James, W., *Does 'Consciousness' exist?*, c.d., p. 478.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 485.

connection with which severally its use or function may be of two kinds." He continues, then, using the analogy: In one moment is the paint in a pot stored in a paint-shop, in another is the same paint spread by a painter along with other paints on canvas. The "spiritual function" of the paint spread on the canvas where, let us say, a certain scenery is pictured, serves as analogy to the cases where a concept is supposed to represent how the things are out in the world.

3.1.3.1 James' analysis of perception

When perceiving the room I am reading in, I am in a direct cognitive contact with material things that are in my perceptual field. Those things are "both [being material] in outer space and [being in my perceptual field] in a person's mind," and the paradoxical question arises how can be one thing in two places at once?

One possible answer is to set forth a form of the representational theory of perception that analyses cognition into an object, an act and a content, where the content *represents* the object and the act, besides being the *substratum* of experience, the *source* of the judgmental unity, contains modality (affirmation, denial, doubting, etc.). Such theories, taking the content as a mental image or something similar, violate the perceiver's "sense of life, which knows no intervening mental image but seems to see the room and the book immediately just as they physically exist."¹³⁹ James fully agrees at this point with Moore in *RI*. The transparency of consciousness, at least when perception is concerned, sets doubts over the "content" or "image" theories. But James' view on perception differs significantly from the theory proposed by early Moore.

James' proposal is, as we already know, to apply the principle of systematic ambiguity onto the *explanandum*. In order to explain the idea, he uses analogy with the point which lies in the intersection of two lines, the same one which Frege uses to explain what he means by the term "Sinn". *How* it is possible for a point to lie on two lines, and yet be one and the same point? It is possible, since the point *lies at the intersection of the lines*. The pure experience, similarly, is placed "on" two *different* series – the series composed of various pieces of pure experience, neutral stuff. It is in a certain "place of intersection of two processes, which connected it with different groups of associates respectively, it could be counted twice over, as belonging to either group, and spoken of loosely as existing in two places, although it would remain all the time a numerically single thing."¹⁴⁰ There are two contexts which - here is a point of difference in the analogy - are understood in *operational* terms: James' speaks of two *processes* which put the piece of experience into different "groups of associates" or "systems of association"; this shows James' reliance on the associative account of thinking typical for Humean psychology. This part of the James' neutral monism *may* be fruitfully combined with behaviorism which can offer operational account of intelligent behavior to replace the outdated Humean associative apparatus; pure experience is, then, to be defined in terms of *stimuli*. It was Russell who, later, tried to develop neutral monism this way.

"The physical and the mental operations form curiously incompatible groups. As a room, the [piece of pure, MS] experience has occupied that spot and had that environment for thirty years. [...] As a room, it will take an earthquake, or a gang of man, and in any case a certain

¹³⁹ Ibid., p. 481.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid., p. 482.

amount of time, to destroy it. As your subjective state, the closing your eyes, or any instantaneous play of fancy suffice. In the real world, fire will consume it. In your mind, you can let fire play over it without effect.”¹⁴¹

3.1.3.2 James' analysis of conception —

James calls the stuff in a perceptual context “percepts” and opposes percepts to what he calls “concepts”. The perceptual part of mental activity concerns things *presently felt* while the non-perceptual part, whether it is imagination, memory or imageless thought, concerns things *remotely thought*. The difference between perception and conception or, roughly speaking, “judgmental thinking” does not necessitate, according to James, any difference in the ontological analysis in the case of the later. *Concepts are contextually ambiguous the same way as percepts*: a memory or an image has also an objective context, that is, besides being what is recalled or imagined, it also partakes on the constitution of an object which is remote in the sense of not being presented or given. Russell did not accept this thesis and applied the principle of systematic ambiguity *solely* on percepts, thus conceiving concepts as unambiguously private occurrences.

3.1.3.3 James on the unity of knowledge

At the end of the article James famously attacks Kant's concept of consciousness as the principle of synthetic unity, diagnosing it as coming from reflecting the regularity of a bodily behavior like breathing; it is worth to cite the whole passage:

“I am as confident as I am of anything that, in myself, the stream of thinking (which I recognize emphatically as a phenomenon) is only careless name for what, when scrutinized, reveals itself to consist chiefly of the stream of my breathing. The ‘I think’ which Kant said must be able to accompany all my objects, is the ‘I breathe’ which actually does accompany them. There are other internal facts besides breathing (intracerebral muscular adjustments, etc. [...]) and these increase the assets of ‘consciousness,’ so far as the latter is subject to immediate perception; but breath, which was ever the original of ‘spirit,’ breath moving outwards, between the glottis and the nostrils, is, I am persuaded, the essence out of which philosophers have constructed the entity known to them as consciousness. *That entity is fictitious, while thoughts in the concrete are fully real. But thoughts in the concrete are made of the same stuff as things are.*”¹⁴²

The claim of this passage which is certainly shocking for those who favor Kant is that Kant's “I think” which must be able to accompany all my thoughts is *concealed* “I breathe” which “actually does accompany them”. The shocking part is this one: that which was supposed to be *a priori* to each one's conscious activity, Kant's “I think”, is identical to something which is *a posteriori*, James' “I breathe”.

Kant's synthetic unity has two functions, it gives the unity of knowledge and it also preserves the (logical) unity of each particular judgment. The former function is at stake now. The unity of knowledge is said by James to emerge with the regularity of bodily experience, where breathing is taken just as a prototype. Bodily experiences, it is to be remembered, belong within the manifold of neutral stuff. James' theory, accordingly, is that the primitive and

¹⁴¹ Ibid.

¹⁴² Ibid., p. 491.

ultimate fact about reality is that there is the manifold of neutral stuff and that, when a certain pattern occurs among its constituents, a certain particular emerges which can be spoken of as being a person which remembers, knows, and perceives something, etc., where there *his (or her)* thoughts are involved.

Russell's criticism of the act (which is the same as what James' calls "consciousness") in *AM* goes along with this account of subjectivity – or the unity of knowledge in particular. Russell says that "the person is not an ingredient in the single thought: he is rather constituted by the relations of the thoughts to each other and to the body."¹⁴³ If the person is not an ingredient in the single thought, there is nothing like Kant's "I think" – but there certainly is a unity of knowledge, which after this James' (and Russell's) overturn concerning this question must be accounted for in a naturalist vein.

3.2. Watson's behaviorism

Russell's objection to homuncular analysis of consciousness, as we saw, was methodological: empirically there is no such thing as the subject acting judgmentally (or mentally) and theoretically there is no need to postulate such an entity. I have supplied this rejection by the regressive argument (Moore-Wittgstein-Rylle's regress), and contended that Russell's own grounds were mostly derived from behaviorism. Now, I wish to continue and briefly introduce Watson's behaviorism but, most importantly, his "objectivism", i.e. his overall insistence on the claim that human mind should be accounted for solely in accordance to the methodology of empirical sciences; the sort of behaviorism he defended is just one particular elaboration of this broader claim.

Watson who begun his career as an animal psychologist earned his Ph. D. in 1903 from the University of Chicago. He was engaged already in his dissertation in experiments with rats' performance in maze inquiring into dependences between various physiological conditions and the ability to learn. For sake of illustration, let me refer to one of his experiment. "Drawing on surgical skills acquired at Johns Hopkins in 1905, he created three groups of rats that could not, respectively, see hear, or smell. Their performance after surgery, though, was no different than before on a variety of measures (e .g., at different starting points) . Finally, Watson made one rat blind, deaf, and anosmic and removed all its whiskers. Although this rat took more trials to learn the maze, its final running speed matched that of the controls."¹⁴⁴ It is useful to realise that Watson's background differed greatly from Russell's (quite a sterile) background at Trinity College in Cambridge. And it also differed from the background of James who promoted a school of thought known as functionalism. However, all the three figures came, soon or later, to combat the same enemy – the psychological structuralism and philosophical mentalism. The differences in background are of importance though, since, as we shall see soon, Watson's eliminativist criticisms of consciousness, according to Russell who unanimously agreed with James' criticism which was not eliminativist, went too far to be acceptable.

¹⁴³ Russell, B., *The Analysis of Mind*, c. d., p. 18.

¹⁴⁴ Morris, E. K. and Todd, J. T., Watsonian Behaviorism, In: O'Donohue, W. and Kitchener, R. (eds.) *Handbook of Behaviorism*, Academic Press, 1999, pp. 16-69, p. 27

The basic principles of behaviorism Watson set forth in the opening passage of his influential article "Psychology as the Behaviorist Views It" (sometimes referred as the "Behaviorist Manifesto") which was published in 1913:

„Psychology as the behaviorist views it is a purely objective experimental branch of natural science. Its theoretical goal is the prediction and control of behavior. Introspection forms no essential part of its methods, nor is the scientific value of its data dependent upon the readiness with which they lend themselves to interpretation in terms of consciousness. The behaviorist, in his efforts to get a unitary scheme of animal response, recognizes no dividing line between man and brute. The behavior of man, with all of its refinement and complexity, forms only a part of the behaviorist's total scheme of investigation.“¹⁴⁵

Observation of behavior is proposed as the *only* method of psychology and is, according to Watson, to be applied *equally* to humans and nonhumans. Introspection is rejected and, as a consequence, also any reference to "consciousness"; if the subject of observation is human, his/hers reports are taken rather as cases of *linguistic behavior* than expressions describing what happens in unobservable consciousness – there is no stream of consciousness, no succession of representations but a case of behavior. When reading the "Manifesto", it is clear that what is proposed as a substitute for the traditional psychological methods is the experimental method of animal psychology.

As I alluded above, Watson was a controversial thinker. Comparing his approach with James, there is a stark difference that Watson, in opposition to James, seems sometimes to dismiss "consciousness" completely. For example, Watson says: "The time seems to have come when psychology must discard all reference to consciousness; when it need no longer delude itself into thinking that it is making mental states the objects of observation. We have become so enmeshed in speculative questions concerning the elements of mind, the nature of consciousness (for example, imageless thought, attitudes, and *Bewusstseinslage*, etc.) that I, as an experimental student, feel with our premises and the types of problems which develop from them."¹⁴⁶ Watson's eliminative rejection of mental phenomena was widely criticised and was not accepted even among later proponents of behaviorism. Many, including Russell,¹⁴⁷ saw such passages as overstatements, since, according to them, there *certainly* are events of (e.g.) imageless thought or imagination. One thing is to be a naturalist with regard to mental phenomena; another is to claim that they do not exist! *But Watson himself eventually admitted that there are mental phenomena and adopted a sort of reductionism*; in spite of the programmatic claims in his "Manifesto", he later „developed a peripheral account that localized thinking in the larynx, emotions in the glands, and imagery in the movements of the eye.“¹⁴⁸

Russell's adoption of Watson's approach to psychology was only partial, mostly due to Watson's eliminativist tendencies. Russell was persuaded that mental phenomena cannot be

¹⁴⁵ Watson, B., The psychology as the Behaviorist Views It (1913), Psychological Review, 1994, Vol. 101, No. 2, pp. 248-253, p. 248.

¹⁴⁶ Ibid., p 249.

¹⁴⁷ Russell commented Watson's rejection of visual imagery in a sarcastic way: "Professor Watson, one must conclude, does not possess the faculty of visualising, and is unwilling to believe that others do." See Russell, B., On Propositions, Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, Supplementary Volumes, vol. 2, 1919, pp. 1-43, p. 10.

¹⁴⁸ Morris, E. K. and Todd, J. T., Watsonian Behaviorism, c.d., p. 39

rejected or, as Watson proposed later, reduced to “sub-vocal” activity in larynx. But it is important that he accepted Watson’s *objectivism* without reservations – it was, I think, more under the influence of Watson than James that he came to think that epistemology is a part of empirical sciences. In *AM* Russell holds the tenet that mental phenomena are governed by psychological causal laws, but he, in turn, assure us that these laws “may be fully explicable in terms of the peculiarities of nervous tissue, and these peculiarities, in turn, may be explicable by the laws of physics.”¹⁴⁹ This radical statement, proposed as a hypothesis though, was perhaps encouraged by Watson.

3.3. Russell’s causal theory of proposition

Russell followed James in assuming that the term ‘consciousness’ is to be taken as a name of a certain function (relation) which is constitutive to all conscious mental states. Belief is one of such states. As for the constitution of belief, i.e. the terms of the postulated function called “consciousness” in case of believing, there must be, according to Russell, constituents of three kinds; a belief-feeling, a content and a certain relation between them. He says, further, that there are at least three kinds of belief-feeling: memory, expectation and bare assent. The entity believed which is the truth-bearer is called the “content”;¹⁵⁰ when taken from a logical point of view (an analysis of inferences in abstraction from the context of particular beliefs) the contents are called “propositions”. The entity which makes the belief true, if it is true, and false, if it is false, is an “objective”. Contents may consist of images (products of imagination) or words, or they may be mixtures of images and words, and even a sensation may appear within a content – one may be, e.g. looking at a rusty bicycle, saying “so rusty”, where the sensation interpreted as a sensation of a bicycle occurs in the logical subject of the proposition, i.e. as a part of the content. The constituents of the content *have* meaning which is, for Russell, a sort of *causal efficacy*; the relation of a sign to its meaning in the case of a word is characterised this way:

„The relation of a word to its meaning is of the nature of a causal law governing our use of the word and our actions when we hear it used. There is no more reason why a person who uses a word correctly should be able to tell what it means than there is why a planet which is moving correctly should know Kepler’s laws.”¹⁵¹

In the second sentence of this passage Russell alludes that knowledge of meaning is not (primarily) knowledge of a lexical definition. It is an *ability* to use the word correctly and act correctly when the word is heard. If this sufficed to account for meaning, Russell’s theory would be through and through behaviorist. *But*, according to Russell, there is a sort of linguistic practice, whether an inner or public speech is concerned, where it is difficult to account for understanding meaning in terms of appropriateness of the subsequent action, e.g. when a word is used to express a narrative. In such cases the meaning of a word is *also* its causal efficacy, but of a different sort – an efficacy to cause certain *images* in one’s mind, instead of an overt action (at this point Russell criticises Watson who vehemently rejected imagination as a superstition of common sense).

¹⁴⁹ Russell, B., *The Analysis of Mind*, c. d., p. 139.

¹⁵⁰ It is important not to confuse the contents in Russell’s theory with the contents stipulated by neo-Kantian philosophers of Brentano’s school.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, p. 198.

The part of Russell's causal theory of meaning which is in a sense behaviorist consist in employing the principle which can be found employed also in James' famous theory of emotion. In order to explain this principle, let me cite from James' "Psychology":

"Our natural way of thinking about these coarser emotions, grief, fear, rage, love, is that the mental perception of some fact excites the mental affection called the emotion, and that this latter state of mind gives rise to the bodily expression. My theory, on the contrary, is that *the bodily changes follow directly the perception of the exciting fact, and that our feeling of the same changes as they occur is the emotion*. Common sense says: we lose our fortune, are sorry and weep; we meet a bear, are frightened and run; we are insulted by a rival, are angry and strike. The hypothesis here to be defended says that this order of sequence is incorrect, that the one mental state is not immediately induced by the other, that the bodily manifestations must first be interposed between, and that the more rational statement is that we feel sorry because we cry, angry because we strike, afraid because we tremble, and not that we cry, strike, or tremble, because we are sorry, angry, or fearful, as the case may be. Without the bodily states following on the perception, the latter would be purely cognitive in form, pale, colourless, destitute of emotional warmth."¹⁵²

It is important to note that James' theory is not a straightforward behaviorist reduction: he does not state that crying as a behavior is identical to feeling sorry, but he states that crying is *causally antecedent* to feeling sorry.

The same principle is employed in Russell's theory of meaning which *de facto* anticipates Wittgenstein's later rejection of private language. *Russell rejects the view that knowledge of meaning should be accounted for by recourse to cognitive and non-linguistic acts that precede linguistic behavior*. Thus he rejects the formerly held theory of acquaintance according which one understands a word if he was antecedently acquainted with the entity which the word in question supposedly indicates or refers to. According to Russell in *AM*, there is no such fact as one's acquaintance with the relation of sequence before one uses or understands the word "after".

An analogous shift happened with regard to the theory of belief so far as it is associated with assertion or agreement with an assertion of someone else – there is neither binary relation of the subject to a proposition nor multiple-relation of the subject to the entities indicated by the words of the associate sentence. It is, again, the *causal efficacy* of the proposition which explains the nature of belief. However, it is to be remembered that there is, in addition to a proposition, also a feeling which determines whether the belief is a memory, expectation or bare assent. This way we return to the very heart of change in Russell's views – the rejection of the thesis that the subject is a constitutive part of conscious phenomena which is, *a fortiori*, the rejection of the *whole* apparatus of cognitive relations of which an acting subject was supposed to be a term.

3.3.1 The final solution to the problems of unity

Russell's adoption of a causal account of belief was Russell's final solution to the problems of unity. The synthetic unity of judgment is a matter of syntactically appropriate formation of an occurrence of believing. The formation of such an occurrence - consisting of a proposition

¹⁵² James, W., *The Principles of Psychology*, (1890), Dover Publications, vol. 2, 1950, p 449.

and a certain feeling which is analogue of former propositional attitude - is a matter of causal efficacy. In other words, an occurrence of belief is a causal *unit* having a certain syntactically appropriate structure. When a man formulates non-sensical sentence-like symbols, he/she is, simply enough, either not trained to manage linguistic behavior, or malfunctioning in a relevant sense: in both cases there is a certain body which is unable to *cause* an event which is a belief. If a man is unable to imagine a state of affairs which has syntactically appropriate structure, e.g. when one hallucinate after having gone into delirium and, therefore, it is impossible for a belief state to occur, this individual is, again, malfunctioning in a relevant sense. The *analytic* unity of consciousness, the ability to generate "concepts" is accounted for by Russell's theory of vague images and the causal theory of meaning as applied to general words. I do not wish, however, to go into details concerning these theories. For the purpose of this essay is sufficient to point out that Russell finally decided to handle the problems of unity within a naturalised sort of epistemology and semantics. Russell, James and Watson, whatever differences among them, reduced human minds to *machines* and all the problems with the structure and unity of mental states, according to them, should be accounted in terms of causal laws, ultimately, if physicalism is right, in terms of physical causal laws.

Conclusion

The main topic of this essay was the problem of unity. I do not wish to pretend that what I proposed at the end of the essay is a complete and satisfying solution to this very problem, but I believe that some sort of causal theory of cognition must be at least a part of such a solution, if there is any. However, after the complicated inquiry which started by an exposition of Moore's arguments against idealism and ended with a brief exposition of Russell's later naturalistic epistemology, it is clear that the problem of unity was a vital issue in early analytic philosophy and especially in the development of Russell's philosophical views. Moreover, I have shown that there is an important connection between the problem of unity and a certain regressive argument which was formulated in various versions by Moore, Ryle and Wittgenstein. This argument is directed, according to my reading, against so-called homuncular analysis of mental phenomena. I think that the problem of unity can be met only by a causal theory of cognition because this argument is conclusive and early Moore's dismissal of mental activity as such is untenable. I agree with James that once the subject "attenuates itself to a thoroughly ghostly condition" (or in my words: once the reification of mental phenomena is complete), it is time to sink the subject of traditional epistemology into oblivion. But the problems of epistemology surely do not disappear when the notion of subject is rejected, and entirely new paradigm is called for – in my opinion it is a sort of naturalistic epistemology.

I must confess, however, that I am not by no way enthusiastic about naturalism in philosophy. I must profess here that once epistemology is naturalised, it loses, according to my opinion, its former importance for philosophy *completely*; or, to say it in other words, the naturalisation of epistemology does *not* mean that philosophy is the philosophy of empirical psychology or the philosophy of science in general. I feel this view (which was actually held by Russell after 1919 onwards) quite ridiculous. The rejection of the subject following by a naturalistic analysis of the epistemological problems does not lead immediately to the thesis that we *are* machines (i.e. entities that are *solely* subjects of causal laws), as some people enthusiastically claim. The whole argument of this rejection, as I see it, is based on a sort of "historical" *petitio principii*: philosophers had associated with the notion of man certain questions once, and these questions eventually turned out to be answered correctly *only* within the field of newly established empirical sciences – but are these epistemological questions philosophical? Do the correct answers to them reveal man in its *very* nature? The task of philosophers is, perhaps, to deconstruct and cast doubts on the supposed primacy of the questions which traditional epistemology imposed on the notion of man. When the question of epistemology are finally settled in a naturalist vein, the question whether man is a machine or not is not a question about what man *is* – but rather a question of what we *want* man to be! Naïve naturalists unduly disoriented by their dogma are wrong in taking this question as a question of fact and thus making empirical sciences metaphysical. This question is a normative one and the fact that so many "philosophers" accept it as a question of fact only shows that they are either so *strongly* decided to take men as machines that they have forgotten that it was a decision, not a discovery, or *too narrow-minded* to recognize that there are other possibilities.

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