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**SENSATION, MEMORY AND IMAGINATION IN BERTRAND
RUSSELL'S PHILOSOPHY 1910-1926**

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Thesis submitted to the
Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies
In partial fulfillment of the requirements
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Department of Philosophy
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Abstract

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the development of Russell's theory of cognition in the period from 1910 to 1926. Russell's theory of cognition consists of a set of principles that explain how our cognitive faculties of sensation, perception, memory, imagination, introspection, etc., contribute to our knowledge of the external world. At the core of the theory of knowledge lie the four experiential cognitive faculties of sensation, perception, memory and imagination. I am interested in these cognitive faculties since I believe that the theory of cognition, which has been overlooked in the scholarship, is an integral part of Russell's epistemology and deserves to be a part of the analysis of Russell's epistemology of the stipulated period. The period from 1910 - 1926 includes what is known as the acquaintance period (1910-1918), and the neutral monist period (1919-1926). I argue that in the acquaintance period Russell believes that the foundation of the theory of knowledge is the theory of experiential knowledge. For him experiential knowledge is grounded in acquaintance and this notion implies a theory of the cognitive faculties – sensation, perception, memory and imagination, and their sub-types. Through knowledge by acquaintance Russell hopes to explain the conditions of the most certain knowledge there is, and distinguish it from knowledge by description which is derivative, conceptual, complex, and dubitable. The theory of cognition under the acquaintance theory of knowledge faces challenges, such as distinguishing between certain cognitive faculties, or explaining how memory, and especially immediate memory, works, difficulty in accounting for our knowledge of the existence of the subject of cognition, etc. Another issue which Russell faces with in the theory of cognition from the acquaintance period is that it could turn out that the most certain knowledge is confined to knowledge of the specious present only. This possible outcome made scholars question the cognitive status of knowledge by acquaintance. In 1918 Russell expresses doubts that the theory of knowledge by acquaintance explains our knowledge of the external world. In 1919 he gives up his theory of knowledge by acquaintance and embraces a new one based on the principles of neutral monism. An initial attraction of the theory of neutral monism is that it made the picture of knowledge simpler by abolishing, or perhaps, by explaining it in new terms, a crucial distinction in the model of knowledge by acquaintance – the distinction between act of cognition (which is mental), and object of cognition (which is physical), and thus, dispensed with certain entities, such as the subject of cognition, which Russell was hesitant about from the very beginning. The central claim of the theory of cognition according to neutral monism is that all knowledge, experiential knowledge included, is derivative or mediated, and therefore, subject to error and skeptical doubt. Thus, even the most certain knowledge (perceptual knowledge) is subject to error. This puts an end to the distinction between direct and derivative knowledge which Russell viewed as important in the acquaintance period, and in a sense, makes the account of knowledge simpler. This, however, comes at the price of exposing all knowledge to skeptical doubt a lot more than it was possible in the acquaintance theory. Whatever the challenges of the new theories of sensation, perception, memory, and imagination, the textual evidence clearly shows that, despite all the changes surrounding the theory of knowledge in both periods, Russell's interest in the theory of cognition was growing and the theory of cognition was becoming increasingly complicated, of which *The Analysis of Mind* (and the later neutral monist texts) is evidence. I believe that there is a lack in the scholarship of a comprehensive analysis of the development of Russell's ideas about the main experiential cognitive faculties in both periods.

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Chapter One

Introduction

The aim of this dissertation is to examine the development of Russell's theory of sensation, perception, memory and imagination in the period from 1910 to 1926. I will use throughout the dissertation the term 'theory of cognition' to denote these faculties. I am interested in the theory of cognition since I believe that, even though it has been overlooked in the scholarship, it is an integral part of Russell's epistemology and deserves to be a part of the analysis of Russell's epistemology of the stipulated period. What I call Russell's theory of cognition consists of a set of principles that explore how our cognitive faculties of sensation, perception, memory, imagination, introspection, conception, etc., contribute to building our most certain and reliable knowledge of the external world.¹ There are four cognitive faculties, in particular, which are at the heart of the theory of cognition and upon which all knowledge of the external world is built. These cognitive faculties are sensation, perception, memory and imagination. It is with these four faculties that my dissertation is occupied. In *Theory of Knowledge* Russell argues that the foundation of the theory of knowledge is the analysis of experience, and that "the simplest and most pervading" aspect of experience is what he calls

¹Even though Russell uses at times 'certain', 'indubitable', 'self-evident', and 'infallible' interchangeably, in Chapter 2 I will clarify what Russell means by these concepts, and what could be called a proper and improper use of the term 'certain' when it comes to experiential knowledge.

‘acquaintance’.² Even though, as Russell points out in *Theory of Knowledge*, the concept of experience is surrounded by vagueness and ambiguity because it has been introduced into philosophy from common language and thus lacks precision, he believes that we can distinguish between relevant and irrelevant notions of experience for the purposes of the theory of knowledge. Russell explains that, first and foremost, experience in theory of knowledge means ‘my present experience’ or experience of ‘primitive facts’, such as the facts of sense, which are known to us immediately and are as “luminous and indubitable as that of sense”.³ Since Russell thinks that the elements of these facts of sense are ‘particulars’, he thinks that the analysis of experience has to begin from the experience of what he calls ‘particulars’. For him particulars are experienced by the subject directly. They are objects of sensation, perception, memory, imagination, and their sub-types.⁴ Thus, even though the scope of what Russell considers to be cognitive goes beyond immediate experience into conception and judgment, it is with the analysis of immediate experience that Russell finds a starting point for the analysis of knowledge, in general.⁵ As John Slater puts it, in the acquaintance period, Russell favored sense-

²*Theory of Knowledge*, (Elizabeth Ramsden Eames and Kenneth Blackwell (Eds.), Routledge, London and New York, 1992), p. 5.

³*Ibid.*, pp. 6-9.

⁴Even though it is true that in 1910 and 1911 Russell is more concerned with the logical distinctions between particulars and universals (percepts and concepts), rather than with the external world or how we know about it, he even then discusses the temporal nature of the objects of sensation and memory which later becomes the core of his theory of cognition. In *The Problems of Philosophy* [1912] which marks the beginning of the mature acquaintance theory, Russell discusses the cognitive faculties of sensation, memory, imagination, and introspection. His interest in the external world and *how* we acquire knowledge of it only increases with time, as it is clear from the *Theory of Knowledge*.

⁵In the chapter on Neutral Monism in *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell disagrees with William James’ interpretation of ‘knowing’ which excludes sensation, or any other type of acquaintance with particulars. Russell believes that acquaintance with particulars deserves to be called cognitive and therefore, it qualifies as (direct) knowledge. “The difference between being and not being one of the contents of my momentary experience, according to James, consists in experienced relations, chiefly causal, to other contents of my experience. It is here that I feel an insuperable difficulty. ... it seems plain that, without reference to any other content of my

data (the objects of the faculty of sensation where things such as colors, smells, roughness, hardness, etc. are immediately known) as the building blocks of our knowledge of the external world.⁶ Thus, when I refer to Russell's theory of cognition in the stipulated period, I mean his account of the cognitive faculties that pertain to experiential knowledge, as opposed to his theory of judgment, in general.⁷

According to Russell, when analyzing experience, we need to clarify what the relationship between the three elements of cognition is: the subject, the object and the act of cognition. Russell claims that there is a "difference in the *relation* [of the subject] to the object"⁸, that is, the act and not the object of cognition. For him, there are four main experiential cognitive faculties: sensation, perception, memory and imagination, upon which the most certain

experience, at the moment when I see the red I am acquainted with it in some way in which I was not acquainted with it before I saw it, and in which I shall not be acquainted with it when it ceases to be itself present in memory... This acquaintance which I have with what is part of my momentary experience seems to deserve to be called cognitive..." (*Ibid.*, p. 23)

⁶Slater, *Bertrand Russell*, (Bristol: Thoemmes Press, 1994), p. 55.

⁷Even though I am aware that Russell developed an elaborate theory of judgment which underwent significant changes during the period that my project covers, my interest lies with the cognitive faculties of sensation, perception, memory, and imagination, and they, by definition, are associated with knowledge by acquaintance. I believe I can focus on Russell's analysis of knowledge by acquaintance, without involving any detailed discussion of knowledge by description. In *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell states that, even though the scope of knowledge by acquaintance is limited compared to the scope of knowledge by description, the described object consists entirely of constituents that lie within our present experience (and thus, are known by acquaintance). Moreover, as already mentioned, in *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell is keen on distinguishing his position on knowledge from James's, who does not consider knowledge of the present experience to be knowledge per se. In support of his belief that present experience should be considered cognitive, Russell devotes a few chapters to the cognitive faculties of sensation, memory, and imagination, and their sub-types introspection, anticipation, etc.

⁸Russell, *Theory of Knowledge*, p. 53.

experiential knowledge is built.⁹ I will follow the development of Russell's account of these cognitive faculties during the stipulated period.

The period from 1910 to 1926 is a period of dramatic change in Russell's theory of knowledge. During this period, Russell abandons the multiple-relation theory of judgment; the acquaintance theory of knowledge (and with it, his view of knowledge as a dual relation between a subject and an object of cognition); and the idea that the subject of cognition is a simple self. He replaces these views with the theory of neutral monism according to which the subject and the object of cognition are reduced to one neutral stuff. 1910 marks the beginning of what is known as Russell's theory of knowledge by acquaintance.¹⁰ Through knowledge by acquaintance Russell hopes to establish what certain and self-evident knowledge is, and distinguish it from knowledge by description which is derivative, conceptual, complex, and therefore, dubitable. In the so-called acquaintance period, from 1910 to 1918, Russell discusses the four main experiential cognitive faculties: sensation, perception, memory and imagination, and their sub-types, in terms of knowledge by acquaintance. Since knowledge by acquaintance is immediate awareness of individual objects present to the mind, then whether objects are temporal in the case of sensation or perception and memory, or atemporal in the case of imagination, does not change the fact that they are all sources of knowledge. (Imagination for Russell is a source of knowledge in the sense that it, just like sensation and memory, presents us with data that are turned into judgments, etc.) These cognitive faculties provide the most certain and indubitable knowledge upon which all other types of knowledge are grounded. In 1918, in *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism*, Russell

⁹In the acquaintance period, Russell also discusses introspection, as a sub-type of sensation, which creates additional problems for his theory of cognition, since it concerns acquaintance with the self, and Russell's understanding of our knowledge of the self undergoes changes during the stipulated period. In the light of this, introspection will be given a special attention in Chapter 2.

¹⁰What I mean by that is that even though Russell discusses 'acquaintance' earlier than 1910 (in *The Principles of Mathematics* [1903], for example), he develops a theory of knowledge per se, based on acquaintance, only around 1910.

expresses serious doubts that the theory of knowledge by acquaintance achieves what he wants it to, namely to explain how we acquire indubitable knowledge. In these lectures he announces that he has given up his theory of knowledge by acquaintance and embraces a new one based on the principles of the theory of neutral monism. As a result of the difficulties that he encountered with the analysis of the cognitive faculties, Russell claims that the hypothesis that we have immediate knowledge or knowledge by acquaintance, is not plausible and that all knowledge is mediated or derivative. I take *The Analysis of Mind*, written in 1921, to be Russell's first major neutral monist text (it is the first neutral monist book). In it he discusses how we acquire knowledge according to the principles of his new theory of cognition. The texts that come after *The Analysis of Mind* and lead to the next significant epistemological work from the neutral monism period, *The Analysis of Matter*, written in 1927, show that Russell remains faithful to the neutral monist theory of cognition. Indeed, he retained this theory for the rest of his life. There are certain minor texts from the period between 1921 and 1927 in which Russell discusses sensation, memory, perception and imagination, which texts have been overlooked in the literature. I argue that despite all the changes in the theory of cognition and theory of knowledge after the abandonment of the acquaintance theory (some of which begin as early as 1914), Russell's interest in how we acquire knowledge through sensation, perception, memory and imagination does not change, to which textual evidence from the neutral monist period attests. This makes me believe that Russell's interest in the theory of cognition persisted throughout the whole period covered in this dissertation, despite the dramatic changes in the rest of his philosophy (the theory of judgment, for example).

I believe that the investigation of Russell's theory of cognition during the period from 1910 to 1926 is worthwhile, then, for several reasons. Discussions of this period have emphasized Russell's positions on the nature of philosophy, his views about empiricism, realism, and idealism, his method of analysis, as well as Wittgenstein's influence on his theory of

judgment.¹¹ This literature, however, has not dealt in detail with the four experiential cognitive

¹¹Peter Hylton's book *Russell, Idealism, and the Emergence of Analytic Philosophy* (NY: Clarendon Press, 1990), and particularly the last chapter "Judgment, Belief, and Knowledge: The Emergence of a Method" (pp. 328-393) is only one example of the many excellent analyses of Russell's theory of judgments and Wittgenstein's influence on him during the acquaintance period. Nicholas Griffin has discussed in great detail Russell's theory of judgment, the transition to the multiple relation theory of judgment, and the abandonment of the latter under the influence of Wittgenstein. At one place, Griffin argues that in 1913 Russell abandons the multiple-relation theory of judgment as a result of the devastating criticism by Wittgenstein (Griffin and Godden, "Psychologism and the Development of Russell's Account of Propositions", pp. 171-186.). As a result, for a while, Russell did not have a theory of judgment to replace the old one (which turned his old theory of propositions into theory of symbolism where propositions were treated not as complex facts but as symbols whose nature is representational). As a result of the reflection during the months spent in prison in 1918, Griffin continues, there was a dramatic change in Russell's epistemological views which resulted in his first neutral monist work "On Propositions" [1919]. In this work, as Griffin shows, the tendency toward naturalism is heavily laden with psychologism and as a result, propositions are not composed of things or sense-data, but of images. The conclusion that Griffin draws is that the period from 1889 until 1925 is a period of tension in Russell's epistemology. The tension is a result of Russell's desire to maintain the correspondence theory of truth, while at the same, of his increased reliance on psychology to explain the nature of propositions.

It is important to note here that in 1985 Griffin argued that, "The shift [1903-1913], in general terms, was one away from absolute realism in which each expression denoted some subsistent or existent term, and the propositions of logic were distinguished by their absolute (untyped) generality, toward an ontology of sense-data or 'neutral' events and a logic dominated by ramified type theory." (Griffin, "Russell's Multiple Relation Theory of Judgment", p. 243). However, as Griffin's review of Gregory Landini's book *Wittgenstein's Apprenticeship with Russell* (Cambridge University Press, 2007) shows, Griffin has changed his view regarding Russell's shift to neutral monism and the abandonment of the multiple-relation theory of judgment. Griffin now accepts Landini's view that "ontological reductions for which Russell is famous (number, classes, objects, minds) are *all* eliminations. When Russell says that tables and chairs are logical fictions he is to be understood entirely literally: it is not that the ontological commitment is to be replaced by another, it is that an ontological commitment is to be eliminated." ([Http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=12804](http://ndpr.nd.edu/review.cfm?id=12804) last logged on January 8, 2010). According to Griffin, Landini maintains, against the widely accepted view, even by Griffin, which was influenced by Quine, that "there was only one type of identity in *Principia*", and that "the ramified hierarchy of types and orders had a nominalist semantics", unlike what Quine claimed about the ramified type theory which, for Quine, "had a realist semantics with different styles of variables ranging over different styles of entities". Griffin continues, "Formerly, embracing realist semantics for type theory, I held that the different argument positions did carry different type restrictions, but that Wittgenstein had pointed out that every elementary judgment would presuppose prior higher-order judgments assigning objects to their appropriate type. Since the point of the theory in *Principia* was to build higher-order judgments up from elementary ones, the process was viciously circular. I now think that this was misplaced ingenuity, forced on me by the assumption that Russell intended a realist interpretation of type theory. Landini's explanation is simpler; in fact, so simple that one is surprised Russell had not spotted the problem himself. Perhaps its relative obviousness, once it is pointed out, accounts for Russell's anguish at the discovery." (*Ibid.*)

faculties in both periods, the difficulties they face, and how they change as his theory of knowledge evolves. Moreover, I argue that the changes in Russell's views about sensation, perception, memory and imagination deserve attention because he considered these cognitive faculties (together with acquaintance with universals) to be the basis of knowledge of present experience, which, for him, is ultimately, what all knowledge is based upon.¹² The four main cognitive faculties and their sub-types that I will analyze are also part of, even if not the most important part, of the story of Russell's philosophical development during the shift from acquaintance to neutral monism. For example, the subject of memory, which, as the textual evidence shows, occupied Russell's attention in both periods, is almost completely overlooked in the literature.

One of the most challenging aspects of Russell's theory of knowledge in the stipulated period is the belief which he held in 1910 that the questions of what and how we know what we think we know, are questions of "mixed psychology and logic".¹³ As Russell himself puts it in his reply to John Dewey's criticism of *Our Knowledge of the External World*, what is "exceedingly confusing" in our analysis of knowledge is that "even what we are calling the *logical* articulation of a man's knowledge is still a question of psychology, in part at least".¹⁴ Russell explains that,

If a man believes two propositions *p* and *q*, and if *p* implies *q* though he has never noticed this fact, then *p*

¹²I do not claim that in the acquaintance period experiential knowledge is the *sole* foundation of knowledge, since Russell thought that *a priori* knowledge is also foundational. However, my interest lies in the immediate, unmediated experiential knowledge, which knowledge is largely and, by Russell's own words, most obviously embodied in the four cognitive faculties. Russell did not change his view on *a priori* knowledge in either period, while his account of the four experiential cognitive faculties changed from the acquaintance to the neutral monist periods. It is this latter story that I am interested in this thesis.

¹³Russell, "Professor's Dewey's 'Essays in Experimental Logic'" (*The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, Vol. XVI, No 1, January 2, 1919), pp. 234-235. This view Russell held even before 1910.

¹⁴*Ibid.*, p. 234.

and *q* are separate pieces of his knowledge, though not separate in abstract logic. The logical articulation of a man's knowledge is subject to restrictions imposed by logic, since we shall not regard one part of his knowledge as logically derivative in relation to another unless it is logically inferable, as well as psychologically inferred by him; but although logic thus enters in as controlling the possible articulations of a man's knowledge, *logic* alone can not determine them, and his individual's *psychology* is required in addition in order to fix the actual logical order among his belief [*italics added*].¹⁵

It seems that what is argued here is that psychology, unlike logic, deals with the beliefs that the cognitive subject actually has, as well as with the logical relations that the cognitive subject sees among these beliefs. Russell argues that the logical articulation of one's knowledge changes as one's knowledge grows. Thus, knowledge at an advanced stage will have more logically derivative material than knowledge at a less advanced stage. But at the same time, the articulation of one's knowledge depends upon the (psychological) state of mind of the knower in question and this state of mind, as Russell puts it, is not a naive state of mind (the state of mind of a monkey or an infant), but that of a reasonable doubter at some particular stage of knowledge. All the constructions that one has built up in knowledge, some of them logical, need to be tested against all possible doubt. Similarly, the questions that this 'mixed case' of psychology and logic (which is what, according to Russell, theory of knowledge is) poses, have to do with how we should organize our beliefs from a logical point of view, and with showing how the more doubtful beliefs may be derived from knowledge that we fall back on when our beliefs are challenged and we are made to doubt them.¹⁶ In other words, philosophical and more specifically, epistemological theories, might use logical criteria in their analyses (namely, logical reconstruction), but it is knowledge gained immediately from experience that they start from,

¹⁵*Ibid.*

¹⁶*Ibid.*

and the analysis of experiential knowledge includes psychological analysis. With this in mind, it seems that what Russell principally wanted to know, in the acquaintance period, as well as in the neutral monism period, is what our most reliable and indubitable knowledge is, and how it is acquired.

It appears that during the period that we will be investigating in this dissertation, Russell was convinced that there are, as Peter Hylton puts it, both logical and psychological constraints on knowledge which need to be accounted for.¹⁷ For example, the notion of acquaintance which is a central notion in Russell's theory of knowledge in the period from 1910 until 1918 and which stands for the most certain and indubitable knowledge, shows us how all cognitive relations ought to be defined and analyzed from both the epistemological and psychological points of view. For Russell the formal or logical definition of acquaintance is that it is a dual relation between two non-homogeneous relata (one of which is mental and the other is not) – a subject and an object of cognition. At the same time, the most obvious example of knowledge by acquaintance is sensation, and sensation is at the center of any psychological analysis of cognition. In sensation a *concrete*, and not just a formal, or grammatical subject, is acquainted with a *concrete* object. In other words, the logical definition of acquaintance (as a dual relation between a subject and an object of cognition), is not sufficient for understanding the nature of acquaintance. We need to consider exactly what sort of entities subjects and objects are, how the concrete subject of cognition is acquainted with the concrete objects of cognition, and what happens, for example, to our knowledge when the object of cognition is in the past, or is only imaginary. Some of the psychological aspects regarding knowledge by acquaintance, which Russell considers important for understanding the nature of acquaintance, concern whether knowledge by acquaintance entails doubt or not, or whether the reliability of acquaintance

¹⁷Hylton, pp. 329-330.

depends upon the position of the subject in physical space and time, etc.¹⁸ We have to note here that from 1910 onward Russell's interest in the psychological analysis of cognition increases and culminates in *The Analysis of Mind* [1921], where Russell writes that he will concentrate mainly on the psychological problems with memory.^{19, 20} As he sees it, it is a task for every philosopher who deals with the problems of knowledge, therefore, to take into account both the logical and

¹⁸Here is how Slater, based upon Russell's theory of knowledge around 1913-1914, explains what happens when we construct our knowledge of the world. "The first stage is to collect into a system all of its appearances at a given time; this provides the data for a logical construction of the object at that time. We may illustrate this procedure this way. Consider a lighted room bare of everything except a table. These appearances are first ordered into series and then the series are collected into a class. ... As we walk along what is called a line of sight toward the table we successively experience the members of one of the first sort of series; as we move around the table at a fixed distance from it we successively experience the members of one of the second sort of series. The members of the first sort of series radiate out from where we would ordinarily say the table is, like spokes from a hub; the members of the second collection of series enclose the common-sensical table in a set of partial spheres, the physical properties of the room preventing complete spheres. ... In finished constructions of the sort just sketched every appearance of a thing belongs to two classes. In the first place it is a member of the class of all the appearances of the thing. This class is of interest to the physicist. In the second place every appearance is a member of a perspective, only some of which are perceived. Perceived perspectives are of interest to the psychologist." (Slater, pp. 52-53).

¹⁹Russell, *The Analysis of Mind*, p. 174.

²⁰ In a recent article entitled "Psychologism and the Development of Russell's Account of Propositions", Nicholas Griffin, together with David Godden, argues that Russell was increasingly relying on psychology to explain the nature of propositions. Thus, the transition to neutral monism was heavily loaded with psychologism. Images and beliefs are the central elements of Russell's theory of knowledge in the neutral monism period. (In the neutral monism period propositions are not composed of things or sense-data, but of images, or words, which depend upon images. David Godden and Nicholas Griffin, *History and Philosophy of Logic*: May 2009, Vol. 30, Issue 2, pp. 171-186). This evaluation of Russell's philosophical development fits well the picture that I draw of the development of Russell's theory of cognition in the stipulated period. I hope to show that, even though Russell's account of the cognitive faculties may not have dictated the changes in his epistemology that occur around 1913-1914 and 1918-1919, it still presents itself as a link between the periods discussed in this dissertation. In the acquaintance period, for example, Russell's account of the cognitive faculties was intimately related to the already established structure of the theory of knowledge (namely, theory of knowledge having to comply with both logic and psychology, and knowledge being divided into knowledge by acquaintance— knowledge by description), even though not without issues of its own, while in the neutral monism period Russell seems to be preoccupied with the 'psychology' of knowledge, that is, with how the cognitive faculties build up our 'integral experience' of the world (an example of this tendency, described by Griffin as increased psychologism, is *The Analysis of Mind* where Russell points out the influence of behaviorism and James's theory of knowledge on his own).

the psychological structures of the cognitive relation. And this is the case because, as Hylton puts it, for Russell philosophical theories “appear to be answerable to the data of experience, to facts about what is or can be plausibly supposed to be present to our minds”.²¹ So, in the period from 1910 until 1918 Russell thought that he could find a type of knowledge that is direct and reliable, without the intermediary of inference and judgment, and he thought that this knowledge is knowledge by acquaintance.

The things that we should be able to fall back on, as Russell puts it, if even our most reliable beliefs are called into question by skeptical arguments made famous by Descartes, play at the same time the role of a starting point of the epistemological analysis. These things are ‘epistemological primitives’ which he calls ‘data’ (‘hard data’). Data are, on the one hand, ‘logical primitives’ – the ones we appeal to in justifying our beliefs, and on the other hand, they are ‘psychological primitives’ – the ones that are given to us (in other words, what makes these data psychologically primitive is that they are caused by the objects the beliefs are about).²² Russell believes that there is a lot of misunderstanding involved in the way that philosophers define ‘data’. To illustrate better what Russell means by ‘data’ I will use two descriptions that Russell gives of ‘data’, in *Theory of Knowledge*, and in *Our Knowledge of the External World*. In *Theory of Knowledge* Russell argues that there are at least three ways in which data can be given

²¹Hylton, pp. 364-365.

²²The example that Russell gives of logical and epistemological primitives is with Galileo’s theory of gravitation. Galileo’s observation of falling bodies was a “mixture of argument, inference, mathematics, with something else which is not argued or inferred, but *observed* [*italics added*]. For him [Galileo], this something else constituted part of what was logically primitive. To those who are troubled by skepticism, the discovery of what is logically primitive in their own beliefs (or half-beliefs) appears important as a possible help in deciding as to their truth and falsehood. We shall call the primitive in this sense the ‘epistemological primitive’. It is the primitive in this sense that I mean when I speak of ‘data’”. Russell goes on to say that he does not agree with Dewey that it is ‘a monstrous superstition’ to treat a given fact as something naturally or psychologically given. Russell thinks that ‘data’ in the sense of ‘epistemological primitives’ are also psychologically given to us. (Russell, “Professor’s Dewey’s ‘Essays in Experimental Logic’”, pp. 234-235).

– in sensation, memory, and imagination.²³ He adds later that some universals should also be considered data. Thus, broadly speaking, data include all particulars, universals, and facts which are cognized otherwise than by inference, or by belief not derived from the analysis of the perceived fact.²⁴ In *Our Knowledge of the External World* Russell distinguishes between ‘hard data’ and ‘soft data’. Hard data, such as the particular facts of sense (and logical truths) that we are acquainted with, are what is ‘really known’. An example of hard data are our sense-data. As Slater puts it, our knowledge of hard data resists any skeptical doubt.²⁵ Soft data, on the other hand, are constructed from hard data; they are all those common-sense beliefs that we uncritically hold. As Slater describes them, soft data are all those “psychologically derivative but logically primitive beliefs, which are susceptible to doubt”^{26, 27}. (We have to note here that in the acquaintance period, Russell was well aware that soft data, which are common-sense beliefs, may not survive a rigorous scientific analysis and justification, it is important that we try to reconcile our common-sense beliefs with our scientific beliefs).

As Hylton comments, acquaintance was intended to give complete and indubitable

²³Russell, *Theory of Knowledge*, p. 47.

²⁴*Ibid.*

²⁵Slater, p. 49. Slater’s example of a psychologically derivative belief is our belief that everyday objects continue to exist even after we have closed our eyes. This belief is psychologically derivative because it is based upon the psychologically primitive belief that we were just perceiving certain objects. On the other hand, the same belief that the external world continues to exist after we close our eyes, is a logically primitive one, because we do not provide any proof for it.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷ It is precisely on the point of knowledge of hard data that Russell disagrees with Dewey (Russell, “Professor’s Dewey’s Essays in Experimental Logic, p. 249). This disagreement is based upon Dewey’s claim that sense-data simply occur, but we do not *know* them. For Russell this is a mistake. We know hard data in acquaintance. It is precisely this type of knowledge of data that is the most certain and perfectly indubitable.

knowledge, and to give it perfectly and indubitably.²⁸ This does not exclude the fact that most of the knowledge that we are able to express is actually knowledge by description. Knowledge by description involves inference and judgment. In this sense, Russell's theory of judgment in the period plays a central role in his epistemology, and that is why it has been discussed at length by Russell scholars. My interest, however, lies with Russell's theory of the four experiential cognitive faculties, which is why I will analyze in detail knowledge by acquaintance, while knowledge by description will be left in the background. Even though, as Slater describes it, a world based solely upon our knowledge by acquaintance is a rather limited world that contains facts of sensation, recent memories, some facts of introspection, as well as some facts of comparison, such as 'the grapefruit is larger than the clementine'²⁹, it is precisely this type of knowledge that according to Hylton, is considered by Russell to be "the paradigm of knowledge".³⁰

The primary objective of this dissertation is to clarify Russell's understanding of what he takes to be the main experiential cognitive faculties in the period from 1910 to 1926. I believe that the best way to do this is to follow the development of Russell's arguments chronologically, as they appear in major and minor texts from the stipulated period. This ensures the meticulousness of the investigation. My intention is to let Russell speak for himself. This is done in order to maintain an impartial point of view toward Russell's theories.

The dissertation is divided into four chapters, including the introduction and the conclusion. In Chapter 2 I analyze the main cognitive faculties according to the theory of knowledge by acquaintance. Russell describes knowledge by acquaintance as "direct awareness

²⁸Hylton, p. 367.

²⁹Slater, p. 50.

³⁰Hylton, p. 376.

of things”, “without the intermediary of any process of inference”³¹. He says, “sense data ... supply the most obvious and striking example of knowledge by acquaintance”³², but they are not the only examples. Objects of memory, introspection, imagination, as well as predicates (i.e., universals and relations) are also known by acquaintance. Sensation, memory and imagination involve a two-term relation between subject and object, and the difference between these faculties lies not in the nature of their objects but in differences in the nature of this relation. The first point of difference is the temporal nature of the relation of cognition – in sensation the object is simultaneous with the subject, in memory the object is earlier than the subject, and in imagination the object is not essentially in any temporal relation at all to the subject, although it can be in any of them.

The most reliable type of knowledge – intuited knowledge – comes through acquaintance with particulars. It is knowledge of things as they appear to us. Sensation (which for Russell at this time includes perception, introspection, attention, and anticipation), memory, and imagination (which includes hallucination and dreaming) exhaust the types of acquaintance with particulars that provide certain knowledge of their objects. At the end of 1913 when Russell writes *Theory of Knowledge*, he realizes that the theory of knowledge by acquaintance, and along with it, his account of the main experiential cognitive faculties, face insuperable problems.³³ The main problem concerning the experiential cognitive faculties is that they cannot be distinguished

³¹Russell, *The Problems of Philosophy*, p. 46.

³²*Ibid.*, p. 48.

³³I fully realize that the insuperable difficulties that the theory of knowledge by acquaintance per se faces, are closely related to the problems that Russell’s theory of judgment at the time faced. However, since my interest in the theory of knowledge by acquaintance is only insofar as the experiential cognitive faculties are concerned, I will not engage the difficulties that the theory of knowledge by acquaintance faces, apart from the difficulties that the experiential cognitive faculties face.

from one another. Also troublesome are the challenges involved in explaining how memory and imagination yield immediate knowledge of particulars. Toward the end of the manuscript Russell surrenders the claim that both memory and imagination involve immediate acquaintance with objects and holds, instead, that they rely on images to convey knowledge of the past and of imaginary objects – a claim he had previously rejected. Images, however, are considered by the theory of knowledge by acquaintance to be complex objects that involve inference, and therefore, they do not belong to knowledge by acquaintance. This would mean, however, that there is no certain knowledge other than the knowledge of the fleeting specious present.

Another challenge that Russell faces with the theory of cognition during the acquaintance period is explaining and justifying the distinction between sensation and perception. Until 1913 Russell believes that perception and sensation are the same cognitive faculty. In 1913 he is adamant that there is a distinction between the faculties of perception and sensation. Perception differs from sensation in that its objects are facts and not sense-data. Facts are said by Russell to be complex entities and they also contain the relations between particulars, which makes them so much more complicated, compared to sense-data. By 1914, however, Russell uses the term ‘sense-perception’, while at the same time, he still (somewhat) distinguishes between sensation and perception in the sense that sensation is contained in perception, and facts of perception are constituted of sense-data. Another point of interest here is whether when verifying facts of perception, the subject of cognition uses judgment, which would make perceptual knowledge derivative and therefore less reliable than sensory knowledge.

Chapter 2 also deals with the period from 1915 to 1918, also known as the later acquaintance period. This is a period of significant changes for Russell’s epistemology. While it still falls within the boundaries of the acquaintance period, by the end of 1918 Russell is convinced that the acquaintance theory of knowledge is flawed and that he needs to build his epistemology within a different ontological framework, namely, the neutral monist one. As far as

the theory of cognition is concerned, this is the period when, in the process of searching for solutions to the aforementioned problems with the cognitive faculties, Russell abandons certain key entities such as 'sense-data', and the cognitive 'subject' and rethinks his theory of sensation, memory and imagination (and introspection). The chapter investigates the changes that sensation, perception, memory and imagination undergo. My conclusion from this section is two-fold. First, despite the ambiguities and issues that the theory of cognition faced in the acquaintance period, Russell consistently maintained that the four main experiential cognitive faculties yield the most certain knowledge that there is (which knowledge goes beyond the specious present). At the same time, the issue of distinguishing between the cognitive faculties, proves for Russell that it is difficult to find a solid criterion of distinction (based on the relation between the cognitive subject and object). As a result, Russell only accounts for possible distinctions between the faculties, which sometimes proves to be unsatisfactory (as in the case of distinguishing between memory and imagination). Second, despite all the other changes that Russell's theory of knowledge was undergoing at this time (mainly with the theory of judgment), Russell's interest in sensation, perception, memory and imagination persisted even after he abandoned the acquaintance theory, when his theory of cognition became more complicated and involved the use of such psychological notions as association of ideas, habit, mnemonic causation, etc.

In Chapter 3 I investigate the changes that Russell's understanding of the cognitive faculties undergo in the neutral monism period. Finally, by the end of 1918, Russell turns to neutral monism. I show that some of the problems that he saw earlier with the experiential cognitive faculties disappear on this new view. For example, the need to distinguish between the types of knowledge of the past, and to account for the different objects of memory, and how one turns into another (for example, how an after-image turns into a past sense-datum), disappears. The price to be paid, however, is that in the neutral monism period, even the most certain knowledge is less certain and more vulnerable to skeptical doubt than it was in the acquaintance

period.

One important consequence for the theory of cognition after 1918, for example, is that sensation is conceived as a part of perception, not as a separate cognitive faculty as it was in the acquaintance period (which also makes the picture of knowledge simpler). Sensation still involves the immediate awareness of the world but this awareness is not considered cognitive. Knowledge is delivered through images which are an essential part of perception, memory, and imagination. I will argue that some of the complications with the account of the experiential cognitive faculties in the acquaintance theory disappear with the abandonment of key notions from the acquaintance theory, and with the acceptance of neutral monism. In the new theory, the analysis is focused on explaining the common features that make sensation, perception, memory and imagination of the 'integral experience' of reality.

According to the new theory of cognition, there is no certain knowledge the way that he understood it in the acquaintance period. The initial premise in the acquaintance theory was that the directness of knowledge by acquaintance guarantees its certainty (if not its absolute certainty, at least its absolute self-evidence). However, Russell gradually abandoned the idea that there is such a thing as direct knowledge. In *The Analysis of Mind* he argues that even perceptual knowledge is not certain in the same way that knowledge by acquaintance was thought to be.³⁴ In fact, he claims that perceptual knowledge could be as unreliable as illusory perception (although the likelihood for such an extreme case is very low, the principle of comparison is what matters) because the objects of perception are not known directly (objects of perception consist of sensations and images, and images are only representations of physical objects). I conclude that

³⁴In the sense that it is more vulnerable to skeptical doubt. Again, the analysis of knowledge and the use of the term 'cognitive' and 'cognition' in both periods calls for a careful distinction between the concepts of certainty, indubitability, infallibility and self-evidence of experiential knowledge. We will investigate how Russell understood certainty of knowledge in both periods, which will shed light on why in the neutral monism period *all* knowledge is claimed to be vulnerable to skeptical doubt.

for Russell experiential knowledge (perceptual knowledge) was still the most certain knowledge there is, but that he regarded it as more vulnerable to skeptical doubt, and therefore, less certain than the unmediated knowledge by acquaintance, since under the neutral monism theory of knowledge, all knowledge, perceptual knowledge included, is derivative, and thus always liable to error.

I do not discuss, with some exceptions, objections and criticisms against Russell from other philosophers for two reasons. First, such an approach shifts the focus of the investigation from Russell's theory of the experiential cognitive faculties to the reception of Russell's epistemological views by Russell scholars. And second, as mentioned earlier, the development of Russell's theory of cognition has been largely overlooked in Russell scholarship, which means that there is hardly any direct criticism of Russell's theory of cognition. However, I will offer my own criticism where I think Russell remained vague, failed to clarify his concepts, and underdeveloped his ideas. This will shed light on the place that the theory of cognition takes in Russell's epistemology.

Russell's rich and complex philosophical views during the period I discuss include metaphysical theories such as logical atomism and neutral monism. These theories, viewed solely as metaphysical theories, are beyond the scope of this dissertation. I will consider the lectures on logical atomism only as far as they mark the beginning of the transitional period from acquaintance to neutral monism. Similarly, the theory of neutral monism will be discussed only in so far as it concerns the theory of cognition. The dissertation will also ignore the discussions in the existing literature which focus on whether Russell was an empiricist, realist, constructionist, atomist, or neutral monist in the period from 1910 to 1926, since such a discussion would involve a whole new analysis of the theories of empiricism, realism, atomism, etc., which is not only a topic for a dissertation in itself, but which also shifts the focus away from the theory of

cognition.^{35, 36} In 1910 Russell thought that the most important philosophical question was whether human beings can know anything, and if so, what and how. My central concern, to repeat, is to understand how, according to Russell the cognitive faculties of sensation, perception, memory and imagination contribute to knowledge of experience and what changes his theory of these faculties undergoes.

³⁵It is undeniable, however, that when Russell turned his philosophical interests toward the theory of knowledge in 1910, his position was (and remained throughout the period that I cover) that of an empiricist for whom the foundational knowledge is knowledge of experience.

³⁶Even though the causes for the transition to neutral monism are not the focus of the dissertation, I briefly discuss on a few occasions why certain scholars, such as David Pears, Robert Tully, and Mafizuddin Ahmed believe that the transition toward neutral monism started earlier (or later) than the stipulated date.

Chapter Two

Theory of Cognition in the Acquaintance Period (1910-1918).

In this chapter I examine Russell's theory of cognition in the period from 1910 to 1918 known as the acquaintance period.³⁷ Before we can continue our analysis of Russell's account of the cognitive faculties, it is important that we clarify the meaning of 'cognitive'. Russell does not really define 'cognitive' or 'cognition' and his use of the notion throughout the stipulated period is sometimes ambiguous. I think that what Russell seems to mean by 'cognitive' is 'that which pertains to knowledge', that is, something that is characteristic of knowledge. This understanding of the notion of cognition requires an understanding of what Russell means by 'knowledge', which is not free of ambiguity, either. (As Russell himself admits in *Theory of Knowledge*, 'knowledge' is such a complicated and overused term, that it is, in practice, almost undefinable.) In this sense, sensation in the acquaintance period is cognitive since it provides unmediated knowledge. Even though, as we will see, this notion of direct knowledge (knowledge by acquaintance) seems to be crossing the border over to knowledge by description, in the acquaintance period Russell does consider sensation, along with all the other experiential cognitive faculties to lead *directly*, that is, without any intermediaries, such as beliefs, to

³⁷To remind the reader, by theory of cognition I mean the set of principles that explore how our cognitive faculties of sensation, perception, memory, imagination, introspection, etc., contribute to building our most reliable experiential knowledge.

knowledge.³⁸ In 1918, however, Russell changes his mind about sensation and declares that sensation, on its own, is non-cognitive. I think it would be fair to say that in 1918 and 1919 by ‘cognitive’ Russell still means ‘that which pertains to knowledge’, it is just that his account of knowledge has changed. He does not believe any more that there is direct knowledge by acquaintance. In this sense, sensation is only one of the things that compose knowledge. In other words, only after adding certain ‘propositional’ elements, such as images and beliefs, to sensation, does it become cognitive. (Again, if we are looking for a strict definition of ‘cognitive’, the addition of ‘propositional’ elements to it will not help much, since, if ‘cognitive’ equals ‘propositional’, then sensation is non-cognitive in both periods. On the other hand, if ‘cognitive’ means ‘upon which knowledge is based’, then sensation is cognitive in both periods.) In 1919 the matter regarding the use of ‘cognitive’ and ‘cognition’ becomes complicated even further. In “On Propositions” Russell states that sensation is non-cognitive because it is not a relation of a subject to an object (subject of cognition to a sense-datum), since the subject of cognition does not exist as an entity in his theory of knowledge any more. That is why, when we talk about ‘sensation’ what we mean, according to Russell, is an entity which is at the same time a part of the mind of the person who has the sensation, and a part of the body which is sensed by means of that sensation.³⁹ It seems that the non-cognitive nature of sensation here is due to the fact that there is no subject of cognition, that is, that there is nothing to cognize this sensation. It would seem then, that, if we follow this definition of ‘cognitive’, neither ‘belief’ nor ‘judgment’ are cognitive, since both require a subject which is not present in Russell’s theory any more,

³⁸It seems that Russell’s insistence on a direct cognitive relation which is free of presuppositions and direct, dates from the time when he was preoccupied with the refutation of idealism. Idealism, as Russell understood it, does not allow for objective, independent of the mind, knowledge. Then, for Russell, who seems to always have wanted to rescue philosophy from the “clutches of idealism”, direct knowledge of reality, becomes absolutely necessary. Thus, acquaintance is viewed by him as a cognitive relation between the mind and what is outside the mind.

³⁹“On Propositions”, in *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 306.

which seems absurd. The distinction that Russell makes in *My Philosophical Development*, between knowledge and experience, might help us understand how he uses ‘cognitive’ in both periods.⁴⁰ Russell says that, unlike what he thought in the acquaintance period, after he embraced neutral monism, sensation for him is mere experience, and as he admits that, even though sometimes it may seem impossible to distinguish between experience and knowledge, we need to keep the distinction firmly in order to avoid ambiguities, such as the ones he encountered in the acquaintance theory. So, the sensory experience requires that certain elements be added to it (belief, image, etc.), in order to turn into knowledge. (This issue will be explored further in Section 4 of this chapter, as well as Chapter 3 which deals with the theory of cognition under the neutral monism theory.)

To summarize, I do not think that Russell intended to give a definition of ‘cognition’, just as he did not attempt to give a definition of ‘knowledge’. But if we have to summarize how he uses ‘cognitive’ in both periods, the safest way to define ‘cognitive’, then, is ‘that which characterizes knowledge’. And since what Russell meant by ‘knowledge’ in the acquaintance period, differs from what he meant by it in the neutral monism period (at least, that is what Russell claims), in order to understand why sensation in the acquaintance period is cognitive, while in the neutral monism period – non-cognitive, we need to be aware of what Russell means by ‘knowledge’ in both periods (despite the vagueness of both concepts, the distinction between ‘experience’ and ‘knowledge’ gives us, at least, a direction of Russell’s thought on cognition). So, based on Russell’s conviction in the acquaintance period that there is direct knowledge, namely, knowledge by acquaintance, we can say that sensation, or any of the other experiential cognitive faculties, are cognitive in so far as their objects present us, without the intermediary of beliefs, with pieces of knowledge.

⁴⁰*My Philosophical Development*, p. 105.

To resume our analysis of the theory of cognition, according to Russell's definition, acquaintance is understood as a two-term relation between a subject and an object of cognition where the object is immediately present before the subject's mind. Russell thinks that the scope of acquaintance extends beyond the immediate present of sensation, to include acquaintance with the past and acquaintance with objects that are not in time, such as the objects of imagination, or universals such as 'whiteness', 'brotherhood', etc. As he defines it in 1912 knowledge of universals (or predicates) is *a priori* knowledge. Knowledge of present, past and imaginary objects is, as Russell calls it, knowledge by acquaintance with particulars. As we already indicated in the introduction, it is this type of knowledge (knowledge by acquaintance) that Russell regards as a 'paradigm knowledge', upon which all other types of knowledge (knowledge by description), are built. Russell's theory of cognition in the acquaintance period has a few key premises. At the beginning of the period Russell believed that sensation provides the most certain knowledge. However, since sensory knowledge is quite limited in scope (in the sense that it is confined to the specious present), Russell thought that it was necessary to have knowledge of the past which is also certain knowledge. Thus, the key premise of his theory of cognition is that the most certain knowledge must include knowledge of the past as well. And so, one of the goals of his theory of cognition is to explore in depth what our present and past knowledge consists of. Another goal of Russell's account of the cognitive faculties is to distinguish between the different cognitive faculties, so that it is clear which type of knowledge is the most certain knowledge (and which type is not). As he works out the details of the theory of cognition under the acquaintance theory of knowledge, however, Russell realizes that he has to give up some of the key premises from which he started and possibly rethink the goals of the theory of cognition, which goes hand in hand with the other changes in his epistemology (mainly in the theory of judgment) as a result of which changes he abandons the acquaintance theory of knowledge.

I think the textual evidence shows that if we are to understand the full picture of Russell's

theory of knowledge by acquaintance, we need to consider his account of the main experiential cognitive faculties. My analysis of Russell's theory of cognition consists of three steps. First, I outline Russell's early views of cognition in the writings before *Theory of Knowledge* [1913]. I show what the general premises of the theory of knowledge are and how his account of cognition was born out of it. Second, I show how the premise that knowledge brought by the experiential cognitive faculties is the most certain knowledge, is gradually modified as he develops the details of his theory of cognition. In this section, I focus on *Theory of Knowledge*, since it is the most developed expression of the connection between the theory of knowledge and the theory of cognition. Then I explain the distinction between the two types of knowledge by acquaintance – acquaintance with particulars and acquaintance with universals. I focus on acquaintance with particulars for two reasons. First, it is described by Russell as the foundation (together with acquaintance with universals) of his theory of knowledge and his theory of cognition ⁴¹; and second, I am interested in the development of Russell's account of the cognitive faculties, which changes (and becomes more complicated) from the acquaintance to the neutral monism period, and in which, as it seems from the textual evidence, Russell becomes increasingly interested.⁴² Then, I will present Russell's discussion in *Theory of Knowledge* of the main cognitive faculties of sensation, perception, memory and imagination, and the problems his account faces under the acquaintance theory of knowledge. The aim in this second step is to show how, when Russell worked out the details of his theory of cognition, he encountered difficulties which continued to

⁴¹As we will see from the analysis of the theory of cognition, as Russell gets into the details of the exploration of the experiential cognitive faculties, it turns out that not all objects of the experiential cognitive faculties are particulars. For example, the objects of perception are facts, and facts are not particulars, but complex objects. Also, the objects of remote memory do not quite fit the description of a particular.

⁴²With this, I do not mean to say that acquaintance with universals is not important for Russell's theory of knowledge. My claim is rather, that, it seems that it was Russell's account of the experiential cognitive faculties, and so much his account of universals, that was changing and becoming increasingly complicated, which is what makes it a source of interest for me.

occupy his attention even after 1914.⁴³ In the third step of my exposition I explain Russell's views on cognition and acquaintance after 1913 until 1915 when he began to express doubt with regard to certain aspects of acquaintance with particulars (such as sensation being cognitive). The aim here is to follow the development of the theory of cognition after 1913 and how Russell was coping with the difficulties it encountered in *Theory of Knowledge*.

The main issues with the theory of cognition in the acquaintance period are as follows. If knowledge by acquaintance, in general, and the acquaintance with particulars, is direct and the most certain knowledge there is, then Russell has to show how it extends beyond the immediate present, which is the domain of sensory knowledge, into the past. From Russell's discussion of theory of cognition, it seems that there is a certain ambiguity as to where knowledge of the past, gained by the faculty of memory, really belongs (to knowledge by acquaintance or to knowledge by description). The first thing that is to be noticed is that while the objects of perception and remote memory are, as it turns out, always complex, the objects of sensation can be either simple or complex.^{44, 45, 46} A thorough analysis of sensation, perception, and memory needs to explain

⁴³To reiterate, Russell's theory of knowledge in the acquaintance period faced other serious problems, such as the problems with his theory of judgment which was criticized by Wittgenstein. My claim here, once again, is that his account of cognition faced difficulties of its own, and based on the textual evidence, Russell thought about these difficulties even after 1914.

⁴⁴Before *Theory of Knowledge* Russell uses the concepts 'sensation' and 'perception' interchangeably. See "On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood" [1910] (*Collected Papers*, Vol 6, pp.122-123), "On the Relation of Universals and Particulars" [1912] (*Logic and Knowledge*, pp.106-107), "On the Nature of Sense-Data: a Reply to Dr. Dawes Hicks" [1913] (*Collected Papers*, Vol. 6, p.188). In *Theory of Knowledge*, however Russell distinguishes between sensation and perception. There he comes to see the distinction as important since the objects of sensation are either simple or complex cognitive objects, while the objects of perception are always complex cognitive objects (called facts of perception or primitive facts).

⁴⁵Russell's theory of memory in the acquaintance period considered the objects of memory to be simple objects, much like the objects of sensation (which is the impression we get from the account of memory in *The Problems of Philosophy*). His detailed discussion of the knowledge of the past in *Theory of Knowledge*, however, concludes that knowledge of the remote past whose objects are absent (or at least, not present to the mind in the same way as the objects of sensation are) requires description and therefore, it is not a direct knowledge by acquaintance. Another reason why objects of remote memory are not simple cognitive objects is

what the distinction between objects of sensation and objects of perception is, what types of memory there are, and what type of knowledge knowledge of the past is, after all. If it turns out that, in the end, knowledge of the past is of two kinds, then we need to explore how there can be one faculty of memory, while at the same time, it generates two types of knowledge of the past, one by acquaintance and another, by description. As I see it, unless Russell is prepared to confine certain knowledge to the immediate present of sensory knowledge (and knowledge of universals), he needs to address the issues that arise from the analysis of knowledge of the past. Another issue that stems from the analysis of cognition is how to distinguish between the objects of imagination which are also before the mind, and the objects of sensation or memory. In other words, if sensation, perception, memory, imagination (and even introspection which will be discussed briefly in the next section), are taken as *cognitive* faculties, we need to know in what sense imagination is cognitive, and what criterion there is to distinguish between an imaginary past and a real past, present or future. The discussion of these issues includes also a discussion of what Russell meant by ‘certain’ knowledge (how the concepts of certainty, indubitability, infallibility, and self-evidence are used in the acquaintance period), and what he means when he states that knowledge provided by the experiential cognitive faculties is the most certain knowledge there is.

Another issue that the theory of cognition in the acquaintance period encounters is the already-mentioned cognitive status of sensation. We will discover that the further into the

that they involve images which are representations of sense-data.

⁴⁶As Russell indicates in “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description” (p. 198), when we see a color or hear a noise, we are acquainted with complex sense-data. Complex sense-data contain parts that are spatially related. However, unlike in the case of other complexes, when I am acquainted with complex sense-data, I am acquainted with the whole and not with its parts. Thus, complex sense-data are considered particulars. Examples of complex sense-data are ‘this-before-that’, ‘the-yellowness-of-that’, etc. As Sajahan Miah aptly remarks, in “On the Relations of Universals to Particulars”, Russell even includes among complex sense-data what he calls ‘data of perception’ (even though data of perception differ in their logical structure). (Miah, p. 69.)

acquaintance period Russell goes, the more it seems that either the cognitive status of sensation is questionable, or that sensation is more complicated than Russell initially thought it was. With this, we will also touch upon the very complicated topic of defining knowledge, and whether sensation, perception, memory, and imagination lead *directly* to knowledge, that is, whether they are truly cognitive, or whether they require something else to turn them into knowledge proper.

Section One. Theory of Cognition in the Period 1910 – 1913.

Russell first developed the acquaintance theory of knowledge from 1910 to 1913⁴⁷. In this period, he distinguishes between ‘knowledge by acquaintance’ and ‘knowledge by description’. As mentioned, knowledge by acquaintance is the most reliable knowledge upon which all other knowledge is founded, and since the current project is interested in Russell’s account of the cognitive faculties, we will discuss knowledge by acquaintance in more detail, but first we need to distinguish it from knowledge by description.

Knowledge by description, as Russell explains in *The Problems of Philosophy*, always involves “some knowledge of truths as its source and ground”.⁴⁸ Knowledge by description is not

⁴⁷My analysis of Russell’s early acquaintance period is based upon the following texts: “On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood” published in 1910, “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description”, first published in 1911, “On the Relations of Universals and Particulars” published in 1912, “On Matter” published in 1912, and the highlight of the period, *The Problems of Philosophy* published in 1912. (The article “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description” is not to be discussed in this section because Russell included the article with almost no alterations as chapter five of the same name in *The Problems of Philosophy* which will be analyzed later in the section.) I will be referring occasionally to *Theory of Knowledge*, written in 1913, for clarification of issues, such as self-evidence, acquaintance with the self, etc.

⁴⁸*The Problems of Philosophy*, (Hackett Publishing Company: Indianapolis/Cambridge, 1912), p. 46.

direct knowledge, unlike knowledge by acquaintance. Thus, when I know something by description, I know some truth *about* it, not the thing itself. For example, when I see a color, I know it perfectly and completely, and I know it by acquaintance. But my knowledge of the table as a physical object is knowledge by description. When I know the table, I know that the table is “the physical object which causes such-and-such sense-data”.⁴⁹ In other words, when I know the table, I describe the table by means of certain predicates such as ‘is red, smooth’, etc. I know that my description of the table is true (verifiable) by means of the sense-data of the table, with which I am acquainted. This is true for all knowledge of physical objects, as well as knowledge of other minds. I cannot know the physical objects, as they are in themselves, by acquaintance. I can only know their description as such-and-such, which description is ultimately based upon sense-data with which I am acquainted. Thus, when I say that I know that there is a table in front of me, my justification for saying this is based on my acquaintance with the sense-datum caused by the physical object (table). I know the truth that this physical object must be causing the sense-datum with which I am acquainted, that is, I know that the physical object is the cause of my sense-datum only by description, not by acquaintance. By the same token, my knowledge of other minds (in resemblance to knowledge of ‘proper names’) is justified as knowledge by description of the physical person (which remains a ‘constant’), which, in turn, is justified as knowledge by acquaintance. Knowledge by description is mediated knowledge and, as Russell, admits, the description “varies for different people, or for the same person at different times”.⁵⁰ For Russell, knowledge by description is both knowledge of things and knowledge of truths. In fact, for him knowledge by description comprises most of our knowledge, since knowledge by acquaintance, which requires direct first-person knowledge of things, is limited. However, as Russell reminds

⁴⁹*Ibid.*, p. 47.

⁵⁰*Ibid.*, p. 54.

us in *The Problems of Philosophy*, and *Theory of Knowledge*, the fundamental principle regarding propositional knowledge, is that “*Every proposition which we understand must be composed wholly of constituents with which we are acquainted.*”⁵¹ Despite this fundamental principle, however, Russell emphasizes, that we can have “knowledge by description of things that we have never experienced” (such as knowledge about Julius Caesar).⁵² In other words, Russell thought that all our knowledge is either by acquaintance or by description, and knowledge by description is all knowledge that goes outside of the domain of knowledge by acquaintance, yet, it is justified in terms of it.

For Russell, knowledge by acquaintance is the direct knowledge of things. In *The Problems of Philosophy*, he defines the parameters of knowledge by acquaintance. He lists sensation (sense-data), memory, introspection (self-consciousness), conception or conceiving (universals or predicates) as the obvious examples of knowledge by acquaintance.⁵³ So, according to the theory of knowledge in the acquaintance period, knowledge by acquaintance is divided into acquaintance with particulars, and acquaintance with predicates.⁵⁴ When Russell refers to particulars, he means the things as they appear to us.⁵⁵ The objects of all the experiential

⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 58.

⁵²*Ibid.*, p. 59. In *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell gives another example to illustrate this point: the phrase “the father of Jones” is a description of the father of Jones and we know the object by description since we know the truth that every man has a father, even though, we may not be acquainted with either Jones or his father.

⁵³In *Theory of Knowledge* Russell also distinguishes between sensation and perception, and includes imagination and anticipation as parts of knowledge by acquaintance.

⁵⁴In *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell introduces the logical form as another object of acquaintance. We will mention briefly in Section 2 what the logical form consists of.

⁵⁵We have to admit that this description of ‘particular’ is not very precise, since universals, in a sense, also appear to us. A ‘negative’ definition of ‘particular’ might be more successful. Universals and particulars are things as they appear to us, but universals can be shared, while particulars cannot. (On pp. 55-56 Russell offers a ‘purely logical’ definition of ‘particular’ – “an entity which can only enter into complexes as the subject of a predicate or as one of the terms of a relation, never as itself a predicate or a relation”.)

cognitive faculties are particulars. Predicates, also called universals, are things such as ‘whiteness’, ‘brotherhood’, ‘diversity’, as well as relations such as ‘before’, ‘after’, etc.⁵⁶

Russell thought that his theory of knowledge, which divided knowledge into knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description, is novel and addresses issues, or avoids difficulties that a classical empiricist theory of knowledge, of the Humean type, faces. Let us explore what Russell thought the originality of his understanding of knowledge was. Russell thought that the common mistake of previous philosophers such as Berkeley, Hume, Leibniz, etc. was that they were seeking to ground knowledge in experience focused on the *object* of cognition, and not on the *act* of cognition. Ever since Berkeley and Hume, theories of knowledge seem preoccupied with sense-data and concepts, and their respective relationships with both the external world and the mind. For Russell before we even enter into a discussion about sense-data, concepts, reality, and mind, we need to distinguish between the object of cognition and the act of cognition. The act of cognition is always mental but the object of cognition, with the exception of the object of introspection, is not mental in the sense of being mind-dependent. Russell thought that philosophers who did not make this crucial distinction are bound to confuse acts of cognition with objects of cognition, which confusion leads to futile attempts to find out whether the external world is mind-independent or not, a central issue in theories of knowledge such as Berkeley’s and Hume’s (and to an extent Leibniz’s). By contrast, Russell defines theory of knowledge as a combination of logic and psychology where the actual mechanism of cognition (the act of cognition and the objects of cognition) is as important as the logical principles which

⁵⁶ When Russell talks about relations in *Theory of Knowledge* he refers to them as “universals”: “All the constituents of a complex are either particular or universal, and at least one must be universal”(*Theory of Knowledge*, p. 81). Relations are “before”, “after”, “at the same time as”, “to the left of”, “to the right of”, etc. For Russell a theory that will describe our knowledge or our experience as human beings is unsatisfactory if it only describes the objects that we experience from a first-person point of view. We have to also account for the relations of the objects of experience to the subject of experience, whether the object is before, after, or at the same time as the subject (*Theory of Knowledge*, p. 33).

we follow in acquiring knowledge. Here is how in “On Matter” [1912] Russell explains what our basic knowledge consists of. All knowledge of the existing world,

rests upon two kinds of foundations: 1) immediate acquaintance,
which assures us of the existence of our thoughts and feelings and sense-data,
both those which we have at the moment and those which we remember;
2) general principles, according to which the existence of one thing can be
inferred from that of another.⁵⁷

The ‘general principles’ that Russell refers to are the *a priori* logical principles without which we could not make either any inferences, or valid predictions about the future. He thinks that induction, for example, relies on the principle that if two properties have been found together and never apart, then it is highly probable that in the future these properties will be found together, rather than apart. According to Russell, the ‘old-fashioned rationalist’ believes that there is knowledge based solely upon the general principles. An example of such knowledge would be the conclusion of the ontological argument about the existence of God. However, as Russell notes, “the ontological argument may by this time be left in the museum of historical curiosities”. Thus, Russell concludes, whatever we know with “certainty or with probability” has to ultimately be founded upon direct acquaintance^{58, 59}.

⁵⁷“On Matter” [1912], *The Collected Papers*, Vol. 6, p.80.

⁵⁸*Ibid.*, pp. 80-81.

⁵⁹Our knowledge of one of the most fundamental epistemological, as well as ontological concepts, *matter*, is an example of how all knowledge is founded upon knowledge by acquaintance. For Russell the ‘common-sense view’ that to know that something exists when I am not perceiving it any more, means to know that there are other minds that have perceived it, or are perceiving it. Since Russell wants to distance himself from this ‘common-sense’ view, he argues that our knowledge of the existence of other minds rests upon our knowledge of the existence of other bodies (meaning anything that is “inferrible [sic] from sense-data as existing independently of our perception”). The entities that we identify as ‘other bodies’ are, in fact, what we call matter. When we say that something is matter, what we are saying is that it is in *space*. There are two types of space that, according to Russell, come to mind at first: some sort of a single space “containing all phenomena”, and experienced or given space (which consists of

The textual evidence from the acquaintance period shows that along with the logical issues in the theory of knowledge there was, from the very start, another, overlooked, aspect of Russell's theory of knowledge, namely his theory of the experiential cognitive faculties. As mentioned in the introduction, a 'theory of cognition' encompasses the experiential cognitive faculties such as sensation, perception, memory, imagination, and introspection, as well as the faculty of conception, all of which contribute to our knowledge.⁶⁰ Since I am interested in the experiential cognitive faculties, when referring to Russell's theory of cognition in the dissertation, I mean a set of principles that explain how our experiential cognitive faculties of sensation, perception, memory, imagination, and introspection, contribute to our knowledge of the world.

many given spaces, such as space of touch, space of sight, etc.). Russell thinks that the single space that common-sense (and Kant) imagines, is actually the many given spaces of experience. Each given space is a system of relations having certain logical properties. So, as Russell argues, "the logician is led to give the name 'space' to any system of relations having the same or similar logical properties". But for Russell we cannot gain much in terms of our understanding of matter if we rely on this space. If we use space in the sense of experienced or given space, then matter should not be in space, since "it must be neutral as between the various immediately given spaces". In other words, Russell argues, what is needed is an understanding of neither the single nor the given space, but the *physical space*. By physical space he means the concept that falls within the domain of physics. Physics studies space as a part of the science of pure mathematics, in which both space and matter are variables. That is, both space and matter are not given to the senses. So, matter is "that which has the properties discussed by physics". But when it comes to *applying* physics in gaining knowledge of real phenomena such as calculating the motions of the moon, we come to deal with sense-data. Sense-data alone are not enough to help us calculate the motions of the moon, but whatever mathematical or physical hypothesis we apply, we deal with knowledge that can be inferred or constructed from sense-data. So, when it comes to our knowledge of the real world, we know about it through sense-data (present or past) and through *a priori* logical principles. These logical principles which lead to building hypotheses and theories, however, need to be translated into, or associated with sense-data. Only then can knowledge of physics, or any other type of knowledge for that matter, be verified and classified as certain. As Russell puts it, whether we travel backward from logical constructions to sense-data, or forward from sense-data to logical constructions, if we call a type of knowledge certain or infallible, then it must be somehow, either through association with, or through other philosophical methods, founded upon our knowledge of sense-data. (*Ibid.*, p. 81-83)

⁶⁰In *Theory of Knowledge* Russell refers to 'cognition' as comprising cognitive relations such as attention, sensation, memory, believing, etc., all of which presuppose acquaintance.

However, before we can proceed with the analysis of what seems to be the most important experiential cognitive faculty in the stipulated period, namely, sensation, we have to turn to a cognitive faculty which has been mentioned a few times so far, but which has not been discussed in any detail, namely, the faculty of introspection. The reason for attending to the faculty of introspection at all, is that it is the only faculty which is dispensed with after Russell loses faith in the acquaintance theory of knowledge. I hope that an analysis of this faculty will shed light on the development of Russell's theory of cognition in both periods discussed in this dissertation. At first Russell declares that introspection is just like sensation, but an inner, as opposed to an outer (sensation), sense. A year later, however, he changes his mind and talks about introspection being similar to perception and not sensation. It is with the analysis of introspection that Russell introduces some of the issues that he faces with the cognitive faculties under the acquaintance theory of knowledge.

In 1912 Russell thought that while sensation was acquaintance with the external world (that is, the mind-independent world of sense-data), introspection was acquaintance with the internal world. Introspection, or self-consciousness, is considered by Russell, to be the source of all knowledge of mental things. Thus, the knowledge that the cognitive subject feels pain and pleasure fall under introspection. In other words, introspection is acquaintance with the content of the mind. The question that automatically crops up and which occupies Russell's attention for a while (during the acquaintance period; but which also becomes important during the transition from acquaintance to neutral monism) is whether acquaintance with the contents of the mind requires acquaintance with the self. In 1912 he concludes that it is possible, but not necessary to conclude that we are acquainted with the self (the 'I').

In *The Problems of Philosophy*, Russell poses the question whether we should be acquainted with the 'bare self' just as we are acquainted with particular thoughts and feelings. His response is one of doubt and hesitation. He believes that while examining introspection, we

seem to be able to point to the individual thoughts and feelings that introspection is composed of, but not to the 'I' as such. However, Russell continues, we seem to think (intuitively) that there must be a reason to believe that we are also acquainted with the self.

The reason that Russell gives is that when we are acquainted with something, we seem to be, in fact, acquainted with two different things: the object of acquaintance itself (the sense-datum or the universal), and our own awareness of this very object. Since all acquaintance is a cognitive relation between an object and a subject, the subject acquainted with the object must be myself. Thus, when I am acquainted with my seeing the sun, what I am acquainted with is the following fact: “‘Self-acquainted-with-self-datum’”.⁶¹ It is difficult to explain how we know about the truth that “I see a sun” (or “I perceive the sense-datum of the sun”), unless we are acquainted with something which we call self or ‘I’. Thus, Russell continues, it seems that we ought to be acquainted with the thing called ‘I’, even if we do not know what its nature is. However, Russell insists, we cannot conclude *with certainty* that we are acquainted with the self. It is only *probable* that we are acquainted with the self as that which desires things or is aware of things.

The question of acquaintance with the self was bothering Russell throughout the whole acquaintance period, and in *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell shows clear signs that he is even less certain than he was in *The Problems of Philosophy* that we are acquainted with the self. He introduces the topic of introspection as potentially the strongest objection against the account of acquaintance as a dual relation between a subject and an object of cognition, precisely because we do not seem to be aware of the subject of our experiences (only of the experiences themselves). Russell reiterates that we seem to be acquainted with the particular experiences of the subject but not with the subject of cognition itself. According to him, in order to defend the proposed account of acquaintance as a dual relation between a subject and an object of cognition,

⁶¹*Ibid.*, pp. 50-51.

we need to either argue that we are, in fact, acquainted with the subject of cognition, or argue that, even if we are not acquainted with the subject, this should not change our account of acquaintance. Russell concludes that the second line of argument is more feasible than the first one.

For Russell the only way to claim that we are acquainted with the subject of cognition is to claim that the 'I' is either a universal, or a particular. The way that we use the 'I' allows for confusion between 'I' and 'ego'. 'Ego' is a universal because it is the general characteristic of 'a person', it does not stand for any concrete person. But 'I' stands for the particular person who experiences the world: "on each occasion of its use, there is only one person who is 'I'".⁶² The ambiguity of the 'I' which stems from this conflation of 'I' and 'ego', disappears when we concentrate on the use of 'I' in normal sentences – there, the 'I' stands for the subject of the present experience.⁶³ Then, it *seems* that the 'I' is not really a universal but a particular (even though, an ambiguous one), and as such, it presents at least the *possibility* of us being acquainted with it, just like we are acquainted with any other particular.

Russell concludes from the discussion of the nature of the 'I' in *Theory of Knowledge* that we are not, after all, acquainted with the subject of cognition in any form, since the 'I' is not a universal and it is only *seemingly* a particular (however, an unidentified one).⁶⁴ It is not a

⁶²*Theory of Knowledge*, p. 36.

⁶³Russell makes the important point that if we accept this definition of the self, then we need to clarify what we mean by 'present experience', since it seems that we *must* be acquainted with our present experience. I will delve into the discussion of presence of experience later in the chapter, when discussing sensation, perception, memory, and imagination, but I would like to point out here that Russell eventually reaches the conclusion that there are different senses of 'present', and that when talking about acquaintance, what we mean when we say that we are acquainted with our present experience, is that there is an 'I' which is attending to 'this', and 'this' is always *given* to the mind. When 'this' is given to the mind in the present moment, then this relation of presence is what we call 'now'.

⁶⁴On pp. 36-40 of *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell argues that the 'I' is an ambiguous particular, rather than a universal. This would mean that we are somehow acquainted with the 'I' (the object of the 'I'). However, as Russell comments, introspection does not answer in favor of

universal because when we use it, there is only one person that is the 'I', and this person is the speaker. It will be more accurate, Russell continues, to call the 'I' an ambiguous proper name rather than a universal, or a particular. However, the 'I' is not a true proper name, either, because we are acquainted with the objects of proper names (from a first person perspective) and it does not look like we are acquainted with the object of the 'I'.⁶⁵ Another element added to the ambiguity of the 'I' is that, if we define the 'I' as our 'present experience' (as Hume did), then we seem to have to be acquainted with it, and yet, it seems that there is nothing, in particular, that we are acquainted with. Despite the ambiguity and elusiveness of the 'I', it seems that we know perfectly well what its meaning is, when we use it. So, Russell argues, the 'I' must have some "easily accessible meaning", and this meaning is what Russell calls the description of the 'I'.⁶⁶ What I think Russell is trying to get at here is that, when analyzed closely, the concept of self or subject of cognition, seems to be elusive and difficult to pin down in the sense that we do not seem to know much about the 'intrinsic nature' of the entity that we call 'self'. We cannot know, for example, whether the self differs from matter or not (whether we should associate the self with our body or not), because we never seem to be able to see the point of view itself from which we observe. Thus, even if we know something about the self, we must know it by description.

We have to admit that what Russell offers as a solution to the problem of knowledge of the self is an ingenious one. Russell calls the subject of cognition a "*referent* [italics added] for the relation of acquaintance, and for those other psychical relations – judging, desiring, etc. –

our acquaintance with the object of the 'I'.

⁶⁵ From a first person point of view, the object of my proper name is supposedly known directly. For other people, however, the object of my proper name is known only by description. On p. 54 of *The Problems of Philosophy*, Russell writes that "assuming that there is such a thing as direct acquaintance with oneself, Bismarck himself might have used his name *directly to designate* the particular person with whom he was acquainted."

⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

which imply acquaintance”.⁶⁷ It seems that what he means by that is that, if it is true that we are acquainted with the object of acquaintance, as well as with the relation of acquaintance (our awareness), then this implies that there is a second term in the relation of acquaintance, namely the subject of acquaintance, with which we must be acquainted as well. It seems, then, that we are acquainted with the subject of cognition as the second term of the relation called ‘acquaintance’, but we are not acquainted with the ‘self’ in the sense of the *unity* of all my experiences. Thus, Russell concludes, the self is a fact of perception and not a sensory particular, and as such, any account of the self requires a description of it (and not a mere acquaintance with the self as such; what we are acquainted with is the particular experiences of the self). Since the discussion of perception and sensation, is a big part of my discussion of Russell’s account of cognition in the acquaintance period, I will leave any further analysis of the consequences for the theory of cognition, generated by the notion of the self, for later. I will only say here, as a preliminary note, that in *Theory of Knowledge*, unlike in *The Problems of Philosophy*, Russell regards facts of perception, unlike sensory particulars, as not only complex entities, but also as “of *what certain propositions assert*”.⁶⁸ From this, it seems that in 1913 Russell considers perceptual knowledge, and with this, knowledge gained by introspection, to be some sort of an indirect knowledge.⁶⁹ This requires clarification since perception, along with sensation, memory, and imagination, was argued by Russell to be one of the main experiential cognitive faculties which provide direct knowledge of the world.

With this in mind, let us, now, go back to the faculty of sensation which proves to be

⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 37.

⁶⁸*Ibid.*

⁶⁹Later in the chapter it will be suggested that perceptual knowledge (especially complex perceptual knowledge), does involve a certain type of multiple relation which is considered, normally, a characteristic of propositional knowledge.

central for Russell's theory of cognition in the stipulated period⁷⁰. There are two reasons for this. First, sensation provides the most certain and indubitable knowledge there is. Sensation is, therefore, foundational, for our knowledge of the external world. In "On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood" [1910] Russell says that knowledge derived from sensation, as opposed to inferential knowledge, is free of error because it is direct, self-evident and the most basic knowledge there is.⁷¹ In order to understand what he meant by the claim that sensation provides the most certain knowledge there is, we need to investigate the concept of certainty of knowledge.

In the acquaintance period Russell uses four main concepts to describe certainty of knowledge, namely, self-evidence, indubitability, and infallibility.⁷² It is necessary at this point to discuss how Russell uses these concepts, with respect to knowledge by acquaintance, in general, and sensory knowledge or knowledge of the past, in particular. It is necessary to state at the outset that Russell uses these concepts as though they overlap, to a less or greater extent. This, in turn, creates ambiguities in the use of the concept of certain knowledge, as well as the notion of knowledge, and makes the boundaries between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description vague.⁷³ Approximately around 1910, when Russell's philosophical interests turned toward theory of knowledge, he wanted to capture what certain knowledge is and how we acquire

⁷⁰Russell, "On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood", p. 122.

⁷¹Hylton explains that since acquaintance is the 'unproblematic meeting ground between mind and what is outside of it', and since the most obvious case of acquaintance is sensation, the direct contact between the mind and the object is ensured by "positing the sense-datum as an entity that exists, so to speak, on the same side of any putative medium as the perceiving mind; our acquaintance with it thus does not take place through any medium but is direct". (Hylton, p. 331, p. 372).

⁷²In *The Problems of Philosophy*, Russell sometimes uses the term 'reliable' or 'free of error' to characterize knowledge by acquaintance without explaining what exactly he means by them. I think that the term 'reliable' is used as loosely as the term 'certain', without distinguishing between the types of knowledge that these properties should belong to.

⁷³As C. Wade Savage points out, there are different senses of the concept of 'certainty', and Russell was not very clear which one he meant with regard to knowledge by acquaintance. (For a detailed discussion, see pp. 80-86 of the present chapter).

it. According to Russell a part of the project of the acquaintance theory of knowledge was that it showed, or at least was intended to show, that the most certain and indubitable knowledge is knowledge that comes from the senses.⁷⁴

Even though the quotation from footnote 74 is confusing as to what Russell thought we know ‘perfectly and completely’, I think that what he considered at the time to be known with the most certainty is the existence of sense-data. (What I mean by this contention is not that Russell thought that we do not know sense-data, but rather that there is always a possibility of confusion on the side of the cognitive subject as to what exactly is sensed and what has caused the given sensation. The only thing that we cannot deny, however, is that we have sense-data which appear to us in a certain way). Thus, the knowledge that ‘this sense-datum exists’ (in the example, ‘there is a shade of color’), is what is beyond doubt. So, if there is any ‘absolute’ certainty of knowledge at all, it belongs to the knowledge of the existence of sense-data. The reasons for this certainty is that the sense-datum, just like any other particular, is not dependent upon the mind, while at the same time, it appears directly (without mediation of any sort) before the mind.

To go back to the foundations of the theory of knowledge by acquaintance, in the acquaintance period, Russell works with two types of knowledge – knowledge of things (knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description), and knowledge of truths (knowledge by description).⁷⁵ As we have established, sensation, together with all the other

⁷⁴Here is what Russell says about this in *The Problems of Philosophy*, “The particular shade of color that I am seeing may have many things said about it – I may say it is brown, that it is rather dark, and so on. But such statements, though they may make me know truths about the color, do not make me know the color itself better than I did before: so far as concerns knowledge of the color itself, as opposed to knowledge of truths about it, I know the color *perfectly and completely* [italics added] when I see it, and no further knowledge of it itself is even theoretically possible.” (p. 47).

⁷⁵Even though knowledge by description is also considered by Russell to be knowledge of things (along with being knowledge of truths), it is indirect knowledge of things and is always grounded in knowledge by acquaintance which is the direct knowledge of things. On p. 46 of *The Problems of Philosophy*, Russell writes: “knowledge of things by description, on the contrary, always involves, as we shall find in the course of the present chapter, some knowledge of truths

cognitive faculties, provides knowledge of things. Knowledge of truths is ‘knowledge *that*’ and is not direct knowledge. In other words, knowledge of things is non-propositional in the case of knowledge by acquaintance, while knowledge of truths is always propositional knowledge. Knowledge by acquaintance has the property of what Russell calls “immediate certainty” or “primitive certainty”.⁷⁶ Even when we dream or hallucinate, Russell argues, we are certain that we have the sensations that we have. (As we will see in the subsequent analysis of the concept of certainty, it seems that this type of knowledge is ‘immediately certain’ because it is not derived from any other knowledge, on the contrary, knowledge is derived from it, and it is certain because it resists skeptical doubt.) Whether these sensations are actually caused by a physical object in the external world, or are purely products of our minds, is another question. Thus, it seems that, at least at first sight, for Russell knowledge by acquaintance, even though non-propositional, appears to have a property, namely certainty, which by definition, is a characteristic of propositional knowledge. How is this possible?

It needs to be noted here that one of the difficulties with this distinction between non-propositional and propositional knowledge is that, as Russell himself admits, even though knowledge of truths is logically independent of knowledge of things, it very often accompanies knowledge of things and thus, it is sometimes difficult to make a clear distinction between

as its source and ground”. On the next page, Russell continues, “My knowledge of the table as a physical object, on the contrary, is not direct knowledge. Such as it is, it is obtained through acquaintance with the sense-data that make up the appearance of the table. We have seen that it is possible, without absurdity, to doubt whether there is a table at all, whereas it is not possible to doubt the sense-data. My knowledge of the table is of the kind which we shall call ‘knowledge by description’. The table is ‘the physical object which causes such-and-such sense-data’. This describes the table by means of the sense-data. In order to know anything at all about the table, we must know truths connecting it with things with which we have acquaintance: we must know that ‘such-and-such sense-data are caused by a physical object’.” (*Ibid.*, p. 47)

⁷⁶*Ibid.*, p. 19.

knowledge of things and knowledge of truths⁷⁷. Thus, sensation is knowledge of things but at the same time, it is accompanied by knowledge of truths *about* the sensation (object sensed). It is possible, then, to say that when we talk about the certainty of knowledge of things, we actually mean that what is certain is the knowledge of truths that accompanies (more often than not) the knowledge of things. As Peter Hylton comments, this feature of acquaintance (its non-propositional character) which seems to be so obvious and straightforward to Russell, becomes somewhat complicated when knowledge of truths enters the picture.⁷⁸

Hylton uses the argument from illusion to illustrate his point. The complication with the certainty of knowledge by acquaintance arises when we introduce the possibility of illusion. The possibility of illusion is a possibility that we have made a mistake and this possibility provides reasons to doubt what we perceive or know. According to Russell's acquaintance theory, the only way to understand the idea of a mistake (error) is if we make a judgment about something that has turned out to be false. An act of acquaintance cannot be right or wrong as it simply *occurs*, and therefore, mistakes or errors are not something that we make with knowledge by acquaintance. But then, what is illusion, if not a mistake? Hylton uses the argument from illusion to suggest that it may, in fact, be rather difficult to separate *completely*, as Russell seems to want to do, knowledge of things from knowledge of truths. For Hylton it seems that for Russell to assume that we are "acquainted with an object in a sense is to have the indubitable (propositional) knowledge that it has the obvious sensory qualities which it does have. So, if one believes that a certain stick is bent, say, when it is not, then one is not acquainted with the stick

⁷⁷See *The Problems of Philosophy*, pp. 44-46. On p. 46 Russell writes, "Knowledge of things, when it is of the kind we call knowledge by acquaintance, is essentially simpler than any knowledge of truths, and logically independent of knowledge of truths, though it would be rash to assume that human beings ever, in fact, have acquaintance with things without at the same time knowing some truth about them."

⁷⁸Hylton, p. 368.

itself; and even if one believes that the stick is straight, this is not indubitable knowledge”.⁷⁹

I agree with Hylton’s observation and I believe that Russell wanted to keep knowledge of things and knowledge of truths separate, while at the same time, he seemed to acknowledge that only knowledge of truths has the properties of being certain, infallible and indubitable. We find evidence for that in Russell’s distinction between sensation and perception, or rather, between the objects of sensation and the objects of perception. The nature of facts of perception, which is discussed in detail later in the chapter, poses the question whether immediate knowledge (of which sensation is only a part) does not, in fact, contain propositional elements. (The issue will be discussed in detail later in the chapter, but we need to say at this point that in the acquaintance period Russell did not really think that perceptual knowledge is propositional or mediated knowledge. The picture changes in the neutral monism period, when he admits that perceptual knowledge is what we called ‘propositional’ knowledge, that is, mediated knowledge which contains belief elements.)

So, if we go back to Russell’s remark that knowledge of things is hardly ever on its own, that is, without being accompanied by knowledge of truths, then it seems that, as Hylton puts it, most of the knowledge that we actually *express overtly* is indirect, or propositional knowledge.⁸⁰ This might be the reason why, even though sensory knowledge, or any type of knowledge by acquaintance for that matter, is not to be categorized as true or false, Russell still talks about sensory knowledge as being certain and indubitable, while perhaps what he means is that it is self-evident. To illustrate this point further, I will refer to the discussion of intuitive knowledge in *The Problems of Philosophy*.

In the chapter on intuitive knowledge, Russell argues that our knowledge of truths which accompanies our knowledge by acquaintance, is what we call ‘intuitive knowledge’ which is also

⁷⁹*Ibid.*, p. 369.

⁸⁰Hylton, p. 376.

self-evident knowledge.⁸¹ Later he argues that self-evident truths are those immediately derived from sensation or perception, and which are called “truths of perception”.⁸² “Thus, whatever self-evident truths may be obtained from our senses”, Russell continues, “must be different from the sense-data from which they are obtained.”⁸³ Then, he concludes, we can talk about two kinds of self-evident truths of perception. The first kind “simply asserts the *existence* of the sense-datum, without in any way analyzing it”.⁸⁴ The second kind of self-evident truth of perception arises when the object of sensation is complex and requires a certain analysis (for example, when we say that we see a round patch of color, which requires analysis of both color and shape, as opposed to asserting solely the existence of the sense-datum of color).

Russell also says that self-evidence of knowledge has degrees, and is not simply present or absent. We discover this characteristic of self-evident knowledge in the analysis of memory. In our analysis of memory, we encounter a difficulty, since the object of memory “is apt to be accompanied” by an image of this object, and yet the image is not what constitutes memory.⁸⁵ (This is seen by the fact that the image is in the present, while the object of memory is in the past). Thus, Russell concludes the essence of memory consists of a past object somehow being before the mind. (I will discuss in detail the issues that arise in the analysis of the faculty of memory later in the chapter. At this point, I will limit myself to outlining what memory is, so that I can make my point about the self-evidence of knowledge.) Since the subject of cognition does not even know whether there even is a past, then, there must be some sort of an intuitive

⁸¹ “Among such truths are included those which merely state what is given in sense, and also certain abstract logical and arithmetical principles...”, *The Problems of Philosophy*, p. 109.

⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 113.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, pp. 113-114.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 114.

⁸⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 114-115.

judgment of memory, upon which my knowledge of the past depends. However, since memory is “notoriously fallacious”, which makes the intuitive judgments of memory fallacious, as well, this feature of memory casts doubt upon intuitive knowledge. (The solution that Russell proposes is that the closer to the present and the more vivid our memory of a past event is, the more self-evident the knowledge of it is.) The conclusion from the analysis of memory regarding self-evidence of knowledge, then, is that self-evidence has degrees. “Truths of perception and some of the principles of logic have the very highest degree of self-evidence; truths of immediate memory have an almost equally high degree.”⁸⁶

The fact that self-evidence has degrees is important for Russell’s theory of knowledge, since, as he remarks, it allows us to see what the relationship between self-evidence and truth is, as well as between self-evidence and infallibility. Russell thinks that the analysis of self-evidence shows that when we talk about self-evidence of knowledge, we deal with two different senses of the concept. The first one has to do with the highest degree of self-evidence which is really an “infallible guarantee of truth”.⁸⁷ The other has to do with all the other degrees of self-evidence (below the highest degree), and in that second sense, self-evidence is not an infallible guarantee of the truth of the propositional knowledge, but it gives only a “greater or less presumption”.⁸⁸

However, as Russell cautions, no matter how self-evident the truth of perception is (even if it is absolutely self-evident), it does not guarantee us *absolute certainty* of knowledge. The reason is that in passing from perception to judgment, there is always a possibility that we might commit an error: “... hence even where a fact has the first or absolute kind of self-evidence, a

⁸⁶*Ibid.*, p. 117.

⁸⁷Later in *The Problems of Philosophy*, Russell argues that there is a type of self-evidence which is absolute: “In all cases where we know by acquaintance a complex fact consisting of certain terms in a certain relation, we say that the truth that these terms are so related has the first or absolute kind of self-evidence, and in these cases the judgment that the terms are so related *must* be true. Thus this sort of self-evidence is an absolute guarantee of truth.” (p. 137).

⁸⁸*Ibid.*, p. 118.

judgment believed to correspond to the fact is not absolutely infallible, because it may not really correspond to the fact.”⁸⁹ From this quotation it seems evident that Russell uses (absolute) certainty and infallibility as synonyms, and that they both are characteristics of propositional knowledge (even though we can never, in fact, obtain absolutely certain knowledge).

So, to go back to the question we posed earlier, namely, is there a sense in which we can talk about the certainty of non-propositional knowledge (knowledge by acquaintance)?⁹⁰ C. Wade Savage points out that from the texts in the acquaintance period we get the impression that knowledge by acquaintance is the most certain knowledge there is because Russell conflates the two senses in which the terms ‘certainty’ and ‘infallibility’ *could* be used.⁹¹ In the first sense, according to Savage, certainty and infallibility mean ‘neither true nor false’ and in the second sense, they mean ‘always true’. According to Russell’s definition of sensation, knowledge by acquaintance is certain and infallible only in the first sense of the concept. However, for Savage the interpretation of certainty as ‘neither true nor false’ is ‘uninteresting’ from an epistemological point of view because it applies only to knowledge of sense-data (but not to knowledge of the past, for example), and because only judgments and beliefs can properly be called ‘certain’ or ‘infallible’.⁹² I do not think that it is fair to brand a usage of a concept as uninteresting and refuse to explore it, especially if it seems to be a part of Russell’s theory of cognition during the stipulated period. However, I think that what Savage is getting at is that the way Russell uses ‘certain’ in the context of knowledge by acquaintance, suggests an almost metaphorical (or common language), as opposed to philosophically significant (that is, epistemic) usage of the

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, p. 138.

⁹⁰After all, the opening sentence of *The Problems of Philosophy* is the following question, “Is there any knowledge in the world which is so *certain* [italics added] that no reasonable man could doubt it?” (p. 7).

⁹¹Savage, p. 152.

⁹²*Ibid.*, p. 153.

concept. As he unfolds his theory of cognition and theory of knowledge further, Russell is being more careful in the way he uses the terms ‘certain’, ‘self-evident’, etc. In 1913, for example, he talks about self-evidence (not certainty) of perceptual knowledge, and he explains that perceptual knowledge is self-evident *only* because it is accompanied by knowledge of truths which are directly derived from the sensations they are attached to.⁹³

The notion of self-evidence, however, appears to be further complicated by the complexity and vagueness of the concept of knowledge.⁹⁴ In *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell argues that “the broad definition of self-evidence is that it is *knowledge which we possess independently of inference*.”⁹⁵ Defined in this way, it should include knowledge by acquaintance. Immediately after this statement, however, Russell makes another one which seems to go against the first one. Since knowledge by acquaintance is “cognition of single objects”, then, he thinks, it will be better to think of self-evidence in terms of *propositional* thinking only (that is, not in terms of thinking which is independent of inference).⁹⁶ This is how, according to Russell, it works. Propositions and beliefs are self-evident if they are immediately derived from the senses.⁹⁷

⁹³In *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell states that there are different degrees of certainty that could be derived from self-evidence. For example, when there is self-evidence present, we can conclude that our beliefs have the highest possible degree of certainty. (p. 167)

⁹⁴“But unfortunately the definition of ‘knowledge’ is very difficult, and it seems highly probable that it must involve self-evidence: we may find that what we ‘know’ is what is self-evident to us and what we infer from what is self-evident to us. ‘True belief’ is not the definition of knowledge. ... We require, in knowledge, some power of logical resistance, some more than subjective stability against doubt, which may easily be absent in beliefs that merely happen to be true. Now this resistance and stability would seem always to rest, in the last resort, upon self-evidence. Hence we must define self-evidence without mentioning ‘knowledge’ in our definition.” *Ibid.*, p. 157. I take this last sentence to mean not that self-evidence does not characterize knowledge, but that ‘knowledge’ is such a vague concept that we will lose the definition of ‘self-evidence’ if we start with the definition of knowledge.

⁹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 156.

⁹⁶*Ibid.*

⁹⁷Russell suggests that self-evidence is “a property which is relative to a given subject at a given moment, and does not belong to the proposition *per se*. It is better, therefore, to speak of self-evident *beliefs* than to speak of self-evident propositions”. *Ibid.*, p. 157.

And yet, they are not self-evident until the moment of sensation. In other words, beliefs are self-evident because they have been caused by the particular sensation. Thus, self-evidence depends upon “perception of some complex which only exists when the judgment is true”.⁹⁸ Thus, a judgment is self-evident when we can perceive its truth. The example that Russell gives to illustrate his point is the following. Suppose, we are in a theater, waiting for the play to begin. At this point, we may believe that the curtain will rise soon to announce the beginning of the play. However, at this point, our belief is not self-evident. When we perceive the actual rising of the curtain (the complex fact of the curtain rising), our belief has the potential of becoming self-evident, but it is not self-evident yet. It only becomes self-evident when we perceive the complex fact (the rising of the curtain) with our belief (what Russell means by ‘perceive’ the correspondence between the fact and the belief, is that we are acquainted with it). As Russell points out, it seems then, that the perception of the correspondence itself (between our belief and the fact) is essential for the understanding of self-evidence. Finally, Russell offers the definition of self-evidence as a “property of judgments, consisting in the fact that, in the same experience with themselves, they are accompanied by acquaintance with their truth”.⁹⁹ This definition, according to Russell, shows that self-evident judgments cannot be false and so, deserve to be called ‘knowledge’ (as opposed to ‘mere belief’).

From this latter analysis of self-evidence, it seems that in 1913 Russell thought that self-evidence, just like certainty, is a property of propositional knowledge (it presupposes acquaintance with a fact, as well as acquaintance with the correspondence between the fact and the belief). I do not think that this excludes the possibility of self-evidence being the property of knowledge by acquaintance, as well, as Russell clearly indicates in *The Problems of Philosophy*. The last thing we need to consider, in line of the analysis of certainty of knowledge, then, is what

⁹⁸ *Ibid*, p. 165.

⁹⁹ *Ibid*., p. 166.

kind of knowledge knowledge by acquaintance is (if it has the property of self-evidence).

On the one hand, Russell calls knowledge by acquaintance ‘knowledge’ and refers to sensation, perception, memory, imagination, and introspection, as cognitive faculties (‘cognition with single objects’; as we already saw, despite the complexity of the notion of ‘cognition’, we can think of ‘cognitive’ as ‘that which pertains to knowledge’). If infallibility and indubitability¹⁰⁰ belong to propositional knowledge, then it might seem that self-evidence is the most appropriate characteristic, out of these three, of knowledge by acquaintance. On the other hand, however, Russell admits that knowledge by acquaintance is often accompanied by knowledge of truths, and as it seems from his subsequent analysis in 1913, it is precisely this knowledge of truths that has the properties of certainty, infallibility, indubitability, and even self-evidence. In addition to all that, as we saw, Russell uses the term ‘certainty’ rather loosely, so that self-evidence is often not only put together, but sometimes even conflated with infallibility, and as a result, certainty applies to both knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description.¹⁰¹ This leaves us with the unsatisfactory conclusion that the experiential cognitive faculties provide knowledge which is spoken of as being certain, while in fact, it is self-evident

¹⁰⁰On p.163 of *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell refers to ‘indubitability’ as a ‘subjective characteristic’ of knowledge. What is more, he argues that from the point of view of the skeptic, indubitability is a subjective characteristic of our beliefs and that it belongs at different times to “the most opposite beliefs”. Thus, the urge for indubitability should be regarded as one of “the unfortunate passions”, like rage and lust, of which the philosopher should rid himself. Later on the same page, when describing certainty of knowledge from the point of view of the ‘believer in knowledge’, he refers indirectly to indubitability as a ‘psychological account of certainty’. Thus, according to Russell, even though indubitability belongs to self-evidence, we cannot define self-evidence in terms of indubitability, precisely because indubitability is a psychological characteristic of knowledge. (As we saw, the way to define self-evidence is by appealing to the acquaintance with facts). So, it seems, based on the textual evidence, that Russell did not think that indubitability alone, can define or guarantee either certainty or self-evidence of knowledge.

¹⁰¹Russell concludes the chapter on self-evidence in *Theory of Knowledge*, with the statement that self-evident judgments are incapable of being false (*Ibid.*, p. 166). At the same time, as we saw from the analysis of *The Problems of Philosophy*, if knowledge by acquaintance is absolutely self-evident, then it is also infallible, because, as we know, the nature of knowledge by acquaintance is such that it does not possess the characteristics of being true or false. See also the discussion of certainty and self-evidence on pp. 167-168 of *Theory of Knowledge*.

(in one sense, anyway). At the same time, the knowledge from the experiential cognitive faculties is (almost always) accompanied by knowledge of truths, which knowledge is not only self-evident but also infallible and indubitable.

It is important to emphasize here once again that for Russell there is no absolutely certain knowledge. In 1912 and 1913 Russell argues that the extreme skepticism in the certainty of knowledge (or even in asserting the existence of knowledge, as opposed to mere beliefs) remains philosophically tenable.¹⁰² (However, as Russell points out, the skeptical attitude is short-lived since it is a questioning attitude and soon ‘exhausts itself’ to give way to various hypotheses which will eventually produce results for the theory of knowledge, and for philosophy, in general.) The best we can hope for is absolutely self-evident knowledge which resists skeptical doubt (it does not resist absolute skepticism).¹⁰³ It seems that, despite all the complications and ambiguities surrounding the concept of knowledge and the certainty of knowledge, Russell thought that knowledge by acquaintance is not only true knowledge, but also (absolutely) self-evident.

Then, if we assume that in 1912 and 1913 Russell believed that knowledge by acquaintance is the most certain knowledge there is and that sensation is the most obvious example of acquaintance, then we need to go back to the discussion of sensation. As we already pointed out, sensation is so important for Russell’s theory of cognition because it provides the most certain knowledge that there is. The second reason why sensation is central for Russell’s theory of cognition in the acquaintance period is that all knowledge by acquaintance, which includes *a priori* as well as empirical knowledge, follows the model of sensory or perceptual knowledge. In “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description” [1911] Russell

¹⁰²*Ibid.*, p. 159.

¹⁰³As Russell argues in *Theory of Knowledge*, self-evidence is the source of knowledge and it must belong to propositions which are epistemological premises. So, self-evidence is epistemologically fundamental. (*Ibid.*)

argues that the most obvious objects of acquaintance are the objects of sensation, called sense-data¹⁰⁴. All other types of knowledge by acquaintance follow the model of acquaintance with sense-data. Knowledge of the past, which is also argued to be self-evident, follows the model of sensory knowledge. That is, memories involve past sense-data with which the subject is acquainted. The fundamental principle of theory of knowledge from the acquaintance period that certain knowledge comes from, and is understood following the model of, sensation appears in all the texts from the acquaintance period as something firmly established¹⁰⁵. Based on the importance of the faculty of sensation, then, we need to investigate how exactly it works.

Before explaining the structure and mechanism of the basic self-evident knowledge that we first find in sensation (accompanied by a truth about it), and then in memory, imagination, introspection, conception, etc., and how it is acquired, Russell first challenges epistemological theories that claim that perceptual knowledge is founded upon ‘impressions’, ‘ideas’, ‘images’, etc. What Russell rejects in these theories is their assumption that all the objects of cognition, even the simplest impressions that come from our senses, are ultimately dependent upon the mind of the knowing subject.¹⁰⁶ For example, according to Hume and Berkeley, the most certain knowledge comes from impressions or sense-data which are the foundations of simple and complex ideas. To Russell’s way of thinking, since for Hume and Berkeley the cognitive atoms

¹⁰⁴“Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description”, in *The Collected Papers*, vol. 6, pp. 148-150.

¹⁰⁵To remind the reader again, in the period prior to the writing of *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell did not distinguish between sensation and perception. Thus, when he refers to perception in the quotations to follow, he is referring to the same cognitive faculty. “The perception itself is correct and what is wrong is a judgment based upon the perception. ... I shall take it as agreed that perception, as opposed to judgment, is never in error.”, “On the Nature of Truth and Falsehood”, vol. 6, p. 122. “When we ask what are the kinds of objects with which we are acquainted, the first and most obvious example is sense-data.”, “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description”, vol. 6, p. 148. “Concerning sense-data, we know that they are there while they are data, and this is the epistemological basis for all our knowledge of external particulars.”, “The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics.” [1914], Vol. 8, p. 6.

¹⁰⁶*The Problems of Philosophy*, pp.38-40.

are impressions, then they are ultimately dependent upon the mind of the perceiver. However, as both Hume and Berkeley would agree, the human mind is limited in its capacity and ability to process information and turn it into impressions, and then ideas. Because of how limited the mind is, and provided that the foundations of human knowledge are dependent upon the mind, then what we could know with relative certainty, would be limited to the content of the mind. That is why Hume chooses to remain skeptical with regard to the scope and certainty of knowledge of the external world. For the same reason, as Russell saw it, Berkeley thought that because of how limited the human mind is, human knowledge needs the existence of a super-being, or God, who is omniscient and perfect, to guarantee its certainty and indubitability. Russell thought that a new and more adequate epistemological system is needed to explain how we can acquire objective knowledge that is certain and indubitable¹⁰⁷.

His first step toward building the new theory of knowledge is to replace the established epistemological terms of ‘impressions’, ‘ideas’, ‘images’, etc., with new ones such as ‘percepts’, ‘sense-data’, ‘concepts’, etc. For example, Russell argues, the concept ‘idea’, as traditionally used by philosophers like Hume and Berkeley, is ambiguous. On the one hand, it refers to the thing that we are aware of in sensation or perception, while on the other hand, it refers to the awareness or thinking itself. When these two things, namely the object of cognition and the act of cognition, are conflated, it is easy to conclude that things that we are aware of are mind-dependent. Within such an epistemological framework where impressions form ideas and which Russell calls an idealist framework, even perceptual knowledge always depends upon the mind of the knowing subject, and because of that it is subjective, limited, and fallible. Russell thinks that to ensure the objectivity of knowledge, the object of cognition should not generally be considered mental or mind-dependent (with the exception of introspection where the object of knowledge is mental) in the sense that it is not generated by the mind of the perceiver in any way. Only the *act*

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, p. 40-41.

of perception is mental, not its object. When the subject perceives or conceives something, it becomes acquainted with it, it does not construct it, interpret it, infer it, or even judge it, but merely apprehends it. In the act of direct acquaintance the object is present to the subject, and nothing in the mind of the subject alters or determines what is present. What guarantees the apprehension of the object in acquaintance is not only the fact that acquaintance is instantaneous and imposed upon the subject, but also that the subject is acquainted not only with the objects that are present before the mind, but also with the relations that the objects or the parts of the objects are in.

Unlike Hume who claimed that the information coming from the senses is passive and needs to be organized by the mind, with which the possibility of error arises, for Russell what enters the mind with acquaintance is the object as an organized whole. And that is why the objects of perception (sensation), in particular, and the objects of the other experiential cognitive faculties, in general, are not susceptible to the errors of judgments and inferences, which are dependent upon the mind. In “On the Relations of Universals and Particulars” [1911] Russell argues that the distinction between act and object of cognition is the “most important epistemological and metaphysical distinction”.¹⁰⁸ Therefore, it is necessary for the analysis of theory of knowledge that we keep the act of cognition, and the object of cognition separate at all times. Then, we will realize that knowledge is subjective only in the sense that it is known by a human mind, but what it is about, is objective and therefore, it is not subject to the same limitations and fallibility as the human mind with its different faculties. To maintain the objectivity of knowledge, Russell introduces a new terminology where the term ‘sensation’ and ‘perception’ apply to the particular act of cognition, and ‘sense-datum’ or ‘percept’ apply to the particular object of cognition.

¹⁰⁸“On the Relations of Universals and Particulars” [1911], in *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 105.

As noted earlier, Russell believed that sensory (perceptual) knowledge is the most certain knowledge, which is also objective knowledge, and it is the model for all knowledge by acquaintance.¹⁰⁹ If Russell is to argue that all knowledge founded on acquaintance is certain, he needs to show that direct acquaintance can reach out beyond the fleeting present moment of perception (sensation) and account for our past experiences as well. Otherwise, he risks ending up with the same skeptical conclusion that Hume reached. That is why Russell argues that the cognitive faculty of memory is crucial for his new theory of cognition. In *The Problems of Philosophy* he writes,

Sense data ... supply the most obvious and striking example of knowledge by acquaintance. But if they were the sole example, our knowledge would be very much more restricted than it is. ... The first extension beyond sense-data to be considered is acquaintance by *memory*¹¹⁰.

Russell thinks that the beliefs of a naive realist that the sun will rise tomorrow, and that the world did not spring into existence five minutes ago, are correct, and so, our knowledge is not restricted only to the immediate present of perception (sensation). With respect to knowledge of the past, the faculty of memory provides the bridge between the knowledge of the present and the knowledge that goes beyond the present moment. But Russell realizes right away that the nature of memory is somewhat ‘confusing’. For the knowledge of the past to be objective, it must deal with mind-independent objects with which we are acquainted in the present moment. Yet, to be knowledge of what is past, the past objects of acquaintance cannot be present. The problem is to

¹⁰⁹When I say that sensory (perceptual) knowledge is the most certain knowledge, this should not be read that sensory knowledge is *exclusively* the most certain knowledge, since, as mentioned earlier, knowledge of universals, which is knowledge by acquaintance, also falls under the most certain knowledge there is. As explained earlier, my focus is on the knowledge that comes from the experiential cognitive faculties.

¹¹⁰ *The Problems of Philosophy*, p. 48.

explain how this can be.

It is true, Russell contends in *The Problems of Philosophy*, that our memories often come to us accompanied by images.¹¹¹ However, Russell insists that the essence of memory is not constituted by these images, “but by having immediately before the mind an object which is recognized as past”¹¹². With images standing between the object of cognition and the knowing mind, the number of entities to be known increases and therefore, the possibility for error increases, too. And the whole theory of cognition (and theory of knowledge by acquaintance) that Russell has developed so far is built upon the principle that the mind is acquainted with its objects directly, without the mediation of such things as ideas, images, impressions, etc. When we remember, he thinks we must be *immediately* aware that we have before the mind an object which is actually in the past, just like we are aware that when we perceive (sense) we have before our minds an object which is in the present.

This modeling of knowledge of past sense-data on knowledge of present sense-data, however, creates a difficulty (or at least an odd account of knowledge of the past, which needs to be clarified). After arguing that memory consists of past sense-data (and that images are undesirable objects for the experiential cognitive faculties), the picture that Russell presents of memory tells us that images have, in fact, place in memory. Part of the reason is that Russell realizes right away that memory is of two types, recent and remote memory. It is the remote memory that ‘creates problems’ for the general account of memory as acquaintance with past sense-data. As Russell puts it, because knowledge of the past has the tendency to decrease in certainty (meaning, self-evidence) over time, knowledge of the past is “trustworthy only in

¹¹¹Images, by definition, resemble sense-data, they are copies of sense-data but not the sense-data themselves.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, p. 115.

proportion to the vividness of the experience and to its nearness in time”¹¹³. In other words, the closer the object of memory is to the present moment, the clearer (more vivid) picture of the past data we have, and therefore, the more certain or self-evident knowledge of the past is. For example, I will most probably remember all the details of the breakfast that I ate this morning, compared to the breakfast that I ate ten years ago on the same date. If I am asked about my breakfast from this morning, I would be a lot more confident in describing it, or making truth claims about it, rather than doing the same thing about my breakfast from ten years ago. If I am asked whether I had eggs for breakfast this morning, I will not even think twice before I answer yes or no. But I cannot do that for something that I remember (vaguely) to have happened ten years ago. The distance in time creates an invisible barrier for my confidence in the self-evidence of something. Immediate memory which is very recent, is the most reliable knowledge of the past, while remote memory is the least self-evident knowledge of the past. Thus, it is only immediate memory, and not remote memory, that provides the same highest degree of self-evidence as sensory knowledge does. This conclusion, in turn, leads to the question whether Russell intended to split the faculty of memory into two faculties – immediate and remote, the former yielding knowledge by acquaintance, the latter – knowledge by description. If so, this needs to be fitted with Russell’s general account of knowledge of the past.

I do not think that there is any textual evidence that in the acquaintance period Russell intended to view memory as two separate faculties in this way. On the contrary, he always refers to memory as a single faculty that provides direct, unmediated knowledge. What is more, in *The*

¹¹³ *Ibid.* On the same page, Russell argues that all knowledge of the past depends upon ‘intuitive judgments of memory’ which intuitive judgment adds ‘past’ to the awareness of past sense-data. Even in 1913 Russell talks about some kind of a (propositional) understanding of ‘pastness’ which accompanies memory and often leads to a belief that what I have before my mind is a ‘true’ memory and not an imaginary memory. I do not think that the addition of the ‘intuitive judgment of memory’ or the understanding of ‘pastness’ changes very much for the understanding or interpretation of the faculty of memory. Russell still needs to show how exactly we are acquainted with past sense-data, in the case of immediate memory.

Problems of Philosophy, as well as in “Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description”, he indicated that the objects of both immediate and remote memory are immediately present before the mind, that is, are known by acquaintance. So, if there is only one faculty of memory, but two types of memory, then, Russell’s theory of memory has to explain how, if knowledge of the past is of two kinds, the subject of cognition goes from one state of knowledge to another (from being acquainted to inferring about past events).

Section Two. Theory of Cognition in *Theory of Knowledge* [1913].

Russell’s quest for certain knowledge continues with the manuscript *Theory of Knowledge*, written in the summer of 1913. In *Theory of Knowledge* Russell declares that immediate experience is the only real knowledge of things (also known as knowledge by acquaintance)¹¹⁴, and that in epistemology it is important “to reduce our problems to what is actually experienced”.¹¹⁵ Thus, whatever the definition of ‘experience’ might be, it is a fact that my ‘present experience’ encompasses sensation, memory, imagination, introspection, and

¹¹⁴*Theory of Knowledge*, p. 32. I think that in *Theory of Knowledge* Russell uses the concept of ‘experience’ not necessarily in a technical way. In the first chapter of *Theory of Knowledge* Russell sometimes uses the concept ‘experience’ to indicate that our knowledge spreads beyond the knowledge of the fleeting present moment of sensation. Later in the book he drops the use of ‘experience’ and replaces it with a more precise description of our knowledge of the world, but he comes back to it at the end of the manuscript where he refers to it as ‘experience as a whole’. Russell admits that ‘experience’ is a vague concept since feelings and emotions are also part of our human experience, and as he argues earlier in *Theory of Knowledge*, feelings and emotions are not part of our cognitive experience, and therefore do not count as knowledge per se. This leads me to believe that at least in the first chapters of *Theory of Knowledge* Russell used experience to mean ‘cognitive experience’.

¹¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 51. With regard to the analysis of experience and knowledge by acquaintance, on p. 52 Russell writes that the general rule that guides him through his investigation is the following: “Seek always for what is obvious, and accept nothing else except as the result of an inference from something obvious which has been found previously. With this rule, a great simplification is effected, and vast masses of erudition can be swept aside as irrelevant.”

conception. Thus, present (or past) experience, as opposed to inference and assumption brings the most certain knowledge there is. What is experienced is best described by the relation of acquaintance. The theory of knowledge by acquaintance is what Russell calls the “theory of experience of cognitive relations”¹¹⁶. And so, Russell sets out to analyze in great detail the “simplest and most pervading aspect of experience” which is the cognitive relation of acquaintance¹¹⁷.

The first thing that Russell does in *Theory of Knowledge* is to define all the concepts of his theory of knowledge. Acquaintance is the central concept in the theory of knowledge and according to what Russell wrote in *Theory of Knowledge*, acquaintance is a “dual relation between a subject and an object”¹¹⁸. It differs from the non-cognitive relations such as “feeling, emotion, volition”¹¹⁹ in that it brings to the subject the most direct, and the most certain knowledge of things. The subject, Russell continues, is mental, the object is not, in general,

¹¹⁶ “*Cognitive facts* will be defined as facts involving acquaintance or some relation which presupposes acquaintance. ... The distinguishing mark of what is mental, or at any rate, of what is cognitive, is not to be found in the particulars involved, but only in the nature of the relations between them. Of these relations acquaintance appears to be the most comprehensive and therefore, the most suitable for the definition of cognitive facts.” (*Ibid.*, p. 45).

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 5.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 22. For Russell, William James and the neutral monists of the time failed to make the distinction between cognitive and non-cognitive relations which led them to the false assumption that such acts as hearing, seeing, or sensing, in general, do not provide knowledge but are “merely the presence of the thing itself as one of the constituents of the mind” (*Ibid.*, p.19).

mental except in the case of introspection^{120, 121}. Any act of acquaintance for Russell is mental. It is “a complex in which a subject and an object are united by the relation of acquaintance”¹²². The subject is an “entity which is acquainted with something, i.e. ‘subjects’ are the domain of the relation ‘acquaintance’”¹²³. The object is an “entity with which something is acquainted, i.e. ‘objects’ are the converse domain of the relation ‘acquaintance’”¹²⁴. What Russell means by this is that we can call an object only those entities with which some subject of cognition is acquainted. If there is no knowing subject to be acquainted with them, then they would not be referred to as objects in this sense. Objects of acquaintance “may be in the present, in the past, or not in time at all”¹²⁵.

Russell believes that we, philosophers, are not going to acquire certain knowledge by analyzing the differences in the *objects* that the knowing subject encounters. The differences

¹²⁰ By ‘conception’ Russell means acquaintance with predicates. The objects of conception are not particulars but are either predicates (universals) or relations. Russell argues that the study of predicates which consists of a study of their nature and the study of the cognitive faculty of conception is of more interest to logic than to theory of knowledge proper (*Ibid.*, p. 90). Since my interest lies with the four main experiential cognitive faculties, I will not analyze the faculty of conception in detail.

¹²¹ As already explained in the previous section, introspection is acquaintance with the contents of the mind. In other words, introspection is acquaintance with *my* acquaintance (*Ibid.*, p. 121). Apart from the problems that Russell is having throughout the whole acquaintance period with the acquaintance with the ‘I’, in *Theory of Knowledge* he says that introspection is like sensation in one sense, and like perception, in another sense. Introspection resembles the faculty of sensation because it is acquaintance with the ‘inner sense’. However, it is different from the faculty of sensation because it deals with ‘mental facts’ (facts are always complex objects which have constituents) which sometimes involve other relations such as judging, believing, disbelieving, etc. in which case it resembles perception (*Ibid.*, p. 37). (What it means to be acquainted with facts and what consequences this brings for the theory of cognition in the acquaintance period will be discussed in detail later in this section).

¹²² *Ibid.*, p. 35.

¹²³ *Ibid.*

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*

¹²⁵ *Ibid.* Here he refers to the objects of sensation which are present, memory whose objects are in the past, and imagination whose objects are not in any of the physical temporal modes.

between the cognitive objects are not the primary concern of Russell's theory of cognition. Rather, it is the differences in the cognitive *relation* between the knowing subject and the known object that is of primary concern of the theory of cognition and theory of knowledge in the acquaintance period.¹²⁶ The distinction between sensation, memory, and imagination, for example, is of primary concern to the theory of cognition (since they involve cognitive relations), unlike the distinction between sense-data, imaginary data, and past sense-data, which are different kinds of objects entering into cognitive relations. Russell argues that the distinction between the cognitive faculties is based upon the nature of the cognitive relation, and not upon the nature of their objects: "The distinguishing mark of what is mental, or at any rate what is cognitive, is not to be found in the particulars involved, but only in the nature of the relations between them."¹²⁷

We can analyze the cognitive relation involved in all cognitive acts, Russell argues, by dividing it into 'acquaintance with particulars' and 'acquaintance with predicates (universals)', both of which were discussed earlier in the chapter. Sensation, perception, memory, and imagination and their sub-types belong to acquaintance with particulars since their objects are particulars.¹²⁸ From what was said earlier, Russell defines epistemology as a combination of logic and psychology, so acquaintance with predicates (conception) and logic play an important part in

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 53.

¹²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 45.

¹²⁸ Russell's definition of a particular is "an entity which can only enter into complexes as the subject of a predicate or as one of the terms of a relation, never as itself a predicate or a relation". (*Ibid.*, pp. 55-56). At another place, Russell calls the 'particular' a "datum that is before the mind" (*Ibid.*, p. 47). This latter definition, however, is too broad because universals or predicates are also described as data that are before the mind. According to Russell, sense-datum is the best example of a particular. A sense-datum is a particular with which we are acquainted.

his theory of knowledge.¹²⁹ But since in *Theory of Knowledge* Russell is not interested in building a theory of logic but a theory of knowledge that will capture what certain knowledge is, his analysis of acquaintance begins with acquaintance with particulars, or the analysis of such cognitive faculties as sensation, memory, and imagination. (This does not mean to say that Russell is not interested in the analysis of acquaintance with universals and logical laws, which also brings certain knowledge. However, since I am interested in the knowledge that comes from sensation, perception, memory and imagination, I intend to only delve into Russell's account of acquaintance with particulars.)

According to Russell's theory of cognition in 1913 the main experiential cognitive faculties that characterize acquaintance with particulars are: *sensation*, *memory* and *imagination*. Each of these faculties have sub-types. Thus, sensation includes introspection (at least, introspection understood in one sense), and attention, memory includes physiological, immediate and remote memory, and imagination includes hallucination and dreaming.¹³⁰ There is an important addition in 1913 to the main cognitive faculties, which results from the introduction of a distinction between two cognitive faculties which was not made earlier in the period. In *Theory of Knowledge* Russell distinguishes between sensation and perception. Thus, *perception* (which also includes introspection in another sense of the concept¹³¹) is a separate cognitive faculty

¹²⁹Russell says that "the central problem of epistemology is the problem of distinguishing between true and false beliefs, and of finding, in as many regions as possible, criteria of true belief within those regions. This problem takes us, through the analysis of belief and its presuppositions, into psychology and the enumeration of cognitive relations, while it takes us into logic through the distinction of truth and falsehood, which is irrelevant in a merely psychological discussion of belief." (*Ibid.*, p. 46).

¹³⁰In *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell admits that, even though knowledge of the past is knowledge by acquaintance, knowledge of the *future* is always inferred and not known immediately, since there is no experience of the future. (*Ibid.*, p. 10, p. 74). Thus, we can never know things about the future with the degree of certainty that we can know the present and the past.

¹³¹Once again, in *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell argues that "if there is introspective knowledge of the present, we will include this with sensation. ... *if* introspection ever gives

whose objects are facts of perception, and not sense-data.

As explained earlier in the section, cognitive faculties involve a two-term relation between a subject and an object of knowledge, and the difference between them lies not in the nature of their objects but in the nature of their *relation* to the subject. The first characteristic of these relations is that it is *temporal*; in sensation and perception (and introspection, for that matter) the object is simultaneous with the subject; in memory the object is earlier than the subject, and in imagination and its sub-types the object is not essentially in any temporal relation to the subject (meaning, the imagined object is not in physical, but only in imaginary time), although it can be imagined as being in the past, present or future. From our earlier discussion of Russell's theory of cognition from 1910 to 1912 it became clear that Russell regards sensation as the most important cognitive faculty and that sensation is the model for his account of all other kinds of knowledge by acquaintance.¹³² Russell holds the same view in 1913 which is why we will analyze the faculty of sensation first.

acquaintance with present mental entities in the way in which the senses give acquaintance with present physical entities, then such acquaintance with mental entities is, *for our purposes*, to be included under the head of sensation." (*Ibid.*, pp. 65-66). At another place, however, Russell argues that introspection, which includes awareness of the self which we know only by description, is knowledge of facts, and as such, is distinct from sensation and belongs to the faculty of perception. (*Ibid.*, pp. 36-37).

¹³²To remind the reader, the way that Russell uses 'cognition', and 'cognitive' in the acquaintance period is different than the way he uses it in the neutral monism period. In the acquaintance period Russell believes that there is a direct cognitive relation between subject and the object of cognition, which he calls knowledge by acquaintance. According to this understanding of cognition, sensation is cognitive. This changes in the neutral monism period, where sensation is not considered cognitive any more, and where there is no direct cognitive relation between subject and object.

2.1. The Faculty of Sensation.

As Russell defines acquaintance with particulars, it is acquaintance with objects which are “all present to me at the time when I experience them”¹³³. This is, in fact, the nature of all present and past cognitive experience: “I can never give an actual instance of a thing not now within my experience”¹³⁴. Sensation is a cognitive relation where the cognitive subject is simultaneous with the cognitive object. This is why, for Russell, sensation is the cognitive faculty which best exemplifies the relation of acquaintance, and, moreover, it exemplifies what the most certain knowledge is. However, the sense in which the objects are ‘present’ to the knowing subject, Russell admits, is troublesome and needs further investigation. All objects of acquaintance are present in the sense of being ‘before the mind’. However, not all objects of acquaintance are present to the knowing subject in the temporal sense. Temporal presence is ‘problematic’ for the faculties of memory and imagination.¹³⁵ It seems that only the objects of sensation, its sub-types, as well as the objects of perception are both present to the mind and present in the sense of being simultaneous with the act of sensation. Objects of memory are in the past, yet somehow they are present to the mind that is acquainted with them; objects of imagination are neither in the present, nor in the past, being imaginary, yet they are somehow present to the imagining mind too. To clarify how the objects of memory and imagination are

¹³³ *Ibid.*, p. 34.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*

¹³⁵ Temporal presence could be interpreted as problematic for anticipation as well since according to Russell’s theory of cognition, the future is something that we infer and do not know by acquaintance (*Ibid.*, p. 10). Anticipation, however, refers to the nearest possible future moment and because of that is considered by Russell to be a part of sensation. Russell makes a similar argument for one of the types of memory, namely sensational memory which contains after-images, and thus, is considered by Russell to be closer to the faculty of sensation than to the faculty of memory.

actually present to the knowing subject, Russell distinguishes two senses in which an object is ‘present’ to the subject of cognition. In the first sense, which Russell calls ‘temporal presence’, ‘present’ means happening ‘now’. According to Russell, only objects of sensation are present in this sense. In the second sense, which Russell calls ‘psychological presence’, ‘present’ means ‘being in immediate contact with the mind’ which he defines as simply having “experience, acquaintance, awareness”¹³⁶; objects of all four faculties, as well as predicates, are present in this second sense.¹³⁷ If sensation is the model cognitive faculty through whose analysis we will understand how we are acquainted with things, we need to understand both senses in which the objects are present to the knowing subject.

If we turn back to the temporal presence of objects before the mind, we will notice that it is a very narrow sense of ‘present to the mind’ since it includes only sensation (and possibly perception), not even anticipation which is a sub-type of sensation.¹³⁸ In other words, only the objects which are in the specious present and which last only as long as my sensation lasts, are

¹³⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 38.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ There is certain ambiguity in the definition of anticipation which creates difficulty for our understanding of knowledge of the future. In *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell argues that anticipation belongs to the faculty of sensation. For example, when I see lightning in the sky, I anticipate the thunder which comes to my mind a few seconds later. At another place, however, he claims that knowledge of the future is always inferred and not known directly, which makes anticipation a ‘propositional attitude’, and thus, excludes it from knowledge by acquaintance (*Ibid.*, p. 10). It seems that knowledge of the future is similar to knowledge of the remote past in the sense that we can know things with greater or lesser probability but never with certainty (as Russell puts it, any knowledge of the future lies “outside of experience” and I have certain knowledge only about my experience. In this sense, it cannot be known directly, like the present and the recent past.) Then, it seems that it is necessary to distinguish between knowledge of the very near future and knowledge of the future in general (in much the same way that we need to distinguish between knowledge of the recent past and knowledge of the past in general). Knowledge of the very near future, such as that in the next few seconds I will finish chewing and swallow the remnants of my pizza slice, is easily predictable. That is what we might call anticipation, whose objects are in the ‘extended’ present. All that this analysis of knowledge of the future does, however, is to bring us back to some of the issues about having direct and certain knowledge of anything outside of the specious present.

present to my mind in this first sense of presence (because the past is gone and the future has not arrived yet). The objects of perception, on the other hand, are facts, and it is not clear whether, according to Russell's theory, facts belong to the specious present, as sense-data do. The relationship between sensation and perception deserves more attention which will be given to it later in the section. Here, it is worth mentioning that we experience (from a first person point of view) certain facts which Russell calls 'primitive facts' (these are facts that do not rely upon "our own reasoning from previous facts, or upon the testimony of others") but we do not experience other facts that have happened far in the past and are considered from our point of view, historical facts, such as the death of Napoleon, or the Second World War.¹³⁹ Even the primitive facts that we experience, however, are complexes that seem to involve acquaintance with relations which is more than what acquaintance with sense-data involves.

To summarize, all objects of acquaintance, including sense-data, facts of perception, memories, imagination data, acquaintance with the 'I', *a priori* logical principles, etc., are psychologically present to the mind of the knowing subject. Only sense-data are both psychologically and temporally present to the mind of the knowing subject. According to Russell, sensation is the cognitive faculty that encompasses all that acquaintance is about, and it is the reason why he has chosen it as a model for his account of all the cognitive faculties. The question, then, is whether as a result of his analysis of acquaintance and sensation, we can conclude that in 1913 Russell believed that we can have certain knowledge of all objects of acquaintance, including past ones, or whether he believed that the most certain knowledge is derived only from sensation, excluding anticipation, memory and imagination.

I do not see how the answer to this question could be in favor of the faculty of sensation. If our certain knowledge is derived solely from sensation, then it is bound to be confined within the (very narrow) limits of the specious present. (The specious present is defined as "the period

¹³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 9.

of time within which an object must lie in order to be a sense-datum”¹⁴⁰). As I already stated, I think this will bring Russell’s theory of knowledge much closer to Hume’s (and his skeptical conclusion regarding knowledge) than he intended or desired. If Russell intended to confine our most certain knowledge only to the specious present, then there would be no point in including memory, imagination, anticipation (as a part of sensation), and perception in knowledge by acquaintance, unless, of course, he thought that there is a type of knowledge by acquaintance which is uncertain. This, however, defies the purpose of knowledge by acquaintance, whose directness guarantees the certainty of knowledge. At the same time, as we already saw from the analysis of Russell’s theory of cognition in the period from 1910 to 1912, there are issues such as having direct knowledge of the past, which need to be clarified if Russell is to maintain his theory of cognition under the acquaintance theory.¹⁴¹

2.2. The Faculty of Memory.

Knowledge of the past is provided by the faculty of memory. Russell claims that memory is important for the theory of cognition for two main reasons. First, it makes our experience *ours*. Russell argues that when we remember something, we often also remember our experiencing it. Thus, when we remember what we ate for breakfast this morning, we also remember that it was

¹⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹⁴¹The issues that I am referring to here, and which will be discussed in detail in the next section of this chapter, concern the nature of the connection between the object of memory and the cognitive subject. If the connection between the subject and the memory object is a direct causal connection, then the memory relation is a problematic one. At the same time, the awareness of the past should not be obviously problematic, since it is simply a cognitive relation between knower and known, and does not imply the relation of contiguity. I will argue that there are certain oddities in Russell’s account of memory which he was prepared to put up with, in order to maintain the theory of knowledge by acquaintance.

us, wearing pajamas and a house-coat, who prepared it, ate it, etc. In other words, in the act of remembering, we “prolong our personality backwards”.¹⁴² Second, the faculty of memory connects our past with our present experiences. As Russell puts it, “memory always makes the links in the chain connecting our present with our past [experience]”.¹⁴³ In other words, Russell needs memory or knowledge of the past, so that knowledge by acquaintance is not trapped in the specious present (or limited to knowledge of universals).

According to Russell, it is not all sorts of memory that “prolong our personality backwards”, and connect our present and past experiences, but only one certain type of memory. The type of memory that Russell has in mind is “memory of our experiencing”. It is the memory of something that we, personally, have once experienced: “When we can remember experiencing something, we include the remembered experiencing with our present experiencing as part of one’s person’s experience.”¹⁴⁴ This type of memory is an “extension of our present experience”.¹⁴⁵ In the same chapter of *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell refers to this type of memory as ‘sensational memory’ which is knowledge of something that has happened in the most recent past and which the knowing subject remembers very well.¹⁴⁶ The subject is aware of the fact that there is a lapse of time between the moment when the thing that the subject remembers was present, and the moment in which the subject evokes it in her memory. With this memory, the subject becomes aware of a particular which has been “experienced before”.¹⁴⁷ To illustrate what Russell means by ‘sensational memory’, we will compare two types of knowledge

¹⁴²*Ibid.*, p.12.

¹⁴³*Ibid.*

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 13.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*, p.11.

of the past, sensational memory and intellectual memory. When I try to remember what I had for breakfast this morning, I become aware of the breakfast (the object of my memory), and of me having the breakfast (the memory being *mine*). When I think of how Bulgarians were on the side of Germany during the Second World War, I am not aware of the troops going to war (the object of my memory), or of me having seen it (the memory being mine). I still have the knowledge of this past event, but I do not have the memory of the associated experiences. This latter case of knowledge of the past is what Russell calls 'intellectual memory'.¹⁴⁸

An example of intellectual memory is the mere memory of the fact "that I saw Jones yesterday" in which case it seems that I do not have a picture of Jones or of my meeting with him in my mind.¹⁴⁹ This type of memory deals with facts which are somehow not in experience at the moment when the subject remembers them, unlike immediate (or sensational) memory where "the thing itself seems to remain in experience, in spite of the fact that it is known to be no longer present."¹⁵⁰ Sensational memory, by contrast, involves the recall of particulars of which I am directly aware, so that I am certain of my knowledge of them. In other words, intellectual memory does not seem to be a direct awareness of the past, as is the case with sensational (or immediate) memory. As with all knowledge by acquaintance, for Russell, sensational memory brings the most certain knowledge of the past. It would follow, then, that intellectual memory does not really provide certain knowledge.

It is clear from Russell's analysis that the first premise of his theory of memory is that memory is a very important cognitive faculty which connects our present and our past experiences. And this, in turn, gives the totality of our experience. Once he starts to elaborate on this premise, however, Russell's theory of memory becomes increasingly complicated and

¹⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p.9.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

requires further clarification and elaboration. First, he distinguishes between types of knowledge of the past, not all of which, it turns out, provide direct knowledge of the past. (Intellectual memory is one example of memory which is not direct knowledge of the past; another example of such memory, which will be discussed in detail later in the section, is remote memory). Second, if there are different types of memory and different types of knowledge of the past, would it not make sense to have different theories of memory which describe different types of memory, or even different faculties? And, would this have any implications for the theory of cognition and theory of knowledge by acquaintance? The textual evidence speaks against different theories of memory, or different cognitive faculties. In the texts from the acquaintance period, Russell consistently refers to memory as one faculty. As for whether having different theories of memory would have any implications for the theory of cognition, or theory of knowledge by acquaintance, we will explore this idea later in the section. Now we will explore the first type of memory, which provides the most certain knowledge of the past there is.

According to Russell, first-person experience of the past is the most direct knowledge of the past that we can have. It is this type of memory, which Russell calls sensational memory, that provides certain knowledge on a par with sensory knowledge. Later in *Theory of Knowledge* Russell, trying to convey the connection between acquaintance and memory refers to the sensational type of memory as ‘immediate memory’.¹⁵¹ Immediate memory is our awareness of the immediate past, “the short period during which the warmth of sensation gradually dies out of

¹⁵¹We have to note that there is a certain ambiguity in the way that Russell uses ‘sensational memory’. It seems that, at first glance, sensational memory is what Russell describes later as ‘immediate memory’. However, the word ‘sensational’ suggests that this type of memory is similar to what Russell describes as ‘physiological memory’ whose objects are, actually, present sense-data, rather than to immediate memory, whose objects are past sense-data. Also, Urmson (whose position is discussed later in this section) interprets Russell’s use of sensational memory as physiological memory. I think that in the acquaintance period, there were two main types of memory, namely immediate and remote memory, which provide two different types of knowledge of the past, namely by acquaintance and by description. That is why, I am more inclined to think that Russell thought that sensational memory is the same as immediate memory.

receding objects, as if we see them under a fading light”.¹⁵² On p. 72 of *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell introduces yet another (third) type of memory, which he never mentions again, namely ‘physiological memory’. Here is how he defines ‘physiological’ memory: it is “simply the persistence of a sensation for a short time after the stimulus is removed. ... Throughout the period of ‘physiological memory’, the sense-datum is actually *present*; it is only the inferred physical object which has ceased.” We can conclude, then, that this type of memory deals with objects which are still in the ‘specious present’. (To remind the reader, the specious present is defined as “the period of time within which an object must lie in order to be a sense-datum”¹⁵³. In other words, the specious present is the time that stretches from the present moment of perception right until the moment when the object ceases to be perceived. Any time past the moment when the particular ceases to be perceived, is no longer a part of the specious present.) So, for Russell the objects of physiological memory are fading sense-data, or as they are known in psychology, ‘after-images’. Immediate memory, then, is “the relation which we have to an object which has recently been a sense-datum, but is now felt as past, though still given in acquaintance”.¹⁵⁴ Russell argues that immediate memory is “intrinsically distinguishable from sensation” and so, it is a “different relation between subject and object”.¹⁵⁵ Then, the difference between physiological and immediate memory is that in physiological memory what has ceased to exist is the external stimulus, not the sense-datum (the sense-datum is only beginning to fade away), while in immediate memory, both the stimulus and the present sense-datum are not any more. That is why immediate memory consists of past sense-data, and not with after-images (sense-data which are in a present mode).

¹⁵² *Ibid.*, p.72.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 68.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 73.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*

However, since according to Russell's definition from 1913 epistemology is not pure psychology, he needs to show where immediate memory stands in the subject-act-object relation. Russell's definition of immediate memory links it directly with acquaintance: it is "a two-term relation of subject and object, involving acquaintance, and such as to give rise to the knowledge that the object is in the past"¹⁵⁶. Immediate memory is what he calls, quoting James, "the *original* of our experience of pastness, from where we get the meaning of the term"¹⁵⁷.

In order for Russell to give us a complete picture of the knowledge of the past, he needs to combine the two layers of analysis (the psychological and the logical) of the faculty of memory. Also, considering that according to his views in 1913 immediate memory is our most reliable knowledge of the past, Russell needs to distinguish not only between reliable and not-so-reliable, or more and less certain, knowledge of the past, but he also needs to clarify what it means to actually *have* knowledge of the *past*. We will address the second issue first.

When we say that we are acquainted with past objects, we are actually saying that, not only do these objects belong to a moment of time when they are not perceived any more, but also that we are acquainted with those past objects in a way that enables us to know that they are past. An important question arises for Russell's views on memory here: are we actually acquainted with the past itself, or do we know about the past only through images of this same past? If we have knowledge of the past only through images, then to say that we have knowledge of past objects would mean that what we have immediately before our minds when we remember, are not the past sense-data themselves but the representations of those past sense-data, or as they are known in traditional epistemology – images. Images resemble or represent sense-data but they

¹⁵⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 70.

¹⁵⁷ *Ibid.*

are not the sense-data themselves.¹⁵⁸ And is it not more intuitively obvious to say that we are immediately aware of the presence of an image, something that resembles the sense-datum, rather than of something which has actually ceased to exist?

It seems, however, that if our knowledge of the past is actually knowledge of images, and not of the past sense-data themselves, it will not be as certain as our knowledge of the past sense-data, since images are entities that stand between the subject and the object of cognition, and according to Russell's theory of knowledge in the acquaintance period, mediated knowledge is subject to skeptical doubt. I do not think that in 1913 Russell would agree that knowledge of the past is knowledge of images of the past because I do not think that he would want to jeopardize the certainty of knowledge of the past. It is clear from the definition of sensational or immediate memory that he thinks that we are acquainted with the past sense-data, and not with their copies. This is precisely why he calls immediate memory "the original experience of pastness". Let us explore, then, how it is possible to be acquainted with the past sense-data themselves.

From a logical point of view, it sounds justified to argue that if the subject and the object of cognition are in a relation of being at different times, then the act of remembering is the instance where the object is earlier than the subject. From a psychological point of view, however, things concerning the analysis of memory do not look as straightforward, and there are issues that need to be clarified. On the one hand, to say that we are acquainted with past sense-data sounds awkward, if not counter-intuitive. The problem comes from the fact that if we say that we are acquainted with past sense-data, we are saying that we are acquainted with something which is not temporally present before the mind any more. The fact that we are acquainted with

¹⁵⁸ "When we pass from imagination to memory by judgment, this seems usually the case. We do not believe that what existed was identical with what we imagine, but only that it may be described in terms of our image, by means of the kind of resemblance that commonly exists between sense-data and the images that we regard as images 'of' those sense-data." (*Ibid.*, p. 171).

it, however, means that it is present before the mind (something must be present before the mind, if I am acquainted with it). So, as a result, we end up being acquainted with something which is present and not present at the same time.

The solution that Russell gives to this riddle is that there are two sense of 'presence' of the objects of acquaintance. As we already discussed the topic, in one sense, all objects of acquaintance are present before the perceiving mind. This sense of 'presence' does not involve duration in time. The other sense of 'present before the mind' describes the temporal presence. In this sense, only certain particulars, such as sense-data, are present before the mind. Then, the objects of memory are present in the first sense of the word. In other words, it seems that Russell's solution to the problem with memory understood as acquaintance with past sense-data would be to assume that in memory we are acquainted with past particulars which are *not* causally effective. Again, there is no problem with the claim that, in principle, we are acquainted with (past) particulars which are not causally effective. However, after reading through Russell's description of memory in 1913, I think it is fair to say that there is slight ambiguity as to what exactly Russell's claim regarding acquaintance with memory objects is. I do not think that it is accidental that in *Theory of Knowledge* Russell insists upon a distinction between the different types of memory, and that he calls immediate memory the most reliable knowledge of the past, as opposed to remote memory which does not bring reliable knowledge of the past. This leaves me wondering whether at the time Russell did not actually think of past sense-data as causally effective. Otherwise, why would he insist that the objects of physiological memory are 'after-images' which actually belong to the specious present, and that the objects of immediate memory are sense-data which have already faded? If this is the case, however, it will mean that we are acquainted with past sense-data which are very close in time to the present sense-data. If we agree that the objects of immediate memory are temporally close to the objects of sensation, then we have to compare the time duration of sense-data to the time duration of past sense-data. The

question, then, is: what is the duration of a sense-datum? I am not sure if Russell thought of the duration of present and past sense-data in those terms, and it would be unfair to say that I am convinced that Russell's solution of the issue concerning the acquaintance with past sense-data is not a genuine solution. Moreover, Russell mentions physiological memory only once, and the way that he describes it, it seems that he thought that it is, actually, a mere extension of sensation, a pre-memory of some sort. But I think I am right in claiming that there is certain ambiguity in the way that Russell describes memory, at the very least, at the level of words. Calling one type of memory 'immediate memory' and its objects 'past sense-data' certainly suggests temporal presence and leads to the already described concerns.

As we saw, Russell rejects the possibility that the objects of our immediate memory are images since that would jeopardize the certainty of immediate memory. He does not, however, reject the possibility of *other* types of memory having images as their objects. It is only sensational or immediate memory whose objects are past sense-data. The objects of remote memory are described by Russell as full-fledged images. So far, we have discovered that there are two different objects of memory, past sense-data and images of past sense-data. In light of this, Russell argues there should be two main types of memory, namely immediate and remote types of memory. We already saw that by definition, immediate memory provides certain knowledge of the (immediate) past. Remote memory, however, is a different case altogether.¹⁵⁹

Remote memory, Russell argues, provides knowledge which is derivative and liable to error. Therefore, it does not belong to the "elementary constituents" of our knowledge of things.¹⁶⁰ When we have a memory about the remote past, it is often blurred and unclear, and indeed, memories of the remote past can be completely false. For example, I thought that I remembered my long deceased grandfather well enough to conjure up an image of him in my

¹⁵⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁰ *Ibid.*

mind. In my image of him, he has a thick silver moustache. A few years ago, however, I was told by my mother that he did not have a moustache, it was always his brother who had the moustache. What happens in the case of erroneous memory is that we think we know the past object but what we actually know is an imaginary object which has no real time relation to the subject of cognition. In the case of my dead grandfather, I have simply transported in my mind the vision of my grandfather's brother's moustache onto my grandfather's face and thus, I have created a *new* (conjured) image, a product of my imagination rather than of my memory.

The relationship of remote memory to the subject of cognition, proves to be rather complicated and leads to the question, what is the thing that distinguishes memory, in general, from imagination, the latter being only an imitation of remote memory? And the answer that Russell gives is: the relation of pastness between the subject and the object of cognition. All objects of memory, whether leading to reliable knowledge or not, are beyond doubt in a relation of pastness to the knowing subject. But what does it mean to be in a relation of pastness? When talking about the past, in one sense, we are dealing with the general relation of pastness. Consider the proposition: "That is in the past now". Even though the precise past moment is not specified, everyone understands what 'past' refers to and what it does not refer to. And then, there is pastness in the sense that we have already discussed in the previous paragraphs, that of "definite temporal distances".¹⁶¹ Within the recent past, Russell claims, we immediately perceive temporal distances. In other words, we are acquainted with the recent past. Even though from Russell's analysis it is not clear when the recent past is not considered recent any more and becomes remote past, we know that yesterday was twenty four hours away from the present moment and we can easily place our memories about yesterday in sequence. Beyond the immediate past, however, all the events remembered are "simply past and their greater or lesser distance from the

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

present is a matter of inference”.¹⁶² Thus, the objects of remote memory bear the characteristic of the general pastness, that is, we know that they are in the past (we may even know their precise past moment as is the case with well-documented historical knowledge), but they do not have the characteristic of an experienced pastness. This distinction between general pastness and experienced pastness is what makes our judgments about the remote past liable to error.

It seems, then, that what Russell wants us to believe is that objects of remote memory are *not* known directly and therefore, remote memory does not provide knowledge with the same degree of certainty as immediate memory does. Thus, the logical conclusion is that remote memory involves knowledge by description, while the objects of sensational or immediate memory are known by acquaintance.¹⁶³ In this sense, the objects of remote memory are derivative from the objects of immediate memory. As Russell argues, there is an ‘absolute gulf’ between acquaintance-memory (immediate or sensational memory) and remote memory that cannot be bridged.¹⁶⁴ The question, then, is whether this outcome of the analysis of remote memory jeopardizes the status of memory, in general, in the theory of cognition as a source of certain and non-inferred knowledge?

Toward the end of *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell digs deeper into the analysis of the faculty of memory. First, in the case of remote memory, Russell states that we have to distinguish between knowledge of the past which is given to us by acquaintance, and knowledge of the past where the object is given to us again by acquaintance but acquaintance which involves no time-relation to the subject and is thus erroneously judged to belong to the past when it belongs, in fact, to an imaginary past. “It is only through the addition of a judgment that it [the latter case of

¹⁶² *Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁶³ *Ibid.*, p. 72, pp. 170-172.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*

remote memory] becomes an object of remote memory.”¹⁶⁵ Russell distinguishes four types of remote memory depending on whether the pastness is given (in acquaintance), or judged (by description): ‘perceptive- acquaintance memory’, ‘perceptive-descriptive memory’, ‘judgment-acquaintance memory’, and ‘judgment-descriptive memory’.¹⁶⁶ Judgment-descriptive memory is, as Russell puts it, “peculiarly fallacious” since we may confuse an imagined event for a descriptive memory.¹⁶⁷ Remote memories, such as those of childhood, belong to this type of memory. And as he remarks, “prudent people” put very little reliance on such memory. It is more difficult, Russell admits, to find an instance that illustrates the judgment-acquaintance type of memory. But what is true for both types of remote memories is that we have no criterion to assert whether this type of memory has or has not occurred, that is, we cannot distinguish it from imagination.

Perceptive-descriptive memory occurs only when it is *self-evident* that the image represents a past event. Russell writes, “This is the sort of experience which we might describe by saying that our image gives us a ‘feeling of pastness’.”¹⁶⁸ This type of memory is what remote memory is all about. The subject perceives the ‘time-complex’ or the temporal distance, but this perception is done in a brief moment which is replaced by a judgment of memory which is ‘more easily revived’ and thus more stable than the brief perception of the temporal distance. The ‘feeling of pastness’, which is missing from the previous two types of memory, but which accompanies perceptive-descriptive memory, makes me know that the objects I remember do belong to the (physical) past, and not just to the imaginary past. This type of memory brings certain knowledge, since it is founded in the faculty of perception. But since it looks very similar

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 171.

¹⁶⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁶⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 172.

¹⁶⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 173.

to the judgment-descriptive memory, it is often mistaken for it.

The perceptive-acquaintance memory is actually what Russell earlier called immediate memory. Its objects do not extend beyond the immediate past. Thus, this is the only memory of the four aforementioned types whose objects are past sense-data and not images. It may also happen, Russell continues, that sometimes, in rare cases, the objects of perceptive-acquaintance memory extend further into the past than the objects of immediate memory usually do. But in general, this is the same type of memory as immediate memory.

Then, it seems that, except for the perceptive-acquaintance memory, it is only through some sort of a judgment, a belief, perhaps a self-evident one, such as what Russell calls the ‘feeling of pastness’ that we know that the object which is before my mind, is an object of remote memory, and not an object of the imagination. This criterion of distinction between memory and imagination, however, goes outside of the scope of acquaintance with past sense-data. Thus, remote memory is confirmed by Russell’s later remarks to belong to derivative knowledge and not to knowledge by acquaintance.

The fact that there are two types of memory (and two objects of memory)¹⁶⁹, one of which is not reliable knowledge of the past, could create problems for the theory of cognition only if Russell thought that *all* memory should provide certain knowledge. It is true that Russell often talks about memory, as though there is only one type of memory (especially in *The Problems of Philosophy*), but I think it would be unfair to draw any conclusions from the, sometimes, loose

¹⁶⁹As we saw, as per Russell’s analysis of memory on p. 72 of the *Theory of Knowledge*, there are actually three types of memory. However, as it turned out, physiological memory belongs to sensation and its objects are actually present sense-data. Given that, and the fact that Russell never mentions this type of memory again, but on the contrary, is concerned primarily with immediate and remote types of memory, makes me think that he did not consider physiological memory as memory proper, but rather as an extension of sensation. This, in turn, creates a certain ambiguity for his theory of memory, since it looks like Russell thought that there is a type of memory (after all, he calls physiological memory, ‘memory’), whose objects actually belong to the specious present. In any case, I think Russell’s attention was occupied with the two types of knowledge of the past, knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description which is provided, respectively, by immediate memory and remote memory. That is why from this point on I will refer to memory as consisting of two types – immediate and remote types of memory.

reference to the two (or even, from the three) types of memory as one memory. I think when Russell refers to memory, he means that there is one faculty of memory, as opposed to two faculties of memory. As Russell goes deeper into the analysis of memory, however, it turns out that there are two (or three, if we include physiological memory as a type of memory proper) distinct types of memory, one of which provides knowledge by acquaintance, and the other knowledge by description. And I think once Russell made the distinction between the types of memory and the types of knowledge they involve, he was fairly consistent in maintaining it.

We cannot deny, however, the fact that, based on textual evidence from the period covered in this dissertation, Russell worried about his theory of memory and tried to ‘get it right’.¹⁷⁰ In the light of the continuous ‘worry’ about the theory of memory, Russell modifies certain aspects of it, which sometimes leads to ambiguity in interpreting what Russell means by a given notion. One example is what Russell writes about memory at the end of *Theory of Knowledge*. Even though Russell had already said that there is an absolute gap between immediate and remote types of memory, he is quick to suggest that there is a way to bridge the seemingly absolute gap between them. In the image of a past event, Russell argues, “there is a gradual transition” from acquaintance memory to remote memory.¹⁷¹ What seems to happen is that as more time passes, the images that resemble past sense-data become less and less like them. Thus, what looks like a fading acquaintance is “really acquaintance with an image growing progressively less like the past but known throughout to be ‘representative’ of the past”.¹⁷²

If images were to bridge the gap between immediate and remote memory, however, should we not worry that, despite what Russell calls the different objects of memory, what he

¹⁷⁰To the point that in “Manuscript Notes”, discussed later in this chapter, he wrote that he must come up with a different theory of memory.

¹⁷¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, p. 174.

actually means is that in *all* cases of memory proper, we are acquainted with images which resemble sense-data, only they resemble them in different degrees, depending on how distant they are from the present moment? In other words, in the light of this last analysis, it seems that we could interpret Russell saying that the objects of both types of memory are actually images (with which we are acquainted), but in the context of immediate memory, he calls it 'past sense-datum', while in the context of remote memory, he calls it 'image of the past sense-datum'. (This also fits with the introduction, toward the end of the book, of the 'feeling of pastness' which accompanies all memories and whose job is to distinguish memory from imagination, and to reduce the probability of error.¹⁷³) If this is the case, however, then I do not see how he could maintain the certainty of knowledge provided by immediate memory (since it will seem, then, that even knowledge of the immediate past is derivative knowledge).¹⁷⁴

In *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell clearly states that,

When we use images as an aid of remembering, we judge that the images have a resemblance, of a certain sort, to certain past sense-data, enabling us to have knowledge by description concerning those sense-data, through acquaintance with the corresponding images together with a knowledge of the correspondence. The knowledge of the correspondence is obviously only possible through some knowledge, concerning the past, which is not dependent upon the images we now call up.¹⁷⁵

In light of this, I do not think it is fair to argue that he claimed one thing, but actually meant

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p. 173. Unfortunately, Russell does not elaborate much on what this feeling of pastness is. From what we said before, and from what we will observe later in the theory of memory in *The Analysis of Mind*, we could conclude that the feeling of pastness is some sort of a belief (or a feeling of belief) that accompanies our memories.

¹⁷⁴ David Pears also worries about the possibility that in 1913 Russell was beginning to modify his theory of memory so that all objects of memory are images of the actual past sense-data. His position on the matter will be discussed later in the section.

¹⁷⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

something else. However, again, I do not think that we could deny the fact that when he states that images of past sense-data will ‘bridge the gap’ between the logically distinct types of knowledge of the past, we have grounds to detect a certain ambiguity and suspect, perhaps, a slight change of mind in Russell as far as the nature of the objects of the faculty of memory is concerned. (In support of this suspicion regarding the nature of the objects of memory, we could even appeal to the fact that later, in the neutral monism period, Russell does change his mind about the nature of memory and argues that, in fact, all objects of memory are images.¹⁷⁶)

So, in agreement with the majority of claims that Russell makes throughout the *Theory of Knowledge*, I think, we can maintain that according to Russell’s theory of memory in 1913, there is one faculty of memory but two main distinct types of memory proper, immediate, and remote memory. The cognitive subject is acquainted first with a sense-datum which is a past sense-datum, and when the past sense-datum fades away, when remembering, the cognitive subject becomes acquainted with the image of the past sense-datum, not with the sense-datum itself. Knowledge of the immediate past is known by acquaintance and it is certain knowledge, while knowledge of the remote past is not certain knowledge. Immediate memory is the ‘true memory’. In light of this, we can conclude that, despite the oddity of the notion that we are acquainted with entities which are present, and yet, have ceased to be present to the mind (and despite the ambiguity that is generated by his claims that physiological memory is a type of memory, that is, that it provides knowledge of the past, but whose objects are actually present sense-data), Russell needs immediate memory so that he can show that we have certain knowledge which goes beyond the fleeting moment of the specious present (or the knowledge of universals).¹⁷⁷ As

¹⁷⁶This evidence, however, should be taken with caution, since in the neutral monism period, there are many other changes in Russell’s metaphysics, as well as epistemology, which lead to this view about memory. In fact, in the neutral monism period, images are not only the objects of memory, but also the objects of all experiential cognitive faculties.

¹⁷⁷For more on the specious present and the way Russell might have used it, see footnote 250 of this chapter.

mentioned earlier, one of the goals that Russell had set for his theory of knowledge (and for his theory of cognition), was to improve upon the concern spotted by Hume and other empiricists, namely that if we want to have certainty in knowledge, we are bound to restrict ourselves only to the present moment of sensing.

Some of the issues that arise from Russell's analysis of memory with regard to certainty of knowledge of the past are addressed by David Pears in the articles "Russell's Theories of Memory" and "The Function of Acquaintance in Russell's Philosophy".¹⁷⁸ For Pears the problems with the faculty of memory lead to questions about the status of knowledge by acquaintance, in general. The main problem with the faculty of memory, as Pears sees it, is that Russell's insistence that certain types of memory (immediate or sensational) belong to knowledge by acquaintance creates a dilemma for him. If knowledge by acquaintance is what Russell wants it to be, then it is vital for him to maintain that the subject refers directly to objects that go beyond the specious present. Memory is the most obvious example of such an extension of knowledge by acquaintance. When we have acquaintance with objects which are in the past, however, there is always a doubt, or at least a hesitation, concerning the identity and even the actual existence of the object¹⁷⁹. Pears divides Russell's views of memory during the acquaintance and post-acquaintance periods into two theories, Theory I and Theory II. Theory I is unfolded in *The Problems of Philosophy* and *Theory of Knowledge* while Theory II is presented in *The Analysis of Mind* (1921). Theory I deals with the cognitive faculty of memory as acquaintance with particulars which are in the past. Theory II presents memory as a series of images occurring in the present time. Pears admits that the move from Theory I to Theory II is a big change accompanied by many other changes in Russell's philosophical views and leading to

¹⁷⁸ Pears, D., "Russell's Theories of Memory", in *Questions in the Philosophy of Mind*, 1975, pp. 224-251. "The Function of Acquaintance in Russell's Philosophy" in Andrew Irvine (Ed.), *Bertrand Russell: Critical Assessments*, Vol. 3., 1999, pp. 221-236.

¹⁷⁹ Pears, "The Function of Acquaintance in Russell's Philosophy", p. 227.

serious consequences for Russell's theory of knowledge.¹⁸⁰ In this chapter I will address Pears' analysis of Theory I. Theory II will be discussed in Chapter 4 of the present dissertation which scrutinizes Russell's post-acquaintance theory of cognition.

According to Pears, Russell was already moving away from Theory I as early as 1913 when he was struggling with the notion of remote memory in *Theory of Knowledge*. Pears argues that the time duration of an object of immediate memory is, according to Russell's own account, 30 seconds.¹⁸¹ Thus, in immediate memory we are related to our past "in the most direct possible way", just as we are related to our present sense-data.¹⁸² Pears points out that in *The Problems of Philosophy* Russell described *all* memory as acquaintance with past thus placing both immediate and remote memory in the framework of 'knowledge by acquaintance'.¹⁸³ In *Theory of Knowledge*, however, Pears claims, Russell hesitates about remote memory. As seen from the textual evidence, Russell is inclined to believe that the objects of remote memory are known by description (since, on the one hand, remote memory requires not only acquaintance with images of past-sense data, but also with the correspondence between them, while on the other hand, it involves a belief of some sort, such the 'feeling of pastness').¹⁸⁴

Even if we do not take Pears' comment about the duration of immediate memory seriously, we have to admit that in *Theory of Knowledge* Russell was not explicit whether all our

¹⁸⁰Russell's search for solutions of the difficulties with the faculty of memory inherited from the acquaintance period, will be discussed in Chapter 4, Section 2.3.1 of the dissertation.

¹⁸¹ Pears, pp. 226-227. Pears refers to Russell's description of immediate or direct memory as presented in Chapter XI of *The Problems of Philosophy* (p. 115).

¹⁸² Pears, "Russell's Theories of Memory", p. 225.

¹⁸³Pears remarks that even though in *The Problems of Philosophy* Russell talks about memory in general as giving us the sense of 'past', the examples that follow on pp. 115-117 refer only to memories of recent past events.

¹⁸⁴Also, the objects of remote memory are images, which makes knowledge of the remote past mediated knowledge, and this goes against the definition of knowledge by acquaintance as direct, unmediated knowledge.

memories are, *in fact*, images that resemble with a higher or a lower degree of resemblance, sense-data. Neither was he explicit about how exactly, *if* some memory objects are past sense-data and some are images, the cognitive subject moves from one state of remembering to another. To me this is an indication that in 1913 Russell is hesitant about the place of memory in theory of cognition and whether knowledge of the past is the same type of certain knowledge as sensory or perceptual knowledge is, as he initially wanted it to be. For Pears the reason why Russell was hesitant about knowledge of the past lies in the fact that Russell pushed the analogy between memory and perception too far. “Russell’s logical analysis of acquaintance was worked out for perception, but extended to immediate and ... remote memory.”¹⁸⁵

I think what I am inclined to make out of Pears’ analysis of Russell’s theory of memory in 1913 is that, perhaps Russell should have been more worried about fleshing out more carefully than he did, the distinction between immediate and remote types of memory, and between memory and imagination (knowledge of the past and imagined knowledge of the past). I do not think, however, for reasons already explained, that I would go as far as Pears does in suggesting that in 1913 Russell was beginning to lose faith in the account of memory as knowledge by acquaintance at all.¹⁸⁶

2.3. The Faculty of Perception.

According to Russell, as we saw, when I am acquainted with something, I am simply

¹⁸⁵ Pears, “Theories of Memory”, p. 233.

¹⁸⁶I agree with Pears’ suggestion that the theory of memory and the theory of knowledge by acquaintance are intimately related, and that if there were any problems with the notion of knowledge by acquaintance, they would be reflected in Russell’s account of memory, as well. But I do not think that Russell was really concerned, in 1913, that knowledge by acquaintance does not work.

aware that it is before my mind. Only upon further analysis do I realize that I am aware of it, or that it belongs to one of the types of knowledge by acquaintance, acquaintance with particulars, or acquaintance with predicates (universals). In *Theory of Knowledge* Russell writes:

When an object is in my present experience, then I am acquainted with it; it is not necessary for me to reflect upon my experience, or to observe that the object has the property of belonging to my experience, in order to be acquainted with it, but, on the contrary, the object is known to me without the need of any reflection on my part as to its properties or relations.¹⁸⁷

Unlike philosophers like William James, who, according to Russell, does not regard seeing, hearing, or any other type of sensing as ‘knowing’, Russell argues that simple direct awareness of the existence of objects is not only sufficient for knowledge but also for certainty.¹⁸⁸ And as shown earlier, for Russell sensation is the best example of directly knowing something. Any additional analysis or reflection upon the existence of things, or upon my awareness of their existence brings more complexity to my knowledge, but it does not necessarily make it more certain. On the contrary, the more complex my knowledge is, the more liable to error it becomes. Thus, knowledge of such entities as sense-data is the most certain knowledge possible. There is, however, another type of entity, namely, perceptual fact, that is known with certainty, even though fact is not particulars.¹⁸⁹ In this section I explore the difference between sense-data and facts. I argue that Russell’s analysis of perception brings an important change in his

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁸⁹ “I think we may say broadly that data include all particulars, universals, and facts ...” (*Ibid.*, p. 47). It is clear from this passage that Russell distinguishes between particulars and facts.

understanding of knowledge by acquaintance.

Sense-data are the objects of sensation, and primitive facts are the objects of perception.¹⁹⁰ In *Theory of Knowledge* Russell wants to convince us that sensation and perception, even though bound together, are, in fact, different cognitive faculties. I believe that the attempt to distinguish between the two faculties has implications for the whole concept of direct (and certain) knowledge. We are acquainted with both the sense-data and the facts of perception. Acquaintance with facts is often accompanied by beliefs.¹⁹¹ And according to Russell's theory of knowledge by acquaintance, when we believe or disbelieve something, we are dealing with "an entity answering to a certain description".¹⁹² What, then, is the distinction between the objects of sensation and the objects of perception?

Unfortunately, in *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell is not very explicit about the nature of facts. It seems that he divides facts into 'primitive facts', and 'complex facts'. Primitive facts are the facts of perception and they are experienced. Most of the facts, however, are not experienced. As Russell remarks, we do not experience that 'the Earth goes round the Sun', or that 'London has six million inhabitants'.¹⁹³ The examples of primitive facts that Russell gives are, 'I observe that the thunder is later than the lightning', and 'I see that one thing is to the left of another'.¹⁹⁴

¹⁹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 9, 37.

¹⁹¹*Ibid.*, p. 9. "When I speak of a 'fact' I mean the kind of thing that is expressed by the phrase 'that so and so is the case'. A 'fact' in this sense is something different from an existing sensible thing: it is the kind of object towards which we have a *belief*, expressed in a proposition." So, it seems that sense-data do not make truth claims and do not have truth value, while facts do. Here is how, on p. 37 of *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell defines facts: "psychical data – at any rate those that are cognitive – consist not of particulars, but of certain *facts* (i.e., of *what certain propositions assert*), and of relations, namely acquaintance and certain others that presuppose acquaintance". What interests us here is the phrase in the parentheses, namely that facts are 'of what propositions assert', and that they are the *cognitive* psychical data (which, as Russell no more than hints, cannot be said about particulars).

¹⁹²*Ibid.*, p. 24.

¹⁹³*Ibid.*, p. 9.

¹⁹⁴*Theory of Knowledge*, p. 47.

Primitive facts, Russell continues, “we see for ourselves, without relying either upon our own reasoning from previous facts, or upon the testimony of others”.¹⁹⁵ These primitive facts are “known to us by an immediate insight as luminous and indubitable as that of sense”.¹⁹⁶

So far, we have discussed perception, according to the textual evidence from *Theory of Knowledge*, as though there is one type of perception (just like there is one type of sensation). In the chapter on understanding, however, Russell introduces ‘complex perception’ (whose objects, I assume, are complex facts). The introduction of complex perception makes me think that what Russell was describing before that is ‘simple perception’ (whose objects are still complex, but primitive facts). It seems that complex perception is a different cognitive relation than sensation and memory since in it the cognitive subject is related to multiple objects such as the particulars, and the relations between the particulars.¹⁹⁷ In other words, even though Russell intended for

¹⁹⁵ *Ibid.*, pp. 174-176.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁹⁷ It is important to note here the difference between complex perception, and a judgment of perception. In judgments, in general, the subject is *always* in a multiple-relation to the constituents of the judgment, one of which is the logical form. It seems that Russell at the time thought that logical form is a key element of judgments. Then, we can say that the multiple relation that the subject enters when dealing with judgments, is a propositional multiple-relation, unlike the non-propositional multiple relation of complex perception.

It is only in *Theory of Knowledge* that Russell introduces a third element of acquaintance (other than particulars and universals), namely, the logical form. The logical form is “the way in which the constituents are combined in the complex” (*Ibid.*, p. 98). The logical form is described as ‘Something is somehow related to something’ which shows the ‘positioning’ of the constituents of the judgment, with which we are acquainted. The form of the proposition “Socrates precedes Plato” would be “xRy”. Russell thought that the logical form is a “primitive constituent of our experience” (*Ibid.*, p. 99). It should be mentioned here that Russell faced difficulties defining the logical form, since he thought that we are acquainted with it, but we can be acquainted only with an object, and yet, he did not know what kind of an object the logical form is. Griffin, in his article “Russell’s Multiple Relation Theory” argues that Russell introduced the logical form as a term in the judgment in order to solve the so-called ‘direction problem’ (the distinction between ‘S believes that *a* precedes *b*’ and ‘S believes that *b* precedes *a*’) that his theory of judgment faced. As Griffin notes, the difficulty of understanding how exactly Russell interpreted the nature of the logical form and how it was supposed to solve the direction problem, is due to the fact that Russell never fully developed the theory of logical forms, and as a result of Wittgenstein’s criticism, he abandoned the multiple-relation theory of judgment altogether. If Russell understood logical forms as templates, Griffin continues, into which different objects can be placed, then these templates will have to have constituents, and

perception (assuming *all* perception) to be a dual relation, it looks like complex perception is some sort of a non-propositional, but yet, a multiple-relation cognitive attitude. In complex facts we are not only acquainted with all the parts of the fact, but we also attend to the parts *as* parts. For example, when we perceived a bookshelf full of books, we are dealing with complex perception because we perceive the bookshelf *as* such, that is, as a whole, but at the same time, we seem to somehow attend to the parts of the bookshelf, as well, that is, to the individual books (otherwise, we would not know that we are attending to a bookshelf full of books). Even though complex perception involves (non-propositional) multiple relations (as opposed to only a dual relation such as acquaintance), it still “had more affinities with ordinary acquaintance and attention than with propositional thought, just because its objects were the same as those of ordinary acquaintance and attention”.¹⁹⁸ Russell’s analysis, however, leaves us somewhat undecided whether we know complex facts by description, or by acquaintance.

Based on the analysis of simple and complex perception, Russell arrives at a classification of the cognitive relations, founded on the object involved in it. Thus, if the object of cognition is a particular, we have “sensation, imagination, or memory”, if the object is a universal we have “conception and complex perception”.¹⁹⁹ Apparently, Russell thinks that, even though complex perception is some sort of a multiple cognitive relation, its objects (complex

these constituents will have to be free variables, but having free variables means that the expressions do not denote genuine belief complexes, but open sentences. Another problem that Griffin sees with Russell’s idea of the logical form, which led Russell to abandon the theory of logical forms, is that, if logical forms are ways (orders) in which the constituents are put together to form complexes, then, it seems that the logical form cannot itself have constituents which need to be ordered, because then we will need another logical form to order the constituents of the first logical form, etc., ad infinitum. In *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell attempted to clarify the nature of the logical form, by calling it a logical fact, but, as Griffin comments, this did not help much the solution of the wide direction problem (even though it did better with the solution of the narrower direction problem. For a detailed discussion of the direction problem in Russell’s theory of judgment, see Griffin, “Russell’s Multiple Relation Theory”, pp. 219-226).

¹⁹⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 131.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*

facts) are the same as those of acquaintance. Thus, it seems that the analysis of perception has shown that perception, much like memory, is of two kinds, simple and complex. And just like memory, simple facts are known by acquaintance, while we cannot say for sure how complex facts are known (presumably by acquaintance). The only thing we might be wondering here is why simple perception is not even mentioned in this classification of the cognitive faculties. David Pears attempts to explain the complicated relationship that perception has with knowledge.²⁰⁰

Pears thinks that the analysis of perception in 1913 leads to an important consequence for the theory of acquaintance, in general: “Admittedly, he [Russell] distinguishes perception from judgment... But in each case the first thing [perception] seems to lead automatically to the second [judgment], and the second seems to be credited with infallibility.”²⁰¹ Even though we may not agree with Pears’ conclusion regarding the infallibility of the perceptual judgments, we should appreciate the fact that Pears is trying to find an explanation why in 1913 Russell distinguished between sensation and perception (provided that he has not done so earlier). I am not sure what Pears means when he suggests that perception, unlike sensation (I assume), somehow leads directly to perceptual judgment, but as I pointed out earlier, for Russell when we perceive we actually *grasp* the complex object with all its constituents, *as* a whole, that is, we take the complex object of perception as a single object, and only *upon analysis*, realize that we are acquainted with more parts than we thought initially.²⁰² In support of what Pears argues, here is

²⁰⁰Pears, “Russell’s Theories of Memory”.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, p. 232.

²⁰² All judgments, without exception, are fallible, so perceptual judgments would be fallible as well, and then calling them infallible is false. It seems to me that what Pears is trying to convey with his analysis is that the possibility of error in perception occurs when we start *analyzing* the facts of perception, or any complex object for that matter. What this means can be illustrated by what happens to our remote memories. When we remember, the sense-datum that has expired continues to project itself in its presentation (the memory image). The subject ‘supplements’ the first datum that it has received from the senses with an entity that presents it *as though* it is the original object that the subject has observed. Evidently, this kind of a sense-

what Russell writes about simple and complex perception:

We found out that there are two ways of perceiving a complex, which we called respectively *simple* and *complex* perception. In simple perception, we attend to the complex itself, and do not attend to its parts, whether or not we are acquainted with them. In complex perception, we attend to the parts, and are acquainted with the whole without attending to it.²⁰³

So, then, perceptual complexes (i.e., facts) are *understood* as single objects, even though what we actually *know* directly are its constituents which might include logical forms, as well as the particulars and their relations. And as Russell argues in the second part of *Theory of Knowledge*, even though understanding is more fundamental than knowing, understanding is still constrained by the principle of acquaintance, that is, everything that we understand, we must be acquainted with first.²⁰⁴ Thus, it seems that in perception there are two cognitive processes involved – acquaintance and understanding, the latter seemingly not present in sensation, and it is more often than not difficult to separate in perception these two cognitive relations.

To support Pears' assumption about the complexity of the relationship between

datum cannot be regarded as a simple object any more because it involves the past sense-datum, and its current presentation which is before my mind at the moment of remembering. What Pears may be saying here is that the possibility for error in perceptual judgments is there, but that the subject of cognition may realize it only when she starts analyzing the complex object of perception. Thus, when I perceive a fact (primitive or complex) such as "The red ball is to the right of the green ball", what I have before my mind is not a simple, but a complex object consisting of a few things, their relation in space (to the right of), and my accompanying belief that this complex *is* what I think it is. Even though both past sense-data and facts of perception are complex objects, our knowledge of them *appears as* certain and infallible, as our knowledge of present sense-data.

²⁰³ *Theory of Knowledge*, p. 177.

²⁰⁴ According to Russell's definition of understanding, it is one of the kinds of 'propositional thought'. Other kinds of propositional thoughts are believing, disbelieving, analyzing, synthesizing, etc. (*Ibid.*, p. 110)

perception and knowledge in the acquaintance period, I will paraphrase Russell paraphrasing William James on knowledge by acquaintance. In *The Principles of Psychology* James claimed that sensation is mere acquaintance with a fact while perception is knowledge *about* a fact. Thus, according to James, as Russell understood him, perception is the faculty that provides knowledge while sensation is ‘mere acquaintance’, which does not lead to knowledge, if taken on its own.²⁰⁵ Even though Russell criticizes James for not understanding and using the concept of acquaintance correctly, meaning that James should have seen that the ‘mere acquaintance’ he refers to does provide knowledge, Russell nevertheless thinks that “if we take him to mean what we mean [about the concept of acquaintance], his statement [James’s] is one which we can in a great measure accept”.²⁰⁶ Apparently, if Russell is right to distinguish between perception and sensation, while still maintaining that we are acquainted with (primitive) facts of perception, just as we are acquainted with sense-data, then it appears that, based on Russell’s own testimony that it is difficult to distinguish between understanding and acquaintance in perception, knowledge by acquaintance is a more complicated cognitive relation between a subject and an object of cognition than he initially thought.

And, in fact, in the neutral monism period Russell states that sensation is not cognitive per se, and that the most certain knowledge is carried by perception which is a ‘propositional attitude’, unlike sensation. Thus, we might conclude that, with the distinction between sensation and perception in 1913, Russell gives the first sign of his later belief that perception provides the ‘real’ knowledge (knowledge proper), while sensation does not provide any knowledge at all.²⁰⁷ I

²⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 55.

²⁰⁶ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁷ With regard to the distinction between sensation and perception, Pears argues that it might not be possible to have knowledge without belief, as Russell seems to want. I think that it is clear that at least in the period from 1910 to 1913 Russell thought that sensation (and simple perception) differs from belief in the nature of the relation between the cognitive subject and the cognitive object. Russell thought that the contents of both sensation and belief is objective (in the

think, therefore, that it would be fair to say that, within Russell's theory of cognition and within the theory of knowledge by acquaintance, in general, it is difficult to describe *accurately and clearly* the nature of direct knowledge, and that sometimes Russell himself falls victim of his own struggle to accomplish accuracy and clarity on the matter.

There is one more faculty that Russell talked about in 1913 and that we need to take into consideration before we draw any general conclusions about Russell's theory of cognition in the early acquaintance period, and move to the analysis of the theory of cognition in the later acquaintance period, namely, the faculty of imagination. But before I move on to the faculty of imagination, I would like to briefly present the views of a few of Russell scholars who attempt to explain the nature of direct knowledge.

In his article "From Knowledge by Acquaintance to Knowledge by Causation", Thomas Baldwin attempts to clarify this very issue of how Russell's theory could show that our most certain knowledge, which is knowledge by acquaintance, goes beyond the specious present.²⁰⁸ Baldwin argues that Russell sets the standards for what acquaintance could accomplish so high that no epistemological justification seems to be able to reach them. In other words, according to Baldwin, Russell's standard for knowledge by acquaintance is that it is supposed to be infallible,

case of belief, the components of a belief are the actual objects which the belief is about). Here is how Russell describes belief: "Belief involves a different kind of relation to objects from any involved in sensation and perception." (*Ibid.*, p. 25). The relation that Russell refers to is the (propositional) multiple relation which is involved in understanding, analyzing, etc. Thus, error is not possible in sensation (or simple perception) while it is possible in belief. Russell also argues that sensation (and perception) differ from belief in the nature of the object that is before the mind. As Russell puts it, the object of the belief that 'Today is Wednesday' is not to be found anywhere in the physical world. That is why 'Today is Wednesday' is a belief, and not a fact, as we sometimes might think (without the careful consideration required for the analysis of belief). (See the discussion on pp. 22-25 in *Theory of Knowledge*). In the light of this comparison between sensation, perception, and belief, I do not think that there is any doubt that Russell thought that knowledge without belief is fully possible. Thus, if we question how knowledge by acquaintance is even possible (as Pears seems to be doing), it is not on account of the presence or absence of belief in sensory knowledge (as Pears seems to be suggesting).

²⁰⁸ Thomas Baldwin, "From Knowledge by Acquaintance to Knowledge by Causation", in Nicholas Griffin, Ed., *Cambridge Companion to Russell*, pp. 420-448.

the most certain knowledge that provides foundation for all other types of knowledge. To accomplish this, Baldwin claims, acquaintance has to be on the one hand, a simple act-object relation (immediate awareness of the object which leaves no room for doubt), and on the other hand, it has to be ‘inherently cognitive’ (that is, it must go beyond the mere act of sensation and include knowledge of the past, as well as knowledge of abstract truths). Baldwin thinks that, instead of keeping the two meanings of acquaintance apart, Russell seems to conflate them. Baldwin argues that Russell uses the terms ‘acquaintance’ and ‘knowledge by acquaintance’ interchangeably while they should have been distinguished. Thus, we should call the acts of sensation *acquaintance*, while *knowledge by acquaintance* should always involve conception. Thus, acquaintance is non-conceptual knowledge while knowledge by acquaintance is conceptual. Mixing them only leads to a confusion of what knowledge by acquaintance *really* consists of. Another point that Baldwin makes is that distinguishing the two meanings of acquaintance would help us distinguish between the cognitive faculties, and as we already pointed out, distinguishing the faculties will make it clearer what counts for knowledge and what does not. To support his argument Baldwin gives an example of the way memory works in Russell’s acquaintance theory. When I remember something, I have an object which is in the past but with which I am directly acquainted now. The object that I am acquainted with is, according to Baldwin, a sense-datum which was once present to me. When I remember that very sense-datum, my mind actually “arcs back” into the past to generate some sort of intuitive knowledge that gives me the idea that ‘this is past’.²⁰⁹ What happens at the moment when I remember something is that I not only have the past object present to my mind but I also recognize it as past.

He [Russell] holds that, in thinking ‘This is past’, I am not thinking, say, ‘the cause of this

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

(present) visual experience is past': I am instead, now, directly identifying something which is not present but past as past. Russell is treating memory as if it includes a quasi-perceptual experiential element which enables us to think directly about past objects.²¹⁰

The 'quasi-perceptual' knowledge is, then, knowledge which only resembles the kind of direct awareness that is unique to sensation. Russell's explanation of the mechanism of memory, Baldwin continues, is that in order to understand what the past actually is, we must already have some intuitive knowledge of it. Thus, in order to know that we are acquainted with a past object (and not with an object of imagination), we have to presuppose some general knowledge of the past, that is, some knowledge of truths. From this, Baldwin concludes, acquaintance is actually theory-laden and not as direct, as Russell wanted it to be. According to Baldwin, evidence of this hypothesis (that acquaintance is theory-laden and not mere direct awareness) is that in the first main text from the neutral monist period, *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell abandoned the old theory of memory and adopted a new one which stated that the subject "must have some intuitive knowledge of the past" if it is to be considered knowledge at all.²¹¹ We have to note here that since knowledge of the past is at the core of the theory of knowledge by acquaintance, the conclusions that we reach about memory affect the general concept of acquaintance, as well. Thus, Baldwin's analysis of the knowledge of the past leaves us with the outcome that acquaintance is more conceptual than Russell thought it was.

A. R. White's article "Knowledge, Acquaintance, and Awareness" tackles the same issue concerning the concept of acquaintance in Russell's theory of cognition.²¹² White thinks that

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 424.

²¹² A. R. White, "Knowledge, Acquaintance, and Awareness", in: *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 1981, # 6, pp. 159-173.

Russell remained ambivalent on the question whether acquaintance is a kind of knowledge, namely ‘immediate knowledge’, or a *means* by which knowledge is obtained. White explores the concepts that Russell uses to explain acquaintance, among which “experience, notice, consciousness, and awareness” stand out.²¹³ All of these concepts suggest that acquaintance is ‘occurrent’, that is, something that is episodic, and lasting only while the object is present to the mind in sensation, introspection, and possibly memory.²¹⁴ The point of ambiguity is that, according to White, Russell wanted acquaintance to be ‘dispositional’²¹⁵ like knowledge, that is, to be present when its object is absent. In other words, White thinks that in the acquaintance period Russell had an inclination to believe that acquaintance itself was only a means to obtain knowledge, but it was not knowledge itself. This contention, however, as White himself acknowledges, does not account for the fact that throughout the acquaintance period Russell also insisted that we are acquainted with objects even when they are not immediately present before

²¹³*Ibid.*, p. 169.

²¹⁴On the issue of memory, White notes that, even though Russell wanted memory to be a prime instance of acquaintance and since memory is more dispositional than occurrent (its object is, in a sense, absent), it would make sense to regard acquaintance as dispositional and not as occurrent. But White thinks that Russell regarded memory more as an experience rather than knowledge of the past (he quotes passages from “On the Nature of Acquaintance” [1914], and “An Inquiry into Meaning and Truth” [1940] where Russell refers to memory as ‘memory-presentation’ (White, p. 169). I disagree with White on two counts. First, Russell is very clear when he talks about memory as knowledge of the past (the only type of memory that could fit White’s description is physiological memory, which is a special type of memory, since its objects are actually present sense-data). I do not think that there is any doubt in that as far as Russell’s general idea of memory goes (this could be said for both the acquaintance and the neutral monist periods). Second, White quotes two texts that are from different periods. While the first text, “On the Nature of Acquaintance” was originally a part of *Theory of Knowledge* [1913] in which case, we could White’s concern with Russell’s ambiguity could be considered justified, the second text is from the late neutral monist period when Russell had already accepted a different epistemological and metaphysical framework, with which came a different theory of cognition, as well (for example, in 1914 Russell replaced ‘acquaintance’ with ‘noticing’, and ‘noticing’ generates new issues). It seems to me that a more careful distinction than White allows, between Russell’s account of memory in 1913 and 1940, is needed. This should also create caution in making conclusions about the nature of knowledge by acquaintance, supported by textual evidence, written at a time when the acquaintance theory of knowledge was long abandoned, and the concept ‘acquaintance’ was replaced by a new one.

²¹⁵*Ibid.*

the mind (as in memory, or, as Russell's own example from "Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description" says, when we know something even when we are thinking about something else at a given moment.)²¹⁶ If we accept the latter claim, then we have to accept that for Russell acquaintance was dispositional (that is, knowledge) and not just an experience or a presentation without any cognitive element in it. So, what we can conclude from the analysis of Russell's use of the concept of acquaintance, White concedes, is that Russell was ambivalent and not entirely consistent when using 'acquaintance'. At times, White continues, he stressed its occurrent characteristic, at other times, he stressed its dispositional characteristic. (And this is why, White believes, scholars have always been divided on the matter of acquaintance in Russell's epistemology).

The same line of reasoning concerning the concept of acquaintance and its relation to the cognitive faculties of sensation/perception, and memory, is shared by David Pears in his article "The Function of Acquaintance in Russell's Philosophy".²¹⁷ Pears believes that what Russell wanted us to believe is that when the subject senses or perceives an object, the subject turns it into knowledge by identifying what is left from the object after 'subtracting' all knowledge of truths (which, by definition, is not a part of acquaintance).²¹⁸ In other words, according to Pears, what Russell calls sensory or perceptual knowledge is the very act of being acquainted with certain objects (the objects being present to our minds), and not the belief that something is the case, that apparently accompanies sensing or perceiving. Knowledge by acquaintance is based

²¹⁶*Ibid.* I think that there is a room for clarification here on the notion of 'immediately present'. As we already discussed it, there are two senses of 'presence' that Russell uses. All objects of acquaintance are immediately present to the mind. But not all objects of acquaintance are temporally present before the mind. From the examples that White gives, with the faculties of sensation, introspection, and memory (most probably, immediate memory), I assume that what he means by 'immediately present' is 'temporally present' before the mind.

²¹⁷David Pears, "The Function of Acquaintance in Russell's Philosophy", in *Bertrand Russell: Critical Assessments*, Vol. 3, A. D. Irvine, Ed., 1999, pp. 221-236.

²¹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 224.

upon the *act* of acquaintance. However, what Pears urges us to ask ourselves is whether the act of acquaintance is the same as knowledge by acquaintance. It seems to me that Pears thinks that it is not. Therefore, for Pears, if we want to understand the concept of knowledge by acquaintance, first we have to define what knowledge is. For Pears the main characteristic of knowledge is the following. If the knowing subject can re-identify an object on a different occasion from the first encounter with it, then this counts as knowledge (and not as a mere acquaintance). Pears gives an example with the fact that, "Language-users certainly do have a non-verbalizable ability to re-identify previously encountered things."²¹⁹ This re-identifying of an object, however, cannot apply to the faculty of sensation as presented by Russell's acquaintance theory, for example. Sense-data which are contemporaneous with the subject of cognition cannot be re-identified by the subject on another occasion because the present is fleeting. The question for Pears, then, is whether sensation is a "rich enough concept" to count as knowledge. And since, according to Russell's definition, sensation is the most obvious example of acquaintance, then the question to consider is whether acquaintance is to count as knowledge, at all.²²⁰

It seems to me that Pears leans toward concluding, along with Baldwin and White, that acquaintance is not knowledge proper, and therefore, that knowledge of things always requires the presence of knowledge of truths for it to be considered knowledge at all. I agree with Pears that Russell's definition of knowledge is not clear. However, Russell himself called knowledge of things *knowledge* and thought that it was logically distinct from knowledge of truths. Therefore, we cannot assume that he simply did not know what he meant by the notion of 'knowledge of things'. Perhaps we should approach the problem of what is meant by knowledge in the acquaintance period from the point of view of the cognitive status of both sensation and (immediate) memory (which are both knowledge of things) and see whether there is something

²¹⁹*Ibid.*

²²⁰*Ibid.*

fundamentally different about them, and from there, decide whether one or both of them are knowledge proper. It seems to me that, even if we assume that the *cognitive* status of sensation (which is the most obvious example of acquaintance) is questionable, before we pronounce our verdict on knowledge by acquaintance, we have to at least consider the status of memory as cognitive or not (since knowledge of the past is crucial for knowledge by acquaintance). I believe that memory, as it was laid out by Russell in the acquaintance period, is a counter-example to the claim that acquaintance is not knowledge. First, if we follow Pears' description of knowledge, we would have no problem calling memory knowledge since in memory the subject is not contemporaneous with the object, and therefore, the subject can easily re-identify the remembered object. At the same time, if we follow Russell's description of (immediate) memory, it is acquaintance with past sense-data. When the subject remembers, it is in direct contact with the remembered object which, in fact, is a past sense-datum. In other words, Russell argued that in the process of remembering, there is nothing that mediates the relation between the knowing subject and the known object, there is only direct acquaintance. Thus, either (immediate) memory is not knowledge by acquaintance, or maybe what Pears suggests does not count as the main characteristic of what Russell thought knowledge by acquaintance is. And I think it is the latter.²²¹

²²¹My discussion of Pears' interpretation of the concept of knowledge should not be read as suggesting that Russell's knowledge by acquaintance is to meet Pears' condition of re-identification. Pears' condition of re-identification is taken from Peter Strawson's *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics*. There Strawson argues that "if we are to operate the scheme of a single unified spatio-temporal system or framework of particulars ... we must have criteria or methods of identifying a particular encountered on one occasion, or described in respect of one occasion, as *the same individual* as a particular encountered on another occasion, or described in respect of another occasion" (Strawson, p. 31). This is what Strawson calls re-identification. (Earlier in the book, Strawson has argued that it is not only plausible, but it is necessary to assume that there is a unified system of spatio-temporal relations in which every particular is uniquely related to every other. Whether we, in practice, *explicitly*, relate the particulars we speak of, to ourselves or to other items of reference, according to Strawson, does not change the fact that we are, at all times, in possession of such a unified framework in which every particular has a unique relation to any other particular.) If we accept this unified framework, we need to be able to point to what Strawson calls 'basic particulars'. He identifies material bodies, "in a broad sense of the expression", as what constitutes this framework. So, things which are, or possess material bodies, are the basic particulars, since only material bodies have "enough diversity, richness, stability and endurance to make possible and natural just that

Pears has an interesting observation about the concept of acquaintance in Russell's theory of knowledge. He believes that in the acquaintance period, whether fully aware of the issue or not, Russell actually tried to 'enrich' the notion of acquaintance.²²² For Pears in both *The Problems of Philosophy* and *Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description* Russell came to a recognition that the subject is acquainted with an object only if the subject somehow *knows* that the object is such and such. I can see how this is an enticing possibility to interpret the complicated notion of 'knowledge by acquaintance', but I do not think that we can arbitrarily decide what Russell should have called 'knowledge', instead of what he called it, especially since he was, in fact, very clear in *Theory of Knowledge*, when he criticized James's account of acquaintance as non-cognitive, that acquaintance does contain a cognitive element, and which made him create this new type of knowledge which he called 'knowledge by acquaintance'.

Now we can attempt to draw a conclusion concerning the issue whether knowledge by acquaintance, which, as described by Russell, is based upon the act of acquaintance with things, qualifies as knowledge proper. I agree with White's point that there is an ambiguity in Russell's understanding of the function of acquaintance in the theory of cognition and the theory of

conception of a single unitary framework that we possess" (*Ibid.*, p. 39). As Strawson continues his search for the basic particulars, it becomes clear that he does not accept sense-data (what he calls 'private particulars') to be basic particulars, because he thinks that they are dependent upon the "the class of persons ... to whose histories they belong" (*Ibid.*, p. 41). "A twinge of toothache or a private impression of red cannot in general be identified in our common language except as the twinge which such-and-such an identified person suffered or is suffering, the impression which such-and-such an identified person had or is having." (*Ibid.*)

It seems, then, that some of Russell's particulars, namely the fleeting sense-data (which are in the specious present) will not qualify as basic particulars. Then, it seems 'unfair' or misplaced to demand that Pears' condition of re-identification be applied to Russell's concept of knowledge by acquaintance. This does not deprive Pears' discussion of knowledge of its insightfulness and helpfulness in clarifying Russell's understanding of knowledge by acquaintance, especially in the context of memory; it just means that we need to take Pears' criticism with caution.

²²²As opposed to what William James, for example, understood by acquaintance and which Russell himself criticized as being insufficient to explain all that happens in acquaintance.

knowledge which did not help resolve the problems that Russell encountered with each one of the cognitive faculties. Both Pears and Baldwin seem to believe that Russell's notion of knowledge *ought* to be such that acquaintance does not fit in it, or, that Russell's understanding of acquaintance needs to be modified or 'enriched', as Pears calls it, in order to fit within the notion of *knowledge* by acquaintance.²²³

I agree only partially with Baldwin's and Pears' arguments about acquaintance. It is true that acquaintance proves to be a more complicated concept than Russell might have thought initially (at least, in the sense, that it requires more clarification and distinction than might have been anticipated). And this is especially clear from the analysis of the faculties of memory (the relation between immediate and remote memory), perception (the relation between simple and complex perception) and the distinction between imagination and the other cognitive faculties. However, Baldwin and, to an extent Pears too, present the things as though Russell was not aware of that. And from there Baldwin concludes that because of this unawareness of Russell's, his whole theory of acquaintance suffers. I think that it is clear from our discussion so far that Russell was aware of the many challenges that his theory of knowledge, and theory of cognition, present, and tried to solve them. Thus, I am convinced that whether or not the presence in knowledge by acquaintance of elements other than the immediate awareness of objects has serious consequences for the acquaintance theory of knowledge, does not come from the fact that Russell was not aware of it.

²²³As we already pointed out earlier in the chapter, Russell himself admits in *Theory of Knowledge*, that the notion of knowledge is rather complicated to the point of being undefinable. However, he used it two contexts, namely in the context of direct, unmediated knowledge (knowledge by acquaintance), and in the context of mediated and inferred knowledge (knowledge by description). It seems to me, however, that when criticizing Russell's notion of knowledge by acquaintance, Pears, Baldwin, and White, do not so much look for possible inconsistencies in Russell's analysis of knowledge, as they try to make Russell's notion of knowledge fit with their own views on what knowledge should be.

2.4. The Faculty of Imagination.

The theory of imagination is a vital part of Russell's theory of cognition. Even though imagination does not provide knowledge in the same way that sensation and memory do, Russell uses imagination to analyze the very nature of cognition, as well as to distinguish between the cognitive faculties. In *Theory of Knowledge* Russell approaches imagination from the point of view of comparing it with the faculty of sensation. The first thing that he claims about the objects of imagination and its sub-types, hallucination and dreaming, is that they are as real as sense-data are. The object of hallucination, Russell argues "is a fact, not an error [of the mind]" because to hallucinate also means to be acquainted with an object, and acquaintance provides certain knowledge²²⁴. In other words, the objects of hallucination, dreams and all other kinds of imaginings are real in the sense that they are present to the mind. Just because imagined objects are not a part of physical space and time as sense-data are, does not mean that they are 'unreal'. As soon as they are present to the mind, they become real for the cognizing subject.

To define the faculty of imagination Russell follows the same procedure as with the faculties of sensation, perception, and memory. He writes:

In the case of sensation and imagination, I believe that sometimes, though rarely, their objects may be identical, and that then they are still intrinsically distinguishable. I conclude that different relations to objects are involved in the two cases, although the distinction is facilitated partly by differences in their usual objects, and partly also by means of their external relations to other things.²²⁵

²²⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 24.

²²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 54.

The phrase ‘different relations to objects’ is misleading and could lead us to believe that somehow imagination does not provide knowledge by acquaintance. I do not think that this could be true, however. What I think Russell means by a ‘different relation’ in the cases of sensation and imagination is that, “imagination differs from memory and sensation by the fact that it does not imply (though it does not exclude) a time-relation between subject and object”²²⁶. “It is not asserted that an object imagined has, in fact, no temporal relation to the subject, but merely that this temporal relation, if it exists, forms no part of the experience of imagining.”²²⁷ It seems that what Russell is trying to say is that for the subject the imagined object may be in the past, present, or future, but the temporal relation between the object and the subject of cognition is not what defines imagination: “whatever time-relation may in fact subsist between the subject and an object which is imagined, no time-relation is implied by the mere fact that imagining occurs”.²²⁸ Russell argues that the imagined object “may be destitute of temporal position, or may have a temporal position which cannot be inferred from the fact that they are now imagined”.²²⁹ As Russell explains, I may imagine one object at one time, and then imagine it at another time, but that does not mean that the object undergoes any intrinsic change during the time between the two moments, it just means that it has ceased to be in the relation of being imagined by the subject. This cessation, Russell continues, may sometimes create the false belief that the object of imagination *was* at the time when it was not imagined. This, however, does not mean that the object of imagination is not real. If I imagine, for example, that tomorrow it will snow, I am imagining it now but the object is in an imaginary future. This object of imagination is still real, even though it does not exist in physical time, and therefore its temporal features are imagined.

²²⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

²²⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 58.

²²⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 56.

²²⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 57.

By the same token, the object of imagination might look like it is contemporaneous with the imagining subject, in which case it can be mistaken for a sensation. This happens often in the case of hallucinating or day-dreaming. Another possibility is to imagine that I have experienced something which, in fact, never happened or happened in a different way than I remember it, as in the case of false memory. In other words, imagination has the property of imitating any of the cognitive faculties, and with it, it can imitate their degrees of certainty of knowledge. This, in turn, can have serious consequences even for the quality of our even most certain knowledge. If imagination can imitate sensory knowledge or knowledge of the past, then it is very important that we be able to distinguish between knowledge and the imitation of knowledge. The question of what constitutes the distinction is central for Russell's theory of cognition, for the purposes of providing a method of distinction between the faculties, so that we can determine when our knowledge is certain, and when – pretend-certain.

Russell points to four “alleged differences” between imagination and sensation (or memory).^{230, 231} The first difference is the physiological difference. Sensation and imagination differ in their relation to the stimulus. In other words, the stimulus for any given sensation is external, while the stimulus for any given imagining, is internal. This difference, however, in Russell's own words, is not ‘relevant’ at this point, to the present theory of imagination (and method of distinction between the faculties), because if we were to distinguish between physical

²³⁰When Russell discusses imagination, he compares it only to sensation and memory. Perception is not mentioned in relation to imagination.

²³¹Here we have to note that Russell says that the method of distinguishing between the faculties of imagination and sensation, involving the time-relation (or the lack of such) between object and subject of cognition, will be ‘put aside’. The reason is that the faculty of introspection is to help us decide whether the relation between subject and object in imagination is temporal or atemporal, but since introspection is complicated, we are not able to decide. At the end of the chapter, Russell comes back to the topic of the method, and once again, reassures us that he cannot conclude with certainty whether the imagination relation is temporal or atemporal, but that he knows that sensation relation and imagination relation are (somehow) different.

and non-physical reality, then we would need to already have a theory of the knowledge of external reality before we can distinguish between imagination and sensation (a theory of the knowledge of external reality will be needed in order to recognize the different relation that the object of cognition bears to the physical reality). The trouble is that most theories of knowledge of the external world are built upon sensation, and not imagination, and unless we can think of a theory which incorporates both sensation and imagination, we cannot use this criterion for distinguishing them.

The second difference has to do with the different relation of the faculties of sensation, memory and imagination to the will. "It may be said that images [objects of imagination] are capable of being called up at will, in a way in which objects of sense are not."²³² What Russell argues is that sense-data are involuntary, they are imposed upon our senses. And this comes as an evidence that they are independent from our minds in the sense that they are not generated by them. Our imaginings, by contrast, are evoked at will because they are products of our minds only. I think that as intuitively true as it may sound, we have to admit that the voluntariness of our imaginings, as well as the involuntariness of our sensations, have their limitations. On the one hand, as far as the involuntariness of our sensations is concerned, it is true that we cannot choose or modify what we sense around us. We can choose, however, which one of all the sense-data that we constantly receive to keep our attention on. Let us consider the following example. When I walk on Bank Street in downtown Ottawa I can smell different food fragrances coming from the Indian, Thai, and Iranian eateries located within a hundred meters from each other. If I analyze the smell coming from each of these places, I will discover at least ten spices used to prepare the different dishes. However, I register at best three of the ten fragrances present on the street at this particular moment. There are many reasons for this, one of them being that if I like Indian food, for example, and I feel hungry, I will concentrate on one particular smell that I

²³² *Ibid.*

recognize and like, such as the smell of chicken curry, blocking out, *at will*, all the other smells that come with it. The same applies to my ability to distinguish between the different tactile experiences. If my eyes are open, my kitchen table may seem smooth to the touch because of the effect of softness that white pine furniture gives when you *look at it*. But if I close my eyes so that I block out the visual experience, and concentrate on the feeling coming from my fingertips, the table surface will feel rough because the white pine that my kitchen table is made of, is, in fact, not sanded or polished. By the same token, even though our mind is the one that creates our imaginings, our ability to imagine things has, in fact, its limitations. Even though I can articulate and talk about the idea of a 'square circle', I do not think I can ever evoke an image of a square circle in my mind. It is also true that certain images from a vivid dream or a hallucination, even if they have little in common with the real world, force themselves on us and it seems almost impossible to control them, to the extent that we remember them long after we have awoken, or come to our senses.

So, the conclusion from the analysis of the second difference between sensation and imagination is that it is not a particularly reliable one. That is why Russell moves on to a third difference that might help us distinguish between the three main cognitive faculties.

The third difference between imagination, sensation, and memory that Russell points out, is partially covered under the one just discussed. Imagination-data, according to Russell, are less vivid than sense-data, present or past. Thus, vividness of data is one way of distinguishing between sense-data and imaginings. Russell argues that even though there are limitations to this difference, it can be used as a general rule. It needs to be pointed out here, however, that this general rule does not work for the act of hallucinating, which is a sub-type of imagination. When we are under extreme emotional and physical stress our imagination is very active and sometimes it presents us with a distorted or exaggerated picture of the world that surrounds us, which is as vivid as the one given in sensation. In those cases our imagination simply takes over and may

even determine our future life. Russell does not dispute this. His response to it, I suspect, would be that this happens rarely and that, in general, imagination-data lack the ‘force of vividness’ which sense-data have. All the same, we have to keep in mind that if the characteristic of vividness does not apply for some of the sub-types of imagination, then it cannot help us distinguish, generally, between imagination and all the other cognitive faculties.

The final distinguishing feature that Russell offers has to do with the belief in the reality of sensations, “in their power of giving knowledge of the ‘external world’”.²³³ As he admits, it is somewhat difficult to define the distinctive feature separating sensation and imagination. Even though he has already established at the very beginning that imagination-data are present to the mind which is acquainted with them, which makes them as real as any other sense-data, it is true that, in a sense, imagination-data are ‘unreal’. The fact that imagination-data are not located in physical time or space makes them different from all the other sense-data. Imagination-data are “destitute of causal efficacy” and because of that they cannot provide knowledge of physics.²³⁴ The ‘unreality’ of images consists, generally, in their ‘unconventional behavior’ compared to sense-data; they may or may not obey the laws of motion, or gravity. (The fact remains, however, that as far as our acquaintance with imagination data is concerned, if we can claim that we are acquainted with something, then there is something real with which we are acquainted.²³⁵) For Russell there is no doubt that there is a difference between the objects of sensation and the objects of imagination, it is a question of linking it to our belief in the ‘unreality’ of imaginings. The ‘simpler difference’ between imagination and sensation, which leads to our belief that

²³³*Ibid.*, p. 59.

²³⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 60. By “knowledge of physics” Russell means knowledge of the physical world.

²³⁵ *Ibid.* As Russell admits, as far as acquaintance is concerned, the ‘unreality’ of objects of acquaintance is rather complicated and is always derivative from some other, simpler difference between the ‘real’ and the ‘unreal’ object.

sensations are real and imaginings are unreal, lies in the fact that the objects of imagination are not simultaneous, or in any other time-relation with the subject of cognition. Then, the objects of imagination do not really need to exist at the moment when they are imagined, or at any other moment, for that matter. This is what creates our feeling that imaginings are unreal, and according to Russell, this feeling, or belief, generally, fits the theory of knowledge of the external world.

On the account of the four distinguishing features between sensation (and memory), and imagination, Russell thinks that the case of dreaming deserves special attention because it leaves us doubtful as to where exactly it belongs, with imagination or with sensation. As far as the first criterion goes (the stimulus), dreams, generally (with certain exceptions), count as imaginings, that is, the stimuli for our dreams are not external, as they are in the case of sensations.²³⁶ With regard to the second distinguishing feature (the involuntariness of sensations), dreams belong with sensations, rather than with imaginings. As we already pointed out, we receive our dreams passively, just as we receive (generally) our sensations passively. As for the third characteristic (the vividness of our sensations), dreams seem to belong, generally, with imaginings rather than with sensations. If the dreamer does not perceive a lot of bright colors, when awake, Russell argues, it is unlikely that her dreams will be full of bright colors either. Most people would agree, he continues, that the world of dreams has the “fragmentary indistinctness” of the world of imagination.²³⁷ Russell is quick to admit, that even though, this seems true, by common-sense standards, we must admit that the possibility that the world of sensation might be as fragmentary and indistinct as the world of dreams also exists. What we actually see with our eyes is often dim

²³⁶The exception that Russell points to is the following: “e.g., where a door banging, makes us dream of some noisy event such as a naval battle. In this case, the noise in the dream may be considered sensation, while the rest of the dream is taken as imagination together with false interpretation.” *Ibid.*

²³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 61.

and fragmentary, but by the power of an “unconscious inference”, we keep passing away from sensation to what we call ‘physical reality’. In other words, Russell admits that we tend to ‘unconsciously’ read into whatever we receive from our senses.

The most ‘puzzling’ yet is the relation of dreams to both belief and what we call ‘physical reality’. With regard to our beliefs, while we are dreaming, we believe that what we are dreaming about is real. When awake, however, we stop believing in dreams, because they do not fit anymore with our construction of ‘physical reality’. With regard to belief, dreams belong to sensation. With regard to ‘physical reality’, they belong to imagination. This conflict between belief (when we are dreaming), and the construction of physical reality (when we are awake), Russell states, is especially obvious in children who tend to confuse objective and subjective reality. So, it seems that, with regard to the case of dreaming (and hallucinating), dreams generally (but not always) belong to imagination, but are “mistakenly supposed by the subject to belong to sensation even in their imagined parts”.²³⁸ It is not that the subject makes false *judgments*, Russell clarifies, that her dreams belong to the world of sensation, but that, while in the grip of dreams, she has *certain feelings* toward her dreams which seem similar to her feelings toward her sensations.

In conclusion, despite the fact that the objects of imagination (especially its sub-types, dream and hallucination) are sometimes believed to belong with sensation, it is beyond doubt for Russell, that images are ‘unreal’ (in one sense of the word, anyway). The conclusion that he has reached is that we did not find anything in the intrinsic character of the objects of imagination that can explain their ‘unreality’. (In other words, his analysis of imagination did not provide a criterion of distinction.) Then, we have to define their ‘unreality’ by their “behavior and relation”.²³⁹ The ‘unreality’ of images “may ... be defined as consisting merely in their failure to

²³⁸*Ibid.*

²³⁹*Ibid.*, p. 62.

fulfil the correlations which are fulfilled by sense-data. An imagined visual object cannot be touched.”²⁴⁰ What this means is that, even if one of our senses, manages to deceive us to the extent that we start believing in its reality (for example, if I press my eyeball, I will see double and I may start believing that there are two, instead of one, staplers in front of me), our other senses ‘correct’ us (by failing to correlate with the other sense-data) and prove the unreality of the object of belief (when I attempt to touch both staplers, I will discover that there is only one stapler). In other words, the correlation between *all* the sense-data which are normally present, are partially missing when day-dreaming, hallucinating, or dreaming.

In *Theory of Knowledge* Russell says that the objects of imagination and its sub-types are usually easily identified because they are unusual and strange compared to the ordinary objects of sensation and memory. Russell acknowledges, however, that this should not be the epistemological grounds for the distinction between imagination, sensation, and memory because these cognitive faculties are defined by the difference in the *relation* between object and subject, and not the difference between the objects themselves.²⁴¹ And if we are to provide a criterion of distinction, it is to distinguish imagination from sensation and memory without appealing to their respective objects. At the end of the chapter on imagination and sensation, Russell concludes that there is, indeed, a distinction between the relation of imagining and the relation of sensation.²⁴² I think what Russell means by that is that the objects of imagination do not have a specified temporal relation to the subject, while the objects of sensation have a specified temporal relation, namely, simultaneity. Thus, the object of imagination may, or may not be, simultaneous to the

²⁴⁰ *Ibid.*

²⁴¹ At the beginning of the chapter “Sensation and Imagination”, Russell writes: “Differences in the object (except when the object is mental) do not directly concern theory of knowledge ...; but differences in the *relation* to the object do directly concern ... theory of knowledge”. (*Ibid.*, p. 53).

²⁴² *Ibid.*, p. 63.

subject. However, Russell adds that, “We failed to find any way of deciding between the view that an image is given as simultaneous with the subject and the view that it is not given as in any time-relation to the subject.”²⁴³ If the object of imagination is given simultaneously with the subject of cognition, Russell continues, then the ‘unreality’ of objects of imagination must consist in failure to obey the laws of correlation, which are obeyed by sense-data. If, on the other hand, the object of imagination is in no time-relation to the subject, then imagination is a “simpler relation than sensation, being, in fact, merely *acquaintance with particulars*”.²⁴⁴ (From this second claim we can conclude that sensation only implies, but is not identical, with the relation of acquaintance with an object.)

It seems to me that if it is true that imagination neither implies nor excludes temporal relations, that is, if we really cannot decide whether imaginings are simultaneous, or in no time-relation, with the subject, then making a distinction between imagination and memory becomes especially difficult. In memory we cannot use the criterion of correlation of the senses, since we cannot experience the past all over again, and so, our senses do not have a chance to ‘correct us’ in our imagined memories. In other words, I will not be able, for example, to distinguish between a memory of my grandmother and my imaginary vision of her. In this case, both the object of imagination and the object of memory are placed in a past context, while at the same time being present before my mind with equal clarity and distinctness. Thus, it seems that, according to Russell, we cannot provide a solid criterion to distinguish between imagination and sensation (or imagination and memory). Rather, he has accepted that there is a distinction (from the common-sense point of view, which Russell respects, there has to be a distinction between imagination and sensation, or imagination and memory) between them, and he only wants to account for it.

²⁴³*Ibid.*

²⁴⁴*Ibid.*

To summarize, our analysis of Russell's theory of cognition under the theory of knowledge by acquaintance has led us so far to believe that what Russell wanted to establish is that knowledge by acquaintance, the most certain knowledge possible, extends beyond the awareness of the specious present. As he developed his theory of cognition in detail, however, this claim required numerous clarifications and dealing with ambiguities. The main challenge for the theory of cognition in the acquaintance period, was to distinguish between the different cognitive faculties, and the knowledge that they provide. As our analysis has shown, Russell manages to provide an account of the distinction between the faculties (not without running into ambiguities and oddities, as in the case of perception, memory and imagination). As far as providing a criterion of distinction between the cognitive faculties, Russell concludes that such a criterion (or method) was not found.

Section Three. Theory of Cognition in the Period 1914-1915.

The theory of cognition in the period after 1913 is further developed in such texts as *Our Knowledge of the External World* [1914], "On The Nature of Acquaintance" [1914], "The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics" [1914], "Mysticism and Logic" [1914], "On Scientific Method in Philosophy" [1914], "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter" [1915], "Letter on Sense-Data" [1915], and "On our Experience of Time" published in the *Monist* in 1915²⁴⁵. In this

²⁴⁵ Russell, B., "On the Nature of Acquaintance", in *Logic and Knowledge. Essays 1901-1950*, p. 125. "The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics" in *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*. Vol. 8. "The Ultimate Constituents of Matter" in *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*. Vol. 8., p. 74. "Letter on Sense-Data" in: *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*. Vol. 8, p. 87.

section I will follow the development of Russell's continuing 'struggle' with the notion of knowledge by acquaintance, as it pertains to the cognitive faculties. The period after 1913 is referred to in the literature as the later acquaintance period and authors like David Pears believe that it is a period of a rather swift decline for the theory of knowledge by acquaintance which began with *Our Knowledge of the External World* [1914]. In this section I will not discuss how swift exactly the decline of the acquaintance theory of knowledge was (I agree that 1913 was a watershed for Russell's theory of cognition), but I will explore how Russell's views on the main cognitive faculties were gradually changing, culminating in his rejection of the theory of knowledge by acquaintance in 1918. After 1913 Russell's general epistemological interests were directed more toward the faculties of sensation and perception, and their objects, rather than the faculties of memory or imagination. Nevertheless, he continued to regard the four faculties as intimately related to each other. Here, I will first briefly outline the views of some commentators, who analyze Russell's works on memory after 1913 (until he abandoned the acquaintance theory of knowledge), followed by Russell's views on imagination in the same period, before I wade into the discussion of the faculties of sensation and perception.

So far, we have established that, despite the numerous issues that Russell's theory of cognition face with the analysis of memory, memory plays a crucial role in his theory of cognition and theory of knowledge in the acquaintance period because memory accounts for the knowledge that is outside of the limited boundaries of the specious present. Just as memory plays such an important role in Russell's theory of cognition in the acquaintance period, it plays an equally important role in the neutral monism period. To shed light on Russell's understanding of knowledge of the past in 1914 (or in the rest of the acquaintance period, for that matter), I would like to introduce here the discussion among D. Pears, R. Perkins, and J. O. Urmson on Russell's

understanding of memory in the same period.²⁴⁶

In “Russell’s Theories of Memory” Pears argues that even though in 1913 Russell still believed that the acquaintance theory was feasible, *Theory of Knowledge*, especially the second part, where Russell analyzes the types of remote memory, marks the beginning of Russell’s changing views on memory and thus, on acquaintance as a principle of knowledge.²⁴⁷ In an earlier version of the “Russell’s Theories of Memory” published in *Bertrand Russell and the British Tradition in Philosophy*²⁴⁸ Pears maintains that until “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” [1918] Russell was an ‘extreme realist’ on the issue of memory. His extreme realism was present in both *The Problems of Philosophy* and *Theory of Knowledge*. As far as I understand Pears’ viewpoint, by ‘extreme realism’ he means that memory was considered by Russell to be an extension of (a sub-species) of sensation, that is, memory consists of what we have *perceived* in the past. This way, memory is not any different from sensation and can be treated epistemologically the same way: “memory actually maintains contact with what was perceived in the past”.²⁴⁹ Pears concludes that, for Russell, throughout the acquaintance period the concepts of both present and past are given in experience, that is, both our present and past sensory

²⁴⁶Pears (“Russell’s Theories of Memory.” *Questions in the Philosophy of Mind*. Ed. David Pears. London: Duckworth, 1975), Urmson (“Russell on Acquaintance With the Past.” *Philosophical Review* 78 (1969) : 510-515) and Perkins (“Russell On Memory.” *Mind* 82 (1973) : 600-601) view the two Russell’s texts, “On the Nature of Acquaintance” [1914] and “On Our Experience of Time” [1915] as a new development to the understanding of Russell’s theory of memory in the acquaintance period. What was not taken into consideration by any of the three commentators, however, is that the two texts published in 1914 and 1915 in the *Monist*, “On the Nature of Acquaintance” and “On Our Experience of Time” are, in fact, chapters from the *Theory of Knowledge* manuscript which was not published in the full until after Russell’s death. Therefore, I do not think that it is wise to refer to Russell’s view on memory from these two texts as a new development to his theory of knowledge in the acquaintance period.

²⁴⁷ Pears, “Russell’s Theories of Memory”, pp. 228-229.

²⁴⁸ Pears, *Bertrand Russell and the British Tradition in Philosophy*. New York: Random House, 1967.

²⁴⁹ Russell, “On the Nature of Acquaintance”, p. 171.

experiences are the building blocks of our most certain and indubitable knowledge. This conclusion also stems from the assumption that our knowledge of time, both present and past, is not purely inferential by any means. We infer certain things about time but we also have a sensation of time, that is, we are directly aware of the passage of time. The question, mentioned previously, that Pears raises is whether memory, as presented in the early acquaintance period, is too close to sensation so that it loses its own identity and becomes a 'natural extension' of sensation. If this is the case, then our most certain and indubitable knowledge cannot reach beyond the boundaries of knowledge of the specious present.^{250 251}

²⁵⁰Elizabeth Ramsden Eames has an insightful explanation of the way that Russell might have used the term 'specious present'. Specious present refers to present experience that has "a temporal spread to it within which the earlier, middle, and later parts are ordered in succession. This kind of present experience allows us direct knowledge of the immediate past (the earlier part of the specious present); it provides immediate experience of succession; by a series of overlapping presents it allows building of a temporal series of events; as long as the doctrine of acquaintance held, it provided a way of distinguishing immediate memories from sensations." Elizabeth R. Eames, "Russell and the Experience of Time", in: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, Vol. XLVI, NO. 4, June 1986. If we accept this explanation, then there should not be a problem for Russell to argue that there is a type of memory, namely immediate memory, whose objects are in the past, but with which we are directly acquainted. It seems to me that this is consistent with what Russell wanted for memory, since this way knowledge of the immediate past complies with the principles of the acquaintance theory of knowledge. (Again, this interpretation of Russell's theory of memory will require a clarification of what type of memory exactly is the memory of the specious present. As we saw, at first Russell talks about 'sensational' memory which seems to be memory of the specious present. But then, he introduces physiological memory which fits the description even better. Then, immediate memory seems to be memory outside of the specious present, when the sense-datum has already faded and become past.)

²⁵¹Urmson criticizes Pears for overgeneralizing Russell's view of memory in the acquaintance period. The gist of Urmson's criticism is that apart from one passage in *The Problems of Philosophy* where Russell argues that "the first extension of sense-data" is acquaintance by memory, there is no textual evidence that Russell maintained the extreme realist position about memory that Pears ascribes to him. According to Urmson, until 1919 when he abandoned the theory of knowledge by acquaintance, Russell regarded only memory of the specious present, that is, what Russell calls, physiological memory, as part of acquaintance with particulars, while remote memory was considered inferential knowledge. (Urmson, J. O., "Russell on Acquaintance with the Past", pp. 511-512). If we keep in mind that at the time of the debate between Pears, Urmson and Perkins, *Theory of Knowledge* had not yet appeared as a separate book, then we can understand why Urmson argues that Russell's theory of memory did not change much from the period between 1910 and 1918 when he abandoned the theory of knowledge by acquaintance altogether. While what Russell wrote in *Theory of Knowledge* shows us that, unlike the somewhat general and sketchy picture of the theory of cognition that Russell

What Pears overlooks, however, is that when Russell worked out the details of his theory of memory in *Theory of Knowledge*, he began to realize that certain types of memory do not fit the model of acquaintance with the past. Thus, if we use Pears' terminology to describe Russell's view of memory, we may agree that, because Russell's understanding of memory was beginning to change as early as 1913, his position on memory prior to 1918 is one of a 'less extreme' realism. Russell admits that acquaintance with past events is confined only to the most recent past, while events in the distant past are known through description. After 1913 Russell thought that our most certain knowledge extends no further in the past than the recent past, while knowledge of any other past objects is uncertain, and dubious.²⁵² R. K. Perkins's observation concerning Russell's changing views on memory from the early and the later acquaintance period supports Pears' view about immediate and remote memory after 1913.²⁵³ He points to a passage from *Our Knowledge of the External World* where Russell, discussing the problem of free will and determinism, remarks that, "If we saw future events in the same immediate way in which we see past events, what kind of free will would still be possible?"²⁵⁴ Perkins uses this passage to

had in *The Problems of Philosophy*, in *Theory of Knowledge* he worked out the details of his theory of cognition and realized that a *general* theory of *one* type of memory as a *simple* acquaintance with the past, would not hold. Urmson also does not take into consideration Russell's ambiguous use of sensational memory, which was discussed earlier in this section.

²⁵² Perkins refers to a Russell's article which was actually a part of *Theory of Knowledge* but which published separately in the *Monist* in 1914 entitled "Definitions and Methodological Principles in *Theory of Knowledge*". In it Russell regards the "possibility of error in any cognitive occurrence" to lead to the assumption that this particular "[cognitive] occurrence is not an instance of dual relation" and thus, not an instance of acquaintance. In other words, it seems that the tendency to regard knowledge of the remote past as uncertain and dubious that started in 1913 continues in the rest of the acquaintance period.

²⁵³ Perkins, "Russell's Realist Theory of Remote Memory.", in *History of Philosophy* 14 (1976), pp. 359-360.

²⁵⁴ Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World*, p. 181.

point out that even after 1913, Russell was still convinced that there is a type of memory that brings immediate knowledge of the past. Since, as we concluded earlier, there is no textual evidence that Russell wanted to have two theories of memory, it seems that if Pears and Perkins are right, then whenever Russell talked about memory after 1913, he actually meant immediate memory which was the source of our most certain knowledge, and not remote memory. In other words, it seems to me that both Pears and Perkins concentrate (exclusively) on one of the types of memory, namely immediate memory, in their analyses of Russell's theory of memory in the period 1913-1918. I think this is somewhat misleading, since I do not think that, despite the fact that in 1913 Russell pronounced immediate memory to be the 'true memory', Russell ever gave up the idea that there is remote type of memory, which provides only indirect knowledge of the past.

As far as the faculty of imagination goes, I do not think there is much development in Russell's theory of imagination after 1913 until the end of the acquaintance period. Russell devoted only one section from "The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics" to imagination. There, he reinstated what he had said in *Theory of Knowledge* about illusions, hallucinations and dreams, and their relation to the notion of 'reality'. The gist of Russell's argument about the faculty of imagination is that its objects, illusions, hallucinations, and dreams should be treated like 'abnormal sense-data' and that they "have intrinsically just the same status as any others [sense-data], but differ as regards their correlations or causal connections with other 'things'".²⁵⁵ From this we can conclude that in 1914 Russell still believed that the objects of imagination are similar to sense-data in all other aspects except for their causal relation to the objects of the physical world. In other words, the objects of imagination do not connect quite as well with the rest of sense-data that the subject obtains, and they also do not fit with the subject's other experiences in the physical world. However, the question of what happens when the objects of imagination fit

²⁵⁵"The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics", in *The Collected Papers*, Vol. 8, p. 24.

perfectly with the rest of the subject's experiences and beliefs, and when the objects of imagination are, in fact, consistent with the other sense-data that the subject perceives, as in the case of having an illusion, remains open. We saw that the criteria for distinguishing between the cognitive faculties that Russell offered in *Theory of Knowledge* proved to be somewhat inconsistent with the initial premises of his theory of cognition. Therefore, to better understand how the faculty of imagination, or any other cognitive faculty for that matter, works, we have to reexamine Russell's analysis of the faculty of sensation and perception which seem to be key elements in the analysis of the theory of cognition, since they bring the most certain knowledge of the world.

In the articles "The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics" and "On Scientific Method in Philosophy" Russell focuses his analysis of cognition on sensation and its objects. The first article was paraphrased by Russell in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, and the latter one was strongly influenced by it. That is why I will discuss both articles as expressing the same ideas whose continuation we see in *Our Knowledge of the External World* [1914]. In all three texts Russell distinguishes between the act of sensation and the objects of sensation which in this case are of two kinds – sense-data, and sensibilia. 'Sensible' is a new term that Russell introduces in 1914. The distinction between a sense-datum and a sensible, along with the number of problems that the concept of sensible creates for the theory of knowledge, has been explored extensively in Russell scholarship. I will not focus too much on the concept of sensible, since it does not contribute directly to the understanding of how the cognitive faculties work which is the main concern of the present research. However, I will go over some of the issues that arise from the distinction between sense-data and sensibilia since they affect indirectly what Russell thought about knowledge by acquaintance, and about the experiential cognitive faculties.

Sensibilia are objects "which have the same metaphysical and physical status as sense-

data, without necessarily being data to any mind”²⁵⁶. For a sensible to be a sense-datum as well, a mind must perceive it. In other words, sense-data are sub-set of sensibilia, and sensibilia are unsensed. As we saw from Russell’s definition of sense-data, they are physical and not mental entities. And since, from the aforementioned description of sensibilia, they seem to share the same metaphysical and physical status as sense-data, it follows that sensibilia are physical entities, too. Sensibilia are the “ultimate constituents of the physical world” to which the mind adds awareness and turns into sense-data.²⁵⁷ The general consensus among scholars is that Russell needed to introduce sensibilia so that he could construct physical objects.^{258, 259}

In 1912 Russell thought that we have direct access in acquaintance only to such cognitive particulars as past and present sense-data, imaginary data, etc., but not to physical objects. We have to infer physical objects from sense-data which we know directly. In *The Problems of Philosophy*, Russell argues that “we can never *prove* the existence of things other than ourselves

²⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 7.

²⁵⁷“The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics”, *The Collected Papers*, Vol. 8, p. 9.

²⁵⁸According to Nicholas Griffin, in 1914 Russell was beginning ‘to be dissatisfied’ with the idea that we know about matter through description, since description involves inference. In other words, Russell was beginning to think that his belief in the earlier acquaintance period that material objects are inferred is false. In *Our Knowledge of the External World* Russell proposed that we construct, and not infer, the material objects out of sense-data. But since the actual sense-data are too fragmentary for us to be able to construct matter, which is supposed to have the property of permanence, out of them, Russell introduces sensibilia to the picture. (*Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (London ; New York : Routledge, 1998, pp. 399-400).

²⁵⁹Since the focus of my dissertation is on the main cognitive faculties, I will not wade into a discussion of the difficulties that Russell encountered with sensibilia and with the logical construction of physical objects in 1914. (One of the difficulties with sensibilia is summarized by Nicholas Griffin in the following way. Since sensibilia are physical and objective entities, just like sense-data, it seems that they are still subject to misapprehension by the mind, thus bringing back the same difficulties which made material objects unsuitable as objects of knowledge by acquaintance in the acquaintance period. *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, p. 400). I will also not discuss the difference between sensibilia and unsensed sensibilia and the difficulties that Russell encounters with this distinction. I shall limit myself to explaining the main purpose of introducing sensibilia and the general principle of logical construction of physical objects which is a new element of the theory of knowledge by acquaintance.

and our experiences”.²⁶⁰ Even though we cannot prove that there are physical objects (matter), we have an “*instinctive* belief” that there is a physical world independent of me which corresponds to the sense-data that I have of this world, and since this belief does not lead to any further difficulties, “but on the contrary tends to simplify and systematize our account of our experiences”, then we can accept it as true.²⁶¹ Thus, we do not know physical objects by acquaintance, but we know them by description, that is, we know them as the inferred causes of our sense-data. In other words, physical objects are inferred entities. And this makes our knowledge of them less certain than our knowledge of sense-data, because we might be justified in believing them without them being there, which is impossible in the case of acquaintance, since we cannot be acquainted with something, unless the thing is there.

According to Sajahan Miah, Russell begins to ‘dislike’ the thesis that physical objects are inferred on epistemological grounds.²⁶² Since physical objects are not known directly, the belief in their existence becomes questionable, that is, open to skeptical challenges.²⁶³ This, according to Miah, is the main (epistemological) reason why Russell decides to abandon the thesis he held in 1912 that physical objects are inferred entities, and replace it with the thesis he developed in 1914 that physical objects are *constructed* entities. The construction of physical objects allowed Russell to satisfy both the common-sense belief and the scientific belief that there is a physical reality that surrounds us and that it is knowable. As Miah states, in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, Russell tries to reconcile, or show the connection between the world of sensation

²⁶⁰*The Problems of Philosophy*, p. 22.

²⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 24.

²⁶²Sajahan Miah, *Russell’s Theory of Perception (1905-1919)*, p. 119.

²⁶³According to Miah, the belief in the existence of physical objects, as presented in 1912, is questionable because it leads us to infer a physical substratum, “whose existence we can never know” (that is, we can never be acquainted with or “justifiably assume” the existence of a physical Lockean substratum). (*Ibid.*, p. 120).

and the world of physics.²⁶⁴ If Russell manages to show that physical objects are not inferred, he will show that even our scientific beliefs are empirically grounded and therefore verifiable without having to postulate the unverifiable causal connection between sense-data and physical objects in the case of inference.²⁶⁵

The problem with constructing physical objects out of sense-data, as pointed out earlier, is that sense-data are momentary and so they do not fulfill the demand for wholeness and continuity that the common-sense (as well as the world of science) world has for sense-data. The fact that sense-data are always observed ²⁶⁶, leaves the cases when nobody observes a given table, out of reach for sense-data. That is why Russell needs an entity which will be directly known and which will bring certain knowledge, but which will not be only from the point of view of one observer. (That is why Russell also refers to sensibilia as ‘ideal qualities’, or ‘ideal appearances’. These appearances are entities that correspond to things as they would appear when, in fact, there is nobody around for them to appear to.²⁶⁷) And these entities are sensibilia. The way that Russell thought about physical objects in 1914 is that they are classes of sensibilia, but may have sense-data as their constituents. We still infer, in a manner of speaking, the existence of physical objects, but this time, unlike in 1912, we infer it from sense-data which are sub-set of sensibilia. (In 1912 Russell thought that physical objects are inferred as the unknown and unverifiable causes of our sense-data.²⁶⁸) Sense-data, as already mentioned, are sub-set of sensibilia, and as

²⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 122.

²⁶⁵*Ibid.* The construction of physical objects does not mean that there is no inference to something more than what we are acquainted with, or can be acquainted with. On the contrary, other people’s sense data are inferred entities, as well as unsensed sensibilia.

²⁶⁶As Griffin and Miah have observed, the fact that sense-data are always observed, does not entail that they are logically dependent upon the observer. Sense-data are physical and in this sense, independent of the subject of cognition. This condition is precisely what allows Russell to introduce sensibilia (which are unsensed) without contradicting himself. (Miah, pp. 126-127).

²⁶⁷*Our Knowledge of the External World*, p. 116.

²⁶⁸And which Miah aptly calls “Lockean substratum” (*Ibid.*, p. 120).

Russell had established, all that we know with certainty is the sense-datum. Thus, when we infer the existence of physical objects (i.e., the classes of sensibilia), we infer it from the sense-data (and we also infer that there are other entities of the sort we are acquainted with, rather than something whose nature is not revealed to us by acquaintance). In *Our Knowledge of the External World*, Russell describes sense-data as ‘facts of sense’, ‘sensible objects’, or ‘hard data’.²⁶⁹ These sense-data are in private space to which only one cognitive subject at a time has access.

Atmospheric changes, changes of the light, change in the state of the subject (including her position in space and her psychological state) influence or alter the visual appearance of whatever it is that we sense. But this still does not change the fact that we sense something and this something is our momentary sense-datum which is not accessible to any other cognitive subject, and yet is still mind-independent. The point of view from which the cognitive subject perceives a sense-datum is called a ‘perspective’. Each cognitive subject has her own perspective that contains sense-data. Even though each cognitive subject has her own perspective to which no other cognitive subject has access, if different cognitive subjects compare their perspectives on the same object (this is only theoretically speaking, since subjects could never compare their perspectives since they are private), they will realize that they are similar (even though they are never identical). The physical object of a table, for example, is constructed out of the collection of the private perspectives.

Regardless of the issues around the introduction of sensibilia²⁷⁰, it is clear that in 1914 Russell still regards sensation as the main experiential cognitive faculty which brings the most

²⁶⁹In *Our Knowledge of the External World*, Russell distinguishes between ‘hard data’ and ‘soft data’. Hard data for him are the sensible objects, the facts of perception and the general truths of logic. These objects are beyond doubt. Soft data are “those which, under the operation of this process [critical reflection], become to our minds more or less doubtful”. (*Ibid.*, p. 78).

²⁷⁰Some of the objections to the status of sensibilia are that since we have access only to our own sense-data, then to assert the existence of sensibilia is a speculative leap. (For a discussion of some of the issues surrounding sensibilia, see Miah, pp. 180-181).

certain knowledge of the world.²⁷¹ (In *Our Knowledge of the External World* Russell uses the term ‘sensation’ to refer to what he described as ‘sensation’ in 1913.) He also uses the term ‘sense-perception’ which seems to correspond to what he described as ‘perception’ in 1913. The objects of ‘sense-perception’, he says, are ‘facts’. Russell describes facts as complex entities whose constituents are ‘qualities’ and ‘relations’.²⁷² “The fact itself”, Russell continues, “is objective and independent of our thought or opinion about it.”²⁷³ When describing the types of data that there are, Russell argues that “the hardest of hard data are those are of two sorts: the particular facts of sense and the general truths of logic”.²⁷⁴ Here it seems that Russell says that the facts of perception are the hardest of hard data. But then what happens to the sense-data or ‘sensible objects’ as he also calls them? In other places in the chapter “On Our Knowledge of the External World”, Russell seems to use perception as a general term that includes sensation in it.²⁷⁵ So, it seems that in 1914 Russell does not distinguish between the process of sensation and the process of perception, but he (almost always) distinguishes between facts of perception and sense-data. Thus, since sensation is contained within perception, I think we could conclude that sense-data are constituents (along with qualities and relations) of facts of perception.

In “The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics” Russell argues that with regard to their

²⁷¹In “Mysticism and Logic”, first published in 1914 and included later in the collection of essays of the same name, when talking about Bergson’s distinction between intellect and intuition with regard to apprehending new knowledge, Russell argues that “only direct acquaintance can give knowledge of what is unique and new”, and this kind of acquaintance is given only in sensation [*The Collected Papers*, vol. 8, p. 39]. In other words, it seems that sensation is still regarded by Russell as the foundation of knowledge, both in terms of certainty, and in terms of apprehension of new knowledge. Again, I do not mean to say that sensation brings the most certain knowledge of the world, *exclusively*, thus excluding knowledge of universals.

²⁷²*Our Knowledge of the External World*, p. 61.

²⁷³*Ibid.*

²⁷⁴*Ibid.*, p. 78.

²⁷⁵Russell talks about ‘perceived perspectives’, ‘perceiving bodies’, and ‘perceiving of sensible objects’ (*Ibid.*, p. 95).

epistemological function both sensation and perception are equal. Both faculties provide data that give the most certain and indubitable knowledge available to us. The objects of sensation are sense-data while the objects of perception are complex facts. What makes them different, therefore, is not their epistemological function but their logical structure. Sense-data are the objects of acquaintance with particulars and can only be named but not inferred, while complex facts, or rather the observation of complex facts represents knowledge of truths and requires assertion^{276, 277}. However, as Russell puts it, “this logical difference, as important as it is, is not very relevant to our present problem [the characterization of sense-data]; and it will be convenient to regard data of perception as included among sense-data for the purposes of this paper.”²⁷⁸ What Russell seems to want to establish in 1914 is that regardless of their differences, the knowing subject is directly aware of both objects of sensation and objects of perception.²⁷⁹ In

²⁷⁶“The Relation of Sense-Data to Physics”, in *The Collected Papers*, vol. 8, pp. 6-7.

²⁷⁷“...sense gives acquaintance with particulars, and is thus a two-term relation in which the object can be *named* but not *asserted*, and is inherently incapable of truth or falsehood, whereas the observation of a complex fact, which may be suitably called perception, is not a two-term relation, ... and gives knowledge of a truth, not mere acquaintance with particulars.” (*Collected Papers*, Vol. 8, p. 6). Similarly, in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, Russell argues that “Given any fact, there is an assertion which expresses the fact. The fact itself is objective, and independent of our thought and opinion about it; but the assertion is something which involves thought, and may be either true or false.” (*Our Knowledge of the External World*, pp. 61-62).

²⁷⁸*Ibid.*

²⁷⁹ There is, perhaps, a certain ambiguity in Russell’s understanding of facts of perception in 1914. Russell argued that facts, the objects of perception, are complex. Thus, when we are acquainted with facts, we are acquainted with their constituents, but attend to the whole. And every fact is composed of at least two constituents – an object and its relation (to another object). Since relations are predicates (in fact, acquaintance with predicates is what Russell calls ‘acquaintance with logical objects’ such as, ‘relations’, ‘universals’, etc.) then, in perception the subject is acquainted with both particulars and predicates, as opposed to being acquainted only with particulars, as is the case with sensation. In some places in *Theory of Knowledge*, as well as in “The Relations of Sense-Data to Physics” [1914] Russell holds the view that facts are complexes that are similar to (complex) sense-data and that they should be considered among the objects of acquaintance with particulars. In other places, including the “Letter on Sense-Data” [1915] he says that facts are more than particulars. And what is more, he says that they are intrinsically different from sense-data in that they are mental and not physical entities. I think we could agree, however, that, generally, in 1914 facts for Russell are different from sense-data

1914 the focus is not on the distinction between such faculties as sensation and perception, but on the fact that they both have the same epistemological function – to provide the knowing subject with certain upon which she can build inferences and complex propositions.

Exploring the issues that Russell's theory of cognition in the acquaintance period raises, scholars like D. J. O'Connor, C. Wade Savage, and D. Pears, offer their perspectives on Russell's theory of sensation and perception in the stipulated period.²⁸⁰ I will outline some of their points relevant to the present research, which will help us flesh out some of the issues that Russell's theory of cognition faced after 1913. D.J. O'Connor, for example, believes that throughout the period from 1912-1927 acquaintance period Russell held a causal theory of sensation or perception, which had some "phenomenalist overtones".²⁸¹ The causal theory of sense-perception amounts to the view that sense-data are immediately known by the cognitive subject, and that they are caused by physical objects, which are independent of our minds. O'Connor argues that in *The Problems of Philosophy* Russell held a causal theory of sense-perception, but that since then, he had several 'diversions', as O'Connor calls them, which did not improve upon Russell's theory of perception, but on the contrary, made it more confusing to the point where it became internally inconsistent. One of these 'diversions' is caused by the introduction of sensibilia,

in that they have constituents, and that they are objective entities, in the sense that they do not depend upon our thought or opinion of them.

²⁸⁰D. J. O'Connor, "Russell's Theory of Perception", in *Bertrand Russell Memorial Volume*, 1979, pp. 304-321. C. Wade Savage, "Sense-Data in Russell's Theories of Knowledge", in *Rereading Russell: Essays on Bertrand Russell's Metaphysics and Epistemology*, 1985, pp.138-169. David Pears, "Russell's 1913 *Theory of Knowledge* Manuscript, in *Rereading Russell: Essays on Bertrand Russell's Metaphysics and Epistemology*, 1985, pp. 169-183. Thomas Baldwin, "From Knowledge by Acquaintance to Knowledge by Causation", in *The Cambridge Companion to Bertrand Russell*, 2003, pp. 420-449.

²⁸¹D. J. O'Connor, "Russell's Theory of Perception", in *Bertrand Russell Memorial Volume*, 1979, p. 306. The 'phenomenalist overtones', according to O'Connor, appear mostly in the neutral monism period, where the distinction between mind and matter is one of a mere arrangement, which according to O'Connor inevitably leads to phenomenalism as far as knowledge is concerned.

which, as we already explained, are needed for the construction of physical objects.²⁸² According to O'Connor, the construction of physical objects, itself, is a move toward phenomenalism, which breaks away from the causal theory of perception.²⁸³

According to O'Connor, however, despite the 'phenomenalist' outcome for perceptual knowledge, in 1914 Russell still believed that a "coherent and gap-free physical world is much easier to understand than the intermittent world of phenomena"²⁸⁴. Therefore, O'Connor argues, despite the phenomenalist tendencies in Russell's views about sensation and sense-data presented in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, it is still more plausible and consistent with his other views about knowledge, to assume that in 1914 Russell held a theory of sensation where the objects of sensation do not depend upon the mind for their existence.²⁸⁵ Our sense-data are caused by physical objects which are independent of our minds. According to O'Connor, we can find proof that Russell never abandoned completely his causal theory of sensation or perception in his later theory of perception. The later theory of perception which Russell describes in *Analysis of Mind* [1921], *Analysis of Matter* [1927], and *Human Knowledge* [1948], is built upon the concept of the "causal line", and on O'Connor's understanding, is a return to the causal theory of

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 312. O'Connor argues that Russell created sensibilia for one main reason, namely to amend the subjectivity of sense-data, although it was against the principle of Occam's razor for which Russell always had a great respect. Russell was aware of the outcome for perceptual knowledge, and in his effort to salvage the objectivity of perceptual knowledge, created sensibilia which are not dependent upon anything that comes from the mind.

²⁸³ We need to note here that O'Connor's interpretation of Russell's theory of sense-perception relies heavily on Ayer's interpretation (A. J. Ayer, *Russell and Moore: The Analytical Heritage*), which has been criticized by a number of scholars for not clarifying Russell's position, but mixing it with Ayer's own position on perception, sense-data, etc. (For a discussion of Ayer's objections, see Miah, pp. 70-72).

²⁸⁴ O'Connor, p. 306.

²⁸⁵ Here again, we have to note that O'Connor relies on Ayer's interpretation of sense-data as subjective entities that depend upon the mind of the perceiver for their existence. As we have already explained, and as Miah successfully shows, this is a misunderstanding of Ayer's, since Russell never believed that sense-data are dependent upon the perceiver for their existence. In the acquaintance period, Russell always claimed that sense-data are physical and not mental entities.

perception as outlined in *The Problems of Philosophy*. The gist of the “causal line” theory is that ‘percepts’ (this is the term Russell used after 1927 to describe the objects of perception) are actually ‘in our heads’ because they are “at the end of a causal chain of physical events leading, spatially, from the object to the brain of the percipient”.²⁸⁶

I will not explore O’Connor’s argument about the causal line theory in detail here, since it includes texts which go beyond the scope of the present chapter.²⁸⁷ However, here I will present Miah’s argument, which states that in the acquaintance period, Russell did not, in fact, abandon the causal theory of perception (and did not commit himself to phenomenalism, as O’Connor seems to be suggesting). Miah argues that even in the constructivist period (when Russell introduced the construction of physical objects), Russell did not abandon his causal theory of perception. The gist of Miah’s argument is that just because in 1914, for example, Russell did not ‘posit’ the physical object as a cause of the sense-datum, does not mean that he denied it. According to Miah, Russell never denied that sense-data have external causes. What is more, in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, Russell insisted that his theory of perception should obey the laws of physics, that is, that the construction of physical objects presupposes causal laws. Thus, Miah concludes, in 1914 Russell’s theory of perception is fully compatible with his realism, of which the causal theory of perception is an expression, which means that he did not really commit to phenomenalism.²⁸⁸

I do not deny O’Connor’s claim that in the later neutral monism period Russell returned to a causal theory of perception. However, Miah’s solid arguments in favor of Russell’s causal

²⁸⁶Russell, *The Analysis of Matter*, p. 320.

²⁸⁷O’Connor concludes his analysis of Russell’s causal line theory of perception by saying that this is probably “the most eccentric and least defensible” of Russell’s theories of perception but, as it turned out, it was taken seriously and further developed by the Australian materialists who developed the identity theory of mind and body.

²⁸⁸Miah, pp. 146-147.

theory of perception in the acquaintance period, and given O'Connor's perhaps rather uncritical reliance on Ayer's interpretation of Russell's theory of perception, I do not think that O'Connor has textual support for his claim that in the acquaintance period (and after it), Russell's theory of perception was inconsistent. On the contrary, in a short text from 1922 Russell defends himself against the accusation that his theory of knowledge in the neutral monism period is phenomenistic. "Physics and Perception" was written in reply to the American philosopher and psychologist Charles Strong's paper "Mr. Russell's Theory of the External World" published in 1922. As the editor's foreword to "Physics and Perception" indicates, Strong focused on Russell's *Our Knowledge of the External World*, and *The Analysis of Mind*.²⁸⁹ He believed that Russell developed a phenomenistic theory of knowledge in both books. In "Physics and Perception", Russell rejects Strong's label and argues that he accepts the truth of physics and "departs from phenomenism so far as may be necessary for upholding the truth of physics".²⁹⁰ True to his approach toward any theory, Russell says that physics is not necessarily true but it has a better chance of being 'truer' than philosophy (or what Strong describes as phenomenism).

Even though O'Connor fails to take into consideration the important distinction between sensation and perception which Russell establishes in 1913, and thus, conflates the two faculties when discussing Russell's causal theory of perception in the acquaintance period, I agree with him that after 1913 there is definitely a change in Russell's approach toward sensation and perception. First, in 1914 Russell uses the term 'sense-perception' which sometimes leads to ambiguity as to which faculty he refers to, but he acknowledges that sensation is contained within perception and that sense-data are constituents of facts of perception. Despite this difference, however, in 1914 Russell thought that sensation and perception have the same epistemological function – to provide the most certain knowledge that there is. And second, as we concluded from

²⁸⁹The foreword is published in Vol. 9 of *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*.

²⁹⁰*The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, vol. 9, p. 128.

the analysis of the theory of cognition in the period 1914-1915, one significant change since 1913 is that in 1914 Russell believes that physical objects are constructed and not (technically speaking) inferred as the causes of sense-data. It is precisely for the purpose of the construction of physical objects out of sense-data that sensibilia are introduced, namely, to ensure that our momentary sense-data persist even after there is no observer around (which, in Russell's mind, will bridge the gap that sometimes occur between the common-sense view of the world and the scientific view of the world).

In "Sense-Data in Russell's *Theory of Knowledge*", C. Wade Savage presents an explanation of what changed in Russell's theory of cognition after 1913. He begins with the premise that in the acquaintance period Russell viewed sense-data as immediate and 'absolutely accurate' data of empirical knowledge, while in the post-acquaintance period, Russell regarded the objects of sensation as not so certain or accurate pieces of knowledge.²⁹¹ Savage argues that this change in Russell's views may have come about for the reason that even before the abandonment of the acquaintance theory Russell was, in fact, divided on the issue concerning the certainty and indubitability of sensory knowledge. What Russell thought originally, Savage continues, was that sensory knowledge is *absolutely* certain and infallible. For Savage this means that sense-data were for Russell "ideal, practically unachievable limits of the actual data of sensation and perception".²⁹² However, according to Savage, we cannot be acquainted with ideal data and had Russell realized that, he would have 'lowered the bar' for sense-data. Savage seems to argue that, because Russell had the 'wrong' premise at the beginning of his theory of cognition

²⁹¹C. Wade Savage, "Sense-Data in Russell's *Theory of Knowledge*", in *Minnesota Studies in the Philosophy of Science, Volume XII Rereading Russell: Essays in Bertrand Russell's Metaphysics and Epistemology*, C. Wade Savage and C. Anthony Anderson, (Eds.), University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis, p. 139.

²⁹²Savage, p. 139. To remind the reader, in 1913 for Russell, the objects of sensation and the objects of perception are two different objects, a fact which Savage does not seem to acknowledge.

and theory of knowledge by acquaintance, he had to abandon it later. As Savage sees it, there are a few factors similar to this one that led to the abandonment of the acquaintance theory of knowledge.

Savage emphasizes the fact that in the acquaintance period Russell's use of 'sensation' and 'perception' is ambiguous.²⁹³ And since sensational and/or perceptual knowledge is foundational knowledge, ambiguity in the use of these concepts could have serious consequences not only for the theory of cognition but also for the whole theory of knowledge. Savage believes that as a result of this ambiguity, and given that in the period between 1910 and 1913 Russell claimed that all simple immediately given sense-data yield absolutely certain knowledge, there are two conclusions that can be drawn about what changed in Russell's theory of cognition after 1913.

First, Savage says, Russell's analysis of sense-data in the acquaintance period is not to be considered fully reliable. Russell considered sense-data to bring certain, indubitable and infallible knowledge, without actually defining the concepts of certainty, indubitability, and infallibility. According to Savage, 'infallible' has a few meanings: 'always true', 'true of necessity', and 'neither true nor false' (in the sense of being truth and falsehood-free like sensory knowledge)²⁹⁴. It seems to me that here Savage is distinguishing between three meanings of certain or infallible: knowledge which is incapable of being wrong because the conditions of error are ruled out; knowledge which is incapable of being wrong (because necessarily true); and knowledge which is

²⁹³ An example of the latter could be drawn from Russell's description of simple and complex objects in *Principia Mathematica*. In the first volume of *Principia Mathematica* Russell replaces 'sensation' with 'perception', and 'sense-datum' with 'perceived object'. Complex objects of perception are called 'sensible facts'. Even though the terminology of *Principia Mathematica* makes things even more confusing, we can see that Russell's description of 'perception' there actually fits the description of 'sensation' in *Theory of Knowledge*, and thus the 'perceived objects' of *Principia* are the sense-data of *Theory of Knowledge*, and 'sensible facts' stand for what Russell called in *Theory of Knowledge* 'facts of perception'.

²⁹⁴ Savage, p. 152.

incapable of being wrong because it is incapable of being either right or wrong. The first two meanings, according to Savage, are very similar to each other, and the third one is a mere triviality (that is, it means ‘infallible by default’)²⁹⁵. It seems that, according to Savage’s interpretation of ‘infallible’, the third sense of infallible could be applied only to the involuntary sensations. As Savage points out, the third sense of infallible is somewhat misleading when applied to any kind of knowledge since it does not mean infallible in the proper sense of the word.²⁹⁶ If in the case of sensation, infallible means ‘neither true nor false’, then sensational knowledge is ‘infallible by default’. Savage argues that this sense of infallible is ‘uninteresting’ (which I assume, means, trivial). The ‘interesting’ sense of the concept infallible ties it to the concept of truth, and therefore, to the concepts of proposition, inference, and judgment. As Russell himself points out in *The Problems of Philosophy*, only judgments can be considered truly infallible. I assume that what Savage refers to is Russell’s statement in *The Problems of Philosophy* that sense-data are neither true nor false, since truth and falsehood applies to

²⁹⁵In support of Savage’s claim, Russell uses the concepts of generality and necessity in this way (see “On Scientific Method of Philosophy”, *The Collected Papers*, Vol. 8, p. 65). When something is always true, that is, when it is true in every case, this implies that it is impossible to find a counter-example, which means that it is necessarily true.

²⁹⁶This is in agreement with our conclusion from our discussion of Russell’s use of the concept of certainty. Savage is right to assume that in the early acquaintance period Russell considered knowledge that comes from sensation or perception to be certain knowledge. As we already explained in the first section of the present chapter, the use of the term ‘certainty’ is ambiguous on two grounds. On the one hand, certainty of knowledge requires propositions with the property ‘true’ or ‘false’, and as we know, sensory knowledge is neither true nor false, it simply is. On the other hand, Russell used ‘certainty of knowledge’ to mean both ‘certainty of knowledge’ proper, and ‘self-evidence’. In the case of sensory knowledge, what he actually meant is that sensory knowledge is absolutely self-evident, not absolutely certain (since only propositional knowledge has the characteristic of being certain or uncertain, and as Russell argues, this type of knowledge can be always false, there is no absolutely certain knowledge). In *The Problems of Philosophy* Russell writes, “In all cases where we know by acquaintance a complex fact consisting of certain terms in a certain relation, we say that the truth that these terms are so related has the first or absolute kind of self-evidence, and in these cases the judgment that the terms are so related *must* be true. Thus this sort of self-evidence is an absolute guarantee of truth.” (*Ibid.*, p. 137). So, we concluded that when Russell talks about certainty of knowledge by acquaintance, he uses the term rather loosely (which includes Savage’s ‘trivial’ use of the concept of certainty and infallibility).

judgments. Thus, whatever comes from sensation, cannot be considered true or false, and therefore, infallible or fallible, in the proper sense of these concepts.²⁹⁷

Savage takes an example of a simple statement such as “A brown color is being seen”, and analyzes it according to the psychological and epistemological indubitability and certainty of the statement. If the subject senses something which provides absolutely certain knowledge, then in this case doubt is psychologically impossible and epistemologically inappropriate, that is, we cannot even imagine doubting such knowledge.²⁹⁸ But, as Savage asks, is it really the case that when we sense something, it is psychologically and epistemologically beyond doubt? Even if we consider only the psychological point of view, we will realize that we falter and are being deceived by our senses all the time. We also have to take into consideration, Savage continues, that the concept of certainty has a strong and a weak sense. In the strong sense of certainty of knowledge, doubt is impossible; in its weak sense – the corresponding belief of the knowing subject is maximal, but doubt is still possible. As far as Russell’s position on ‘certainty of knowledge’ goes, we can only guess that for perceptual knowledge he uses certainty in the strong sense, since he never made the connection between psychological and epistemological certainty, on the one hand, and between strong and weak senses of the concept, on the other. From this, Savage concludes that Russell’s analysis of sense-data in the acquaintance period is not reliable and therefore, became gradually unstable with time until Russell realized that it was indefensible, and replaced it with another theory of sensation and perception.

²⁹⁷“The actual sense-data are neither true nor false. A particular patch of color that I see, for example, simply exists; it is not the sort of thing that is true or false. ... But the patch itself, like everything else in the world of sense, is of a radically different from the things that are true or false, and therefore, cannot properly be said to be *true*. Thus whatever self-evident truths may be obtained from our senses must be different kind from the sense-data from which they are obtained.” (*The Problems of Philosophy*, p. 114).

²⁹⁸Savage, p. 152.

The way I see it, after a thorough analysis of the concepts of ‘certain’, ‘infallible’, and ‘indubitable’ knowledge, Savage seems to suggest that we cannot use any of them, in the proper sense of the word, as far as sensory knowledge goes. I fully appreciate Savage’s efforts to clarify the meaning of the concepts of certainty, and indubitability with regard to sensation. However, I think that, given the fact that he does not want to deal with the ‘uninteresting sense’ of infallible, it seems to me that he is making too strong of a suggestion that Russell abandoned the theory of sensation that he had in the early acquaintance period (before 1914) because of a definitional imprecision concerning the concepts of certainty, indubitability, and infallibility.²⁹⁹ The fact that there were changes in Russell’s understanding of what perceptual knowledge consists of, does not change the fact that Russell argued consistently throughout the acquaintance period that sensory or perceptual knowledge is, in fact, certain knowledge.

I think that, as we already discussed at the beginning of the present chapter, Savage is right to point to the fact that the way Russell uses ‘knowledge’ and ‘certainty of knowledge’ in the acquaintance period, leads to an ambiguous interpretation of both terms. Here is what Russell says at the end of *Theory of Knowledge*, “It is a commonplace that all knowledge is in some degree liable to error, and that we are fallible even in our most dogmatic moments.”³⁰⁰ If this is true, then, it cannot be that sensory knowledge, or any knowledge by acquaintance, for that matter, is error-free knowledge (as Russell argued). However, as we already clarified, Savage is wrong to assume that Russell ever thought that sensory knowledge has the property of being absolutely certain, since certainty belongs to propositional knowledge, which knowledge by acquaintance is clearly not (at least not by design). Sensory knowledge is the most certain

²⁹⁹Russell admitted that in philosophy we often encounter definitional problems because many of the concepts that philosophers use are borrowed from common language, and therefore, bear imprecision and vagueness typical for natural languages (see Russell’s discussion of the concept of ‘experience’ in *Theory of Knowledge*, Chapters I and III). But that did not stop him from using those concepts, clarifying their meaning wherever necessary.

³⁰⁰*Theory of Knowledge*, p. 167.

knowledge there is, and since it is not propositional knowledge, it must be error-free (since errors appear only where there is inference). In other words, I think it is fair to say that Russell's use of 'knowledge' and 'certainty' is sometimes ambiguous, especially when knowledge by acquaintance is concerned (because of conflation of the 'technical' and common-sense use of the words) but it seems unfair to argue that Russell was *actually* confused about which cognitive objects belong to certain knowledge and why, especially since, as we showed, Russell argued consistently throughout the acquaintance period, that sensation and perception are cognitive.

Savage's second conclusion about the changes in Russell's theory of cognition after 1913 is that after 1913 Russell replaced the 'ideal' sense-data that he had with 'real' sense-data that are dependent upon certain subjective conditions for their existence and therefore, not absolutely certain. According to Savage, in *The Problems of Philosophy* Russell described sense-data as some sort of pure, 'ideal' data, which, however, could not be achieved in practice. And since Russell built his theory of cognition in order to describe how we acquire knowledge *in practice*, he eventually abandoned the theory in which sense-data appear to be ideal and not real building blocks of knowledge. The real data that the subject receives through the senses have degrees of certainty, and as Russell remarks in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, they depend upon things like light and the position of the subject's body in space, which makes them subjective and therefore not entirely reliable, that is, not absolutely certain. Therefore, Savage argues, the sense-data that Russell describes in 1914 fail to rise up to what Savage takes to be unreasonable criteria of certainty, indubitability and infallibility that were set up for sensory knowledge in *The Problems of Philosophy*. The discrepancy between the initial criterion of certainty of sensory knowledge and 'real' certainty (I can only assume that Savage means by 'real' certainty the self-evidence of sensory knowledge) eventually led Russell to abandon the theory of sensation and perception that he had in the acquaintance theory.

As I understand it, what Savage suggests happened to Russell's theory of

sensation/perception in 1914 was that Russell could not find a proof that sensory and perceptual knowledge is as certain and infallible as he thought it to be earlier in the period. In his discussion, Savage emphasizes the problems that Russell encountered with the objects of sensation. Sense-data proved to be less objective and mind-independent than Russell wanted them to be at the beginning. I think that any hesitation that Russell might have had about the theory of perception in the stipulated period is not a hesitation about the objects of sensation and the role they play in theory of cognition. I do not think that it could be claimed that in 1914 Russell thought that sense-data are mind-dependent. I think that what has made Savage think that Russell regarded sense-data as mind-dependent and subjective is the statements in *Our Knowledge of the External World* that sense-data are momentary and thus, present us with only a fragmentary picture of the world which needs to be 'supplemented' by sensibilia (which do not depend upon the cognitive subject in any way, since they are unsensed). However, as pointed out earlier, with regard to O'Connor's analysis, this is a misinterpretation of Russell's position. I do not think that Russell ever had illusions about the physical nature of sense-data. Just because sense-data are objects of sensation and in this sense require the existence of a subject (unlike sensibilia, some of which are unsensed), does not mean that they are mind-dependent or subjective. Even in 1914 Russell continued to believe that sense-data are physical and not mental entities. In this sense, the addition of sensibilia does not change anything in the nature of sense-data. Whatever the issues Russell had with the distinction between sensation and perception, and their respective objects, this does not change the fact that even in 1914 sensation and perception continue to be the bedrock of knowledge of the external world. In other words, I do not think that the epistemological function of sense-data, or facts of perception, changed in Russell's theory of cognition from the acquaintance period, as Savage suggests.

Let us summarize, then, the conclusions that we have reached so far about the theory of cognition under the acquaintance theory of knowledge. The main problem, as I see it, with the

theory of cognition in the acquaintance period is that it is difficult to distinguish between the main experiential cognitive faculties of sensation, perception, memory and imagination. First, throughout the acquaintance period there has been an ambiguity in the way Russell used and understood 'sensation' and 'perception'. As we saw earlier, from 1910 until 1912 Russell used sensation and perception interchangeably. In 1913 he tried to distinguish between sensation and perception, only to go back to a partially interchangeable use of both concepts in 1914 (he talks about sensation and sense-perception which he sometimes uses interchangeably in *Our Knowledge of the External World*). What is more, after 1913 we notice a tendency in Russell to regard perception, and not sensation, as the cognitive faculty through which we acquire our most certain knowledge. This development culminates in the neutral monist period when Russell admits that sensation does not have cognitive properties and it is perception and not sensation that is the basic cognitive faculty. What adds to the complexity of the relationship between sensation and perception is the complex relationship of perception with knowledge. There seem to be two things going on in perception – acquaintance with the facts of perception, and knowledge about the facts of perception, which are sometimes difficult to distinguish. What is more, at the end of *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell distinguishes between simple and complex perception, the former being a dual relation, while the latter is a multiple relation which, however, resembles the dual relation. This, and the case of immediate and remote memory, made us think that maybe knowledge by acquaintance is more complicated than it was initially thought.

Sensation is the faculty that provides the most certain knowledge there is. Sensation, however, is limited to the specious present and unless Russell wants to end up with Hume's skeptical solution about knowledge, he needs to show that the most certain knowledge or as he calls it, knowledge by acquaintance, goes beyond the specious present. As Russell puts it, the first extension of knowledge by acquaintance is knowledge of the past. Knowledge of the past is of

two general kinds, immediate and remote memory. The first thing that we get from Russell's analysis of faculty of memory is that memory objects are either past sense-data, in the case of immediate memory, or images of past sense-data, in the case of remote memory. Thus, as it turns out, there are two types of memory, which brings two different types of knowledge. Then, Russell has to admit that the idea that we are acquainted with something which is in the past is somewhat odd, but something that he is prepared to accept, if it complies with the acquaintance theory of knowledge. Another issue that we encountered with the analysis of Russell's theory of memory was the ambiguity of which type of memory belongs to the specious present, physiological or immediate memory. We concluded that Russell, most probably, thought that immediate memory is outside of the scope of the specious present, since its objects have already faded and become past. Yet another issue concerning Russell's theory of memory that our analysis uncovered, has to do with the distinction between imagination and memory. Imagination appears to have the property of imitating any of the cognitive faculties, and, as per Russell's own words, we have no way of deciding whether the relation between the imagined object and the imagining subject is atemporal, or simultaneous. This leads Russell to conclude that he has not found a solid criterion, or method, of distinguishing between the cognitive faculties, but that, since he is convinced that there are differences, we should simply account for these differences and see if we can find distinctions which are convincing and not incompatible with the acquaintance theory of knowledge.

I think that our analysis, so far, of Russell's theory of cognition, along with some of Russell's commentators' suggestions, has managed to address most, if not all, of the ambiguities that Russell's account of the main experiential cognitive faculties encounters in the stipulated period. As a result, we concluded that in the period covered in this chapter, Russell consistently maintained that sensation, introspection, (simple) perception, (immediate) memory, and imagination yield knowledge by acquaintance, and that these faculties (along with the faculty of

conception, understood as acquaintance with universals) yield the most certain knowledge that there is.

The next section continues to focus on the development of the theory of cognition in the last period of the acquaintance theory, from 1916 until Russell accepted neutral monism in 1919. This period is full of dramatic changes for Russell's epistemology and his metaphysics. We will trace the ones that pertain to Russell's account of the cognitive faculties.

Section Four. Theory of Cognition in the Period 1916-1918.

In this section I will continue investigating the development of Russell's theory of cognition in the later acquaintance period until the abandonment of the acquaintance theory of knowledge^{301, 302}. This section is divided into two sub-sections (the second sub-section being the summary of the conclusions from the analysis of the first section). The first sub-section follows the development of Russell's theory of cognition chronologically, in order to give an account of some of the changes in Russell's theory of cognition in the later acquaintance period. It begins with an analysis of the main text from this period, "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" written

³⁰¹The main text from the period is "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" written at the beginning of 1918. Along with a detailed analysis of the text, I will in this chapter also discuss a few other short writings from the period. First, Russell's "Manuscript Notes" from 1918 (published in Volume 8 of *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*) which consist of short texts on epistemological subjects such as sensation, introspection, memory, propositions, belief, judgment, and language. From all eight of them I will discuss "On Sensations and Ideas", "Introspection as a Source of Knowledge", and "Three Notes on Memory".

³⁰²In the introduction to the "Manuscript Notes" from 1918 John G. Slater, the editor of Volume 8 of *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell* writes: "By the time he finished "On Propositions: what they are and how they Mean" on March 4, 1919 he had completed his move to neutral monism. This paper ["On Sensations and Ideas"] was probably written in 1918. Russell used this paper in the composition of *The Analysis of Mind*. ... These notes ["Three Notes on Memory"] were used in the writing of *The Analysis of Mind*." Documentation for this claim is provided in the annotations. (*Ibid.*, p.250).

at the beginning of 1918, followed by my discussion of the selections from the “Manuscript Notes” written shortly after “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”. The theory of neutral monism was already attractive to Russell because it used the methodological principle of Occam’s razor which, for example, helped Russell dispense with the troublesome subject of cognition.³⁰³

In this section I look at how the theory of neutral monism was affecting the theory of cognition in the later acquaintance period. I will point out some emerging points of departure and points of connection between the theories of cognition under the declining acquaintance theory and under the emerging theory of neutral monism. This is crucial for explaining Russell’s full-fledged theory of cognition under the neutral monism, which he laid out in *The Analysis of Mind*. Another aspect of Russell’s theory of cognition that I will draw attention to in this section has to do with the change in terminology that starts taking shape in 1918, and the role of belief in the theory of knowledge in 1918.

In 1918 Russell openly declares that he abandons the theory of acquaintance and shows great sympathy toward the theory of neutral monism which he had criticized in 1913. His writings from the period contain a discussion of James’ theory of neutral monism which he eventually embraces, not without modifications, however. I will discuss James’ ideas schematically in the way that they are presented by Russell. The full account of the theory of neutral monism and the influence of James’ theory on Russell’s epistemological ideas will be discussed in Chapter 3.

³⁰³David Pears, for example, believes that Russell began the process of abandoning the acquaintance theory of knowledge right after he wrote *Theory of Knowledge* in 1913.

4.1. Theory of Cognition in 1918.

“The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” is a series of lectures that Russell gave at the beginning of 1918. As Robert C. Marsh notes, they are actually a record of Russell’s ideas from 1912-1914. The lectures bear signs of development in Russell’s outlook on the theory of knowledge by acquaintance which, as I remarked in the previous chapter, was already noticeable around 1914 when he wrote *Our Knowledge of the External World*. In other words, the lectures on logical atomism show signs that Russell’s epistemology was moving further away from the theory of knowledge by acquaintance, albeit without completely abandoning it. However, unlike the texts from 1919 where the transition toward the new theory of knowledge has already taken shape and there is an explicit rejection of the theory of knowledge by acquaintance, in “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” Russell still regards knowledge by acquaintance to be central for theory of knowledge, and respectively, for the theory of cognition³⁰⁴. To remind the reader once again, my intention is not to explain the transition to neutral monism, since for this I would need to explore the changes in the theory of judgment, which are rather complex and outside of the scope of the present dissertation.³⁰⁵ My goal is to trace the changes in the theory of cognition in the stipulated period. Here are some of the principles of Russell’s theory of knowledge, as laid out in “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”, which pertain to the theory of cognition in the stipulated period.

Russell begins the series of lectures with the claim that according to the doctrine of the

³⁰⁴“In order to understand a name for a particular, the only thing necessary is to be *acquainted* [italics added] with that particular. When you are acquainted with that particular, you have a full, adequate, and complete understanding of the name, and no further information is required.” (“The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”, in *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 202.)

³⁰⁵We need to remind ourselves here again that, upon one type of construal of ‘cognition’, a theory of cognition would include a theory of judgment. However, as we have shown, in the acquaintance period, Russell thought that cognition does not necessarily involve judgment, as is the case of sensation, for example, which yields immediate, presuppositionless knowledge.

logical atomism that he embraces, facts, particulars, and beliefs all belong to the objective world.³⁰⁶ Logical atoms that the world is made of are of different kinds. Some of them are particulars, which are “such things as little patches of color or sounds”³⁰⁷; other logical atoms are things like predicates and relations, and so on.³⁰⁸ For Russell, particulars have also the ‘peculiar’ property of being completely self-subsistent (which persists only as long as experience lasts). It would be a mistake, however, to think that we can describe the world toward which our knowledge is directed as containing particulars only. The world contains also facts, which are complex entities. Facts differ from particulars in that they are what makes a proposition true or false. For example, the proposition ‘Socrates is dead’ is true or false, based not on Socrates, but on the physiological occurrence of the death of Socrates which happened in Ancient Greece a long time ago. Facts, generally, belong to the ‘outer’ world that is beyond the control of our minds (with the exception of what Russell calls ‘psychological facts’). According to Russell, it is a mistake to think that we can describe the world only in terms of particular facts. So, along with

³⁰⁶Even though, as David Pears points out in his book *Bertrand Russell and the British Tradition in Philosophy*. (New York: Random House, 1967), the boundaries of the theory of logical atomism are fuzzy, for Russell it embodies first and foremost the common-sense belief that there are “many separate things” in the world, as opposed to different phases of a “single indivisible Reality” (*Logic and Knowledge*, p. 178).

³⁰⁷Physical objects are considered, just like in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, sets of sense-data, or appearances (to be precise, in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, Russell thought that physical objects are classes of sensibilia, and that they can have sense-data as their constituents; but since sense-data are a sub-set of sensibilia, then, the inference/construction of physical objects is ultimately from sense-data). Sense-data are as real as phantasms and hallucinations (the only difference being that phantasms and hallucinations do not have the same correlations with other things that sense-data do). Then, the tables and the chairs, in themselves, are not the real things, the real things are the series of the classes of particulars that make up the tables and the chairs for us. By the same token, a person is not a persisting metaphysical entity, but a collection of appearances in relation to each other. *Ibid.*, p. 274-276.

³⁰⁸*Ibid.*, p. 179. On p. 205 of “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”, Russell argues that to understand a name for a particular, one only needs to be acquainted with it; understanding predicates, however, is to “bring in the form of a proposition”. For example, to understand the predicate ‘red’ one must understand what is meant by saying that ‘This is red’.

the *particular facts*, there are also *general facts*.³⁰⁹ ‘All men are mortal’ is an example of such a general fact. Particular facts are such facts as ‘This is white’. Particular fact, Russell continues, concern particular things, particular qualities, or particular relations. There are also “completely general facts of the sort that you have in logic”, in which there is no mention of any constituent of the actual words, that is, no mention of any particular thing, or particular quality, or particular relation.³¹⁰ In “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” Russell states there is an infinite hierarchy of facts where “you have a thing and a quality, two things and a relation, three things and a relation, four things and a relation, and so on”³¹¹. The simplest fact is a fact that consists “in the possession of a quality by some particular thing. Such facts, say as, ‘This is white’”.³¹² The next simplest fact, Russell writes, is the one that contains a relation between two particulars, such as “This is to the left of that”³¹³. The next simplest fact contains a triadic relation between its particulars, such as “A gives B to C”, and so on.³¹⁴ Russell ends the lecture by stating that acquaintance is the only way that one gains a “full, adequate, and complete understanding” of a fact and its constituents.³¹⁵ To know a particular or a fact, one needs to be acquainted with it first. Perception of facts for Russell is not liable to error, that is why we cannot say that we believe in facts, since beliefs could be wrong.³¹⁶ In 1918 Russell thought that sensation and perception are

³⁰⁹*Ibid.*, p. 183.

³¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 184.

³¹¹*Ibid.*, p. 199.

³¹²*Ibid.*, p. 198.

³¹³*Ibid.*

³¹⁴*Ibid.*

³¹⁵*Ibid.*, p. 202.

³¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 222-223. If we cannot say that we believe facts, then we have to say that what we believe is propositions. As Russell admits, this is an awkward expression, because he does not believe in propositions any more. The point is, that the objects of beliefs are not on the same “level of reality” as facts are. Strictly speaking, we cannot ask, ‘What is it that you believe?’,

sources of knowledge. We will explore below whether this statement has any implications for his theory of cognition in the later acquaintance period.

As we saw, in the acquaintance period Russell works within the ontological and epistemological paradigm of a two-term relation between a subject and an object of cognition, the simplest and most direct of which he calls acquaintance. Even in the early acquaintance period, Russell is aware of an alternative metaphysical and epistemological position, called neutral monism. The theory of neutral monism says that mind and matter are not two distinct substances but are each made of one sort of (neutral) ‘stuff’. For Russell this implies an epistemological framework where the mind (subject) and the physical objects are constructed out of elements which he calls ‘events’. The distinction between mind and matter lies not in their nature, but in the causal laws that they obey.^{317, 318} In *Theory of Knowledge* Russell likes the idea that neutral monists see our knowledge as unmediated by such things as ‘images’ or ‘ideas’, etc, but he rejects the theory on the grounds that it makes everything that we experience part of our minds

since there is not a single thing that one can point to as the object of one’s belief. Thus, beliefs do not contain propositions as their constituents, but only the constituents of a proposition.

³¹⁷Russell explains this in detail in *The Analysis of Mind* [1921].

³¹⁸In “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” Russell illustrates how neutral monism works with the following example which, by his own words, bears “a little undue simplicity”. If we take any of the appearances that the chairs in the classroom presents and if all of us look at any of these chairs, they will present a different appearance to all of us (because of the different angle, etc. that we all have toward the particular chair). If we put together all the different appearances that this particular chair presents to all of us at this moment, we will get something that belongs to physics. In other words, if we take all the sense-data that belong to different people at a given moment, and arrange them, we should get a class of sense-data that describe a physical object (the chair in a given moment). If, on the other hand, we take all the appearances that the different chairs present to me at this moment, I will get something that belongs to psychology, namely, my experience at a given moment. So, what we normally call ‘seeing the chair’, according to neutral monism, is merely the existence of a certain particular, namely the particular which is the sense-datum of that chair at that moment. I and the chair are both logical fictions, both being in fact a series of classes of particulars, of which one will be that particular which we call my seeing the chair. The actual appearance that the chair is presenting to me now is a member of me and a member of the chair, I and the chair being logical fictions (pp. 278-279).

which at the time Russell thought was closer to idealism than to his own theory.³¹⁹ In “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”, however, he reintroduces neutral monism and it seems that since 1913 his attitude toward the new theory has changed.

In “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” Russell’s reintroduction of neutral monism is, specifically, in relation to his views on beliefs. According to Russell both Dewey and James share a behaviorist view (or so Russell claims) of beliefs, according to which to say that a subject of cognition believes something is to say that he or she acts/behaves in a certain fashion to achieve a certain goal. And if her act/ behavior leads to the desired result, then this is what counts as true belief. If it does not, then the subject has a false belief. Russell does not agree with the behaviorist view of belief. The main thing he disagrees with in James’s and Dewey’s position is the idea that the object of belief is considered as one *thing*. Russell argues that the object of belief is not one thing, but a complex entity that has constituents which are in relation to each other.³²⁰ What Russell likes about James’s interpretation of belief, and the theory of neutral monism, in general, however, is its widespread use of the principle of Occam’s razor.³²¹ Russell likes James’s idea of keeping the world simple. In James’s theory, facts and beliefs are of the same epistemological and ontological status, their objects are both mental and physical at the same

³¹⁹*Theory of Knowledge*, pp. 30-31. Russell argues that neutral monism is closer to idealism in its assumption that anything which is immediately present to me must be part of my mind. And, based on this assumption, neutral monists infer that the mental and the physical are composed of the same ‘stuff’. Even though Russell does not object to the neutral monist conclusion, he believes that the assumption that anything which is immediately present to me must be part of my mind, is false.

³²⁰Even though Russell remains firm on the complexity of belief, we have to note here that in *The Analysis of Mind*, when Russell has already accepted neutral monism, he argues that, even though this ‘behavioristic’ view of belief is not the position he would like to defend, it is still “suggestive of truth, and not so easily refutable as it might appear to be at first sight” (p. 245). What is more, he adds that “there is a great deal to be said in favor” of James’s understanding of belief, and that “I have some hesitation in regarding it as inadequate” (p. 249).

³²¹The principle of Occam’s razor states that one should avoid multiplying entities wherever possible. The first principle of the theory of neutral monism is that there is *one stuff* out of which the world is made. This means that thoughts are no different from things, which reduces the elements of knowledge from two (object and subject, or subject and act) to one.

time. That is, when I know, there is no medium between me and the world that I know. The reason is that neutral monists do not like the distinction between mental and material, as absolute opposites. Mental and physical entities are each made of the same “stuff”, only arranged differently. The objects of beliefs and facts are both mental (something that is cognized) and material, we just use them in different contexts.

Even though throughout the acquaintance period, Russell does not accept monism as a viable alternative to the epistemological dualism that he has been working in, he certainly cherishes the principle of Occam’s razor and the possibility of reducing, rather than multiplying, the entities that we work with in epistemology. And true to what he always believed in, Russell wanted to keep the picture of theory of knowledge as simple as possible which neutral monism promised to accomplish (even though neutral monists did not talk about direct knowledge in the sense of acquaintance, they believed that our experience of things is unmediated). Even in 1913, when he criticized neutral monism, Russell was in favor of Occam’s razor in philosophical analysis. As he puts it, “I always wish to get on in philosophy with the smallest possible apparatus, partly because it diminishes the risk of error”³²². In “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” he admits that the fewer entities we have to assume, the less the risk of error. So, it seems that in lecture four of the series on logical atomism Russell both liked and disliked the theory of neutral monism for the same reasons he did in 1913. On p. 222 of “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”, Russell writes: “... the whole theory of neutral monism is pleasing to me, but I do find so far very great difficulty in believing it.”³²³ As a comparison, in the second chapter of

³²²*Ibid.*, p. 221.

³²³*Ibid.*, p. 222. Russell states that the main ‘difficulty’ that he sees with accepting neutral monism concerns the existence of such ‘emphatic particulars’ as ‘this’ and ‘I’. Words such as ‘this’ and ‘I’ are names for these particulars in the world that are present before you at the moment of speaking. All kinds of past, present and future particulars ‘radiate’ from ‘this’, because our attention picks them out from the whole stream of other particulars that surround us. And according to Russell, neutral monists, who have dispensed with consciousness, cannot explain ‘this’. In other words, Russell sees a problem with the fact that neutral monists do not

Theory of Knowledge he stated the following:

Occam's razor, which I would regard as the supreme methodological maxim in philosophizing, prescribes James's theory as preferable to dualism...³²⁴

Neutral monists ... infer that the mental and the physical are composed of the same "stuff", and are merely different arrangements of the same elements. But if the assumption is false, both these opposing theories [neutral monism and idealism] may be false, as I believe they are.³²⁵

It seems that Russell shared the same feelings about neutral monism in *Theory of Knowledge* and in the fourth lecture of the series "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism".³²⁶ He liked the

distinguish between the particular and the experience of the particular. However, in Lecture 8, where he admits that he is becoming increasingly sympathetic to the neutral monism, he admits that the issues with 'emphatic particulars' is so subtle, that he is becoming doubtful whether he is right or not.

³²⁴*Theory of Knowledge*, p. 21.

³²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 22.

³²⁶Mafizuddin Ahmed in his book *Bertrand Russell's Neutral Monism*, summarizes five main objections that Russell launched against neutral monism between 1913-1918 (Ahmed, pp. 28-32). The first 'insuperable difficulty', as Russell describes it, with neutral monism, and more specifically with James's version of it, is that, according to neutral monists, there is nothing cognitive in the mere presence of an object to the mind. The second difficulty with neutral monism concerns the nature of belief. For Russell sensation and belief differ in regard to the nature of what is before the mind, which neutral monists do not seem to recognize. As Russell argues in "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism", beliefs and facts are on different levels of reality (the objects of belief never being as real as facts are). This creates difficulties for accounting of error in belief. If we follow neutral monism, false beliefs should be regarded as analogous to hallucinations. But hallucinations are as facts and not erroneous beliefs, and they are as real as any other fact. The third objection against neutral monism has to do with abstract facts and memory-objects. If there are no purely mental entities in the universe, as neutral monists claim, then we have to hold that $2+2=4$ exists only when somebody is thinking it, but not otherwise. Russell sees a similar problem with the account of memory objects. He thinks that neutral monists cannot account for the "essential pastness of the remembered object", since they think that the past can never be directly experienced in memory. The fourth objection deals with the distinction between my present experiences and everything else in the world. For Russell neutral monism cannot account for what unities all of my present experiences into one bundle, and distinguishes them from the rest of the world. The fifth objection has to do with such

simplicity that neutral monism offered but even in 1918 he was not quite ready yet to accept the idea that facts and beliefs are of equal ontological status.³²⁷ He remains firm that facts of perception are the building blocks of knowledge and that they are objective entities, unlike beliefs which are products of our minds and therefore, always liable to error. He cannot accept the neutral monist premise that beliefs and facts are fundamentally the same. It is obvious that in 1918 Russell still thinks in a paradigm where there is a fundamental difference between mental and material, between inside and outside the mind. On this view, perception, unlike belief, is still considered by him a cognitive act that gives us a direct access to things that are outside of our minds, that is, things that are non-mental.

In his eighth and last lecture on logical atomism, however, Russell states that “I feel more and more inclined to think that it [neutral monism] may be true”³²⁸. For Russell, James’s and Dewey’s view, namely the theory of neutral monism, “has gradually come to seem possible to be the correct one”³²⁹. This change in his views may seem abrupt but it proved to stay for the rest of Russell’s active philosophical career. My task here is not to explain what led to this change, the reasons for which, as mentioned above, are complex and are related to the theory of judgment, among other things. My task is rather to follow how the acceptance of the theory of neutral monism affected the theory of cognition.

As we noted earlier, according to neutral monism the distinction between mental and material entities is a matter of arrangement only. In other words, both mental and physical things

‘emphatic particulars’ as ‘this’ and ‘I’. According to Russell, without consciousness, whose existence neutral monism rejects, we cannot account for these emphatic particulars.

³²⁷As we already pointed out in the previous footnote, for Russell neutral monists refuse to accept that the objects of perception, facts, are real entities (that constitute the world), while the objects of belief do not have this reality. That is why neutral monists cannot explain successfully the nature of error (or false belief).

³²⁸“The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”, p. 279.

³²⁹*The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, vol. 8, p. 252.

are each made of the same stuff, but when the thing is related in a certain context to other mental or psychological things, it belongs to psychology, and when the thing is related to in a certain other context with other material or physical things, it belongs to physics.

If one takes sense-data and arranges together all those sense-data that appear to different people at a given moment and are such as we should ordinarily say are appearances of the same physical object, then that class of sense-data will give you something that belongs to physics, namely the chair at this moment. On the other hand, if instead of taking all the appearances that the chair presents to all of us at this moment, I take all appearances that the different chairs in this room present to me at this moment, I get quite another group of particulars. All the different appearances that different chairs present to me now will give you something belonging to psychology, because that will give you my experiences at the present moment.³³⁰

In other words, the physical object is a set of sense-data, which are physical; my experience is the set of all sense-data that I am having, which is psychological. Since my sense-data include a part of the set of things which is the physical object, there is an identity between the object of perception, and the physical object. And this is what guarantees us that our knowledge of the physical object is unmediated. So, both the physical object and my experience of it are constructs of neutral elements. We should not think, Russell continues, that when the subject sees, or senses the object, a special connection, such as acquaintance, takes place between them. My seeing of the chair is “merely the existence of a certain particular”.³³¹ In other words, the act of sensation that was the foundation of Russell’s theory of cognition based on the acquaintance theory of knowledge, would not play a role in a theory of cognition in a neutral monist epistemological

³³⁰“The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”, p. 278.

³³¹*Ibid.*, p. 279.

framework. This, of course, would have consequences for his theory of the subject of cognition, as well. If there is no act of cognition (but, perhaps, only an occurrence), such as sensation taking place, then we can (fully) dispense with the subject of cognition. According to the new epistemological position the subject of cognition would be reduced to a series of classes of particulars. So, both the subject and the object of cognition would be what he describes in “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” as ‘logical fictions’.³³² Russell describes logical fictions as series of classes of particulars.³³³ Thus, in 1918 Russell describes (even though he does not accept it yet) a viable possibility of addressing the issue that he has been having with the subject of cognition from the very beginning of the acquaintance period, namely that the subject of cognition is not a real entity. It seems that a theory of cognition under neutral monism would offer the right epistemological and methodological framework to pronounce the subject of cognition a logical fiction, and rid his theory of knowledge of the metaphysical problems that the entity of the self (the ‘I’) entailed.³³⁴

What we have discovered so far is that Russell’s growing attraction to the theory of neutral monism is bound to influence his theory of cognition. Under the theory of neutral

³³²*Ibid.*

³³³On pp. 278-279 of “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”, Russell writes, “We commonly assume that there is a phenomenon which we call seeing the chair, but what I call my seeing the chair according to neutral monism is merely the existence of a certain particular, namely the particular which is the sense-datum of that chair at that moment. And I and the chair are both logical fictions, both being in fact a series of classes of particulars of which one will be that particular which we call my seeing the chair.” For Russell logical fictions exist, and are a result of logical construction, which is a form of Occam’s razor.

³³⁴We have to keep in mind, however, that a part of this new epistemological and methodological framework that allows Russell to dispense with the entity of the subject of cognition is his logical atomism. Because the two central entities for any theory of knowledge, namely, the subject and object of cognition, are considered logical fictions according to neutral monism, Russell is convinced that neutral monism cannot be justified without the foundation of logical analysis, which analysis his theory of logical atomism provides. Without the background of the logical analysis and the understanding that the subject and the object of knowledge are logical entities, the idea that both the physical and the mental are each made of the same stuff, arranged differently, sounds merely eccentric and not very convincing from an epistemological point of view.

monism, which makes a good use of the logical principle of Occam's razor, the subject and object of cognition would be considered logical fictions, that is, they would be considered entities that are ontologically the same (reduced to the same neutral stuff), but which depend upon the epistemological context to be treated as subject or object of cognition. This would allow Russell to fully dispense with the subject of cognition as an unnecessary entity, about which he had doubts from the very beginning of the acquaintance period. Another consequence, discussed in detail in Chapter 3, for the theory of cognition after the acceptance of neutral monism, would be that the distinction between the cognitive faculties, which was an issue in the acquaintance theory of knowledge, is not an issue for the theory of cognition any more, because it is inessential in the sense that it does not contribute anything to our understanding of how the cognitive faculties work (which does not mean that we cannot distinguish between the faculties).³³⁵ Overall, the simpler picture of knowledge that neutral monism offers, is supposed to minimize the margin of error, and thus, retain or maximize the objectivity of knowledge (that is, free it from the mental or subjective elements in it, inevitably present in the acquaintance theory).

As Russell argued in *Theory of Knowledge*, epistemology has to do both with logic *and* with the description of the process of cognition (which, he believed, belongs also to the realm of psychology, in the broadest sense of the word). The theory of knowledge by acquaintance is an example of this belief – it tried to account for the process of cognition: where, how, and with what cognitive apparatus in use we acquire knowledge. The conclusion of the acquaintance theory was that the basis for all knowledge is the immediate direct knowledge of particulars and universals, which Russell called knowledge by acquaintance. In “The Philosophy of Logical

³³⁵We have to note that the distinction between the cognitive faculties in the neutral monism period seems inessential, in principle, but since Russell modified the ‘orthodox’ neutral monism, we will see that in some cases, distinction between the objects of the cognitive faculties is necessary. For example, in 1921 Russell thought that there are elements which are purely mental, and possibly physical entities (which is against the first premise of neutral monism where all objects of cognition are neutral entities). Then, it becomes important to be able to distinguish between purely mental entities, such as images, and neutral entities, such as sensations.

Atomism”, as we already noted, Russell felt that a new theory of cognition and theory of knowledge was needed. Since the theory of cognition is in the focus of the present dissertation, and since in “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” Russell does not offer a detailed account of what the new theory of cognition would be like (partly due to the fact that, even though he strongly sympathizes with the theory of neutral monism, he has not yet adopted it for reasons mentioned above), we need to explore the texts and notes that Russell wrote after the series of lectures on logical atomism in order to fill in the specifics of how we acquire knowledge from the point view of neutral monism.

In a short article entitled “On Sensation and Ideas” which is believed to be written shortly after “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” and used in the composition of *The Analysis of Mind* [1921], Russell’s opening paragraph comments on his previous and present views of cognition.³³⁶ It is clear from this article that Russell finds the question about the nature of cognition of ‘boundless importance’.³³⁷

Russell lays out two foundational principles that a theory of cognition might be built upon. The first one is James’s principle (which eventually, Russell feels compelled to adopt). The principle says that in presentations, or in everything that is before the mind at the time of acquiring knowledge, “there is nothing specifically mental except certain causal relations between entities which, with other causal relations, occur equally in physics”³³⁸. In other words,

³³⁶John G. Slater, the editor of Volume 8 of *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell* remarks that “Because it records Russell’s first espousal of neutral monism, the doctrine that there is one and only one primal stuff, and that mind and matter differ merely in their organization of it, it [“On Sensation and Ideas”] must have been written after he gave his lectures on “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism” (p. 250).

³³⁷“On Sensation and Ideas”, p. 252.

³³⁸*Ibid.*

what we acquire as knowledge is not mental.³³⁹ The second alternative principle is that presentations, or everything that is before the mind at the time when we acquire knowledge, involves an ultimate relation of awareness, and since this relation is mental and therefore subjective, what we acquire as knowledge is ultimately subjective. Which one of these two principles presents the true picture of knowledge? Since Russell wanted to preserve the objectivity of knowledge³⁴⁰, he argues against the latter one.³⁴¹ But let us see how he arrives at this conclusion.

Let us suppose, Russell writes, that I see a patch of red color. This patch is not psychical but physical. However, Russell argues, this does not mean that the patch of color cannot be physical, at the same time. My seeing the patch of red color does not consist of an irreducible relation of awareness (which is mental) between me and the object of my awareness, as he himself believed earlier in the period. In other words, the act of awareness/sensation/acquaintance is not an irreducible entity any more. My seeing the patch of red color, Russell continues, is identical with the patch itself. The patch of red color itself is not a case of knowledge, as he thought earlier, but a natural event like any other natural event (rain, for

³³⁹In “On Sensations and Ideas” Russell argues that he does not see a reason to change his view that when I see a red patch, the red patch itself is physical and not psychical, while my seeing it is psychical. This idea, he thinks, is not incompatible with the principles of neutral monism. From the claim that the red patch that I perceive is physical, it does not follow that it cannot be psychical, as well. It would have followed if we assume that physical and psychical are utterly distinct and they do not overlap, which view Russell does not share any more (p. 253).

³⁴⁰As our analysis of Russell’s theory of cognition in Chapter 3 will show, even though Russell has always been after objectivity of knowledge, after embracing neutral monism, the outcome for knowledge in terms of its certainty is rather in the opposite direction (it turns out that since all knowledge is mediated, it is more vulnerable to skeptical doubt than it was in the acquaintance period).

³⁴¹We have to keep in mind that, as Russell himself indicates in *My Philosophical Development*, after he embraced neutral monism, he realized that losing the distinction between knowledge and what is known, and with this, dispensing with the notion of acquaintance, proved to be challenging for his theory of knowledge. So, in *The Analysis of Matter*, and *Human Knowledge*, he reintroduced it as ‘attention’ and ‘noticing’. Even though he was not completely satisfied with these concepts, he thought that it is important to identify some sort of a mental activity that helps turn mere experience into knowledge.

example). Russell admits that, it is clear, that there is some sort of an ‘act’ of awareness. However, common sense thinks that when we see a patch of red color, or hear a noise, for example, there are two separate things, the patch of red color or the noise, and the seeing or hearing. But according to James, and neutral monism, there is only one single event, the difference between the object and the act is in the context, that is, in the causal correlations that the event occurs in. Then, the distinction between the cognitive faculties themselves (which is based on the nature of the relation between subject and object, but which we often find in the difference between the objects of the various cognitive faculties), does not seem to contribute anything to our understanding of the cognitive faculties. The reason Russell himself gives for rejecting the second alternative principle of the theory of cognition is that the view that seeing a red patch is identical with the red patch itself offers a much simpler explanation of the process of acquiring knowledge without multiplying epistemological entities: instead of having three entities to deal with, subject, object, and act of cognition, we have to account for only one – the occurrence of the red patch. This, of course, is in line with the principle of Occam’s razor that Russell has always cherished and promoted in his writings. Russell also admits that before (in the early acquaintance period) he wanted to save the world from “the clutches of idealism” and that is why he kept the mental act of acquaintance as far away as possible from the physical object of acquaintance. Now, however, he wants to save the mental world as well from the clutches of idealism, and he is sympathetic to neutral monism because it bridges the gap between mental and physical.

From the analysis given so far it seems that by the end of 1918 Russell had (almost) embraced neutral monism (while still using the old vocabulary).³⁴² We need to clarify now how it is that, in 1918, he does not think that certain particulars, namely, the ones that come from

³⁴²We should not forget that when Russell accepted neutral monism, he made certain modifications to it, at least to James’s version of it. We will discuss these modifications in Chapter 3.

sensation, are cognitive.³⁴³ In other words, how is it the case that when I derive information about the external world from my senses, this is not knowledge? And how can we avoid the relation of awareness (or acquaintance) toward the objects that are being seen or heard when seeing and hearing means being visually and auditory aware of something?

In *My Philosophical Development* [1959], Russell explains that upon accepting neutral monism, he abandoned sense-data.³⁴⁴ (The process of abandonment of sense-data, by Russell's own words, is complete in 1921, but, as it is obvious from the textual evidence, it begins in 1918.) As a result, he did not regard sensation as cognitive any more. He does not deny that knowing something (for example, knowing that somebody is coming toward me), comes *through* sensation, but it is not the same as sensation. If sensation were cognitive, that is, if its objects were pieces of knowledge, then we would have to distinguish between a subject, an object, and an act of cognition (as Russell did earlier). The subject, however, as Russell has suspected even in 1913, and has argued in "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism", is a logical fiction. That is, we still use the term 'subject' not because observation reveals that there is such a thing, but because from the point of view of grammar and language, it is more convenient to have it. If the subject of cognition is no more, then the distinction between subject and object of cognition also disappears. Then, the act of sensation and the object of sensation become the same, which, as Russell puts it, is an "actual constituent of the world".³⁴⁵ So, seeing a patch of color and the patch of color itself are the same thing. But then, the patch of color cannot be knowledge. The reason for that is that the patch of color is a mere event, it just is and thus it cannot be a piece of knowledge, as he earlier believed it was. And that is how Russell concludes that sensation, understood as pure sensation, is not cognitive, according to the new view. Sensation may *cause*

³⁴³See the discussion of 'cognitive' and 'cognition' at the beginning of this chapter.

³⁴⁴*My Philosophical Development*, p. 101.

³⁴⁵*Ibid.*

knowledge, because it gives rise to images and memory (when the sensations have faded away), but it itself is not cognitive.³⁴⁶ (Later in the same chapter of *My Philosophical Development*, Russell admits that dispensing with sense-data created a number of problems for the theory of knowledge that he did not initially anticipate. One of the problems that he mentions is the understanding of the notion of knowledge. He also admits that the notion of acquaintance with something proved to be more valuable than he thought initially and so, he realized, in the later neutral monism period, that he needed to re-introduce acquaintance, in a way that complies with the principles of neutral monism. Russell admits that there is a sense in which there is no distinction between experiencing and knowing that you are experiencing it. For example, I am asked whether I see the yellow color on the wall in front of me. If I see it, my experience and my knowing it, seem to be indistinguishable. However, Russell argues, experiencing and knowing are different in nature, and to suppose that we always know an experience when it is happening, will lead to an infinite multiplication of events. Russell's example is that if I feel hot, then this is one event, knowing that I feel hot is another event, knowing that I know that I feel hot, is yet another event, etc., ad infinitum. To avoid this, Russell argues, we have to either accept that our present experience and our knowledge of the present experience are indistinguishable, or that we do not know our present experience. Russell concludes that he prefers to use 'know' in a sense which distinguishes it from experience and thus he is prepared to accept the thesis that we do not know our present experience, even though, as he already conceded, there is a sense in which our present experience and our knowledge of it are inseparable. So, according to this conclusion, Russell has to admit that even the most 'immediate' knowledge contains pure sensation *and*

³⁴⁶Russell's claim that sensation only *causes* knowledge, but is not itself cognitive, is somewhat confusing, especially in the light of a lack of a strict definition of 'cognitive' in his texts. As we noted at the beginning of the chapter, if cognitive meant 'that upon which knowledge is based', then sensation should be considered cognitive in both periods. I think what Russell is trying to say here is that sensation on its own, is like pure experience and it does not constitute knowledge. For something to become knowledge, we need an additional propositional element (belief).

something else. This something else is difficult to define, but Russell suggests that ‘attention’ and ‘noticing’ be regarded as the elements that may turn sensation into knowledge. In perception, for example, Russell explains, we have created a habit of noticing things. So, when we see a dog, we *know* that it is a dog, not based on our sensation of it, but based on our habit to expect the dog that we see to behave like one. Knowledge of past experiences, on the other hand, requires not only attention or noticing, but also a *belief* that what we remember truly happened.

So, the answer to the question why in 1918 Russell thought (or was beginning to consider it) that sense-data are non-cognitive elements, is that the sense-datum and the act of sensing become indistinguishable under neutral monism. Under neutral monism, knowledge happens at the level of images and beliefs. In other words, all knowledge is mediated knowledge. As we will see from the analysis of Russell’s theory of cognition in the neutral monism period, ironically, even though Russell was after objectivity in knowledge, the picture of knowledge that he presents in the neutral monism period leads to the outcome that even the most certain knowledge is less certain than knowledge by acquaintance.) Since belief seems to be playing an increasingly central role in the theory of cognition, it is necessary that we very briefly explain Russell’s understanding of the notion of belief in 1918.³⁴⁷

I think it is fair to say that even before 1918 Russell thought that the concept of belief was a complicated concept which could not be exactly defined.³⁴⁸ Beliefs have the property of being true or false. Unlike his view on belief in the earlier acquaintance period, where beliefs were not

³⁴⁷Since a thorough understanding of Russell’s theory of belief in the stipulated period would require an analysis of his theory of judgment and specifically, of the abandonment of the multiple relation theory, which is outside of the focus of this dissertation, I will go as far as outlining the changes in Russell’s understanding of ‘belief’ in 1918 which lead to the neutral monist view of belief (without wading into the issue of the origin of the change, etc.).

³⁴⁸Note what Russell says in *The Analysis of Mind*, “I believe knowing to be a very external and complicated relation, incapable of exact definition, dependent upon causal laws, and involving no more unity than there is between a signpost and the town to which it points.” (*The Analysis of Mind*, pp. 234-235).

considered dependent upon the mind, in 1918 Russell is beginning to change his mind about beliefs. In the lectures on logical atomism, Russell admits that it is easier if we assume that beliefs are propositional attitudes, in the sense that beliefs have the form of relating object-like entities to propositions, such as 'Today is Tuesday'.³⁴⁹ Russell argues that neutral monists deny the existence of beliefs in the sense that Russell uses them. According to Russell, neutral monists

³⁴⁹In "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" Russell argues that the proposition, 'I believe that today is Tuesday', or 'I believe that Socrates is mortal', has, in fact, two verbs. (It needs to be noted that this two-verb account of belief occurs only in "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism".) One of them expresses the subordinate relation, in this case, 'is' (as in 'today is Tuesday' or 'Socrates is mortal'), and the other expresses the main relation, 'believe'. Russell argues that not only the proposition, but also the fact that is expressed by the proposition, has two constituents (which Russell calls also verbs). In the course of his analysis, Russell admits that one of the points of departure with neutral monists is precisely the understanding of beliefs. For neutral monists, according to Russell, the objects of beliefs are single entities which may or may not exist. For him, this account is wrong, because it cannot account for false beliefs, or many other beliefs which do not fit in the neutral monists' description.

Regardless of what Russell thought of the neutral monists' interpretation of beliefs, he admits that there is a "great deal that is odd about belief from a logical point of view" (*Ibid.*, p. 226). The oddity that Russell refers to here is that in any belief, say, 'that today is Tuesday' or 'that Socrates is mortal', we encounter different logical forms, but this does not stop us from believing both propositions. So, belief, according to Russell's 1918 view, is not a single entity, and we do not believe facts or propositions (understood as a single entity), but the constituents of a proposition (even though in 1918 Russell does not believe that there are such ontological entities as propositions, he still uses the term 'proposition' for ease). Every belief has at least two relations (verbs) – 'believe' which is always the primary relation, and any number of subordinate relations. The subordinate verb cannot be put on the same level with the rest of the terms in the proposition (as Russell did in 1913 when he developed his multiple-relation theory of judgment which was criticized by Wittgenstein and led to its abandonment). The example that Russell analyzes in "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" is "Othello believes that Desdemona loves Cassio." This is an example of a false belief. There are two relations here, 'believes' and 'loves', the former being the primary relation, while the latter – the subordinate. It seems that the subordinate relation is a relating relation in the sense that it relates two terms, Desdemona and Cassio. In reality, however, as we know, Othello falsely believes that Desdemona loves Cassio, which means that there is no such a thing as 'the love between Desdemona and Cassio' (the love between Desdemona and Cassio is a non-existent). Then, it turns out that in false beliefs the subordinate relation is not a relating relation (but has to remain a universal relation, while at the same time somehow relating the terms of the proposition). Russell thought that it is precisely the dealing with non-existents that makes the account of belief, and accounting for its logical form, so challenging (which leads Russell to conclude, as indicated earlier, that the logical form of belief depends on the proposition believed). So, in the proposition "Othello believes that Desdemona loves Cassio", 'believes' is the main verb, also called 'propositional' verb. This verb always expresses a universal relation. 'Loves', however, should not be treated as another term, along with 'Desdemona' and 'Cassio' (which, as indicated earlier, Russell believed prior to Wittgenstein's criticism, and which, according to Russell's own evaluation of the theory in 1918, was "unduly simple", *Ibid.*, p. 226.).

believe that beliefs consist in our behavior towards a fact. For Russell this is an inadequate account of belief.³⁵⁰ Russell insists that we describe beliefs as relations toward facts.³⁵¹ By 1921 Russell was convinced that beliefs are purely ‘mental’ entities, which are composed of images, or words, and that they are the elements needed in order for something to become cognitive.³⁵²

Before I proceed toward summing up Russell’s views from 1918, I would like to introduce two other short texts from the same “Manuscript Notes” from 1918 that will further enrich our understanding of what is happening in Russell’s theory of cognition in the stipulated period.

The third text from the “Manuscript Notes” is entitled “Introspection as a Source of Knowledge”, which is believed to be written at the same time as “On Sensations and Ideas”. In this paper Russell continues his description of the possible types of knowledge and the way we acquire it. He states, “We now recognize no knowledge except belief.”³⁵³ This seems to depart from what Russell believed in the acquaintance period, prior to “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”. However, apparently by the end of 1918 Russell was inclined to accept that knowledge based upon beliefs is reliable enough. This is in line with his thoughts in “On Sensations and Ideas” where he argued that judgments (beliefs) are cases of knowledge (unlike sensations, for example). He then moves on to comment on introspection. The need to analyze introspection comes from Russell’s wish to fight the common view that introspection should not be considered a reliable source of knowledge, because it is private and its objects are purely

³⁵⁰This is what Russell believed in 1918 when his theory of cognition and theory of knowledge was still within the framework of the acquaintance theory. As we already indicated, in 1921 when Russell was a full-fledged neutral monist, this view of the nature of belief complied with his new theory of knowledge.

³⁵¹“The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”, pp. 218 - 227.

³⁵²In memory-beliefs, for example, we often tend to have images of a given past event, but if the memory becomes a habit, then the images fade away and are replaced by words.

³⁵³*The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, Vol. 8, p. 258.

mental. Russell believes that introspection deals with beliefs which are private, but that this should not be a problem since there are sensations which are either semi-private or private, too. In other words, privacy should not be an issue when analyzing and/or empirically verifying the objects of introspection. If, Russell suggests, privacy is considered the mark of introspection, then Robinson Crusoe knew his island by introspection before Friday appeared. And in fact, "all sensible objects are more or less private".³⁵⁴ Here Russell refuses to accept the view that 'behaviorists' hold, namely, that we know pain by introspection. The knowledge of my stomach-ache, Russell argues, is private but it is a sensation because it concerns my body and my body is something that I have a sensation of. So, the definition of introspection that Russell settles for here is the following: "Introspection consists of non-inferential beliefs concerning the existence of particulars connected with the beliefs in question by exclusively psychological laws".³⁵⁵ In other words, sensation obeys both psychological and physical laws, while introspection obeys only psychological laws.^{356, 357}

According to the emerging new theory of cognition, all knowledge is knowledge of particulars which particulars, however, could be physical and psychological, at the same time,

³⁵⁴*Ibid.*

³⁵⁵*Ibid.*

³⁵⁶Once he has embraced the theory of neutral monism, however, Russell discards introspection as a cognitive faculty on the account that the mental and the material are not different substances and therefore, they do not require different types of knowledge. So, the need to have introspection which accounted for mental data in the acquaintance period, disappears in the neutral monist period.

³⁵⁷It needs to be noted here that Russell does not provide an example of what is known by introspection, only what is known by sensation. (Those sensations that are semi-private Russell calls non-physical sensations. Such a non-physical sensation is the pronunciation of words where we have sensations of the words on our tongue and throat.) The lack of examples of introspective knowledge, in my opinion, makes it difficult to understand what introspection, according to the new understanding, is, and how it differs from certain sensations, such as the sensation of a stomach-ache. On the other hand, this might be interpreted as a sign of the fact that Russell already thought that introspection is dispensable which led to its abandonment shortly after this text was written.

depending on the context in which they are used.³⁵⁸ It seems, then, that since “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”, Russell still talks about immediate knowledge, but he is beginning to consider beliefs, inferential and non-inferential, more and more, as sources of reliable knowledge. (This, of course, does not mean that beliefs are as reliable pieces of knowledge as sense-data were in the acquaintance period, but since sense-data are slowly falling off Russell’s epistemological map, then beliefs become the next to most reliable pieces of knowledge.)

Another thing that deserves attention here is that in “Introspection as a Source of Knowledge” Russell not only defines introspection as a non-inferential belief, but he also describes sensation as a particular that obeys both physical and psychological laws.³⁵⁹ Later in the “Manuscript Notes” Russell states that sensations consist of images – visual, auditory, or whatever else. Even though Russell does not specify the connection between sensation-images and facts of perception, the general feeling that one might get from the “Manuscript Notes” is that sensation-images are very similar in structure to facts of perception. In other words, it seems that sensation is still important for Russell’s theory of cognition but we need to note that the definition of sensation has changed since 1913. Sensation does not lead to knowledge any more, and thus, its objects are not objects of (direct) knowledge. As we saw, Russell’s ‘hesitation’ about the nature of sensation and its objects in 1918 has consequences for Russell’s perception of the other cognitive faculties and for the whole theory of cognition in the period after he abandons the acquaintance theory of knowledge, which consequences will be further explored in Chapter 3.

³⁵⁸Russell admits that some particulars could obey only physical, or only psychological laws. We will see from the discussion in Chapter 3 that the fact that certain particulars can obey only physical laws, creates issues for Russell’s theory of cognition in the neutral monism period, since it seems that it goes against the principles of the theory of neutral monism. We will see how Russell gets around this problem.

³⁵⁹By ‘sensation’ here Russell means ‘the object of sensation’, ‘the sense-datum’ and not ‘the act of sensation’.

The third text from “Manuscript Notes” is entitled “Three Notes on Memory”. According to the editors of *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell* this text dates from the same time as the other two texts previously discussed. Unlike the other two texts, however, “Three Notes on Memory” is a collection of notes, and consists of sketchy sentences and paragraphs that probably served more as an outline for a future text, rather than a complete paper that stands on its own. Because of its sketchiness I believe it is an invaluable source of Russell’s intentions and the direction of his thoughts regarding theory of cognition in the stipulated period.³⁶⁰

“Three Notes on Memory” begins with a list of some of the topics that Russell thought were important for the theory of cognition. The opening paragraph suggests that the topics that were important for Russell’s theory of cognition in the acquaintance period are considered equally important here, too.

Imperative to get rid of ‘Subject’. Involves abandonment of distinction between sense-data and sensation. Involves different theory of imagination and memory. Tends to make the actual object in memory (e.g.) more remote from present mental occurrence than on old theory. *Memory* is a good problem to concentrate on.³⁶¹

This passage shows us that for Russell memory was still an important subject in theory of cognition. Indeed he says that a new theory of the faculty of memory is imperative. The importance of memory for the acquaintance theory of knowledge comes from the fact that memory is a direct knowledge of something that has ceased to exist. The feeling that we get from these notes is that the importance of memory for the theory of cognition has not changed from the

³⁶⁰What I mean is that the fact that these notes were not polished I regard as a sign of their author’s true interest in the topics discussed in them. It seems to me that Russell would have written notes about things that truly interested him, or bothered him, as I think, is the case with the theory of memory which has been occupying his attention since the beginning of the acquaintance period.

³⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 261.

time when Russell wrote *Theory of Knowledge*. Later in the text Russell singles out a few propositions that mark the focal points of the description of the faculty of memory: 1) there is, beyond doubt, knowledge of the past; 2) images are part of knowledge of the past, but do not fully constitute it because they are present and the past is not; 3) we need to make a clear distinction between the process of cognition and its objects in the case of memory for the same reason stated in 2); 4) ‘feeling of recognition’ or ‘feeling of familiarity’ must be accounted for when it comes to knowledge of the past because knowledge of the past is impossible without recognizing that something has happened earlier and that it is familiar to us³⁶²; 5) we need to clarify the question whether there is a type of memory that is infallible in the way perception is; 6) definitions of immediate and remote memory need to be worked out.

It seems that in our analysis of memory, considering the six conditions laid out here, we can formulate two main questions that need to be considered: 1) what is the nature of the present mental occurrence in remembering?, and 2) what is the relation to the past object remembered? Russell says that psychology is concerned with the first question, while epistemology concentrates on the second question. Since it seems that here Russell is concerned more with epistemology than with what he thinks of as ‘psychology’, then, the main question for him regarding memory is: how are the past objects that we remember related to our present objects of cognition? To answer it, we first have to look at the main premises that Russell laid out earlier: 1) the objects of memory are in the past, and not just in the moment after the sensation has ceased to exist; 2) unlike in the acquaintance period, in 1918 Russell states that the objects of memory are images, that is, some sort of replicas of past data, and not past sense-data themselves; (I think he means that when we recall something, we call to our mind images); 3) it

³⁶²In “Three Notes on Memory” Russell uses the terms ‘feeling of familiarity’ and ‘feeling of recognition’ interchangeably, while in *The Analysis of Mind* [1921] he separates them, and calls the ‘feeling of familiarity’ a ‘sense of familiarity’ which distinguishes it from all the other feelings.

seems, however, that in late 1918 he believes that there is something that accompanies all images of past events. My guess is that what Russell had in mind is the ‘feeling of recognition’, or the ‘feeling of familiarity’. Here is an illustration of what he means by this new concept³⁶³:

When I remember (say) my breakfast this morning, I have in mind certainly images, but also the feeling that these images have what we may call ‘meaning’, i.e., in some sense they point to the actual breakfast, and are a means of knowing it. I may be conscious that they are inadequate or redundant: I may know that there are elements that they omit and elements that they add. I can know much more about the breakfast than the images alone would seem capable of conveying.³⁶⁴

Presumably, familiarity or recognition is what distinguishes memory images from imagination images, for example. Here Russell turns to the old problem that he discussed in *Theory of Knowledge* concerning what makes memory objects any different from the objects of imagination. In the acquaintance period he tried to show that memory objects are past objects with which the subject is acquainted now (and which makes knowledge of the past as certain and reliable as sensory knowledge), while the objects of imagination seem to lack any particular temporal relation with the subject.³⁶⁵ From the brief notes in “Three Notes on Memory” quoted above it is not clear whether at this point Russell was concerned with the certainty of knowledge of the past. But it looks like he is still looking for a way to distinguish the objects of memory from the objects of imagination. To help the distinction, he adds a new element, the feeling of

³⁶³As we saw, he used ‘feeling of familiarity’ in *Theory of Knowledge* as well, but he only mentions it there, without elaborating on it.

³⁶⁴*Ibid.*

³⁶⁵We should recall that, even though, in *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell stated that this is probably true, we have no means of deciding (meaning, that there is nothing in the relation of imagining that can help us decide) whether the objects of imagination are atemporal, or simultaneous with the cognitive subject.

recognition, or the feeling of familiarity, which supposedly shows what the *meaning* of the objects of memory is.³⁶⁶ For Russell memory images mean something, that is, they ‘point to something else’ other than themselves (they are present images but images of something, and that something does not exist in the present moment)³⁶⁷. In other words, memory images are accompanied by a judgment, a belief that there once was a past object resembling the present image.³⁶⁸ In imagination, however, there are no such judgments, or beliefs present; imagination images do not point to anything outside of themselves. Therefore, if we use Russell’s description of the meaning of images, imagination images do not mean anything, since we cannot become familiar with made-up things. If we take the conclusion that imagination images literally do not mean anything, then it contradicts what Russell had said earlier and would say later about the faculty of imagination. To say that imagination images do not mean anything hardly does any justice to the role that the faculty of imagination plays for the theory of cognition, a role that

³⁶⁶Even though Russell mentions the feeling of familiarity as early as *Theory of Knowledge*, it is not until *The Analysis of Mind* that Russell stresses its importance for the faculty of memory and for the theory of cognition.

³⁶⁷*Ibid.*, p. 262.

³⁶⁸It is not clear whether at this point Russell distinguished between ‘belief’ and ‘feeling of recognition’. If he did, then we might have a case of memory where we have the image and the feeling of recognition, without the belief, or the judgment. From the way that he uses these terms in *The Analysis of Mind*, it is not entirely clear whether he distinguishes between feeling and belief. In *The Analysis of Mind*, he argues that there is the mere feeling of familiarity or pastness, and then there is the recognition (which is a belief), which leads to knowledge that something is a true memory of a past event (*Ibid.*, pp. 169-170). From this point of view, we could conclude that Russell meant to separate the feeling of familiarity and recognition (which is a belief). However, in *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell also talks about ‘belief feelings’ which accompany memory and distinguish it from mere imagination of the past (*Ibid.*, p. 176). There he calls recognition a ‘feeling of recognition’, and insists that beliefs are some sort of ‘positive feelings’ that accompany our images (and which have a special relation with them). In 1918, however, it is not clear whether Russell thought that there are memory images which are not accompanied by beliefs. For example, it is not clear how exactly this feeling of recognition or familiarity makes the memory images any different from the imagination images. If, as Russell himself admits on more than one occasion, images are fallible, feelings are even more fallible. How, then am I going to be convinced that what I remember is indeed what happened some time ago? The search for an answer to this question will continue in the next chapter. For now, however, we might satisfy ourselves with saying that true memory is accompanied by a belief-feeling, and that is what, supposedly, distinguishes memory from imagination.

Russell has recognized in the past and continues to recognize in *The Analysis of Mind*. I think that we should read the aforementioned statement that memory-images point to something outside of themselves, while imagination-images do not in the sense that imagination-images, unlike memory-images, are not always images *of* something (that exists or has existed).

Whether Russell will find a distinction between memory and imagination (even though, to repeat, the distinction becomes somewhat inessential in the neutral monism period for reasons explained earlier), will be explored further in Chapter 3. For now, all that we need to notice is that, as it appears, in 1918 Russell was beginning to believe (in fact, he thought it was imperative to go in this direction) that memory contains images and feelings of familiarity or recognition (or belief-feeling) which is what makes it cognitive. And this view is different from Russell's view in the acquaintance period where (immediate) memory did not contain images or beliefs, but on the contrary, was considered to yield, just like sensation, direct knowledge (of the past).

4.2. Concluding Remarks on Russell's Theory of Cognition in 1916-1918.

It is time to sum up the results of our analysis of Russell's theory of cognition in the period 1916-1918. Even though Russell's sympathy toward James's neutral monism was growing, at the beginning of "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" he thought that the foundation of knowledge consists of (apart from predicates) particulars which are related to each other and have a temporal duration, which makes them objects of direct cognitive acquaintance. (This reminds us of Russell's old concept of sensation.) Another aspect of Russell's new theory of cognition is that the faculty of memory still plays a central role in the definition of cognition. The description of memory requires a distinction between memory and imagination, and memory and sensation, in whatever form the latter appears in the analysis of cognition.

Then, based on the textual evidence, in late 1918 Russell gradually started believing that the theory of knowledge was not based on the subject-act-object relation any more, which means that the old theory of knowledge, based on the notion of knowledge by acquaintance, was being replaced by a different one which did not recognize the subject-object-act structure, and with this, the idea of direct, unmediated knowledge (the way that it existed in the acquaintance period). Instead, the object of sensation and the act of sensation were considered identical, as an event which is only construed differently, depending on the context. All three parts of cognition, subject, object and act, are actually the same entity, only causally related differently. These causal relations or correlations refer the cognitive event either to the subject matter of psychology, or to that of physics. As a result of the ‘collapse’³⁶⁹ of subject, object, and act, sensation is non-cognitive. Knowledge now seems to be achieved at the level of belief.

In late 1918, in “Three Notes on Memory”, we observed that Russell’s discussion of memory follows, in part, at least, *Theory of Knowledge*. It is true that Russell’s analysis of memory follows the same direction as in 1913. He focuses on the process of cognition (sensation, memory and imagination) and compares sensation with memory and imagination³⁷⁰. He even talks about immediate and remote memory. Toward the end of the notes, Russell wrote: “In sensation, the object merely exists. In perception, what is sensed leads to a judgment that correlated objects exist now – e.g., when from visual data tactile qualities are inferred.”³⁷¹ We should not forget, however, that in “Three Notes on Memory” Russell gave us an image-based account of memory which is different from what he tried to establish about memory in the

³⁶⁹What I mean by that is that certain entities are not considered part of the epistemological analysis any more.

³⁷⁰Not only does Russell talk about objects of memory and sensation, he also talks about the distinction between the faculties of sensation and perception, which distinction he was trying to establish in the acquaintance period.

³⁷¹*Ibid.*

acquaintance period, and which becomes central in the neutral monism period.

In the first sub-section of the present section we concluded that Russell's view of the main experiential cognitive faculties and their objects is gradually changing from what he had in the acquaintance period. The first noticeable change in Russell's theory of cognition around 1918 is that sensation is non-cognitive. (The place of sensation in the theory of cognition has been taken by perception of facts. Facts, unlike sense-data, are complex entities and thus, are liable to interpretation and error.) Even though in 1918 Russell is only describing the theory of neutral monism, without embracing it, he states that neutral monism is becoming very attractive because it offers a simpler picture of the world, and of knowledge of the world. According to neutral monism, both mental and material entities are each made of the same 'stuff'. This shows that the acts of cognition which were considered mental in the acquaintance period, and the objects of cognition which were considered physical entities, are considered under neutral monism essentially the same thing. And this picture of the world provides an opportunity to dispense with the 'subject' of cognition, which allows Russell to dispense with the whole subject-act-object structure of knowledge that he held so far.

Even though in 1918 sensation is considered non-cognitive, memory continues to be central for Russell's theory of cognition. The main reason for that is that memory meets the expectations of Russell's new theory of cognition. On the one hand, it consists of images and because images are representations of something, they can be true or false, which is the requirement for being cognitive. On the other hand, true memory is accompanied by a belief which is also what makes it cognitive, as opposed to mere experience (as sensation is). And it seems that in 1921 Russell was convinced that, with belief and the feeling of familiarity accompanying memories, he had found a way to distinguish between memory and imagination. (As we already noted, and as will be explored in more detail in Chapter 3, Russell's account of the feeling of familiarity and belief which accompany memory-images suffers from certain

ambiguities which need to be addressed before we can decide whether he is successful in this distinction). Imagination-images are not accompanied by a belief of the past, or a feeling of familiarity. The more familiar we are with a certain image or presentation, the more reliable the memory of it is.

Our analysis of Russell's theory of cognition and theory of knowledge so far has established the following. The theory of cognition accounts for the main cognitive faculties and their objects – sensation, perception, memory, imagination, conception and judgment. At the core of theory of cognition are the main experiential cognitive faculties of sensation, perception, memory and imagination. As already explained in the introduction and Chapter 2, my interest lies with Russell's account of the main experiential cognitive faculties of sensation, perception, memory and imagination since I believe that it is an integral part of Russell's epistemology in the stipulated period, and has been overlooked in the scholarship. In 1918, and as we will see from the analysis in Chapter 3, even after that, these faculties still yield what we called paradigm-knowledge.

Chapter Three.

Theory of Cognition in the Neutral Monist Period (1919-1926).

This chapter deals with Russell's theory of cognition under the new theory of knowledge in the neutral monism period. Russell embraces the theory of neutral monism in 1919, after he abandons the theory of knowledge by acquaintance.³⁷² The important question that will be addressed in this chapter is how Russell saw the new theory of cognition (under neutral monism), and in what ways it built upon the theory of cognition he developed on the basis of the acquaintance theory of knowledge. By foundational knowledge in the acquaintance period, Russell meant knowledge by acquaintance, that is, direct knowledge that comes through sensation, perception, memory, imagination, introspection, and conception. In this chapter we will continue to focus our analysis on Russell's account of the cognitive faculties, since as we have established so far, it is an integral part of Russell's epistemology in both periods and should

³⁷²In this chapter I will discuss a few short texts from 1919, "Analysis of Mind", "Miscellaneous Notes", "Analysis of Knowing", and "Points on Memory", all of them published in Volume 9 of *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*. These short texts reveal the direction of some of the changes that occur in Russell's theory of knowledge, namely the ones that concern the theory of cognition after the abandonment of the acquaintance theory of knowledge. These texts are also believed to be the basis for *The Analysis of Mind* which is the main focus of this chapter. "On Propositions: What They Are and How They Mean" [1919] is another text that will be discussed in Section 1 of the present chapter, since in this text Russell announces for the first time that he has embraced neutral monism.

be a part of the analysis of Russell's epistemology, which fact has been overlooked in Russell literature. The theory of cognition, as we already saw, has undergone changes since 1910, and it is getting more complicated and it seems that Russell's interest in it is growing, as *The Analysis of Mind*, the first neutral monist book, shows. The conclusion that we reach at the end of the chapter is that even in the neutral monist period Russell still considered experiential knowledge to be foundational. What changes is that in 1921 he came to believe that experiential knowledge is not direct but always derivative. Indeed, on his new view, *all* knowledge is derivative, since all knowledge requires the mediation of images, beliefs, etc. (which does not mean, as we already discussed in Section 4 of the previous chapter, that knowledge of the external world is not *caused* by sensation). This outcome leads to the conclusion that even the most certain knowledge that we can have is more vulnerable to skeptical doubt than it was according to the acquaintance theory.³⁷³ This is a definite change of views from what he held in the acquaintance period. This outcome makes Russell's theory of cognition in the neutral monism period more vulnerable to skeptical doubt than the theory of cognition in the acquaintance period which is a price that, apparently, Russell is prepared to pay. While investigating the differences between the two periods, we will note that some of the issues that Russell's theory of cognition in the acquaintance period faced are not present in the theory of cognition under the neutral monism theory (whether this is an improvement over the older theory of cognition or not is a different question).

As a reminder, the conclusion that we reached in Chapter 2 was that the theory of

³⁷³In *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell states that perceptual knowledge which is the most certain (experiential) knowledge, is, in principle, liable to error, even though in reality, the likelihood that what we know through perception is erroneous may not be very high. We also have to note at the outset that there is a difference between total skepticism and skeptical doubt. As will be discussed later in this chapter, Russell never disputed that total skepticism is tenable from a philosophical point of view. The difference with the acquaintance period is rather that because we have direct knowledge of the world, our 'paradigm' knowledge is more certain and less susceptible to doubt than in the case when there is no such direct knowledge of the world (as Russell seems to claim in the neutral monism period).

cognition under the acquaintance theory of knowledge faced certain problems which made it challenging at times (as in the case of knowledge of the past) to explain how our ‘paradigm knowledge’ which is the most certain direct knowledge (knowledge by acquaintance), goes beyond the specious present of sensation, or how it does not cross the boundary of knowledge by description. This, in turn, raised some questions concerning the notion of knowledge by acquaintance, namely, how can we have knowledge which does not have the characteristic of truth and falsehood at all? This also cast a shadow of ambiguity, which needed an additional clarification, over Russell’s use of ‘certain’ as far as knowledge by acquaintance is concerned. At the end of 1918, when the acquaintance theory of knowledge was gradually abandoned, Russell made certain changes to the theory of cognition. Some of the changes, such as that sensation is non-cognitive, or the abandonment of introspection, resulted from the acceptance of the theory of neutral monism, where object and act of cognition are ‘collapsed’ into one neutral entity. Other changes were a result of Russell’s continuing development of his ideas about memory and imagination (and the distinction between the two).³⁷⁴ From the point of view of the theory of cognition and theory of knowledge, the theory of neutral monism proved to be attractive because it made the picture of knowledge of the world simpler by abolishing the distinction that is crucial to the model of knowledge by acquaintance – the distinction between act of cognition (which is mental), subject of cognition, and object of cognition (which is either physical or mental). What is more, the theory of neutral monism allowed Russell to dispense completely with the subject of cognition, about which Russell always had hesitations, dating as early as 1912. This does not mean, however, that the theory of cognition under the neutral monism did not face challenges. As we already mentioned, even though Russell was after objectivity and reliability of knowledge, it turns out that in the new theory, knowledge is more vulnerable to skeptical doubt than it was

³⁷⁴See the discussion of memory in 1913 and also in 1918 (“Three Notes on Memory”).

before. Another issue that was proving to be challenging in explaining knowledge was the fact that the theory of neutral monism did not distinguish between knowing and what is known.³⁷⁵

Before we begin the investigation of the interactions of the main experiential cognitive faculties and the new challenges that they pose for Russell's theory of knowledge, what I wish to emphasize is that, just like the acquaintance theory, Russell's new theory of empirical knowledge remains based on an account of the cognitive faculties of sensation, perception, memory, and imagination, which are considered dependent upon each other in producing our 'integral experience' of the world.

My discussion proceeds in four steps. In Section 1 I give a historical background to Russell's new theory of cognition, and map out the premises of his version of neutral monism. In Section 2 I explore Russell's theory of cognition in the early neutral monism period of 1919. The main text in this period is "On Propositions" in which Russell lays out the foundations of the new theory of cognition. In this section I also discuss briefly Russell's account of propositions. In Section 3 I explore the details of Russell's theory of cognition as presented in *The Analysis of Mind* [1921], as well as smaller texts written in the period 1922-1926, that is, before the next major neutral monist work, *The Analysis of Matter*, in which Russell modified his theory of cognition. I argue in this section that *The Analysis of Mind* presents a continuation of Russell's epistemological project from 1910, inasmuch as it attempts to explain how cognition works and how (relative) certainty is possible for knowledge gained through experience. I also argue that Russell's version of the theory of neutral monism incorporates important features of his previous

³⁷⁵As we will see from the analysis of *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell thought that neutral monists are only *partially* right in considering both mind and matter to be composed of neutral stuff, which taken in isolation, is neither mental nor material. He admits that this applies to sensations, but not to images. So, for Russell there are entities which are purely mental (images) or purely physical (entities that are subject only to physical laws, such as unperceived particulars). This is one of the reasons why Mafizuddin Ahmed calls Russell's neutral monism at the time of *The Analysis of Mind*, the stage of 'partial neutralism', where Russell has not accepted all the principles of the orthodox neutral monism. (M. Ahmed, *Bertrand Russell's Neutral Monism*, p. 36).

theory of cognition. Finally, in Section 4, I summarize my analysis of Russell's theory of cognition in the period 1919-1926, and compare it to the theory of cognition in the acquaintance period. Despite the challenges that embracing neutral monism presented for Russell's new theory of cognition, the theory of neutral monism did provide a simpler picture of the world, which is why Russell valued it so highly.

Section One. The Theory of Neutral Monism.

Since neutral monism is a complex theory that has ontological, epistemological, and even ethical aspects to it, I will provide only a very general overview of the theory, together with a brief account of William James's views about knowledge and cognition as expressed in the posthumously published *Essays on Radical Empiricism* [1912] which contains essays that are considered his mature neutral monist work. As Russell admits in "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism", his views of cognition were strongly influenced by William James's ideas of cognition. The acquaintance theory of knowledge was dualistic, in the sense that the subject and the object of cognition were regarded as intrinsically different entities. After Russell abandoned the principles of knowledge by acquaintance, he dispensed completely with the subject, and began to view the act of cognition which he thought earlier to be mental, and the object of cognition, which he thought was either physical or mental, as entities that do not differ in substance.³⁷⁶ Russell was always interested in James's theory of neutral monism, as well as his

³⁷⁶We have to note that in *The Analysis of Mind*, unlike in the earlier neutral monism texts, Russell develops his full-fledged theory of belief, and clarifies certain points that he did not elaborate on in 1919. There Russell argues that the objections against distinguishing between the act of cognition (act of presentation), and the object of cognition, are not valid against the act of belief, because believing is "an actual experienced feeling, not something postulated like the act [of presentation]" (*Ibid.*, p. 233). The issue will be discussed in more detail in Section 3 of the present chapter but we need to keep in mind that in the neutral monist period Russell saw belief

theory of psychology, and out of all neutral monists that he was familiar with (Mach, Perry, et al.), Russell felt that James's ideas were the closest to what he thought neutral monism was all about. I agree with Robert Tully that Russell himself, true to his approach toward any theory, treated neutral monism as a hypothesis that can help in explaining the nature of (especially experiential) knowledge³⁷⁷.

Neutral monism is a metaphysical and epistemological theory of the relation between mind and matter, the physical and the psychological. Neutral monism holds that mind and matter are made of the same 'neutral stuff' which is more primitive than mind or matter taken separately. This neutral, primitive stuff, however, should not be regarded as a third entity that has special properties that differentiate it from mind and matter. To use Russell's simile, neutral monism is like organizing entities in columns and rows. The same neutral thing can appear in two different ways, horizontally and vertically. Being a part of a column and a row requires that the entity enters into two different types of relations. Mind and matter, therefore, are not made of different stuff, they are the same stuff, only organized differently.

The foundational principle of neutral monism that "the elements of the world are of the same fundamental type"³⁷⁸, contradicts the mind-body dualism of Russell's acquaintance theory of knowledge. As far as the account of knowledge goes, neutral monism implies that the object, and the subject of cognition are different only depending on how the given theory incorporates them within its own conceptual apparatus and goals. As James puts it, experience (or knowledge) has no 'inner duplicity' of being separated into a subject and an object. There is only 'pure experience', which is the primal neutral stuff of the world, within which things and thoughts are

as having three elements, content (images or words), act (belief-feeling), and objective (the actual event).

³⁷⁷Tully, "Russell's Neutral Monism", *Russell*, 1988, 8, p. 220.

³⁷⁸*Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, Version 1.0, London and New York, 1998.

only points of emphasis. If we take a part of this pure experience and place it into a certain context, it plays the part of the knower, taken into another context, it plays the part of the known. What we characterize as 'mental' and 'physical' is such only because it stands in different relationship to our other experiences. That is why James denies the existence of consciousness as an entity. He believes that consciousness is a function, 'knowing', and not a special stuff. So, the concept of 'datum' used in a context of psychology refers to something that has to do with the mind. If the same concept is used in the context of physics, however, it would refer to something non-mental. For example, if we describe a red patch as a sense-datum, that means that we relate it to other entities that make up the biography of the observer. To call the same red patch a physical entity is to relate it to other entities that make up the history of the physical world. As Tully observes, the accounts that neutral monists gave of mental and material phenomena were thus dependent upon the theory that was using them. More importantly, for neutral monists both psychology and physics have a common ontological ground over which neither of them can claim an 'absolute right'³⁷⁹. In other words, the same entity, which is neither inherently physical, nor inherently psychological, can be used for different purposes and in different contexts. Take the description of a rainbow, for example. If we are to give a psychological account of one's perception of a rainbow, then we will describe the colors of the rainbow according to their vividness and their distance from where one is, possibly even according to one's present physical and emotional state. If we are to give an account of the rainbow for the purposes of physics, then the colors will be described as waves of different lengths, and not according to my perception of their vividness, and my present physical or emotional state will not play any role in my description of the phenomenon.³⁸⁰

³⁷⁹Tully, p. 336.

³⁸⁰Compare the following two descriptions of a rainbow: 1)'in a rainbow the light is first refracted as it enters the surface of the raindrop, reflected off the back of the drop, and again refracted as it leaves the drop; the overall effect is that the incoming light is reflected back over a

Unlike James, however, who, as Tully describes it, opts for a more “synoptic metaphysics” which exhibits a wider perspective of reality and knowledge, instead of analyzing in detail and venturing on arguments about the nature of pure experience and the exact mechanism of acquiring knowledge, Russell approaches the matter of experience and knowledge from the point of view of an analysis where the details are vital.³⁸¹ In *The Analysis of Mind* he reconstructs cognition by analyzing the faculties of sensation, perception, memory and imagination, along with belief. The first premise of his new theory of cognition concerns the cognitive faculties of sensation and perception. Russell agrees with James’s idea that perception (whose core is sensation) is foundational for knowledge, and he also agrees with James that perception, *alone* (that is, without the element of belief), does not yield knowledge, as it was supposed to in the acquaintance period.³⁸²

If we follow James’s idea that perception is a direct experience of the world, and combine it with Russell’s old ideas about experiential knowledge, we might be tempted to conclude that in 1921 perception provides direct knowledge, as it did according to the acquaintance theory of knowledge. However, it would be a mistake to think that for Russell perception in the neutral monist theory of knowledge gives direct knowledge. In 1921 Russell thought that anything that had to do with knowledge must contain a ‘propositional’ element (such as belief). Pure acquaintance with things, such as we encounter in sensation, is not cognitive per se. Thus,

wide range of angles, with the most intense light at an angle of 40°–42°, and 2) ‘a rainbow is one of the most spectacular light shows observed on earth.’ (By Donald Ahrens, *Meteorology Today*, West Publishing House).

³⁸¹Robert Tully, “Russell’s Neutral Monism”, in *Russell*, 1988, 8, p. 210.

³⁸²For James, the experience of the world that we have in perception is not cognitive, it is a feeling. This was precisely one of the objections against neutral monism that Russell launched in *Theory of Knowledge*, but which he later accepted after he abandoned the acquaintance theory of knowledge.

sensation is direct experience which is at the core of cognition, but it is not itself knowledge.³⁸³ In other words, whatever is given to my senses is non-cognitive. As Russell states in 1922, cognition is related to either knowledge or error.³⁸⁴ So, the theory of knowledge, Russell argues in another text from 1926, is a product of doubt.³⁸⁵ When we try to examine what we *know* at all, we are led into distinguishing between trustworthy and untrustworthy beliefs, all of which are propositional entities. Our analysis of knowledge is accompanied by the analysis of cognition, in which we eventually reach the entities that we call sensations. For this reason, I believe that it is confusing to use the term ‘direct knowledge’, as Tully does, when referring to Russell’s analysis of perception in the neutral monist period, since in 1921 Russell did not believe that any type of knowledge is direct. He believed that we have direct experience, and hence, direct contact with the world, but to ‘upgrade’ this experience to knowledge, we require a belief, that is, a propositional element, not given directly in experience.³⁸⁶ And that is why for Russell’s neutral monist theory of cognition, perceptual knowledge contains sensations (non-cognitive), and images (cognitive) and that is why we could talk about perceptual knowledge, but not of sensory knowledge.

According to neutral monism, what we experience in perception, or any other cognitive faculty for that matter, is the aforementioned neutral stuff. One of the objections against the theory of neutral monism that Russell had in *Theory of Knowledge* was that neutral monists

³⁸³In this sense, I think that what James called ‘perception’ in his *Essays on Radical Empiricism* is actually Russell’s ‘sensation’ in *The Analysis of Mind*. Perception for Russell contained an element of belief, which sensation did not.

³⁸⁴“Perception”, in *The Collected Papers*, Vol. 9, p. 183. This definition of ‘cognition’ is in accordance with the conclusion from our discussion of ‘cognitive’ in Chapter 2 and the beginning of Chapter 4.

³⁸⁵“Theory of Knowledge”, *The Collected Papers*, Vol. 9, p. 194.

³⁸⁶We will discuss in detail the concept of belief in Section 3 of the present chapter. Here, it will suffice to say that in the early neutral monism period for Russell beliefs (or, more precisely, the objects of belief) contained, generally, images and words.

could not explain how we perceive things that are neutral. Even then, however, Russell embraced the neutral monist's thesis that the distinction between mental and material is not in their substance, but in the relations with all the other entities that participate in our experience. However, the conclusion that Russell made at the time, from the neutral monist's claim that we perceive neutral entities, is that what neutral monists called 'neutral' was actually part of my mind (since, as Russell interpreted it, according to neutral monism, or at least, according to James's version of it, whatever I perceive is present before the mind, that is, part of the mind), that is, mental.³⁸⁷ And this made neutral monism close to idealism, which was unacceptable for Russell. It seems that, even though in 1921 Russell is still against idealism, he no longer thinks this objection against neutral monism valid. My guess is that in 1921 Russell did not think that 'neutral' equals 'mental' any more. In *The Analysis of Mind* Russell actually explores what it means to say that something is neutral (which he did not do in 1913). As a result, in 1921 he argues that sensations (the objects of sensation) are 'truly neutral' entities.^{388 389}

In *The Analysis of Mind*, however, Russell admits that there are purely mental entities,

³⁸⁷See *Theory of Knowledge*, Chapter 2, especially pp. 22-23, p. 31.

³⁸⁸In *The Analysis of Mind* Russell argues that "what is heard or seen belongs equally to psychology and to physics. ... There are, it seems to me, *prima facie*, different kinds of causal laws, one belonging to physics and the other to psychology. The law of gravitation, for example, is a physical law, while the law of association is a psychological law. Sensations are subject to both kinds of laws, and are therefore truly 'neutral'..." (*Ibid.*, pp. 25-26).

³⁸⁹Tully explains that the main motivation for Russell, along with other neutral monists, to claim that sensations were 'truly neutral' entities, stems from the need for the theory of knowledge under neutral monism to relate this neutral stuff to perceptual observation. "Since empirical claims are grounded in what is (or might be) directly observed, the Neutral Monists require a concept of observation that would not perpetuate the traditional divide between mind and matter, or between self and the external world." (Tully, p. 339). Despite the motivation for introducing the concept of neutral stuff, Tully thinks that the problem of identifying and describing the neutral stuff persists. If neutral items do not comprise a separate class of things with their own properties, Tully continues, then how are we to pick them out in order to construct either mental or material things out of them? And if what I know is neither mental nor material, then what is it? (*Ibid.*, p. 338).

such as images, and that there possibly are purely physical entities, as well.³⁹⁰ In fact, he believes that images, which are purely mental, are central for experiential knowledge.³⁹¹ If Russell believed in the existence of purely mental images, then would it not be implausible for him to believe at the same time in the premise that what we perceive or remember, or know, in general, is neutral, that is, neither mental nor physical? Even though, as Russell himself admits, it is not clear from James's writings what is meant by knowing neutral stuff, Russell believed that what James meant was that knowledge of the world does not include purely mental phenomena, such as images. On pp. 25-26 of *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell writes:

My own belief ... is that James is right in rejecting consciousness as an entity, and that the American realists are partly right, though not wholly, in considering that both mind and matter are composed of neutral-stuff which, in isolation, is neither mental nor material. I should admit this view as regards sensation: what is heard or seen belongs equally to psychology and to physics. But I should say that images belong only to the mental world...But entities subject only to physical laws, or only to psychological laws, are not neutral, and may be called respectively purely material and purely mental.

³⁹⁰“But I should say that images belong only to the mental world, while those occurrences (if any) which do not form part of any ‘experience’ belong only to the physical world.” (*The Analysis of Mind*, p. 25).

³⁹¹It is precisely this claim of Russell's which urges scholars like Ahmed to argue that in 1921, Russell embraced only a ‘partial neutralism’ because he did not accept in full the first principle of the theory of neutral monism, namely that all the stuff in the world is neither mental nor physical but neutral. (Ahmed, pp. 34-36). Ahmed believes that at the time when Russell wrote *The Analysis of Mind*, his views were partially neutral monistic, and partially dualistic. This, according to Ahmed, was ‘corrected’ in *The Analysis of Matter*, where Russell shares a complete neutralism. I am not, in principle, against Ahmed's claim, since it is obvious that later Russell modified some of his claims about perception and cognition. It is also clear, from Russell's own testimony in *My Philosophical Development*, and from “The Philosophy of Logical Atomism”, that as sympathetic as he was toward neutral monism in 1918, he still worried about things like the distinction between known and knowledge, or of the disappearance of the act of acquaintance. However, it seems to me that what Christopher Pincock (discussed below) gives as an interpretation of Russell's view of the existence of pure mental entities, is quite interesting and presents a serious attempt to show how the existence of purely mental entities is not incompatible with the principles of the newly accepted neutral monism.

It appears that if images are crucial cognitive constituents that participate in all knowledge, then we should not claim that what we know is actually a neutral entity.³⁹² Since the possibility to know neutral stuff (or not) is at the center of the theory of neutral monism and one of the most significant changes which Russell would have made from the acquaintance theory of knowledge, we need to explore the issue further.

In his article “Richard Semon and Russell’s *Analysis of Mind*”, Christopher Pincock, with whom I agree, argues that Russell actually found a way to reconcile the theory of neutral monism with the premise that purely mental entities such as images, have a vital role in the theory of cognition by invoking Richard Semon’s concept of ‘mnemic phenomenon’.³⁹³

Semon’s account of mnemic phenomena is as follows. For him “each sensation enters an akoluthic phase shortly after it is experienced, during which it persists in the mind, although increasingly faintly and subconsciously”.³⁹⁴ The akoluthic phase is the transition phase between sensations and memory images. Suppose that when I hear the sound of my alarm clock, I experience the smell and the sight of black coffee. According to Semon the entire complex of sensations is stored in our minds *together*. When I remember any one of those sensations, the entire complex tends to be recalled. In other words, when I re-experience the alarm clock sound, I

³⁹²In his article “Richard Semon and Russell’s *The Analysis of Mind*”, Christopher Pincock seems to believe that in the first chapter of *The Analysis of Mind* Russell opposed James’ view about neutrality of our knowledge. According to Pincock, in the last chapter of *The Analysis of Mind* where mental phenomena are discussed, Russell seems to believe that the existence of images does not in any way go against the premises set by the theory of neutral monism (Pincock, pp. 306-308). The explanation for Pincock, with which I am inclined to agree, is that Russell wrote the first chapter of *The Analysis of Mind* before he had a chance to introduce himself to the works of Richard Semon where the important concepts of ‘mnemic phenomena’ were discussed (Pincock, p. 123).

³⁹³Christopher Pincock, “Richard Semon and Russell’s *Analysis of Mind*”, in *Russell*, 2006-07, Vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 101-127.

³⁹⁴*Ibid.*, pp. 107-108. *Akoluthic* sensation is another term that Russell borrows from Semon. Akoluthic sensations refer to fading sensations.

re-experience the smell and sight of black coffee. “Hence, memories literally involve a distinct kind of sensation, over and above those caused by current excitations. These are what Semon calls mnemic sensations and mnemic phenomena are all those mental phenomena where these sensations play a role.”³⁹⁵ What this analysis tells us, Pincock argues, is that even if images existed and were ultimately governed by psychological laws, there is a way, through the analysis of mnemic sensations, to show that even images are, ultimately, governed by laws that govern such physical things as brains. Then one can still be a neutral monist and use images for the analysis of memory. (Moreover, at the end of *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell argues that “mnemic causation may be reducible to ordinary physical causation in nervous tissue”.³⁹⁶ According to this view, which Russell calls materialism, all mental phenomena are causally dependent upon physical phenomena. Even though Russell argues that he does not know whether materialism is right or not, but “the bulk of evidence points to the materialistic answer.”³⁹⁷) Here is how we can incorporate images in a theory like neutral monism. When I have an image of something, it is accompanied by a certain feeling of assent that the thing I have an image of is actually a true copy of the thing and not just a fabrication of my mind. Thus, the image evokes the original thing either through a memory (which, in part, is a habit formed in the past, of responding to certain stimuli which are not present any more), or through an actual sensation of it. So, as it turns out, the image of something has the same effects as the (physical) thing itself (this is because, as Russell states, causes are not single but complex events, which include not only the present stimuli, but also past events, the habits that we have formed based on these past events, etc.) And that is the reason why neutral monism can use purely mental entities such as images in its theory

³⁹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 106-107.

³⁹⁶*The Analysis of Mind*, p. 303.

³⁹⁷*Ibid.*

of knowledge.³⁹⁸

Having laid out the basic tenets of Russell's neutral monism, I explore in the next sections the details of his theory of the relationship between the main experiential cognitive faculties of perception (with sensation at its core), memory and imagination which constitute the foundational knowledge upon which every other type of knowledge is built, as seen by Russell in 1919 and 1921. Through a detailed analysis of the development of Russell's theory of cognition in the period 1910-1926 I will demonstrate that, despite the differences between the two theories,

³⁹⁸Pincock's thesis that Russell managed to reconcile the principles of neutral monism with the premise that purely mental entities such as images play a vital role in theory of cognition is confirmed by a letter written by Russell in 1922 (and published in vol. 9 of *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*). In 1922 Russell wrote a letter to Dr. N.G. Munro which appeared in *The Japan Weekly Chronicle* of the same year. The letter is a response to Munro's review of Russell's *Analysis of Mind*. Munro made a comment about Russell's views on matter and sensations, which Russell found inaccurate. Munro believed that, according to Russell, matter is a "collocation of sensations". This definition of matter makes it difficult to reconcile with the view that there is a "purely physical world", which according to Munro Russell shared, too. In his response, Russell wrote that the way he saw it, the world actually consists of floating particulars. Minds, on the other hand, are constituted of mnemonic contexts, or mnemonic phenomena. Some of the particulars enter into those mnemonic contexts and become parts of the mnemonic phenomena. In other words, some particulars are mental, while others are not, but the non-mental particulars can be interpreted through the mental. If our experience is defined by the mnemonic phenomena which, by definition, are mental, then it follows tautologically that sensations are going to be those particulars that are experienced, which makes them part of the mnemonic phenomena. However, as Russell argues, this is not an important metaphysical truth, since, as he stated in *The Analysis of Mind*, sensations are neither mental nor material (solely and exclusively), in fact, they belong to both worlds. With this, Russell confirms the principles that he had established in the neutral monist period about the relation between mental and physical. The last sentence of this short text, however, if taken at face value, may sound quite puzzling, in the light of what was argued by Russell earlier. "...The philosophy I hold", Russell concludes, "is neither idealism nor materialism, and allows the possibility of a world containing nothing mental." The phrase, "allows a world containing nothing mental" is in full accord with the principles of the theory of neutral monism. However, it seemingly contradicts what Russell argued earlier in the paper, that mental phenomena which he calls mnemonic phenomena, are what constitutes our experience, and that, thanks to them, mental and material can be treated as mental and material. Here we have to remind ourselves the discussion on mnemonic phenomena and how mnemonic phenomena actually allow Russell to keep the principles of the theory of neutral monism and, at the same time, allow the existence of purely mental phenomena in his theory. The view that there are mental phenomena which constitute our experience does not contradict the view that there is a purely physical world. In this sense, we can only hope that, despite its imprecision, what Russell meant with the last phrase is that mental entities can be treated the same way as material entities, since, after all they are not different in substance from each other. And this is nothing that a neutral monist would disagree with.

there is a common thread in the face of the theory of the main experiential cognitive faculties (perception, memory, and imagination). Neutral monism seemed to offer a simpler picture of experience and knowledge, while at the same time, its main thesis (that what we know is neutral) helped ‘bridge’ the gulf between the psychological and the physical outlooks of the world.³⁹⁹

Section Two. Theory of Cognition in 1919.

One of the tasks of the analysis in this section is to track the changes in the theory of cognition that began in 1918. In 1919 Russell appears to have become fully convinced that neutral monism is the theory that gives the best picture of knowledge. In “On Propositions” [1919] Russell defends a theory of knowledge from the point of view of neutral monism where sensation is not considered foundational knowledge.⁴⁰⁰ His argument is built around his disagreement with the behaviorist view of mental phenomena. I will not discuss in detail the way that Russell views behaviorism in the early neutral monism period, since this is not the focus of the present research, but I will look at Russell’s argument in order to consider his evolving views about sensation, memory and imagination.

As Russell sees it, according to behaviorism mental phenomena are considered not “amenable to scientific treatment, because each of them can only be observed by one observer –

³⁹⁹According to Stace, there are two main motives that have inspired neutral monism, namely to get rid of the psycho-physical dualism, and to give an account of the world in terms of verifiable empirically, entities. (Ahmed, p. 10.) As Russell was getting increasingly interested in psychology (and the psychological account of knowledge), but never abandoned his interests in the development of physics, it seems only logical that he would develop a natural liking for the theory of neutral monism.

⁴⁰⁰Again, we have to remember that the interpretation of Russell’s view that sensation is non-cognitive is obscured by the lack of a clear definition of ‘cognition’ in Russell’s texts. As Russell himself admits, there is no such thing as sensory knowledge any more, but the foundation of knowledge is based upon sensation.

in fact, it is highly doubtful whether even one observer can be aware of anything not reducible to some bodily occurrence.”⁴⁰¹ In other words, from a behaviorist point of view, mental phenomena and images are something publicly unverifiable and introspective reports about them are also considered unreliable on the grounds of being private and, in light of unconscious causes of behavior, unworthy of inclusion in the scientific picture of the world. Even though Russell considers some behaviorist views to be not without merit, he finds the denial of images to be “empirically indefensible”.⁴⁰² Russell insists that images, visual and auditory ones, in particular, are distinct from sensations. He agrees with behaviorists that perhaps we can explain away kinesthetic images “as being really small sensations of the same kind as those that belong to actual movements”⁴⁰³, but, in general, sensations are physical data (they are actually both physical and psychological data, in accordance with the principles of the theory of neutral monism) and images are mental data.⁴⁰⁴ To illustrate his position Russell gives the following example. I am sitting opposite an empty chair, I shut my eyes and I visualize my friend occupying the chair. A behaviorist would argue that my ‘imagining’ or visualizing my friend occupying the empty chair in front of me is a physiological event and therefore it can be explained as me having ‘really small sensations’. Russell argues that even if the event of visualizing someone sitting in the otherwise empty chair is a physiological event, it is not part of what constitutes the physical reality (i.e., the reality outside of my body) that I observe, and therefore, it cannot be viewed as a

⁴⁰¹Russell, “On Propositions”, in *Logic and Knowledge*, p. 291.

⁴⁰²*Ibid.*, p. 293.

⁴⁰³*Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁴In “Theory of Knowledge” [1926], Russell considers data, in general, to be ‘two-fold’ organized events. On the one hand, they are the constituents of the public world of physics (in the case of sensations), on the other hand, they are the constituents of our personal experience (in the case of occurrences of beliefs, or pure imagination-images as in dreams) and thus, they are inferred, not given (as he claimed in the acquaintance period). *The Collected Papers*, Vol. 9., p. 194.

visual sensation.⁴⁰⁵ It does not mean, however, according to Russell, that we can deny the existence of visual and auditory images just because they are not part of what we call physical reality. Both physical reality and the reality of images can co-exist perfectly well, as soon as we distinguish them clearly. The distinction between images and sensations, Russell continues, is confirmed by the everyday experience, a criterion that Russell always respected.

This conclusion shows us that, from the point of view of Russell's current theory of cognition, the physical world apparently does not include only what we are aware of. The world of physics, for example, describes phenomena that we are not aware of, at least not in the same way that we are aware of the empty chair in front of us. But then, are the worlds that physics and psychology describe so different from each other? And if they are, then how does this view fit into the neutral monism framework? As Russell sees it, sensations and images are radically different from each other, but that is not because of the stuff that they are made of. The mental and the physical are distinguished by what causes them, not by what they consist of.⁴⁰⁶

In "On Propositions" Russell analyzes the concept of sensation, whose meaning, as we already saw, has changed even in 1918 when Russell pronounced it non-cognitive. Here he agrees with the common-sense view that images, which he considers particulars and also essential elements of cognition, are representations of something, often they are representations of sensations. As a class, images are different from sensations, but individual images resemble individual sensations because sensations are their prototypes. Since in the new theory of cognition images and not sensations are the essential cognitive elements, and images are presentations of something, Russell wants to build a theory of presentation (and a theory of

⁴⁰⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁰⁶ This is how Nicholas Griffin summarizes Russell's position on neutral monism, as explained in *The Analysis of Mind*. Mind and matter differ only in that they are organized by different causal laws: material objects by the causal laws of physics, minds by the 'mnemic' causal laws in which a past state of mind is among the proximate causes of its current state. (In *Routledge Encyclopedia*, Version 1.0, London and New York: Routledge, 1998).

belief).⁴⁰⁷

Further confirmation of what we have said so far about Russell's view of sensation in 1919 is found in some shorter texts from 1919.⁴⁰⁸ These shed a further light on the direction of development of Russell's theory of cognition since 1918. The first short text from this period is "Analysis of Mind", written in January 1919. Russell himself identifies it as a draft of the book *The Analysis of Mind* [1921].

The sections of the manuscript which are of interest to the present research are, in order of importance: "Sensations", "Images", and "Meaning of Images". As we already noted, in 1919 Russell believes that sensations are the intersection of mind and matter, they have both mental and physical causes (that is why they are neutral). In this paper, when analyzing sensation, Russell repeats what he had said in "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism", that sensation is non-cognitive, because the act of sensation (which Russell now thinks was postulated earlier), and the object of sensation (known as a sense-datum in the acquaintance period), are 'collapsed' into one

⁴⁰⁷In "On Propositions" Russell writes, "It seems to me imperative, therefore, to construct a theory of *presentation* and belief [italics added] which makes no use of the 'subject', or of an 'act' as a constituent of a *presentation* [italics added]." (*Ibid.*, p. 305). We have to note here that the use of 'presentation' is problematic, in principle, in the neutral monist period since, according to the principles of the theory of neutral monism, there is no observer and observed (knower and known). In other words, if there is no subject, then there is nothing which the presentation can be presented to. Later in the text he continues, "Apart from sensations, '*presentations*' appear [italics added], as a matter of observation, to be composed of images." (*Ibid.*, p. 306). At the bottom of the same page Russell summarizes that we have two sorts of 'mental stuff', namely, sensations and images. Thus, it seems that what he means here by 'presentation' is 'mental stuff'. I think the use of the term 'presentation' in "On Propositions" is out of convenience, and it seems to refer to 'content' (in the case of images, 'presentation' refers to 'content of the mind' since images are purely mental entities; in the case of 'sensations', 'presentation' refers to both 'content of the mind' and 'content of the body' since sensations are both physical and mental entities). Given the changes in his new theory of cognition, it seems that the way Russell perceives the 'I' (the observer) is as a series of images, or a series of presentations (and not as a special substance or a kind of 'stuff'). He explains that the subject of cognition (or the act of cognition, for that matter) is not 'empirically discoverable', that is, it is not 'an actual phenomenon' but an 'assemblage', just like the concepts of mathematics, and so, we should discard it as an element of cognition. (*The Collected Papers*, Vol 9, p. 305.)

⁴⁰⁸The texts that I discuss in the next paragraphs are published in Volume 9 of *The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*.

neutral entity which he now calls ‘sensation’. And since, as he explained in *My Philosophical Development*, the patch of color that we sense cannot be cognitive, it follows that sensation as a cognitive faculty is not cognitive. And sensations (the patches of color) are not cognitive because “they simply come and are”⁴⁰⁹, that is, they are mere events and not pieces of knowledge. Here Russell introduces an idea which he repeats in 1921. Sensations form the core of the faculty of perception but they themselves are not cognitive. We can extract the core of perception only after careful psychological analysis. In other words, the nature of sensations is known only analytically, not empirically. What is empirically known is image. Images are not fainter sensations, as we might think. Images can achieve ‘any level of liveliness’ even to the extent that they may seem more real than any sensation. But this still does not make them sensations. They are essentially different from sensations in the sense that they are governed by different causal laws.

The conclusion from the analysis of sensation in 1919 repeats what Russell has reached in 1918, when he discarded the subject from the analysis of cognition. Sensation as a relation is non-cognitive because it is not regarded as a relation between a subject and an object of cognition. This, in turn, means that we cannot distinguish any more not only between a subject and an object of cognition, but also between an act of sensation and an object of sensation, as constituents of the presentation, anyway. This ‘collapsing’ of sense-data and the act of sensation makes it “impossible to regard a sensation as in any sense cognitive”⁴¹⁰. This is one of the central ideas in *The Analysis of Mind*.

The second idea from the texts from 1919 which Russell carries over to *The Analysis of Mind* concerns memory. The central concept of the analysis of memory in “On Propositions” is

⁴⁰⁹*The Collected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, Volume 9, p. 4.

⁴¹⁰*Ibid.*, p. 306.

the feeling of familiarity. Even though, as we have already mentioned, Russell mentions the feeling of familiarity or the feeling of recognition a few times throughout 1918 (and even as early as 1913), it is not until 1919 that he attempts to give a definition of the concept ‘feeling of familiarity’. Russell’s discussion of the concept has serious implications for his later theory of cognition, since most of the points he makes about the feeling of familiarity are carried over to *The Analysis of Mind* [1921], in which it becomes the center of his analysis of memory.

Unlike sensation, the ‘presentation of images’, the simplest form of which is memory, does have cognitive value⁴¹¹. In 1919 “knowledge of the past is not *really* knowledge of the past, but of something independent of the real existence of the past”.⁴¹² This is because memory is about the presentation of memory-images, and not of past sense-data, as was the case in the acquaintance period. And unlike sense-data images “point to something beyond themselves” which makes them true or false and thus pieces of knowledge, and not just events like sensations which ‘simply are’. In other words, it seems that upon acceptance of the theory of neutral monism, Russell changed his theory of memory (something which he said in “Three Notes on Memory” that was ‘imperative’ to do) in the sense that now he thinks that it is not *logically necessary* (which does not mean that it is not empirically necessary) that the remembered object should have occurred, or that the past should have existed at all.⁴¹³ But even in 1919 Russell believes that memory is essential to other knowledge. This is why he continues to struggle to find the best explanation of how memory works.

Since memory (meaning *all* memory and not just remote memory, as turned out to be the

⁴¹¹Russell’s general hypothesis about memory in 1919 is that memory should be analyzed “into present contents” (See “Points on Memory”, p. 22).

⁴¹²*Ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴¹³If we remember that one of Russell’s objections against neutral monism, in the acquaintance period was that neutral monists cannot account for the ‘essential pastness’ of the remembered object, we will realize that now Russell does not think that there is an ‘essential pastness’ of the remembered object any more.

case in the acquaintance period) is now image-based, and images are copies which makes them less reliable pieces of knowledge than sense-data were, knowledge of the past cannot be as reliable as it was in the acquaintance period⁴¹⁴. This is why, Russell argues, we are compelled to conclude that memory consists of something *more* than images. The new element that characterizes memory is the feeling of familiarity. In other words, when we remember, we have a memory-image in our minds which is always accompanied by a *feeling* or a *belief* that something is the way we remember it to be, or that something happened the way we believe we know it happened.⁴¹⁵ Memory, Russell argues, is itself “a form of belief”.⁴¹⁶ When we remember, we have a *feeling*, and we also believe that the content of the image in question not only makes sense to us, but is also true. What we really believe when we believe that something happened the way we remember it, is not that the present memory-image exists, but that something that goes beyond this present image that the image represents, is the case. We believe in what the image refers to,

⁴¹⁴We have to keep in mind that this (knowledge of the past is not as certain as it was in the acquaintance period) applies to all knowledge in the neutral monism period. Here Russell does not discuss the reliability of memory, but simply wants to be able to distinguish between the memory-images which are true representations of past events and the memory-images which are false representations of past events.

⁴¹⁵As we pointed out at the end of Chapter 2, there is an ambiguity in the way that Russell uses the term ‘feeling’, referring to memory, specifically. It seems that in 1921, Russell has disambiguated the relation between belief and feeling. In *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell argues that in belief (unlike in presentation), there are three elements that need to be distinguished, namely the act of believing, what is believed, and the objective of the belief. Belief, understood as the act of believing, is constituted by feeling. On p. 233, he writes that “believing is an actual experienced feeling”, and not just an “assemblage” (that is, a logical fiction). Later in the chapter on belief, Russell argues that there are three kinds of belief, namely memory, expectation and bare assent. All of them are constituted by a ‘positive feeling’ (the only difference being that the bare assent has no ‘time-determination’ as memory and expectation do). (*The Analysis of Mind*, pp. 249-250). We can conclude, then, that when Russell talks about ‘belief’ being a ‘feeling’, what he means is the act of believing, is a feeling which is in a specific relation with the content of belief (images and words), so that it can be said that the content is what is believed. This specific relation between the belief-feeling and the content of belief is what, Russell argues, helps us distinguish memory-belief from any other belief that we entertain at the time when we remember a past event.

⁴¹⁶“Three Points on Memory”, p. 306.

that is, in the event that took place some time ago.⁴¹⁷

A further confirmation of the role of the feeling of familiarity in memory is to be found in the section devoted to memory from “Analysis of Mind” [1919], and “Points on Memory”.⁴¹⁸ In “Analysis of Mind” Russell describes three components of memory: the feeling of familiarity, recognition, and recollection of a particular past event. Recognition and recollection of a particular past event seem to be self-explanatory. The feeling of familiarity exists in relation to some other present image and is expressed by ‘*this* is familiar’.⁴¹⁹ A sensation comes without a feeling of familiarity. Awareness comes instantaneously in sensation, without the feeling of familiarity, or any belief-feeling. However, as Russell explains in *My Philosophical Development*, in perception we have created a habit of being aware, or of noticing things. And this habit is based on the frequent repetition of sensations. Thus, in perception the feeling of familiarity seems to play a role. When a sensation is repeated frequently enough, it becomes more and more familiar with every repetition. Thus, the feeling of familiarity “gives time-

⁴¹⁷In “Three Points on Memory”, Russell argues that when we leave the domain of psychology and try to investigate what exactly is expressed in words (in word-propositions which, in fact, consist of image-propositions) when we say that we believe in a given memory of ours, things become rather complicated. According to Russell, when we use words, the words actually point not only to the images, but also to their meaning. Thus, when we express something in words, “as if it meant the image, we need an unnatural duplication of words, in order to reach what the words stand for”. (*Ibid.*, p. 314). Regardless of this complication with the relation between words and images, for Russell there is a relation of correspondence between beliefs and actions (just like there is one between propositions and facts). In other words, when we think that a belief is true, our actions are dictated by this belief. And as we saw from our analysis of Russell’s understanding of belief in 1918, it seems that in 1919, upon the acceptance of neutral monism, he also accepted the ‘behavioristic overtones’ in his theory of belief, which he had rejected in 1918 as inadequate.

⁴¹⁸In this text Russell distinguishes between two types of memory – ‘habit-memory’ and ‘true memory’. Unfortunately, Russell does not explain what habit-memory may consist of and how true memory is different from habit memory. Thus, we cannot draw any conclusions about any new types of memory in 1919.

⁴¹⁹*Ibid.*, p. 5.

order”⁴²⁰ to our sensations. I think that what Russell means by that is that the feeling of familiarity helps us reconstruct the sequence of events. For example, if I witness a car chase on Highway 417 and when prompted to reconstruct the details of the event in my mind by, say, another car chase, or a newspaper article about car chasing, an important part of my reconstruction will be the feeling of familiarity. This feeling of familiarity tells me that the images that I have in my mind are somehow familiar to me because I have experienced the event in question before. So, when a sense-datum becomes past, what is left of it, or rather formed after it, is an image and when we recollect it, we say that we are familiar with it.

In “Points on Memory” Russell adds another feeling to the feeling of familiarity, namely the feeling of pastness. I think that the feeling of pastness makes Russell’s point about the time-order clearer. The feeling of pastness is the same feeling of assent, mentioned in “On Propositions” which seems to accompany any belief, only made more specific, to apply to memory beliefs. It is the feeling of pastness, he now argues, that gives us the time order of our memory. (The feeling of familiarity makes us trust the memory-images as true copies of their prototypes. “When we judge an image to be partly wrong as a memory image”, Russell concludes, “this is because parts of it do not feel familiar”.⁴²¹) I think that what Russell is suggesting here is that in our experience of things, our mind creates a sequence where sensations, images, and whatever other entities are part of this experience, are settled in a certain (temporal) order. As Russell admits, whether this hypothesis is right or wrong, it shows us that it is “*formally* possible to construct the time-series of memories out of present ingredients alone”.⁴²² Russell gives the following formal expression of his hypothesis about memory. “A = event remembered, occurring at time t. B = occasion of remembering, occurring at time t+t’. C =

⁴²⁰*Ibid.*

⁴²¹*Ibid.*

⁴²²*Ibid.*, p. 22.

remembering”.⁴²³ Then, C is a ‘mnemic phenomenon’ because it is caused by A and B jointly. C contains the elements of the ‘feeling of familiarity’ and also the ‘feeling of pastness’. The latter is capable of degrees and proportional to t’.

The problem that Russell sees with this hypothesis is that memory sometimes mistakes the time-order, and also, much of the remembered time-order is actually inferred (which makes it liable to error and doubt). For Russell the issue that memory mistakes the time-order shows that it is not the time-interval that is relevant to our knowledge of the past, but something else, which usually “increases with the interval”.⁴²⁴ And this something else Russell calls ‘context’. Context includes successive images in the same order as their prototypes. (On the other hand, remembering is a process which happens in the same way as a present process is apprehended, through akoluthic sensations, which “by fading acquire the mark of just-pastness in an increasing degree as they fade, and are thus placed in a series while all sensibly present”.⁴²⁵) Most often, however, what we know when remembering, is not the time relation of the remembered event and the present event (this happens only in recent memories), but the time-order of two remembered (past) events. According to Russell, the knowledge of the time-order of two remembered events is often mere inference.⁴²⁶

⁴²³*Ibid.*

⁴²⁴I am not exactly sure what Russell means here by ‘increases with the interval’, but my guess is that he refers to the context in which a given memory occurs. In this sense, what memory mistakes is not the time-interval itself, but the context in which the memory occurs (if there is hardly any context, then the chances of making a mistake about the past are high). The context is suggested by Russell to ‘go along’ with the time interval, or change according to the time-interval. Thus, the closer we are to the present, the more context we have at our disposal, and the farther away we are from the present, the less context we have at our disposal. This is consistent with his subsequent note which reads “Distant memories have less context” (*Ibid.*, p. 23). Thus, if our memory is of an event which did not happen long ago, we will have more context about the event and we will be less likely to make a mistake regarding the details of the event.

⁴²⁵*Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁴²⁶In *The Analysis of Mind* which will be discussed in detail in Section 3 of this chapter, Russell embraces fully the idea of memory-images being characterized by a feeling of familiarity.

To summarize, it seems that in 1919 Russell's analysis of the theory of cognition was, generally (with certain differences), in compliance with what he had set up in 1918, when he sympathized strongly with the theory of neutral monism. Sensation, memory and imagination (where imagination is also used to distinguish between true and false memory-images) are even more in the spotlight of his new theory of knowledge, with new 'psychological' elements added to their analysis, than they were in the acquaintance period, and Russell devotes even more attention to them in *The Analysis of Mind*.

Section Three. Russell's Theory of Cognition in the Period 1921-1926.

In this section I discuss in detail Russell's theory of cognition as presented in *The Analysis of Mind* [1921], as well as the relevant short texts written after 1921 and before *The Analysis of Matter* [1927]. The first relevant short text written after 1921 is "Physics and Perception" [1922], followed by "Mr. Bertrand Russell's *Analysis of Mind*" [1922], "Perception" [1926], and "Theory of Knowledge" [1926].⁴²⁷ These short texts that follow *The*

There are three short texts from 1919 that are relevant to the subject matter of the present analysis of memory – "Miscellaneous Notes", "Analysis of Knowing", and "Points on Memory". The introductory note by the editors of Volume 9 of *The Collected Papers* informs us that all three texts were written at the time or after Russell wrote "On Propositions". Most of the points from these texts are given a more detailed analysis in *The Analysis of Mind*. In the second part of "Miscellaneous Notes" entitled "Memory" Russell sketches his future theory of memory. He writes, "Memory demands: a) an image; b) a belief in past existence. The belief may be expressed in the words 'this existed'. 1) Here there is a specific feeling of sensation, constituting *belief about the past*: this is to be taken as a unit, belonging to the believing, not to the content." The points that Russell makes here are not any different from the points he stated in "On Propositions", and in "The Analysis of Mind". Memory consists of images, not of past sense-data. What accompanies memory-images is the feeling of familiarity which is a specific belief in the past, that shows the relation between the prototype of the image and the image itself.

⁴²⁷ All the texts are published in *The Collected Papers*, Vol. 9.

Analysis of Mind, right until his next major work, *The Analysis of Matter*, provide a commentary and revision of the neutral monist ideas established in “On Propositions” and *The Analysis of Mind* and thus, provide a useful insight of how Russell felt about the new theory of cognition and its challenges. I consider *The Analysis of Mind* to be the main text from Russell’s mature neutral monist period. I will also allow myself occasional references to texts written after 1926, such as *The Analysis of Matter* [1927], and *My Philosophical Development* [1959], where Russell reviews and evaluates his earlier views from a later perspective.⁴²⁸ This will help me present Russell’s neutral monist views as accurately as possible.

Even though in 1921 Russell does not use the term ‘cognitive faculty’ when referring to sensation, perception, memory and imagination, I will continue using the same term. My reason for doing so is that in his neutral monist period he continued the same line of analysis of the cognitive faculties from the acquaintance theory of knowledge. In this section I explore what Russell’s understanding of foundational knowledge is and how it is changed under the theory of neutral monism. My thesis is that in the new theory of cognition the foundational (most certain

⁴²⁸There is still a considerable controversy in Russell scholarship whether *The Analysis of Mind* belongs to Russell’s mature neutral monism theory or not. *The Analysis of Matter* is considered by scholars like Michael Lockwood and Robert Tully to be, by Russell’s own words, a companion to his earlier *The Analysis of Mind* (Lockwood, p. 150, Tully, p. 356). Other scholars such as W. T. Stace and R. M. Sainsbury think that *The Analysis of Mind* should not be considered a part of Russell’s neutral monism period at all. M. Ahmed’s position seems to be one of a compromise between the above positions. As we already noted, Ahmed believes that *The Analysis of Mind* is a neutral monist work, but that it is characterized by a ‘partial neutralism’ and ‘partial dualism’, since in 1921 Russell had not fully accepted the first premise of neutral monism, namely, that the entities that form the stuff of the world are neutral entities (Ahmed, p. 38). According to Ahmed, in *The Analysis of Matter*, Russell ‘corrected’ his view concerning the objects of cognition and what there is in the world, and he now believed that the stuff that the world is composed of is indeed neutral. I agree that there are some changes in Russell’s view and vocabulary that manifest themselves in *The Analysis of Matter*, such as the replacement of ‘sensations’ with ‘percepts’, and ‘particulars’ with ‘events’. I also agree that the changes in the use of these concepts is, beyond doubt, very important. However, I also believe that Russell’s views in *The Analysis of Mind* are full-fledged neutral monism (which does not contradict what Ahmed says about Russell’s partial neutralism; Russell never said that he accepted James’s, or any other neutral monist’s, view without certain modifications) and that, despite the modifications in the later works, the latter build upon the principles laid out and the cognitive issues addressed in *The Analysis of Mind*.

experiential knowledge) is perceptual knowledge (sensation is at the core of perception, without itself being cognitive). Perceptual knowledge is not direct but indirect. Its main constituents are sensations, images and beliefs. In this sense, all knowledge of experience is indirect knowledge. If all knowledge is indirect, then some of the problems that Russell's theory of cognition faced in the acquaintance period seem to disappear. For example, in the neutral monist period, the objects of memory are only images and not past sense-data and therefore there is no need to try to fit the strange notion of being acquainted with something that is in the past within the rest of the theory of cognition (nor to have to explain how immediate memory is knowledge by acquaintance while remote memory is knowledge by description). At the same time, the specious present is not regarded in the neutral monism period as an (inappropriate) 'confinement' for the most certain direct experiential knowledge we have, since in the neutral monism period all knowledge is indirect. These changes in the theory of cognition from the acquaintance period, however, come at a price, namely, the certainty and immediacy of knowledge. In the acquaintance period Russell claimed that all knowledge by acquaintance is certain (if not absolutely certain, fairly close to it). In the neutral monism period, however, all knowledge is indirect and hence, liable to error, which means that even perceptual knowledge is liable to error and thus vulnerable to skeptical doubt, which diminishes the certainty of (even perceptual) knowledge, compared to the degree of certainty it had in the acquaintance period.⁴²⁹

⁴²⁹ As we already noted in Section 4 of Chapter 2, in *My Philosophical Development*, Russell explains that initially, when he accepted the principles of neutral monism, he did not realize that the merging of the act, subject and object of cognition, thus leaving out the relation of acquaintance, would cause problems for his theory of cognition, which made him re-introduce acquaintance later in the period (as the act of attention or noticing). First, he thought that in sensation (or presentation), it is possible to 'collapse' the object, act, and subject of cognition into one, since sensation is non-cognitive. However, as he admits, the very nature of knowledge is such that it presupposes a knower and a known. Eliminating the distinction between the three elements of cognition does not seem to explain the cognitive faculties (such as perception, memory, etc.). That is why in *The Analysis of Mind*, when analyzing beliefs, which are cognitive entities and which constitute the cognitive faculties, he argues that he retains the division in the analysis of belief into object and act of belief (and objective of belief).

In the first chapter of *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell gives us the main reasons why neutral monism proved to be attractive. The first one involves Russell's growing interest in psychology. He believed that psychology provides him with a more satisfactory explanation of the nature of knowledge than epistemology does. At the end of *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell writes that "an ultimate scientific account, if it were ascertainable, would resemble psychology rather than physics".⁴³⁰ In 1921 for Russell matter is a logical fiction and so it cannot be the 'ultimate reality'. Thus, the laws that science works with should be laws of the correlation of the particulars that constitute the momentary condition of (the logical fiction) matter. Then, these laws should be equally applicable to physics and psychology. If science is up to the task to explain the world, then it should succeed where metaphysics has failed, namely, by achieving a "unified account of what really happens, ... free from all convenient fictions or unwarrantable assumptions of metaphysical entities".⁴³¹ Russell believes that analyzing matter into constituents such as sensations and images (which are subject to mnemonic causation), is "of utmost importance to philosophy, and vital for the understanding of the relations between mind and matter, between our perceptions and the world they perceive".⁴³² As he says in *The Analysis of Mind*, his interest in psychology is not "so much for its own sake, as for the light it may throw on the problem of knowledge"⁴³³. The 'problem of knowledge' that he is referring to is related to what the constituents of cognition are. In the acquaintance period, Russell believed that the basic constituents of knowledge are an object, a subject, and an act of cognition (which is mental). In 1921 he does not believe that, from the empirical and theoretical points of view, this is the

⁴³⁰*The Analysis of Mind*, p. 306.

⁴³¹*Ibid.*

⁴³²*Ibid.*

⁴³³*Ibid.*, p. 15.

correct analysis of knowledge, and he seeks the help of psychology to determine what it is.⁴³⁴ He thinks that since psychology studies the (causal) relations of the different mental processes as well as human behavior, it can help him narrow down and analyze the different parts of our ‘integral experience’ of the world and show how this experience turns into knowledge. Thus, through psychology Russell realizes that feelings such as the feeling of pastness or the belief, are an integral part of knowledge. The feelings of belief and pastness are now crucial for understanding how memory works. And since in the neutral monism period, just like in the acquaintance period, memory is central for the theory of cognition, then the feeling of belief and the feeling of pastness become central for the whole theory of cognition, and theory of knowledge.

As we already noted, Russell’s account of cognition in 1921 is a continuation, with certain clarifications (mainly in his theory of belief), of the changes he was making to the theory of knowledge in 1918. He had dispensed with the subject of cognition, and had ‘collapsed’ the act, object and subject of cognition into one occurrence or event.⁴³⁵ In 1921, just like in 1919, Russell says that, unlike James, he believes that there are purely mental entities, such as images, and purely physical entities (such as what he called in the acquaintance period sensibilia). In

⁴³⁴On p. 18 of *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell argues that empirically, he cannot find anything that corresponds to the act of cognition, and theoretically, he cannot see that the act of cognition is indispensable. He adds that Meinong’s ‘act’ of cognition is the “ghost of the subject” which should be dispensed with.

⁴³⁵We already saw that in 1918 Russell was increasingly less willing to admit that the subject of cognition is anything but a grammatical category used out of convenience, and not out of necessity (as a representation of a real entity). This tendency culminates in “On Propositions” and *The Analysis of Mind* where Russell admits that if the object of cognition is neutral and defined according to the appropriate context, then the subject of cognition, as its ultimate opposite, does not have a place in the new epistemological vocabulary. The role of the subject of cognition can be filled by any set of particulars or a set of logical constructions, such as patches of color perceived from a certain perspective that relate to other patches of color, etc. The subject of cognition becomes a ‘logical fiction’, an entity that is used because it is grammatically and linguistically convenient but does not imply the existence of an entity such as the Cartesian ego or the transcendental subject of Kant. (*The Analysis of Mind*, p. 141.)

other words, it seems that in the early neutral monism period, Russell did not think that all the constituents of the world (and all objects of cognition), are actually neutral entities. And even though, he thought that James and most neutral monists would not agree with this claim he thought it did not contradict the general principles of neutral monism.⁴³⁶ Thus, we can say that in *The Analysis of Mind* the object of cognition, in general, is either neutral, purely mental, or purely physical, and that knowledge is not direct but derivative. What we need to explore now is what happens to the other element of cognition, namely, the subject of cognition.

Now that the subject of cognition is dispensed with and the object of cognition is a neutral entity, it remains to see how certain experiential knowledge is. As it is to be revealed, in the neutral monism period, the picture that Russell draws of experiential knowledge is more complicated than the one from the acquaintance period. In *The Analysis of Mind* Russell states that he accepts the behaviorist claim that knowledge is a response to a stimulus in the environment, but he thinks that this account of the nature of knowledge is also insufficient and will not give us an understanding of what (certain) knowledge is. He writes, "... what is known may be quite different from the stimulus, and no part of the cause of the knowledge-response".⁴³⁷ Russell gives an example of how limited the behaviorist account of knowledge is. It is only in sensory (perceptual) knowledge, he writes, that the stimulus and what is known are identical (which may bring us some certainty of what is known). In knowledge of the future, however, the stimulus and what is known are not identical, but totally distinct. In abstract knowledge they are distinct too, since abstract facts have no date, and stimuli do. In knowledge of the past, the thing remembered is an essential part of the cause of our remembering. So, what Russell adds to the behaviorist account of knowledge, thus hoping to find the most accurate definition of knowledge,

⁴³⁶In Section 1 of the present chapter we already discussed how Russell might have thought that his view on images, which are purely mental entities, did not contradict with the principles of neutral monism.

⁴³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 258.

is that we should define knowledge in terms of the accuracy of one's response to an external stimulus accompanied with what he calls *appropriateness* (i.e., suitability for realizing one's *purpose*).⁴³⁸ This way, if we consider a simple question-answer situation, if the purpose of answering a question is actually to deceive rather than tell the truth, giving the wrong and not the correct answer to a question will be an indication of knowledge. In other words, what I think Russell is trying to say here is that certainty of knowledge depends not only upon the response of the observer to the external stimulus, but also, on what purpose the observer is trying to realize with the response. The 'drawback' of the neutral monism account of knowledge is that *all* knowledge becomes less certain than what was considered the most certain knowledge in the acquaintance period (such as knowledge of the immediate past).

Further on, considering certain and indubitable knowledge, Russell looks at the case of self-evident beliefs. He believes that, even though, we all have beliefs about abstract things (such as the law of the excluded middle), and concrete perceptual facts that we think completely self-evident, self-evidence is not the same thing as having no doubt, or being absolutely certain.⁴³⁹ If we are completely certain of a proposition, we do not seek a ground to support it, and if we accept that self-evidence is a ground for belief, then doubt has already crept in and self-evidence "has not resisted the assaults of scepticism".⁴⁴⁰ Russell thinks that it is not practical to think that

⁴³⁸The example he gives is the following. If a carrier pigeon flies home, we say that he 'knows' the way. However, if he flew to some random place, we would not say that he 'knew' the way home, any more than we would say that a stone rolling down the hill knows where it is going. (*Ibid.*, p. 260.)

⁴³⁹As we saw from our analysis of the notion of certain knowledge in the acquaintance period, it seems that in 1913 he reached the same conclusion, even though in a less clear and defined manner than he does in *The Analysis of Mind*. Russell does not offer a definition of self-evidence, but he says that "self-evidence must not consist merely in the fact that we believe a proposition". The reason is that sometimes we believe that our beliefs are erroneous, and we wish to believe that there is a certain class of beliefs that are never erroneous. So, self-evidence must not consist merely in the fact that we believe something. (*Ibid.*, p. 262).

⁴⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 263.

self-evident beliefs lead to knowledge which is indubitable, because we may mistakenly believe that it is self-evident that a given belief (that people living in the Antipodes, for example, are hanging with their heads down) is self-evident.⁴⁴¹ I think that Russell does not deny the fact that there is such a thing as a truly self-evident belief. However, he thinks that in practice, we can never find the ultimate self-evident belief without falling into an infinite regress, and that is why, he thinks that self-evidence does not provide us with an absolute criterion of truth.

The self-evidence of judgments of perception, however, is of a different nature. Judgments of perception such as, “The buttercup is yellow”, are the simplest kinds of judgments and they seem to be indubitable or at least, carry a very low probability of error. Whether the probability of error is low or not, we still could not call judgments of perception absolutely certain, since it is very difficult to find a class of judgments which are known to be always exempt from error.⁴⁴² This account of judgments of perception as seemingly indubitable or infallible is in accord with the account presented by Russell in the acquaintance period.⁴⁴³ One of the reasons is that, since judgments of perception involve correlations (as when we “judge that a certain noise is that of a passing car”)⁴⁴⁴ and we can never be certain that a given correlation will

⁴⁴¹Russell says that to remove all risk of error, we will need an endless series of self-evident beliefs, which obviously cannot be realized in practice. Therefore, he concludes, it seems that self-evidence is useless as a practical criterion for guaranteeing the truth of something. (*Ibid.*, p. 264.)

⁴⁴²To support his claim, on p. 266 of *The Analysis of Mind* Russell says that some perceptual judgments such as “This is a buttercup” or “This is yellow” which are derived from recognition, entail a risk of error, but sometimes it is a very low risk of error (marigolds, for example, look like buttercups and their colors are such that some, probably only very few people, might call them orange, while they are yellow to others). Thus, we could easily call perceptual judgments certain, but we could not call them absolutely certain since absolute certainty entails freedom of error which no judgment can provide.

⁴⁴³This does not mean to say that Russell’s account of perception in both periods is the same, but only that in both periods he believed that judgments of perception have a special place among other judgments, in the sense that they at least *seem* indubitable.

⁴⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 266.

be invariable, it follows that we can never be certain that a given perceptual judgment is always free of error. Thus, even though sometimes the risk of error that judgments of perception involve is very low, it is still an existing risk of error. From this Russell concludes that “our subjective certainty is usually a result of habit” and may lead to faulty conclusions in circumstances which are unusual or unfamiliar to us.⁴⁴⁵ As I understand this claim, what he wants to say is that certainty of knowledge is a subjective feeling of certainty rather than an objective criterion of the truth of our beliefs, judgments, etc. This does not say that for him there is no objective certainty, only that we have no reliable criterion for it, and that subjective certainty is not such a criterion. However, as Russell admits, “it is perhaps true that judgments having a high degree of subjective certainty are more apt to be true than other judgments”.⁴⁴⁶ Russell concludes that there is no such thing as knowledge which is absolutely certain and completely free of error, nor is there an absolute criterion of certain knowledge. There are, however, criteria of verification of the truth of our beliefs (such as when we receive confirmation that what is happening at the moment is what we have predicted would happen).⁴⁴⁷ Russell observes that these criteria have been used by science for ages and we can consider them safe to use in theory of knowledge. And so, when Russell talks about foundational or certain knowledge in the neutral monist period, we have to keep in mind that he means relative certainty which might or might not be accompanied by a self-evident belief.

Having explained Russell’s new understanding of the certainty of knowledge, we are now in a position to consider how he accounts for it in terms of the theory of cognition. Before we broach the theory of the main experiential cognitive faculties, it is worth noting that in *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell believed that it is important not so much to *distinguish* between the

⁴⁴⁵*Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁶*Ibid.*

⁴⁴⁷*Ibid.*, p. 269.

cognitive faculties and their objects (which distinction was supposed to be based on the nature of the cognitive relation to the cognitive object), as was done in the acquaintance period, but rather to explain their common features and show how they work together to provide an adequate picture of our knowledge of the world. This, however, does not mean that there is a lack of distinction between the cognitive faculties in *The Analysis of Mind*, or that the distinction is not important in certain cases, as in the case of memory and imagination, for example. So, instead of dividing knowledge of the past into two kinds, knowledge by acquaintance (immediate past) and knowledge by description (remote past), and trying to reconcile this notion with the idea that there is only one faculty of memory which provides the most certain knowledge there is, in 1921 Russell is more concerned with showing how knowledge of the past, which is derivative knowledge anyway, the explanation of our 'integral experience' of the world.

The analysis of the integral experience of the world also requires a new vocabulary. The new theory of cognition works with such concepts as habit, association of images, feeling of pastness, feeling of belief, etc., most of which were not present in the acquaintance theory of cognition (at least, not in any significant way). In the sections that follow I offer a detailed analysis of the main cognitive faculties of perception (sensation at its core), memory, imagination, the causal laws of cognition, as well as the concepts of habit, association of images, feelings of belief, recognition, and pastness, and integral experience. Since Russell divides knowledge into the same cognitive faculties that he used in the acquaintance theory of knowledge, in my analysis of the neutral monism theory of cognition I will use Russell's division, and begin with the first and most important experiential cognitive faculty, the faculty of perception.

3.1. Sensation and Perception.

In this section I compare Russell's view on sensation and perception in both periods, which will help us detect the differences and possible similarities. I argue that the first important point of comparison between the theory of cognition in the acquaintance period and theory of cognition in the neutral monist period lies with Russell's views of sensation. We will first compare sensation to perception in both periods, and then compare sensations (the objects of sensation) to images in order to see what changes Russell introduces in the neutral monist theory of cognition.

In the acquaintance theory (at least until 1914), it is sensation that provides the most certain knowledge of the external world which is guaranteed by the directness and immediacy of sensory knowledge. In the new theory of cognition it is perception, and not sensation, which is the main cognitive faculty that provides the most certain experiential knowledge (which, according to the results we reached in the previous section, is still liable to error). Sensation, however, is the (non-cognitive) core of perception, which can be 'extracted' only after theoretical analysis. In "Perception" [1922], Russell writes that when we talk about sensation, we mean our sensory experience. What Russell suggests is that 'seeing' (or 'sensing', in general) is not to be separated from our processing of what we see: that is, seeing and understanding what we see, are the same thing.⁴⁴⁸ In this sense, 'seeing' is obviously dependent upon previous experiences. More importantly, when we process the seeing of the table, we tacitly accept that it is true that there is such an object in our field of vision. And this feeling of acceptance, which is also called belief (when Russell talks about belief being a feeling, he speaks with the vulgar, since, as we already

⁴⁴⁸I am not sure if Russell thinks that the way we use the word 'seeing' implies (or conflates) that we *understand* what we see, or he thinks that we actually cannot separate the seeing from the processing of what we see.

noted, technically speaking, only one of the elements of belief, namely, the act of belief, is constituted by a feeling), that accompanies our sensory experience, is an intrinsic element of our cognition. So, our knowledge of the external world is triggered by the sensory stimuli, but it happens at the level of images and beliefs.⁴⁴⁹ With this in mind, Russell sets out to describe how perception provides knowledge, and what role sensation plays for perceptual knowledge.

In accordance with the principles of neutral monism, perception is knowledge of both the mental and the physical. As we saw, Russell argues that the main elements that experiential knowledge is composed of are sensations and images, which, in turn, give rise to beliefs. Sensations are the non-cognitive elements of beliefs that have physical causes, as opposed to images whose causes are mental.⁴⁵⁰ Sensations are “members of a system which is a certain physical object”.⁴⁵¹ The difference between sensations and images, for example, is that sensations’ causes are external to the mind, while the causes of images are internal to the mind. In Chapter 8 of *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell proposes three main criteria to distinguish between images, in general, and sensations: 1) by degree of vividness (images having less vividness than sensations); 2) by our belief in the ‘physical reality’ of sensations versus the lack of belief in the ‘physical reality’ of images; 3) by the fact that the causes and effects of sensations are different from those of images (and imaginings).⁴⁵² Russell claims that the first two criteria are flawed and

⁴⁴⁹*The Collected Papers*, Vol. 9, p. 183.

⁴⁵⁰It needs to be noted here that images, in general, have mnemonic causes, which means that there is a possibility that some images have physical causes. Here is what Russell explains in *The Analysis of Mind*: “an image is occasioned, through association, by a sensation or another image, in other words that it has mnemonic cause – which does not prevent it, in principle, from also having physical cause. And I think it will be found that a causation of an image always proceeds according to mnemonic laws, i.e. that it is governed by habit and past experience.” (*Ibid.*, p. 150)

⁴⁵¹*Ibid.*, p. 109.

⁴⁵²*Ibid.*, p. 145.

not ‘universally applicable’, even though somewhat practical⁴⁵³. He assures us that it is not always the case that sensations are more vivid than images. On the contrary, hallucinations and delusions are often so vivid that they can fool us into believing that they are sensations.⁴⁵⁴ Thus, the best way, in the sense of most reliable and theoretically proven, to distinguish images from sensations is through their causes.⁴⁵⁵ Images are caused by *association with sensations*, not by stimuli that are external to the nervous system, as sensations are. In other words, images have mnemonic causes (the sensations that they represent are in the past), they are “governed by habit and past experience”^{456, 457}. Thus, a sensation, Russell writes, only “*seems* to give us knowledge

⁴⁵³*Ibid.*

⁴⁵⁴Russell argues that certain images are capable of evoking such strong emotional reactions, as in the case of lady Macbeth and her recurring hallucination of the dagger, that we cannot possibly claim, as Hume and Stout did, that images lack the vividness that sensations have. It is true that in most cases when we imagine an object, we do not act as though we will use it because we know that it does not have the same properties as the ‘real’ physical object. However, when we dream or hallucinate, we have the feeling that the images are as real as anything else in the world.

⁴⁵⁵Russell believes that the traditional theory of causality, according to which a cause is the antecedent of an event which produces that event without fail, is mistaken. This theory, he suggests, presents the cause and effect as isolated events whose relation is developed only in ideal circumstances. However, what is observed in nature is not a sequence of discrete events, but rather a *process* of a continuous change. Thus, if we regard the causal relation as a process, we will not be able to single out with certainty and necessity a given cause for a given event. Thus, Russell thought that a better explanation of the causal relation is that causes and effects form a “temporally contiguous processes” (*Ibid.*, p. 96). Our knowledge of causal relations is, therefore, empirical, and empirical knowledge is always approximate and liable to exceptions. So, we can never say for sure what the cause of a given event is, all we can do is offer a contingent explanation. The causal laws of both physics and psychology are only approximate, and liable to error. Therefore, the causal laws that theory of knowledge works with are also approximate and liable to error. The antecedents of events are ‘nearly invariable’ but never absolutely invariable.

⁴⁵⁶*Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁴⁵⁷The same applies, but to a lesser degree, to their effects. Sensations have both mental and physical effects. The example that Russell gives is the following. Imagine standing on the railway station platform, waiting for the train that you are supposed to catch. As you watch the train, both the physical effects (“the successive positions of the train”), and the mental ones (“the successive waves of fury and disappointment” in you) are present (*Ibid.*, p. 151). The effects from images, however, always follow mnemonic laws, that is, images follow laws that describe kinds of actions that turn experienced data into memory images. This does not mean that images

of a present physical object, while an image does not”⁴⁵⁸. But in reality, the difference between sensations and images is in the context in which they occur. and therefore, they do not invoke “different ways of knowing them”, and that is how it is possible to have both types of entities as part of perceptual knowledge.⁴⁵⁹

Following the same argument about entities requiring different types of knowledge, in *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell admits that introspection as a special type of knowledge, disappears from his epistemological vocabulary altogether. In 1913 Russell admitted that all the objects of cognition are external objects, that is, external to the mind, except the objects of introspection. In 1921 he believes that since perception is made of sensations, images and beliefs, we do not need another entity (an object of introspection) to explain how perception or cognition, in general, works. In other words, when you are asked to be ‘conscious of’ (to know by introspection) a table, the question of whether you really are conscious of a table or not, cannot be decided only by analysis of your state of mind (that is, an analysis of the faculty of introspection). What is also needed is “to ascertain whether your sensation is having those correlates which past experience causes you to assume, or whether the table, happens, in this case, to be a mirage”.⁴⁶⁰ In other words, Russell continues, observation shows us that there is nothing that is not composed of images and sensations, and that sensations and images differ only in their context and not intrinsically. Thus, there is no ‘special stuff’ that consciousness is

may not be able to produce physical effects, but that any such physical effects are produced by copying (mimicking) the physical effects of a sensation. When I picture a bowl full of sweet and succulent watermelon pieces, I feel how my mouth literally starts watering and I can almost taste their sweetness. This image, which is purely mental, but which has a physical effect on me, is only possible because I have previously experienced (sensed) the taste of the watermelon pieces.

⁴⁵⁸*Ibid.*, p. 110.

⁴⁵⁹*Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁰*Ibid.*, p. 113.

composed of, and no conscious experience that could be intrinsically distinguished from any other experience. Since objects of knowledge are inferred entities, then whether the object of what we know is introspective, that is, a ‘conscious experience’, or a physical object, makes very little difference to the way we know them. Even though there are, no doubt, things that we can observe only about ourselves and not about others, such as the feeling of pain, everything that we observe and turn into knowledge, is composed of elements which are intrinsically similar to the elements of what composes the material world. And thus, according to Russell not only is our knowledge about the world of introspection (consciousness) no more ‘privileged’ than our knowledge of the external world (as Hume thought), but it is not a different kind, at all. So, what earlier Russell called introspection, is nothing more than knowledge that we have arrived at by *reflecting on sensations*.⁴⁶¹

Having established that perception consists of sensations, images and beliefs and that everything in cognition can be analyzed with sensations, images and beliefs, without any special ‘conscious stuff’ of introspection, let us see what happens when we actually sense an object. According to Russell, sensation is what is given to us by our senses. Everything that comes from the senses – a smell, a taste, and also a “headache or the feeling of muscular strain” – is a sensation⁴⁶². However, as Russell puts it, there is “so much interpretation, so much of habitual correlation [of objects]” mixed with sensation that the only way to extract the core of perception is through a “careful investigation”⁴⁶³.

Perception of an object, on the other hand, is “the appearance of the object from a place where there is a brain with sense-organs and nerves”.⁴⁶⁴ As Russell writes in 1922, when a

⁴⁶¹*Ibid.*, p. 123.

⁴⁶²*Ibid.*, p. 139.

⁴⁶³*Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 131.

number of people report that they see a table, we conclude that the perceptions of the table are caused by a “train of events emanating from a common source, and modified gradually as they travel away from it”.⁴⁶⁵ A series of events occur between each observer and the physical object, and at the end of the causal chain comes the event that we call ‘perception’. The occurrence that we call ‘perception of a physical object’ has two main characteristics: a) it is causally connected to a series of previous events which are in the physical space; b) it can also be ‘known by a person’ or in other words, it can be part of our human experience. These two characteristics of perception, Russell concludes, are not necessarily connected. Occurrences that have the first characteristic constitute the physical world, those that have the second characteristic constitute the mental world. Thus, what constitutes perception, in general, is both mental and physical. So, it turns out that the object of perception is ‘neutral’ between all actual and possible observers: it is the set of all the particulars that participate in its perception. These particulars Russell calls ‘aspects’ or ‘perspectives’ of the object. This description of perception is reminiscent of *Our Knowledge of the External World*. In the next paragraph I show that Russell’s new theory of perception (and sensation) is in some ways similar to his views of perception (and sensation) in the acquaintance period. The similarities are indicative of one of the points we are illuminating in this chapter, namely that Russell’s interest in the theory of cognition (the analysis of the experiential cognitive faculties) persisted throughout all the other changes surrounding theory of knowledge from the acquaintance to the neutral monism period.

The first question for Russell’s view of perception in the neutral monist period, then, is how, if an object is the collection of all the perceived aspects, we collect these aspects or perspectives of the object into one thing that we call an object. According to him, the ‘real’ object is not itself perceived, it is inferred. And the decision whether a certain particular belongs

⁴⁶⁵*The Collected Papers*, Vol. 9, “Perception”, p. 191.

to the object in question or not, is to be settled not by referring to the ‘real’ material object which belongs to the physical world, as Russell thought in the mature acquaintance period until 1914 (we should not forget, however, that in the acquaintance period, Russell thought that we do not have access to the physical objects, independent of our experience and knowledge of them), but *only* by comparing the particulars and their relations with each other. What we have to do is analyze how the particulars are collected. This view is similar to what Russell suggested in 1914. The analysis of perception shows us that there is no ‘real’ object other than the collection of the aforementioned particulars. “According to this view that I am suggesting, a physical object or piece of matter is the collection of all those correlated particulars which would be regarded by common sense as its effects...”⁴⁶⁶ Physics and psychology, the main branches of knowledge responsible for the description of objects, offer two different ways of classifying the perceived particulars. Psychology and physics classify them according to the system of correlated particulars in different places. Both psychology and physics take into consideration what Russell calls the ‘intrinsic laws’ of perspective which provide the visual shape of the object, as well as the nature of the ‘intervening medium’ such as conditions of visibility, etc. (which change with the shortening of the distance between the perceiver and the object perceived). Whatever the system of classification used by physics or psychology is, one thing is certain – the physical object is not described and analyzed as a physical object but as a set of all the particulars perceived and inferred. When Russell refers to the object of perception as physical, and not mental, he is, in fact, referring to its cause. The object of perception is caused by something that is external to the mind. When a causal chain from the physical object reaches the observer, however, it is mixed with other particulars that it is in relation with, some of which have mental causes. Let us illustrate Russell’s view with an example of a perception of a table located in the

⁴⁶⁶*Ibid.*, p. 101.

middle of a kitchen.

The cause for the presentation of the table is external to the observer's mind. However, upon occurring in the mind, the presentation mixes with such things as the idea of color, shape, approximate distance from the observer, or from the other objects in the kitchen, as well as the visibility conditions that create the environment for its perception. If the kitchen is painted in bright yellow, then this may create an optical illusion that the kitchen is brighter than it actually is. Or, if the kitchen is an open concept design and leads to a dining room that has a big window, this may create the illusion that the table is of a bigger size than it actually is, etc. In other words, we cannot perceive an object in isolation from the perspective that it comes with, and we cannot describe it without the context in which it occurs.

This view of perception is confirmed by what Russell writes in 1922 in "Physics and Perception". Russell explains that since Kant's time, philosophy seems to be overemphasizing the importance of knowledge, and more specifically, of the distinction between what we know and what we do not know. For Russell, this overemphasis stems from the Cartesian dualism which he believes he has overcome in the neutral monist period. He sees the picture of perceptual knowledge as follows. The world is full of particulars, the sort of particulars that physics deals with, and some of these particulars (the ones that exist where there are brains) have "peculiar effects which are called 'being known' or 'being experienced'".⁴⁶⁷ These particulars can be collected into sets of particulars. Thus, when I see a penny, what I perceive is one member of the system of the 'momentary penny'. This member of the 'momentary penny' is 'situated' in one part of the brain, and near this part of the brain, there are very similar unperceived particulars which are also parts of the 'momentary penny'. Thus, the mental occurrence that we call 'perception' is a kind of a relation, based upon certain laws of change (such as the ones of

⁴⁶⁷*The Collected Papers*, Vol. 9, p. 131.

perspective), to a number of other relations that are all linked to each other in the same way. This leaves us with the definition of the fact of perception as a “member of a thing occurring in a place where there are mnemonic effects, and it is these mnemonic effects which give rise to what is called knowledge of the thing.”⁴⁶⁸ The ‘thing’ is defined not as one physical entity, but as a group of all the present occurrences in my mind that appear in our sensation. Russell believes that this theory of perception is plausible because he thinks it brings perception to harmony with the scientific principle of continuity, and because it harmonizes physics and psychology. In the sense of the so-presented picture of (perceptual) knowledge, it seems that sensation lacks this ‘relatedness’ to mnemonic phenomena (that is, to past events) which is a crucial characteristic of knowledge. Therefore, sensation is not cognitive, and perception is.

So, as we pointed out earlier, the view of perception and sensation that Russell defended in the neutral monist period bears similarities to the view on perception and sensation that he developed in 1918 and in the mature acquaintance period, particularly in *Our Knowledge of the External World*. The main difference between the accounts of sensation and perception in both periods lies in the fact that in 1912 and 1913 Russell regards sensation and perception as full-fledged cognitive faculties (sensation being the most obvious example of knowledge by acquaintance), while in the neutral monism period only perception qualifies as a cognitive faculty, and sensation is viewed as the non-cognitive core of perception. Perception is mixed with interpretation (and not just pure awareness of the object) and habitual experiences which correlate the objects of perception. This is precisely what makes it a *cognitive* faculty, unlike sensation.⁴⁶⁹

⁴⁶⁸ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶⁹ Since in the early and mature acquaintance period (until 1914) Russell thought that sensation is the most obvious example of knowledge by acquaintance, when I explain Russell’s position in the neutral monist period, according to which sensation is non-cognitive, what I imply is that in the neutral monist period it is the notion of knowledge by acquaintance, or immediate knowledge, that is now considered implausible.

The example that Russell gives in *The Analysis of Mind* to illustrate how perception, and not sensation, is the paradigmatic cognitive faculty which provides the most certain experiential knowledge available to us, is with our experiences in a foreign country. Immersed in a foreign environment where language and customs are different, Russell argues, one appears to be partially deaf and blind to a lot of sensations, and generally, not as responsive to the surroundings, because of the lack of a good understanding of what goes on around her. Russell's point seems to be that everything that we consider under normal circumstances to be a sensation, a datum coming straight from the senses, actually has to do with our habitual experiences over a prolonged period of time, as well as with the sense of familiarity of the environment. And it is the combination of pure sensation, habit⁴⁷⁰, interpretation, and expectation, that gives us the cognitive quality of our awareness of the world. In other words, we cannot have perception, or any of the other experiential cognitive faculties for that matter, without sensation. The difference between Russell's views on sensation in the acquaintance period and the neutral monist period is that in the neutral monist period Russell, as he himself admits, does not conflate having a taste of something (sensation), with knowing what the taste is of (perception).

Since in 1921 Russell considers perceptual knowledge to be the most certain experiential knowledge available to us (even though, it can never be as certain as it was in the acquaintance period because it is not directly acquired through acquaintance), we have to consider what makes it the most certain experiential knowledge, compared to the rest of experiential knowledge. I believe that the answer is, sensation. Sensation is at the core of perception, and sensation is a 'direct experience' of the world (without being knowledge per se), whose causes are physical (external to the mind). In other words, the main thing that is changed in the picture of sensory

⁴⁷⁰Acquired habits, for Russell, are also mnemonic phenomena. When a certain experience repeats itself, we acquire a habit which plays an active role in our response to a present stimulus. For example, when we are asked "What is the capital of France?", we respond "Paris" because of past experience which has led to the formation of habitual knowledge. (*The Analysis of Mind*, pp. 29-20).

and perceptual knowledge from the acquaintance theory is that perception brings a propositional element to sensation and turns it into cognition. But the direct contact with the world that we have through sensation (even though it is not cognitive) still brings (relative) certainty to the cognitive faculty of which sensation is a part.

Before we continue exploring further Russell's theory of cognition in the neutral monist period, which includes analysis of the faculties of memory and imagination, however, we need to consider some of the interpretations that Russell scholars offer on what Russell's new theory of perception is. These interpretations not only introduce the very important issues of the relationship between sensations and images, and sensation and perception, but they also show some of the difficulties that the new theory of cognition encountered and how Russell dealt with them. This critical perspective toward the theory of cognition in the neutral monist period will bring depth to the central issue that we have been discussing, namely, what has changed for Russell's theory of cognition since the acquaintance period.

3.1.1. Thomas Baldwin's, Robert Tully's, and Michael Lockwood's Interpretations of Sensation and Perception.

Thomas Baldwin, Michael Lockwood and Robert Tully agree that Russell's neutral monism theory of knowledge is based upon his account of sensation (just like his acquaintance theory of knowledge was)⁴⁷¹. Baldwin and Lockwood believe that Russell uses sensation in a new way that fits his new theory of cognition and theory of knowledge, while Tully argues that the

⁴⁷¹Thomas Baldwin, "From Knowledge by Acquaintance to Knowledge by Causation"; Robert Tully, "Russell's Neutral Monism", in *The Cambridge Companion to Russell*, pp. 420-449, pp. 332-371.

new theory of sensation has more similarities with the old one (from the acquaintance period) than might seem obvious at a first glance. The task in this section, then, is to look at how much Russell borrowed from, and how much he moved away from the theory of cognition in the acquaintance theory. I think that because comparison is the focus of this section, it is important for our analysis of Russell's new theory of cognition to explore the three positions and see if either Baldwin, Lockwood, or Tully might be right in their claims, and if so, what are the consequences for Russell's theory of cognition.

Thomas Baldwin compares Russell's theory of sensation from 1921 and 1913. For him one central difference between the theories of sensation in the acquaintance period until 1914 and neutral monism period is that Russell's 'sensations' from 1921, even though, 'roughly the same' as sense-data from the acquaintance period, are now perceived by Russell as "capable of forming the basis for logical constructions of both mind and matter"⁴⁷². Sense-data were not capable of doing that before because they were considered physical entities, and matter was not considered by Russell a product of a logical construction (at least not until 1914). In the new theory of cognition, the process of knowing is "dependent upon causal laws" and not upon simple entities alone which are physical in nature, as it was in the acquaintance period⁴⁷³. Thus, when in 1921 Russell says that sensations are the sources of knowledge, what he means is not that they are *literally* pieces of knowledge but that they inevitably *lead to a belief* about the external world,

⁴⁷²*Ibid.*, p. 440.

⁴⁷³*Analysis of Mind*, pp. 234-235. On p. 86 of the book, Russell explains that the general causal law of 'acquiring experience' is that "*If a complex stimulus A has caused a complex reaction B in an organism, the occurrence of a part of A on a future occasion tends to cause the whole reaction B.*" Then, later in the book (pp. 294-295) Russell explains that if a child who has burned herself approaches a fire, she will fear it and tend to stay away from it. Thus, based on previous experience, the effects of a fire are very different on a child that has burnt herself and on a child that has not. And so, what causes the reaction in the burnt child is not only the presence of fire near her (a single event at one time), but also the previous sensation of fire on her skin (two or more events at two or more times). Thus, Russell continues, "we are brought back to causal laws, and to the suggestion that many things which seem essentially mental are really neural" (*Ibid.*, pp. 294-295).

which belief is the actual element of cognition. According to the new theory of cognition, sensations are the core parts of perceptual knowledge, which consists not only of sensations but also of mnemic phenomena (images and beliefs), the latter being propositional (that is, cognitive) entities. Naturally, this picture of perception has consequences for the understanding of the nature of knowledge. In *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell argues that perceptual knowledge is not self-evident and as certain as sensation in the acquaintance period was thought to be, for reasons already explained. If we accept that this we have interpreted Baldwin's position correctly, then it seems that the results from Baldwin's analysis of Russell's theories of cognition in both periods, coincide with the results that we have reached.

Robert Tully agrees that Russell's neutral monist theory of cognition and theory of experiential knowledge are based upon his account of sensation but, unlike Baldwin, he concludes that this shows that Russell has not actually broken away from the theory of knowledge that he offered in the (later) acquaintance period (1914-1918) – at least, not in any significant way. Tully points to two main reasons for his conclusion. The first one is given in his “Three Studies of Russell's Neutral Monism”, where Tully makes the general comment that Russell's theory of memory in 1921, which relies on images and other mental phenomena such as feeling of expectation, bare assent and remembering, clashes with the principles of neutral monism which, he claims, rejects the existence of purely mental phenomena.⁴⁷⁴ This, according to Tully, implies that Russell was hesitant about the main principles of the theory of neutral monism at the time when he wrote *The Analysis of Mind*. As we already pointed out earlier, Mafizuddin Ahmed also believes that in 1921 Russell was not a full-fledged neutral monist, since he did not share the first premise of neutral monism, namely that the world is made of neutral stuff, which excludes purely mental (and purely physical entities). Even though Ahmed does not

⁴⁷⁴Tully, “Three Studies of Russell's Neutral Monism”, in *Russell*, 1993, 13, p. 17.

claim, like Tully does, that in 1921 Russell has not broken away from his (later) acquaintance theory, he admits that Russell's theory of knowledge in 1921 is characterized by a partial neutralism and partial dualism.⁴⁷⁵

It seems to me that Ahmed's position is more mitigated than Tully's position. I think it is fair to say that in 1921 Russell's theory of cognition had certain dualistic features, and that there were similarities between the theory of cognition developed in *Our Knowledge of the External World* and in "On Propositions" and *The Analysis of Mind*. The fact that there is a continuation between his theory of cognition in both periods, however, does not mean that he has not moved away from the acquaintance theory of knowledge.⁴⁷⁶ As we saw from the analysis of Russell's theory of cognition in the later acquaintance period, it is clear that in 1918 Russell was moving away from the act-object-subject of cognition model and seeking to replace it with a different model. Also, even in *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell admits that he does not want to advocate certain positions defended by neutral monists like James, but that he sees their value more than he did before. An example is Russell's position on belief-feeling, explained earlier. Russell admits that James's position, that belief does not require any special feeling, but that the sheer existence of an image, which is not contradicted in any way, is sufficient to make belief what it is, has a "certain dynamic power" and could account for some simple phenomena in belief, it

⁴⁷⁵Ahmed, p. 38.

⁴⁷⁶It needs to be noted that in 1921 Russell does not, actually, claim that images are *intrinsically* mental phenomena. Images are particulars, like any other particular, except for the fact that they are subject to psychological laws only. Then, even if we ignore Semon's influence on Russell's understanding of images as mnemonic phenomena, it would be unfair to interpret Russell's position in 1921 as only a partial neutral monist position, as both Tully and Ahmed seem to suggest. As Nicholas Griffin has pointed out to me, both Ahmed and Tully, might have the same complaint about Russell's admitting certain other particulars, such as the unsensed physical objects, which are subject only to physical laws. The fact that neither Tully nor Ahmed does that, suggests that in their interpretation of Russell's early neutral monist period, they have an unacknowledged tendency to physicalism, while accusing Russell of an unacknowledged tendency to dualism.

cannot explain such complex phenomena as abstract beliefs or memory beliefs.⁴⁷⁷

I think that, without going into the details of Tully's position, we can respond to his interpretation by pointing to the following fact, discussed earlier in the chapter.⁴⁷⁸ According to Russell himself, his version of neutral monism, which included the use of such mental phenomena as images, did not prove to be a threat for the general principles of neutral monism and therefore Russell did not have a reason to be hesitant about embracing it. In addition to what was said in footnote 398 above, as pointed out earlier, at the end of *The Analysis of Mind*, where Russell discusses purely mental phenomena, he states that images are subject to mnemic causation. And as he states, "mnemic causation may be reducible to ordinary physical causation in nervous tissue".⁴⁷⁹ In other words, it seems that via mnemic causation, we can argue that the existence of purely mental phenomena, does not necessarily, contradict the neutral monism principle that all entities are neutral entities (that is, there are no purely mental or purely physical entities). When I have an image of something, it is accompanied by a certain feeling of assent that the thing I have an image of is actually a true copy of the thing and not just a fabrication of my mind. Thus, the image evokes the original thing either through a memory (which, in part, is a habit formed in the past, of responding to certain stimuli which are not present any more), or through an actual sensation of it. So, as it turns out, the image of something has the same effects as the (physical) thing itself, and this is the case because we should not treat causes as single events but as complex events which combine present events as well as past events.

The second reason, which, in my opinion, is stronger than the first one, that Tully gives for thinking Russell reverted to the theory of acquaintance is that Russell fails to explain how exactly the concept of *act* of cognition, which earlier was believed to consist of the dual relation

⁴⁷⁷*The Analysis of Mind*, pp. 249-250.

⁴⁷⁸See the discussion on pp. 176-178 of the present chapter.

⁴⁷⁹*The Analysis of Mind*, p. 303.

of acquaintance (which duality of acquaintance brings Tully to call Russell an epistemological dualist), has vanished after 1918.⁴⁸⁰ According to Tully all that Russell did in *The Analysis of Mind* was to “redirect the attention” from the *act* of cognition toward the *objects* of cognition without elaborating on the reasons for this redirection⁴⁸¹. On his view, in the post-acquaintance period (around 1919), Russell regarded the act of cognition as nothing more than a constituent of a presentation. And so in the neutral monist period he wanted to explore what the presentation (the object of cognition) which does not possess an “irreducibly mental character”, consists of.⁴⁸² And as we already discovered, in 1921 Russell believed that the ‘objects’ of cognition are sensations and images.

Tully sees problems with both entities. Russell talks about images which he defines as mnemonic phenomena and which enter into the relation of mnemonic causation with other entities, such as beliefs and sensations. But Tully finds it implausible that according to Russell’s new theory, images are fully observable and empirically detectable while the actual (mental) act of imagining, remembering, or perceiving is considered by Russell empirically unobservable and undetectable. For Tully, Russell’s thesis that sensations become data only when conjoined with propositional entities such as images and beliefs, leads him to conclude that beliefs and images

⁴⁸⁰Tully does not specify what he means by ‘epistemological dualism’, so I interpret it in the broadest possible sense meaning that subject and object, the perceiving mind and the physical object, are two different (in substance) entities which are not reducible to each other. In this sense, in the acquaintance period, Russell did subscribe to epistemological dualism, since he regarded acquaintance, or knowledge to be a dual relation between a subject (or mind) and an object of cognition (which is physical, with the exception of the object of introspection). In “Three Studies of Neutral Monism”, Tully explains that in the period 1910-1913 Russell’s dualism was not of substances or objects (even though, according to Tully, there is a strong suggestion in *The Problems of Philosophy*, where Russell contrasted matter and sense-data, of a dualism of objects), and not strictly a dualism of properties, but a dualism of the relation of acquaintance and sense-data. (“Three Studies of Russell’s Neutral Monism”, pp. 21-22.)

⁴⁸¹Tully, p. 352.

⁴⁸²*Ibid.*

very much resemble what was defined in the acquaintance period as a mental act of cognition.⁴⁸³

When an image clusters with other images and even with other sensations, beliefs are formed, and without beliefs, we cannot have ‘data’ (which are pieces of knowledge). Images are also components of beliefs. Beliefs, in turn, consist of the feeling of assent and a relation “actually subsisting between the assent and the proposition”.⁴⁸⁴ The role of the latter is to bind the two other components. Thus, it seems that, for Tully, images and beliefs play the same role as the mental act of cognition in the acquaintance period. This, for Tully, is an indication that even in 1921 Russell was still an epistemological dualist, and not a neutral monist, and that he still regarded cognition as a dual relation between a material and a mental entity.⁴⁸⁵

Thus, Tully’s claim that images and beliefs play the same role as the mental act of cognition, leads him to view sensations as not significantly different from the sense-data in the acquaintance period in that they play the same role in the later theory as they did in the earlier one. He points out that in *The Analysis of Mind* Russell still refers to sensations as *particulars* that are parts of a dual relation between the subject and the object of cognition.⁴⁸⁶ When sensations are collected, they form part of the private experience, or what Russell calls ‘the biography’, of the person who has them. Along with the biographical element in them, however, they are also mind-independent physical objects. These two aspects of sensations, the

⁴⁸³If Tully’s thesis is that only when conjoined with beliefs or other propositional elements, sensations become ‘data’ that is, elements that are cognitive entities, then, this certainly sounds true for Russell’s theory of cognition in the neutral monism period. However, the use of ‘data’ is somewhat misleading in the sense that it suggest that sensations are elements upon which knowledge is based. While this is true, it does not seem that sensations need the addition of any propositional element in order for them to be elements upon which knowledge is based. They would need the addition of such entities as images and beliefs to be considered cognitive.

⁴⁸⁴*Analysis of Mind*, p. 251.

⁴⁸⁵Tully, 354.

⁴⁸⁶I think what Tully is saying is not that in 1921 Russell literally talks about a dual relation between a subject and an object of cognition, but that this is what, in reality, results from his analysis of knowledge.

biographical and the physical, are put together by the presence of images to which sensations give rise. Sensations give rise to mnemonic phenomena such as (memory-)images and this is what turns a simple private experience into a full-fledged experience (that we refer to as 'life') that could be shared, and analyzed objectively. Tully believes that sensations, as described in 1921, are the same as sense-data from the acquaintance period, only under "different management".⁴⁸⁷ This is what Tully calls elsewhere "revisionary dualism rather than unalloyed monism".⁴⁸⁸

To summarize, Tully thinks that Russell was not really a neutral monist when he wrote *The Analysis of Mind*, but rather a "disguised epistemological dualist". His conclusion is based upon Russell's analysis of sensations, images, and beliefs. For Tully, in 1921 Russell wanted to dispense with the act of cognition (which would tie him to the previous epistemological dualism), but what he actually did was to replace its function in the theory of cognition with the 'clustering' of images that lead to beliefs. (When images cluster together with other images and sensations, they form beliefs.) And beliefs bind together what is given to us (sensations), which is physical, with what is in our minds, which is mental. This leads Tully to conclude that in 1921 Russell still regarded sensations as physical entities that are given to us (and therefore, independent of our minds), which makes them similar to sense-data from the acquaintance period.

I agree with Tully's observation that there are more similarities between the two periods than it may seem at first glance. As Russell himself admits in *The Analysis of Mind*, and in *My Philosophical Development*, the very nature of knowledge presupposes that there be a knower and a known, and so it is difficult to think how we can reduce completely the act, the object, and the subject of cognition to one entity. And that is why, Russell considered re-introducing the act

⁴⁸⁷Tully, p. 355.

⁴⁸⁸*Ibid.*

of acquaintance later in the neutral monism period as the act of noticing or awareness. However, it seems to me that, as indicated earlier, Tully reads too much into Russell's alleged 'dualism' in the early neutral monist period. To say that Russell was not a neutral monist when he claimed he was, seems misleading. We could point against Tully's conclusion that Russell was a dualist in disguise in the neutral monist period, the fact that under neutral monism, for Russell the two sides of the dual cognitive relation, the object and the subject of cognition, are subject to further analysis, which proves in the end that they are made of the same stuff (i.e., that they are neutral entities). This way, the dual cognitive relation is not irreducible and does not have an explanatory power for the theory of cognition in the neutral monist period, as Tully wants to present it. Also, following Tully's logic that Russell was not a neutral monist when he claimed he was, we could say that Russell was as much of a neutral monist as a neutral monist could be and that, perhaps, there is more dualism in neutral monism, that a (full-fledged) neutral monist would like to admit. This kind of evaluation, however, is well beyond the goal that I have set for my dissertation. It seems to me that when Russell accepted neutral monism, he thought that he accepted the main principles of the theory, and that some of the principles defended by neutral monists such as James were what Russell wanted to defend, and some of them were not (such as the view that belief-feelings are not constituents of belief), even though he appreciated them now more than he appreciated them before. Then, Russell was aware that his claim that there are purely mental, and purely physical entities, is at odds with neutral monism, but he thought that he could work it out with the notion of mnemic causation.

It also seems to me that Tully suggests, that Russell gave up on the idea of direct knowledge as early as 1914. And that this move is independent of whether Russell was an epistemological dualist or an epistemological monist. This interpretation of Russell's position is shared by Michael Lockwood, whose position I will now consider. Lockwood's, as well as Tully's implicit suggestion (that Russell was beginning to reconsider the idea of a direct

knowledge as early as 1914) is a more modest conclusion, and one that I accept, compared to Tully's main conclusion that in 1921 Russell was not actually a neutral monist but a disguised epistemological dualist (which means that his new theory of cognition and theory of knowledge that he embraced after 1919 was not so new, after all).

In "What Was Russell's Neutral Monism?", Michael Lockwood argues that most of the central notions of Russell's neutral monism were in place as early as 1914. Sense-data were already regarded as neither mental nor physical entities. To remind the reader, in *Our Knowledge of the External World* Russell talks about the *perspective* in which every sense-datum appears.⁴⁸⁹ Lockwood believes that the concept of perspective is the same as what Russell calls in 1921 a *context* according to which every element of knowledge can be placed or interpreted. Every sense-datum or sensation is to be interpreted as a set of appearances (or presentations) that are organized according to the laws of perspective, or according to the different contexts in which the concepts are used : "*qua* element of a set of appearances constitutive of a physical object at a time, it [the sense-datum] is to be regarded as material, but *qua* element in a perspective constitutive of a person's simultaneous perceptual experiences, it may be regarded as mental."⁴⁹⁰ According to Lockwood, Russell's theory of knowledge in the period between 1914 and 1919

⁴⁸⁹Russell talks about how perceptual knowledge depends on the perspective of the subject even in *The Problems of Philosophy*. The new element, introduced in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, is 'perspective space'. Here is how Russell explains it: sometimes, the perspectives that two people perceive are very similar that they are described in the same way. "In case the similarity is very great, we say the points of view of the two perspectives are near together in space; but this space in which they are near together is totally different from the spaces inside the two perspectives. It is a relation between the perspectives, and is not in either of them; no one can perceive it, and if it is to be known it can be only by inference." (*Ibid.*, p. 96). While each perspective, Russell continues, contains its own space (private space), there is only one, all-embracing perspective-space in which all perspectives (or points of view) are the elements. Thus, the perspective-space is the system of the private spaces (points of view) themselves. Each private space counts as one point within the perspective-space. These private spaces are ordered by means of their similarity. (*Ibid.*, pp. 97-98).

⁴⁹⁰Michael Lockwood, "What Was Russell's Neutral Monism?", in *Midwest Studies in Philosophy*, 1981, 6, p. 146.

fell short of being full-fledged neutral monism only insofar as he had not yet given up on the subject of cognition. Lockwood believes that it was only in *The Analysis of Mind* that Russell dispensed with this entity, and this had important consequences for the new theory of cognition. Since, according to the new theory, there is no recipient available to collect the data that are given to us through the senses, the term sense-datum was also to be replaced with something that did not suggest givenness. So, Lockwood agrees with Baldwin that in 1921 the concept of sensation is not used in the same way as the concept of sense-datum is used in the acquaintance period. The question that Lockwood needs to clarify is what the new concept of sensation would actually consist of.

In the chapter on perception in *The Analysis of Mind* Russell argues that every object that is perceived by a brain consists of a set of *regular appearances* and a set of *irregular appearances*. What Russell calls a set of regular appearances of the object is the object taken in an ideal case, that is, as though all the appearances of the object, from all possible perspectives, were available to the brain (which, in reality, is not the case). The set of irregular appearances of the object, however, is the appearance of the object as being somehow distorted by the medium in which it appears to the human brain. The example that Russell gives describes a star perceived as a luminous point by someone standing on the planet Earth. In ideal conditions, the star is a set of regular appearances. Thus, if we consider the star as a set of regular appearances, then its appearance at a certain place “does not require any cause or explanation other than the existence of the star”.⁴⁹¹ So, we may say, continues Russell, that a regular appearance of the star is due to the star alone. But if the star is perceived by a human brain, then its appearance will be irregular since it will have to reach our atmosphere and as a result its image might be distorted for the human eye. The atmosphere and the visibility conditions, including the human brain, are all parts

⁴⁹¹Russell, *The Analysis of Mind*, p. 134.

of what Russell calls an 'intervening medium'.

In sensation and perception we deal with irregular appearances. Sometimes, the irregularity is so big that the sensation cannot be traced back to the physical object any more. Thus, Russell concludes, sensation and perception are never precise, they are always to some degree vague and confused. In the cases when a sensation can be traced back to the physical object, that is, to the set of regular appearances, then we say that the sensation is caused by the physical object. When the sensation can only be traced back to the set of irregular appearances that have occurred in the brain, then we say that the sensation is not caused by the physical object. The latter case is partly what we might define as a product of our imagination (a hallucination is an example of that). Russell's conclusion is that we can never be completely sure of our distinction between sensation (or perception), and imagination, for example.

Lockwood does not seem to have a problem with the results that Russell reaches about the distinction between sensations and images. He thinks, however, that in his discussion of the regular and irregular sets of appearances, Russell should have argued explicitly that we cannot have the same 'intimate' and 'immediate' apprehension of objects of sensation and perception (because they work with irregular sets of appearances), as we do with objects that compose our own mental life. And this is precisely the new element that Russell brings to the theory of sensation and perception in 1921, namely that it is an illusion to think that we can have the kind of relationship with our sensations that was defended in the acquaintance theory of knowledge.⁴⁹²

⁴⁹²However, Lockwood points to two notorious difficulties associated with this new perspective on sensation and perception (Lockwood, pp. 154-155). On the one hand, if, according to Lockwood, Russell identifies mental events with brain events, it seems that the old epistemological dualism and the material-mental dichotomy which was present in the acquaintance theory is replaced in the neutral monism theory by a new one – the dichotomy between two types of property of the sensation and perception, the physical and the phenomenal property. The second difficulty that Lockwood points to is 'the illusion of contingency'. Even if we think that mental and brain events are identical, we have a strong intuition that brain events are actually only accompanied by mental events, and that the brain event could exist unaccompanied by the mental event, and vice versa. The question concerning the possible dualism that Russell might be getting into with the new theory of knowledge was discussed

In my opinion, what Baldwin and Lockwood have right and Tully misses, is that the changes that Russell made in the theory of cognition under the acquaintance theory and under the neutral monism theory were not prompted by the fact that Russell wanted to dispose of his epistemological dualism between material (physical) and mental, subjective and objective (this does not contradict the claim that the loss of the epistemological dualism, which Tully disputes, may have come as a result of the changes). I agree with Lockwood and Tully that around 1914 Russell was beginning to make changes in the theory of cognition, such as introducing the idea of perspective space. However, we should not forget that, as we mentioned earlier in the chapter, in 1914 Russell's theory of cognition and theory of knowledge was still operating within the framework of the subject-object dichotomy and acquaintance was still a part of Russell's conceptual apparatus. As far as Tully's criticism of Russell's new theory of cognition under neutral monism as presented in *The Analysis of Mind* goes, I agree that Russell did not elaborate sufficiently on why certain concepts, such as the concept of act of cognition, were abandoned. I agree that the disappearance of the act of cognition leaves a blank spot in Russell's picture of knowledge, since it is very difficult to conceive of knowledge without conceiving of some sort of an act of cognition. However, as we already discussed, Russell analyzes away the act of cognition, without denying that when analyzing knowledge, it is only natural to think about a knower that is aware of (knows) a known. So, what I think was important for Russell in 1921 was to build a coherent theory of cognition which would comply, generally, with the principles of the theory of neutral monism. This does not mean that he accepted James's, or anybody's neutral monism, without modifying certain principles. I believe that with the abandonment of immediate knowledge, Russell was fully aware that the certainty of knowledge would suffer. As quoted

earlier, with regard to Tully's verdict on Russell's neutral monism in 1921. As it was noted, the fact that Russell's theory of knowledge in 1921 might have tolerated a certain dualism, does not mean that Russell was not a neutral monist.

earlier, in *The Analysis of Mind* he shows that he accepts the consequences of abandoning the concept of acquaintance, in particular, that even perceptual knowledge is not free of doubt or error. In the light of this, I do not think that in 1921 the concept of sensation which, Russell says (and which Baldwin, Lockwood, and Tully acknowledge), is at the core of the theory of cognition, is the same as the concept of sense-datum in the acquaintance period. This fact, combined with Russell's claim in *The Analysis of Mind* that sensation is the core of perception (and certain types of memory) and it is sensation that guarantees the certainty of perceptual knowledge, shows us that Russell had a persistent interest in the theory of cognition, which as, *The Analysis of Mind* shows, was becoming increasingly complicated (and in which Russell involved considerably more psychological analysis and vocabulary than in the acquaintance period).

3.2. Memory.

In this section I argue that the faculty of memory plays an equally important, if not even more important, part for the theory of cognition in the neutral monism period, as it did in the acquaintance period. In this section, I will first analyze the way that Russell defines memory, in terms of images, feeling of pastness, feeling of familiarity, and recognition. Then, I will point to some of the difficulties that memory presents for the theory of cognition under neutral monism.

In the neutral monist theory of cognition, memory is what makes our experience of the world integral because it connects knowledge of the present with knowledge of the past.⁴⁹³ I

⁴⁹³Baldwin is one of the few scholars who recognizes the importance of memory for the theory of cognition in the neutral monist period. Baldwin believes that, according to Russell, we should study memory in the light of the relation between the stimuli and the response of our minds, which means that "memory's content should match its cause" (Baldwin, p. 442). In other words, Baldwin believes that in 1921 Russell has a causal theory of memory, based on the

believe we can argue that, regardless of what kind of a theory of memory Russell has in the neutral monism period, the results he reaches from the analysis of memory have an impact on the whole theory of knowledge. Memory is investigated in comparison with the faculty of perception and the faculty of imagination. Knowledge of the past is not only an essential part of our integral experience but it also helps us understand all the other types of knowledge. Thus, the accurate description of memory is vital for understanding how the other (experiential) cognitive faculties work.

I believe that Russell's struggle with the faculty of memory that began in the acquaintance period are far from over even in 1921. One similarity between *Theory of Knowledge* and *The Analysis of Mind* is that in *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell still considers immediate memory to be the closest one to sensation. Another similarity is that, just as he did in *Theory of Knowledge*, in *The Analysis of Mind* Russell defines memory by comparing it to sensation and perception. But the similarities between the two works end there.

As we already showed in the previous section, in the neutral monism period Russell has a new understanding of knowledge, which affects how he classifies the cognitive faculties.

stimulus-response causal theory. I will not dispute the claim that Russell had a causal theory of memory, as I think that in 1921 Russell did believe that the difference between memory-images and imagination-images is that memory-images have physical prototypes (are caused by sensations) and imagination-images do not. However, I would like to point out to two things with regard to Baldwin's interpretation of Russell's account of memory. First, it is true that in *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell compares how our memory works to the working of a thermometer, but the textual evidence shows us that Russell did not end the story there. In the chapter on truth and falsehood in *The Analysis of Mind* Russell says that the question whether our minds should be compared, as far as knowledge is concerned, to (scientific) instruments such as thermometers and barometers is very important, and that he thinks that the behaviorists' account of knowledge as a mental response to stimuli from the environment is "important *but not exhaustive* of knowledge" [*italics added*] (*Ibid.*, p. 254). This quotation makes me think that in 1921 Russell's theory of memory was not based exclusively upon the stimulus-response causal theory, as Baldwin seems to present it. Another evidence against Baldwin's claim is that in *The Analysis of Mind* Russell says that the causes of memory-beliefs are often obscure and it is not easy or even always possible to investigate them (*The Analysis of Mind*, pp. 178-179). It seems to me that, in the light of the latter claim, to investigate the nature of memory, we will need more help from psychology, rather than physics.

Perception is what Russell calls “integral experience of things in the environment, out of which sensation is extracted by psychological analysis”.⁴⁹⁴ This ‘integral experience’ is explained in terms of ‘habit’, ‘association’, ‘belief’, and ‘image’. As Russell clarifies in “Perception” [1922], sensations are the results of an external stimulus that is registered on the sense-organ.⁴⁹⁵ They are not based upon any previous experience. Images, however, are different from sensations, in the sense that they involve past experience and not just the immediate results of the sensory stimuli. So, even when I see a table that I have never seen before, there is still an expectation that the table will be of certain shape, feel and coloring. This expectation is part of my overall experience and is not a result of the momentary sensory stimulus. This experience, which can be remembered, or which can modify our habits or, more generally, which has ‘mnemic effects’, and thus, which can be cognized, is what he calls ‘integral experience’. Habit is a concept that involves the occurrence of similar events at different times. It is true, Russell admits, that habit transforms the sensory experience into experience which can be remembered, associated, imagined, or expected, but it is unwise to argue that habit (without beliefs) can explain anything about memory. As Russell puts it, behaviorists who believe that habit explains how memory works, think this because they already trust memory without really knowing why (without exploring its mechanisms). To understand how, according to Russell, habit and association work toward building our integral experience, we need to consider the concept of “*fact* of past experience”. As we know, facts are the objects of perception. So, in order to know how memory works, we need to know how perception works. Perception is formed by what Russell calls “sensational ingredients” which bring up such “habitual associates” as images and expectations. In other words, perception consists of sensations (which are at its core), and images and

⁴⁹⁴*The Analysis of Mind*, p. 157.

⁴⁹⁵*The Collected Papers*, Vol. 9, p. 183.

expectations (which are formed by association with sensations). In order to understand how our past experience is turned into knowledge of the past, we need to look at how sensations, which are non-cognitive, turn into cognitive elements (images), through habit and association.

Since, as we discovered from the previous section, images are central for the new theory of cognition, I will begin the analysis of memory with analysis of the concept of image. In the chapter on memory, Russell provides a more detailed account of how images interact with other cognitive entities. Images are considered to be copies and, in the case of memory, they are copies of past sensations. This statement alone, Russell argues, raises many questions and leads to difficulties which need to be addressed. First, are images exact or only approximate copies of past sensations? Establishing the reliability of memory-images will help us establish the reliability of knowledge of the past.

Because images are copies of ‘past sensible experiences’, they are not as reliable sources of knowledge, in the sense of being as accurate, as past sense-data would have been (which is what Russell believed memory consists of in the acquaintance period).⁴⁹⁶ But then, as we saw in Chapter 2, Russell faced certain challenges with the notion of past sense-data and the relation present entities bear to past ones (i.e., to ones that no longer exist).⁴⁹⁷ This issue does not arise in the new theory of memory because in 1921 Russell thought that knowledge of the past is logically independent of the past itself. This is possible because the main constituents of memory (as of any cognitive faculty for that matter) are images, and images are only copies of sense-data. Thus, if images are copies of past sense-data, they can be before the mind (analyzed in the

⁴⁹⁶*Ibid.*, p. 158.

⁴⁹⁷He had to explain the odd notion that we are acquainted with something that is not present any more. This required a distinction between the different senses of ‘present’, and also, a careful consideration of whether the past entities which enter in acquaintance, are causally active or causally passive. As far as I am concerned, I do not think that Russell’s theory of memory in the acquaintance period made it absolutely clear what kind of a relation with the past entities the subject has.

present), without having to face the difficulty of having to explain how past sense-data are past and present at the same time, as Russell did in the acquaintance period. At the same time, in the acquaintance theory Russell discovered that memory is of two types, immediate and remote, the former providing knowledge by acquaintance, and the latter knowledge by description.

Immediate memory provides the most certain knowledge that there is, while remote memory provides only relatively certain knowledge, which in many cases is considered rather unreliable.

This created a certain tension within the theory of memory. Knowledge of the past is of great importance for the whole theory of knowledge by acquaintance, since it shows that knowledge by acquaintance goes beyond the fleeting present. At the same time, it turns out that knowledge of the past is not *all* knowledge by acquaintance, which requires a careful distinction between the types of knowledge of the past, and also an account of the reliability of knowledge of the past. In the theory of memory under neutral monism, where images are the main constituents of all experiential knowledge, the distinction between recent and remote types of memory does not seem to be of crucial importance. Thus, introducing images (along with the general principle of neutral monism that the different types of particulars do not require different types of knowledge) seems to have simplified Russell's task of analyzing memory and knowledge of the past. This simplification, which translated into Russell's language, means also an improvement of our account of knowledge of the past, however, comes at a price. The price is paid by the certainty of knowledge of the past. In the neutral monism period memory provides only relatively certain knowledge (the more remote it is, the lower the degree of certainty is), and is never as certain as immediate memory was in the acquaintance period. In other words, in the new account of memory, we do not have knowledge of the past which is as certain as knowledge of the immediate past was in the acquaintance theory.

Before we continue with the analysis of memory, we need to address the issue of skepticism and knowledge in the neutral monist period, since it is particularly relevant to the

analysis of knowledge of the past. As mentioned earlier, in the neutral monism period, Russell does not find the same high degree of certainty of experiential knowledge as he did in the acquaintance period. This is particularly obvious in the case of knowledge of the past. Since, according to Russell's theory of knowledge in the neutral monism period, we do not have direct, but only indirect knowledge of the external world, none of the methods of verification of our beliefs of the world provide a "theoretical refutation of the sceptic, whose position must remain logically unassailable".⁴⁹⁸ However, adds Russell, the practical methods that we use to verify our beliefs, allow us to gradually build philosophical and scientific knowledge, which is never absolutely certain or infallible. In other words, there is no 'logical impossibility' in the skeptical hypothesis that the world sprang into existence five minutes ago and that all the people in the world remember a completely unreal past. (The reason for this is that there is no logically necessary connection between events that are happening at different times.) This position sounds like an echo from what Russell concluded about truth and falsehood in "On Propositions". There Russell concluded that, apart from the 'uninteresting' formal definition of truth as a correspondence between the proposition and its objective, we usually discover the truth by linking beliefs and actions. True beliefs lead to certain actions, which do not occur if the belief is false. However, as Russell points out, the 'pleasant effects' of a belief are not sufficient to either verify our beliefs, or to define truth. But even if we use the formal definition of truth, we cannot be reassured that there is anything at all that can be known.⁴⁹⁹ So, it seems that, generally, in the neutral monism period the lack of self-evident direct knowledge of the world leads to the conclusion that our knowledge of the world is more vulnerable to skepticism than it was in the

⁴⁹⁸*Ibid.*, p. 271.

⁴⁹⁹"The further inquiry whether, if our definition of truth is correct, there is anything that can be known, is one that I cannot now undertake; but if the result of such an inquiry should prove adverse, I should not regard that as affording any theoretical objection to the proposed definition." ("On Propositions", p. 320)

acquaintance period.⁵⁰⁰

I think it is important to note here, however, that Russell's position on (total) skepticism with regard to (experiential) knowledge in the neutral monism period is not *substantially* different from the position he entertained in the acquaintance period. The difference comes from the susceptibility of knowledge to *skeptical doubt* (and not to total skepticism). In other words, it is not the case that in the acquaintance period Russell thought that experiential knowledge is immune to (total) skepticism, but rather that it is *more* immune to skeptical doubt than it appears to be in the neutral monism period. Let us compare, for example, what Russell writes about skepticism and knowledge in *Theory of Knowledge* and *Our Knowledge of the External World*. In *Theory of Knowledge* Russell writes, "The endeavor to define self-evidence brings to a head the conflict between the objectivity of truth and the subjectivity of belief by which the skepticism of every age has been nourished. I do not pretend to be able to decide this secular conflict. But we shall find it not without interest and profit to explore the strength and weakness of the opposing forces."⁵⁰¹ In considering both sides of the story of knowledge, the skeptical and the non-skeptical, Russell continues, "The position of the skeptic who questions without denying is impregnable. ... The extreme skeptical position remains, therefore, one which is philosophically tenable."⁵⁰² But Russell reassures us in *Theory of Knowledge* that, "the skeptical philosophy is

⁵⁰⁰In support of this contention, here is what Russell writes in *The Analysis of Mind* on self-evidence, certainty of knowledge and skeptical doubt: "Again, self-evidence must not be the same thing as the absence of doubt or the presence of complete certainty. If we are completely certain of a proposition, we do not seek a ground to support our belief. If self-evidence is alleged as a ground of belief, that implies that doubt has crept in, and that our self-evident proposition has not wholly resisted the assaults of scepticism. To say that any given person believes some things so firmly that he cannot be made to doubt them is no doubt true. Such beliefs he will be willing to use as premisses in reasoning, and to him personally they will seem to have as much evidence as any belief can need. But among the propositions which one man finds indubitable there will be some that another man finds it quite possible to doubt." (*The Analysis of Mind*, p, 263)

⁵⁰¹*Theory of Knowledge*, p. 156.

⁵⁰²*Ibid.*, p. 159.

brief; it begins and ends in questioning. By its nature, it cannot argue, or seek to establish any result, even its own tenability. Therefore its philosophical interest is soon exhausted and we turn to the other hypotheses, according to which we do know some propositions.”⁵⁰³ For Russell there is more (practical if not theoretical) value in what he calls the ‘analytic attitude’ over the questioning (skeptical) attitude. The analytic attitude “accepts facts at their face value and does not seek for a justification of the whole in something outside the whole”.⁵⁰⁴ This attitude, admits Russell, may not be theoretically superior to the skeptical attitude, but it leads to a more complicated philosophy (or what he called earlier in the book “a multitude of forms”⁵⁰⁵) which is better equipped to explain the world and thus deserves more attention than the skeptical attitude.

Russell concludes the discussion of skepticism, knowledge, and self-evidence in *Theory of Knowledge* with the statement that certainty of knowledge “*must* involve reference to the facts”.⁵⁰⁶ The only way of ascertaining facts is by acquaintance. Thus, knowledge by acquaintance guarantees certainty of knowledge. “From this argument, so far as I can see”, writes Russell, “there is no escape.”⁵⁰⁷ This conclusion is restated in *Our Knowledge of the External World*. There Russell argues that “Universal skepticism, though logically irrefutable, is practically barren; it can only, therefore, give a certain flavor of hesitancy to our beliefs, and cannot be used to substitute other beliefs for them.”⁵⁰⁸ And again, the ‘evidence of the senses’

⁵⁰³ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 51. “The hypothesis that we obtain knowledge of physical objects through the senses is one which is capable of multitude of forms, according to the view we adopt as to the nature of physical objects.” Some forms, Russell continues, may be irreconcilable with others, but we can never be sure until we try all possible forms.

⁵⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

⁵⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

⁵⁰⁸ *Our Knowledge of the External World*, p. 74.

(knowledge by acquaintance) is the most certain type of knowledge.

I think that the textual evidence clearly shows that it is undeniable that Russell has consistently been making the same argument against (total) skepticism, namely that it is philosophically irrefutable but practically useless, in both the acquaintance as well as neutral monism periods. What has changed in the neutral monism period is that self-evidence, which is the foundation of certainty, along with direct knowledge of the world, is considered subjective, which makes experiential knowledge more vulnerable to skeptical doubts than it was in the acquaintance period.⁵⁰⁹

To resume our discussion of memory, Russell still needs to show that memory-images differ from imagination-images, the latter being even more unreliable than memory-images. Russell argues that there needs to be a characteristic of the images themselves, which makes the distinction between memory-images and imagination-images. The first, most obvious characteristic, is vagueness of imagination-images. Vagueness, however, Russell argues, appears not only in imagination-images, but also in remote memory-images, or even in perception-images. For example, if we are under the influence of fatigue, the face of a friend that we see in front of us might be recognizable, but it might look distorted and vague. We thus need to look elsewhere to determine what distinguishes memory-images from imagination-images. In order for memory-images to be more accurate than imagination-images, they need to be accompanied

⁵⁰⁹In *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell writes that logical and mathematical knowledge is in a different position compared to experiential knowledge, as far as certainty and self-evidence is concerned. The self-evidence of mathematical or logical judgments lies in the fact that “they represent our decision as to the use of words, not a property of physical objects” (*The Analysis of Mind*, p. 265), which tells us that they are based on linguistic decisions which we could (presumably) have done differently. Judgments of perception are different in that they involve correlations (or are derived from recognition), and since “there is no correlation of which we have the right to certain that it is invariable” (or recognition which is flawless), judgments of perception are always liable to error (*Ibid.*, p. 266). The certainty involved in judgments of perception (or all experiential knowledge, for that matter), then, is subjective certainty which is a result of habit, but which “may lead us astray” if circumstances change, or if we encounter conditions that we were unaware of. Then, self-evidence and subjective certainty do not constitute an “absolute criterion of truth” (*Ibid.*).

by something else, which is missing in imagination, and which will help us distinguish memory-images from pure imaginings. This something else is belief, or belief-feeling. Before we can continue with the analysis of what belief-feeling accompanies memory and distinguishes it from imagination, we need to draw our attention to what Russell means by belief or belief-feeling.

We noted earlier that we encountered certain ambiguity with Russell's definition of belief in the neutral monism period. As we established, he often speaks of belief and feeling of belief, or belief-feeling, especially as far as memory is concerned. Then, we wondered, is belief the same thing as feeling of belief, or are they different things which only accompany each other on certain occasions? I think that in *The Analysis of Mind*, it becomes clear that certain feelings, such as the feeling of familiarity or the feeling of pastness, which, as we will see, accompany memory-images, as opposed to imagination-images, are thought by Russell to be characteristics of the images themselves, but they are not beliefs. So, the feeling of pastness and the feeling of familiarity accompany all memory-images, and help us form habit-memory, which is a type of memory that both humans and animals have. Habit-memory, however, Russell argues, is not knowledge-memory. Knowledge-memory requires memory-belief. Memory-belief, then, involves belief-feeling, in addition to the memory-image. So, it seems that when Russell uses belief and belief-feeling interchangeably, he uses 'belief' in a popular way, since technically speaking, the belief-feeling is only one of the components of belief. What makes the analysis of belief somewhat challenging here is that Russell seems to be constantly switching from a popular to a technical use of 'belief'. In the technical sense, as he points out in *The Analysis of Mind*, belief, *unlike presentation*, should be analyzed in terms of having three elements – the act of believing, the object (or the content) of belief, and the objective of the belief.⁵¹⁰ The act of believing is a

⁵¹⁰As we discovered, in 1919 (see pages 183-184, footnote 407), Russell argued that both the analysis of presentation and belief should be such that we should 'collapse' the act and object of cognition into one. In 1921, however, Russell argues that we should get rid of the act and the object, only as far as the analysis of presentation is concerned. The analysis of belief should distinguish between the act, the object and the objective of the belief. The reason that Russell

feeling. The content of belief is an image or a word, that is, a present event.⁵¹¹ The objective of belief is the past event which is not present before the mind. As Russell notes at the end of the chapter on memory in *The Analysis of Mind*, “When I speak of a *feeling* of belief, I use the word ‘feeling’ in a popular sense, to cover sensation or an image of a complex of sensation or images or both.”⁵¹² Russell adds later in the book, that belief (meaning belief-feeling) is “special positive feeling”.⁵¹³ Belief-feeling is characterized with different attitudes toward the same content. For example, if the content of our belief is an image of a breakfast-table, “you may expect it while you are dressing in the morning; remember it as you go to work; feel doubt as to its correctness when questioned as to your powers of visualizing; merely entertain the image, without connecting it with anything external, when you are going to sleep; desire it if you feel hungry, or feel aversion for it if you are ill”.⁵¹⁴ For Russell, not all of these attitudes are cognitive. The main cognitive attitudes that take part in the belief-feeling are memory, expectation and bare assent.⁵¹⁵

provides is that the act of belief is an actual experienced feeling and not something postulated as is the case with the act of presentation (*Ibid.*, p. 233). I do not think that Russell actually changed his mind about belief between 1919 and 1921. I think that in 1921 he analyzed belief in greater depth than he did in 1919, and realized that we need to distinguish between the analysis of belief and the analysis of presentation, because the act of presentation is a logical fiction and not something experienced, while the act of belief is an actual experienced feeling.

⁵¹¹Russell argues that the content of our belief may consist of words only, or of images only, or of a combination of images and words, or of either or both together with sensations (*Ibid.*, p. 236). It is also the case that sometimes images associated with sensations overcome us with such force and spontaneity that the untrained mind cannot distinguish between the images and the sensations. (*Ibid.*, p. 237.)

⁵¹²*Ibid.*, p. 187.

⁵¹³*Ibid.*, p. 249.

⁵¹⁴*Ibid.*, p.242.

⁵¹⁵To illustrate how the feeling of belief works Russell gives the following example. I enter a familiar room and notice that there is a picture hanging on the wall that I have not seen there before. My feeling of belief tells me that the wall was blank the last time I was in the room. My present perception of the room, however, tells me that there is a picture on the wall. So, there is a clash between my feeling of belief and my perception of the object in question. Russell seems to think that this clash between my present perception and my memory of the room is what

In bare assent there is no time element in the feeling of belief, while in memory and expectation there is. As Russell argues, it is not enough that the belief-feeling and the content of the belief (the image, the word) “should co-exist: it is necessary that there should be a specific relation between them, of the sort expressed by saying that the content is what is believed”.⁵¹⁶ If it was not the case, Russell continues, whenever we have, for example, a memory-feeling, we should be able to remember any memory-proposition that comes to mind at the same time. But what happens is that we remember one proposition, while merely considering another. The relation between the belief-feeling and the content of belief is expressed by saying that the content in question is what is assented to.⁵¹⁷ So, in the analysis of memory, we need to keep the distinction between the content of the belief (often a memory-image and not a word), the act of belief (the belief-feeling), and the objective of the belief (the actual past event) clear in order to avoid ambiguity and confusion.

In “Physics and Perception” [1922], Russell classifies beliefs into inferred and non-inferred beliefs. Even though, he admits, it is difficult to explain what is meant by inferred and non-inferred belief, he suggests that we look at knowledge as composed of beliefs that are either derivative (from sensations and other beliefs), or non-derivative.⁵¹⁸ Russell illustrates derivative

distinguishes remembering from imagining. If I had only imagined, and not remembered, the room with the bare walls, then I would not have had a feeling of belief to tell me that the last time I saw the room, there was not a picture on its wall. This feeling of belief brings the feeling of ‘reality’ to us which no image, taken on its own, can bring. This feeling of reality, Russell argues, is like the feeling of respect, something that comes to us without our volition. In other words, the feeling that accompanies our memories makes us believe that what we remember now is not a pure fabrication of our minds but is, in fact, something that has occurred in the past, something that has a perceptual, that is, a ‘real’ and physical prototype. (*Ibid.*, p. 186.)

⁵¹⁶*The Collected Papers*, Vol. 9, p. 230.

⁵¹⁷*Ibid.*, p. 251.

⁵¹⁸Since we should not be able to derive anything from a sensation because sensations are considered in the neutral monist period non-cognitive, we could assume that what Russell means by ‘derivative’ here is ‘in response to’. This is confirmed by the example, discussed in the next

beliefs with the following example. When a tree falls, we expect to hear the crash that inevitably follows it. This expectation is derived from (a response to) our previous sensations of falling trees, and if we are challenged on our perception of a given fact, in order to justify our perceptual belief, we can fall back on what we have sensed (seen or heard) before and of what we have established a habit.⁵¹⁹ Even though Russell does not give a strict definition of non-derivative belief, he says that non-derivative beliefs are, generally, of three kinds – perceptions, memories, and logical principles.⁵²⁰ Russell argues that normally memory-beliefs should not be included among the non-derivative beliefs, because they are copies of earlier sensations. But there are cases when we remember something that we did not notice at the time of the occurrence of our perception. In this sense, memory-belief has the same right to be regarded as non-derivative as any belief that participates in perception. (Perceptions, in turn, consist of two things – a core of sensations, and images and beliefs “called up by the sensation through the influence of past experience”.⁵²¹)

Let us resume our analysis of the faculty of memory. We said that we need to find what characterizes memory-images and makes them different, and more accurate, than imagination-

paragraph, that he gives to illustrate what derivative beliefs are.

⁵¹⁹It seems that Russell’s theory of memory is based on the copy principle (similar to Hume’s copy principle) where memories are copies of the preceding perceptions. However, if we remember something which we have not noticed at the time of perception, it becomes difficult to explain how we can remember it, at all. As we already saw, it seems that Russell, just like Hume, has to rely on habit. Even if we do not notice (that is, somehow retain) all the events that go through our senses, that is because we have established a mechanism of habit (and expectation) which let us remember things that we have not, actually, perceived (in the sense that we have not retained them in our memory). (Then it seems that, even though Russell was clear that only habit, without belief, cannot bring us actual knowledge of the past, his copy theory of memory would still face the same challenges that Hume’s copy theory faced.)

⁵²⁰Perhaps what Russell had in mind for non-derivative beliefs is something similar to G. E. Moore’s belief that “I have a hand” which is a belief that the subject cannot support with any inference but it is a justified belief, nonetheless.

⁵²¹*Ibid.*, p. 129.

images. There are two feelings that accompany memory-images and make them more accurate than imagination-images. The first feeling is called a 'feeling of familiarity'.⁵²² Some memory-images (usually the recent ones), Russell writes, feel very familiar, while others (usually the remote ones) simply feel strange. Memory-images are also accompanied by the 'feeling of pastness' which enables us to place them in a time-line.⁵²³ More recent memories are easily placed at a certain point in the past. Thus, recent memory-images come with 'more context' which enables us to recognize them as true memories (as opposed to imagination-images). For example, if I try to remember what I ate this morning for breakfast, the chances that I will visualize the plate with the bacon and eggs, and the mug with the orange juice are much higher than if I try to remember what my deceased grandmother wore when I last saw her fifteen years ago. This is because I have preserved not only the visual images of my breakfast but also the smells and tastes that come with it, which help me place the memory in a context and make it more accurate. A memory from fifteen years ago has lost, to a large extent, its context (the smells, the tastes, the sounds, etc.) and with it, the sense of accuracy and reliability of the knowledge of the past.

To summarize, in 1921 Russell believed that what constitutes memory is mostly images and the two feelings that accompany them – the feeling of familiarity and the feeling of pastness.⁵²⁴ The feeling of familiarity gives us the sense of accuracy of memory-images and the feeling of pastness enables us to place memory-images in time order. Remote memories come with less context and are therefore less reliable (in the sense that they provide less certain

⁵²²*The Analysis of Mind*, p. 161. Here is how Russell defines 'feeling': at the end of the chapter on memory in *The Analysis of Mind*, Russell has a note which says, "I use the word 'feeling' in a popular sense, to cover a sensation or an image or a complex of sensations or images or both" (p. 187).

⁵²³*Ibid.*, p. 162.

⁵²⁴Later in the book he adds another element, namely the sense of recognition, which somewhat resembles the feeling of pastness. Recognition will be discussed later in the section.

knowledge) than recent memories. Thus, we can conclude that in 1921 Russell thought that neither type of memory is free of error and thus that neither provides as reliable (certain) knowledge of the past, as immediate memory from the acquaintance period did. From this conclusion, we can only infer, since Russell does not spell it out, that for him memory-images as a whole are inaccurate copies of past sensations, but that some are more accurate than others. Therefore, knowledge of the past, as a whole, is not reliable knowledge, but one type of knowledge of the past is more certain than the other.

With this Russell believes himself to have answered the question of whether memory-images are accurate or inaccurate copies of past sensations, and whether knowledge of the past is reliable or not, and he moves on to point out that the definition of memory that he works with in 1921 is more complex than the definition he used in 1913. The complexity of the definition of memory in the neutral monist period inevitably creates difficulties that will be addressed later. Russell argues that if he had retained the concepts of subject and act of cognition (from the acquaintance period), then “memory would have been comparatively simple”.⁵²⁵ He could have argued, then, that remembering is a direct relation between the present act or the present subject and the past event remembered. (In other words, the act of remembering is present while the object remembered is past.) However, contrary to what Russell is saying here, when he was working on the acquaintance theory of knowledge, the very same question of how to bring past experience into the present without the help of images was of great importance and it did not look like Russell was satisfied with the answer he provided at the time. In any case, the way that he sees the problem with the pastness of memory objects in 1921 is that, with the rejection of the concepts of subject and act of cognition, what he is left with in memory is a present occurrence which somehow has to resemble (copy) or be related to what is remembered (which is a past

⁵²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 163.

sensation). And, since images are never completely accurate, and therefore memory is never fully reliable knowledge, Russell finds it difficult to give other than pragmatic reasons for the belief that memory is not a sheer delusion.

Against the possible contention that memory is a sheer delusion, Russell makes three points. First, however vague the data we acquire from our knowledge of the past may be, it is beyond doubt that there *is* knowledge of the past. Second, we have to admit, based on empirical evidence, that we possess greater capacity for knowing the past than for knowing the future (in this sense, knowledge of the past cannot be completely hallucinatory, unless we admit that both knowledge of the past and knowledge of the future are hallucinatory). Third, Russell does not believe that the analysis of memory does not have a practical application. Therefore, we have to be able to find a 'true memory' which is not a sheer delusion. According to Russell, there is such a thing as 'true memory' which he calls knowledge-memory and which is the most reliable knowledge of the past that we could have (which is still less reliable than the knowledge of the past in the acquaintance period). While we could grasp the first two points intuitively, the third point needs further elaboration.

Russell's analysis of 'true memory' begins by comparing it with immediate memory and habit-memory. We have to note here that what Russell means by immediate memory in 1921 is not the same as what he meant by this term in the acquaintance period. In *The Analysis of Mind* Russell recognizes that immediate memory has non-cognitive elements, as well as cognitive (propositional) ones. Past sensations are turned into memory-images with the help of the feeling of familiarity and the feeling of pastness, along with recognition, habit, and association of images. Thus, when Russell says that memory is an immediate knowledge of the past, he means that it is a recollection of a unique occurrence in the past and not purely inferential knowledge of the past. However, as we noted earlier, in the recollection of any past occurrence (even the most recent one), there are a lot of propositional or inferential elements that participate in it, unlike

immediate memory in the acquaintance period where knowledge of the past was acquired directly, without the mediation of any propositional or inferential element. Immediate memory, Russell writes in *The Analysis of Mind*, is the “retention of the immediate past in a condition intermediate between sensation and image”.⁵²⁶ In other words, immediate memory consists of sensations and images. To complete the analogy with the immediate type of memory in the acquaintance period, the term ‘specious present’ is used here, too, to describe immediate memory. Specious present is the moment when the sensation fades away and becomes an image. When the sensation fades it is called an ‘akoluthic sensation’, a term that we familiarized ourselves with earlier.⁵²⁷ Akoluthic sensations turn gradually into full-fledged images where there is no trace of the stimulus that gave rise to the sensation. So far, the description of immediate memory sounds very similar to the one Russell offered in *Theory of Knowledge*. Unlike in the acquaintance period, however, in 1921 Russell does not think that the immediacy of memory is what makes it *true* memory. True memory requires a belief-feeling, since the belief element is what makes it cognitive.

Next, Russell proceeds to compare what he calls ‘true memory’ to ‘habit-memory’. Apparently, apart from immediate and remote memory, in 1921 Russell distinguished two other forms of memory, namely true, also called *knowledge-memory*, and *habit-memory*. Knowledge-memory provides the ‘real’ knowledge of the past, while habit-memory does not. To explain the difference between these two forms of memory, Russell borrows an example from Bergson’s *Matter and Memory*.⁵²⁸ When I learn a lesson by heart, he argues, it is usually referred to as something that I have remembered. But what it actually means to learn something by heart is to acquire certain habits. Russell believes that not only humans, but also plants and animals have

⁵²⁶*Ibid.*, p.174.

⁵²⁷See p. 172 of this chapter.

⁵²⁸*Ibid.*, p. 166.

this type of memory. On the other hand, when I recollect the second time that I read the lesson (I may recollect that there was a piano music coming from my neighbor's window, or that when I turned the page, I saw a tiny spider crawling from the textbook to the back of my hand), this recollection is of a unique event that occurred only once. This recollection of the unique event, according to Russell, is the true memory. However, as Russell points out, *in practice*, it is often difficult to distinguish between habit-memory and true memory, since the way that we describe the recollection of a unique event, by using the same words every time, turns it into a habit-memory. "A gramophone," Russell continues, "by the help of suitable records, might relate to us the incidents of its past; and people are not so different from gramophones as they like to believe".⁵²⁹

Even though it is often difficult to distinguish between habit-memory and true memory, there is no doubt for Russell that these two forms of memory exist in their own right. As I understand it, the distinction between true memory and habit-memory is that true memory works with unique events of the past while habit-memory only imitates the recollection of unique past events and is not cognitive (but may look like it is), that is, habit-memory does not enrich our knowledge of the past. Russell is interested in the true memory which is, actually, knowledge of the past. Even though, as Russell himself admits on a few occasions, he has not explored in detail whether knowledge (of the past) can be reduced to habit altogether, he "at least provisionally" accepts Bergson's view that habit does not account for the recollection of unique past events. In other words, he endorses the view that "knowledge of past occurrences [true memory] is not proved by behavior which is due to past experiences".⁵³⁰ The fact that someone can recite a poem, thereby exemplifying habit-memory, does not mean that she can remember any previous

⁵²⁹ *Ibid.*

⁵³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 167.

occasions on which she had recited it, that is, that she has true memory of past events. And Russell is interested precisely in the remembering of these previous occasions, which, he believes, would bring us 'true' knowledge of the past.

As noted earlier in the discussion, memory, in general, comes with two types of feelings, the feeling of familiarity and the feeling of pastness. Now Russell adds another element that accompanies true memory, namely the 'sense of recognition'. The feeling of familiarity accompanies all memories. We cannot derive any knowledge of the past from the feeling of familiarity alone because the feeling of familiarity is by no means always reliable. As Russell argues, we all remember cases when we were (falsely) certain that what we were experiencing had happened to us before. As Russell describes it, a further stage of acquiring knowledge of the past is to add to the feeling of familiarity *the sense of recognition*. The concept of recognition is used in two ways. The first sense in which recognition is used has to do with knowing that something is such-and-such, even though it may not feel familiar. "Here", Russell writes, "we have a definite influence of past experience, but not any actual knowledge of the past."⁵³¹ For example, I may not *remember* when and where I have seen my neighbor's black cat that always crosses the street close to my house, but I *know* that my neighbors have a cat and that, reportedly, it crosses the street near my house. Recognition in this sense does not involve more than a "habit of association: the kind of object we are seeing at the moment is associated with the word 'cat', or with an auditory image of purring, or whatever other characteristic we may happen to recognize in the cat at the moment".⁵³² The other sense in which recognition is used is the sense in which we do not know the name or any other property of the object in question, but we know that we have experienced it before. This sense of recognition involves knowledge *about* the past,

⁵³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 169.

⁵³² *Ibid.*

and it is a belief which we can express with the judgment, "This has existed before".⁵³³ This second sense of recognition does not involve a definite memory of a definite (unique) past event but it involves the knowledge that something that is happening now has happened before. Recognition in the second sense, unlike in the first sense and unlike the feeling of familiarity, is cognitive, that is, it is what we discussed earlier as belief-feeling (one of the constituents of belief). With regard to the latter statement, Russell explains that the judgment "This has existed before" is not adequate to express the complexity of the thought that we recognize something as experienced before. And this statement is also not a precise description of what happens when we recognize something as being a part of our past experience but, as he puts it, it is close enough from the common sense point of view, so we should accept it, too.

Thus, when we recognize something, it is not actually the exact same thing as the one that we have experienced in the past, but only an approximation of the past occurrence.⁵³⁴ For example, when I recognize the face of my friend, I most certainly do not see the whole series of particulars that make up the face of my friend, but only a quick succession of them. And since faces change all the time, if I am to describe the face of my friend, I most probably will describe a few features that have either changed or disappeared altogether. This, however, does not prevent me from still being able to recognize the face of my friend. Because the occurrence that I recognize as something that has happened before is not an exact or a full-fledged copy of the original occurrence, Russell concludes that recognition in the second sense is a logical construction (unlike the feeling of familiarity, for example). Thus, when recognition, in the second sense of the concept, accompanies my memory-images, I have a true memory which is the

⁵³³ *Ibid.*, p. 170.

⁵³⁴ We have to add that the fact that in memory, as interpreted in the neutral monism period, we logically *construct* the original object of recognition, along with the fact that memory consists of images and not past sense-data, only adds to the proneness to error of knowledge of the past (compared to knowledge of the past in the acquaintance period).

most reliable knowledge of the past that we can have (which is still not as reliable as knowledge of the immediate past was in the acquaintance theory).

To summarize, the presence of memory-belief is what makes memory cognitive. And it is also what makes knowledge of the past more reliable than knowledge that comes from imagination. As we already pointed out earlier, the feeling of familiarity and the feeling of pastness accompany memory-images and distinguish them from imagination-images. These feelings, however, cannot help us distinguish between imagination-images and memory-images because they cannot account for all the cases when we are convinced that something is familiar to us when it is not, or for the cases when we are wrong in thinking that something happened in the past, when it, in fact, happened in our imagination only. The belief can be expressed with the proposition "This happened". In other words, the mere presence of images without the element of belief, gives us imagination. But the belief that something has happened in the past makes our images memory-images. Toward the end of the chapter on memory, Russell defines memory-belief as "a specific feeling or sensation or a complex of sensations, different from expectation or bare assent in a way that makes the belief refer to the past; the reference to the past lies in the belief-feeling, not in the content believed".⁵³⁵ As we already pointed out, the belief-feeling that constitutes true memory (knowledge-memory) is what brings the feeling of 'reality' to us which no image, taken on its own, can bring. This feeling of reality, Russell argued, is like the feeling of respect, something that comes to us without our volition.

One of the difficulties that Russell's theory of memory in *The Analysis of Mind* seems to encounter is in the relation between the belief-feeling and the content of belief. Russell believes that reference to the past lies in the feeling of belief and not in the *content* that is believed (in the images that I have in my mind). He points out that the content of my memory does not contain

⁵³⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

any time-determination. In other words, relying solely on my memory-image I would not know that what I have in my head is an image of something *past*; it could be an image of anything (fabricated by my mind). The time-determination lies in the feeling of belief, and this feeling is precisely what we call ‘remembering’ or ‘recollecting’. In other words, I *know* that something is a memory thanks to the feeling of belief, and not thanks to the images that I have in my mind. However, the relation between the feeling of belief and the content of the memory which makes the feeling of belief refer to the content, and which is “expressed by saying that the content is what is believed”⁵³⁶, seems to be a product of the memory-image and its cause, which makes it lose its explanatory power. And that is why Russell confesses at the end of the chapter on memory that “this analysis of memory is probably extremely faulty, but I do not know how to improve it”.⁵³⁷

To further understand Russell’s new theory of memory, we will turn to David Pears’ analysis of Russell’s neutral monist account of memory. Pears’ analysis of the concept of feeling of belief adds an important point about Russell’s theory of memory in the neutral monist period, namely that the feeling of belief was intended by Russell to make us *understand* what past actually is (which was missing in the acquaintance theory). (Pears believes that Russell failed to show how in memory we move from a general conception of pastness to a concrete ‘perception’ of something as a past event.)

⁵³⁶*Ibid.*, p. 186.

⁵³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 187.

3.2.1. David Pears' Interpretation of Russell's Theory of Memory in 1921.

To remind the reader, Pears believes that in the period between 1912 and 1921 Russell offered two different theories of memory. Pears calls these 'Theory I' and 'Theory II'. Theory I is the theory offered in the acquaintance period until 1919 and was discussed in Chapter 2. I will only mention it here, without going into details about its conclusions, in order to make the connection with Theory II. Theory I relies on the concept of acquaintance with the past, which is a direct relation between the cognitive subject and object. This makes Theory I non-representational one. According to Pears, in the acquaintance period Russell ascribed infallibility to memory (at least as far as immediate memory was concerned), because memory was analyzed in the same way as sensation, and sensation was considered infallible.⁵³⁸ Infallibility was denied to remote memory which was the 'problematic' type of memory for Russell in the acquaintance period (in the sense that it did not fit in the picture of memory providing knowledge by acquaintance). Pears thinks that in the neutral monism period Russell denied infallibility to *all* memory, and not just to remote memory. According to Pears Russell's main view on memory in 1921 is that memory consists of a "core of images" that, in fact, do not tell us anything about the past. The concept of pastness, without which no analysis of memory can be developed, does not come with the content of images. As we know from our previous analysis, in 1921 Russell believed that the belief-feeling (and not the memory-image) is what gives us the feeling of pastness and eventually turns mere images into memory-images. Since Russell claims that the belief-feeling brings the feeling of pastness into memory, Pears sees an inconsistency between Russell's definition of the belief-feeling and his general argument about how memory works. If

⁵³⁸We have to stress on the fact that this is Pears' interpretation of knowledge of the past as infallible. We offered a detailed discussion of what knowledge by acquaintance (knowledge of the present and past) is in terms of certainty, and what it is not. We concluded that we cannot characterize knowledge by acquaintance as infallible, but only as self-evident.

pastness is conveyed by one type of belief-feeling which has temporal characteristics (which Russell identifies as memory), and if beliefs consist of images, then how is our sense of pastness not brought up by (the content of the belief) images?

One possible interpretation that Pears gives is that the belief-feeling generates some sort of a primitive *understanding* of the concept of 'past', which comes before the conceptual understanding of what pastness is. He thinks that this possibility is paradoxical since no matter how primitive our understanding of something is, it is conceptual and cannot come from a feeling. Another possibility that Pears offers, which seems more plausible, is that there are certain characteristics in *some* images that make us believe that they correspond to our past experiences. This second possibility sounds closer to what Russell had in mind when he talked about the relation between the belief-feeling and the memory-images.⁵³⁹ Pears thinks that these 'special' memory-images refer to the past through the feeling of familiarity. What the feeling of familiarity does is to (immediately) suggest that there is a memory-image in line which makes us believe it.

In other words, as I understand it, Pears sees the place of the feeling of familiarity as triggering the belief-feeling (and turning it into memory-belief). In the example that Russell gives with the new picture hanging from the wall that was not there before, one finds oneself having a feeling of *unfamiliarity* rather than of familiarity. This feeling of unfamiliarity arises when the present perception clashes with the feeling of familiarity. What bothers Pears is that according to Russell's theory, the feeling of familiarity is a general feeling and that is why taken on its own, it

⁵³⁹Pears' second argument sounds closer to what Russell had in mind also because of what Russell says when he discusses various theories of beliefs. He admits that he has a lot to say in favor of James's understanding of belief (which is very similar to what Pears suggests). James's account of belief, as Russell presented it, is that there is no need of a special feeling, the belief-feeling, that makes belief what it is. The mere existence of images, which are not inhibited by anything else (such as disbelief, or doubt) yields belief. As we already pointed out earlier in the section, Russell does not endorse this view, but he admits that it has a 'dynamic power' and that it can explain simple phenomena in the realm of beliefs (hallucinations or dreams, for example). *Ibid.*, pp. 247-249.

cannot guarantee us that something is a true memory (a recollection of a unique past event) and not a sheer delusion. So, it seems that for Pears, from this point on, it would take a further step to turn the feeling of *general* familiarity (or general unfamiliarity) into a feeling of *concrete* familiarity (which is the belief-feeling). And, according to Pears, Russell does not describe this further step. In other words, Russell does not describe how he arrived from the (general) feeling of familiarity at the belief-feeling (or even more specifically, to memory-belief). What Russell does do, however, is to suppose that any memory claim “implicitly involves a stipulation about its own causation”.⁵⁴⁰ In other words, any time I receive an image that I identify as a memory-image, the feeling that this image was caused by some past experience of mine similar to it, strikes me. But if that is all that Russell’s theory of memory relies on, Pears asks, then what happens if the image that struck me as familiar is familiar for a different reason? For example, I find that the room that has the picture hanging on the wall is familiar to me, that is, I have seen it before, but the truth is that I have not seen this particular room but another room in another house, which is very similar (almost identical) to this one. In conclusion, Pears’ main criticism is that in Theory II Russell *presumes* without giving a solid argument for it, that we always make the transition from the general feeling of familiarity that accompanies the memory-image to the (concrete) feeling of belief which guarantees me that what I have in my mind is a true memory.

I find Pears’ criticism of Russell’s theory of memory important for the analysis of memory in the neutral monism period. I agree with Pears that it is not clear how that transition from the feeling of familiarity to the belief-feeling is supposed to be made. I do not think, however, that Pears explains what he means by a ‘general’ feeling of familiarity. If by ‘general’ he means that what the feeling of familiarity brings to me could be summarized in the propositions ‘This happened’ or ‘This belongs to the past’, then according to the original text,

⁵⁴⁰Pears, p. 136.

this actually is given by the sense of recognition. Pears never mentions the sense of recognition in his analysis, and I believe that he actually conflates the feeling of familiarity with the sense of recognition, taking characteristics from both and creating a single feeling. If, on the other hand, ‘general’ means something that came as a result of a habit, then this might be closer to Russell’s original argument. If we follow the argument in the chapter on memory in *The Analysis of Mind*, we will see that Russell says that the feeling of familiarity operates from habit. Habits are established as a result of a repetition of events, which taken separately, are actually unique. Thus, it might be that the feeling of familiarity leads us to the true memory, after all.

I agree with Pears’ observation that Russell assumes that memory claims tacitly involve stipulation about their causes. What Pears points to is the problem that was mentioned earlier, which Russell himself noticed, namely that when trying to analyze what exactly causes memory images, we seem to be going in circles. It turns out that memory is caused by remembering or recollecting. To say that memory is caused by remembering or recollecting, is the same as to say that memory is caused by memory. I think that Pears is right in suggesting that Russell did not offer a solution to this particular problem. What Pears does not seem to want to admit, however, is that Russell was at least aware of this problem, even if he could not solve it.

It looks like, as Pears noted, Russell’s theory of memory under neutral monism faced difficulties of its own. It is as a result of the analysis of the faculty of memory that the vulnerability of the whole theory of cognition to skeptical doubt becomes apparent. Before we can draw our conclusions regarding the theory of cognition in the neutral monism period, we need to look at the last main experiential cognitive faculty, namely the faculty of imagination.

3.3. Imagination.

In *The Analysis of Mind*, unlike in *Theory of Knowledge*, Russell does not devote a chapter to the faculty of imagination, but he devotes a chapter to the analysis and distinction between sensations and images. Moreover, he refers constantly to imagination, comparing it to both perception and memory, which makes me believe that imagination was just as important for the theory of cognition in the neutral monism period as it was in the acquaintance period. I think it is fair to say that his attitude toward the faculty of imagination has not changed considerably since the acquaintance period. Imagination in *The Analysis of Mind* is still considered a part of the triad sensation/perception-memory-imagination which constitutes our experiential cognitive apparatus. In 1921 imagination consists of pure images which lack any time reference and belief-feeling, and this is what distinguishes them from memory-images. Even though in the acquaintance period the objects of imagination were considered data, or products of immediate knowledge, and not images, the distinction between memory and imagination objects was based precisely on their reference, or their lack of reference to the (physical) time-order. In 1913, imagined objects were generally considered time-less (that is, not anchored to any specific time-order), which distinguished them from remembered objects which did not lack time-order. The reason why imagination-images lack time-order or time-determination, as Russell calls it, is because time-determination lies in the nature of the belief-feeling, and does not belong to the image itself.⁵⁴¹ The new element, then, that distinguishes between memory-images and imagination-images in the neutral monism theory of cognition is the absence of the belief-feeling in imagination-images. “The mere occurrence of images”, says Russell, “without this feeling of belief, constitutes imagination; it is the element of belief [which may be expressed in the words

⁵⁴¹ *Ibid.*, p. 186.

‘this happened’] that is the distinctive thing in memory”.⁵⁴² As Russell puts it, without the belief-feeling, previously discussed in this section, memory-images become pure imagination-images. Imagination-images, or pure images, then, are, as Russell puts it, ‘roughly speaking’ not ‘real’. ‘Real’ things are those that can cause sensations, or that are in a context of such correlations which constitute physical objects. Thus, the image is ‘imaginary’, while the prototype of the image is ‘real’.⁵⁴³ From Russell’s analysis of the faculties of perception and memory, and his references to the faculty of imagination, it follows that what connects the three faculties is ‘image’. Images are “occasioned, through association, by a sensation or another image”⁵⁴⁴, and they are also believed to be “copies of sensations which have occurred earlier”.⁵⁴⁵ Thus, through images all data that come from the senses turn our experience of reality into an ‘integral experience’ where we know things with varying degrees of certainty.

Hallucinations, delusions, and dreams, which are part of our experience, also lack the belief-feeling that accompanies memory-images. This, however, sounds counter-intuitive since it is precisely the fact that we believe in them that makes them delusions and hallucinations, that is, events that can trick us into believing that they are real and true. Unfortunately, Russell does not elaborate too much on the feeling of belief with regard to imagination, delusion and hallucination. When discussing James’s view of belief, already discussed earlier, he seems to believe that James’s account of belief explains well how hallucinations and dreams work.⁵⁴⁶

⁵⁴²*Ibid.*, p. 176.

⁵⁴³*Ibid.*, p. 185.

⁵⁴⁴*Ibid.*, p. 150.

⁵⁴⁵*Ibid.*, p. 155.

⁵⁴⁶It seems that what applies to hallucinations and dreams does not apply to delusions, since in delusions the feeling of belief is present, unlike in hallucinations and (possibly) dreams. Russell’s account of hallucinations and dreams would have definitely benefitted from a distinction between hallucinations and dreams, on the one hand, and delusions, on the other.

According to this account, the mere entertaining of an image (which does not have anything else occurring simultaneously that contradicts it, or makes us suspicious) is sufficient to produce a belief. When a child imagines a white winged horse, Russell continues, according to James, the existence of the white winged horse is affirmed by the child. So, if there is nothing else (another idea) that contradicts the idea of a white winged horse, then the child believes that there is a white winged horse. Russell thought that this account of belief seems to explain how hallucinations and dreams work. However, it cannot explain more complex beliefs, such as memory-beliefs, or abstract beliefs. So, he concludes that, without the belief-feeling, which is a positive feeling, that accompanies images, we cannot have true beliefs.

Here is how Russell sees imagination, dream, and hallucination, in comparison to memory, in "Perception" [1922]. When I recall an event from the recent past, my breakfast for example, I evoke various images in my head. The visual images are the table, the plate, the cup of tea, etc. They may be accompanied by tactile, olfactory, and even auditory images. My images are, in principle, private, and this is what makes my memory-images seem 'imaginary', without them being really imaginary. In dreams, the place where I put my dreams, is even more private, since it does not exist anywhere except in my mind. Since my memory-images resemble, with varying success, a public object that existed in the past, the memory-image is not, in fact, imaginary.⁵⁴⁷ In the case of dreams, by contrast, we cannot claim publicity because there is nothing from the past experience to refer my private dream images to. This distinction between private and public, Russell argues, is the true distinction between mind and matter. "What many people can perceive is physical; what only one person can perceive but localizes in a public place is in his own body; what only one person can perceive but fails, immediately or on reflection, to

⁵⁴⁷The whole discussion of public and private space reminds us of *Our Knowledge of the External World* where sense-data and physical objects were defined in terms of public and private space. This parallel between the two texts confirms the thesis that we defended earlier that there are similarities between the theory of cognition in the later acquaintance period and the early neutral monism period.

localize in a public place, is mental.”⁵⁴⁸ Publicity, Russell continues the argument, is not in the strict sense a datum, even though we are convinced that it is. However, when we analyze the concept of publicity in all its aspects, we should realize that there are many occasions when we are fully convinced that what we have in our minds is an event in the public space, when it actually is not. One of those occasions is dreaming. In our dreams we are fully convinced that the occurrences are public while in reality they are strictly private. In this sense, Russell continues, we can use ‘publicity’ as a practical criterion to distinguish between memory-images and imagination-images (in the sense that memory-images are caused by what is in the public space).

Section Four. Concluding Remarks.

We have now completed the analysis of the main cognitive faculties in the period 1919-1926, known as the neutral monism period. To summarize, in the period from 1919 to 1926 Russell established a new theory of cognition. We can trace some of the necessary changes that Russell was beginning to make in his theory of cognition back to *Our Knowledge of the External World*. The main premise with regard to the new theory of the experiential cognitive faculties of perception, memory and imagination in the neutral monism period, which is in accord with the principles of neutral monism, is that all knowledge, including experiential knowledge, is derivative, that is, indirect. At the same time, all empirical knowledge has a sensational core, which is non-cognitive and thus non-derivative. The non-cognitive nature of sensation comes as a result of reducing the act, object and subject of cognition (presentation) to a logical fiction, and replacing it with one entity, called ‘event’ or ‘occurrence’, or simply ‘sensation’. This move is a

⁵⁴⁸*The Collected Papers*, Vol. 9, p. 189.

direct result of Russell's sympathy toward the theory of neutral monism which, for him, presented a simpler and also more objective picture of our knowledge of the world.

One of the problems that the theory of cognition under the acquaintance theory of knowledge faced was that, sensory and perceptual knowledge, taken on its own, that is, without knowledge of the past, seemed to 'trap' the most certain knowledge within the narrow boundaries of the specious present, even though this was what Russell thought he would avoid with the theory of knowledge by acquaintance. Knowledge of the past, which was supposed to guarantee that knowledge by acquaintance goes beyond the specious present, faced challenges of its own. The first thing we need to be aware of is that there are two types of knowledge of the past, one by acquaintance and one by description. And as we discovered, the boundaries between the two are sometimes blurry. On the other hand, it turned out that there is an ambiguity as to what immediate memory is a memory of, the immediate past, which belongs to the specious present, or the immediate past which does not belong to the specious present. If the latter, it seems that acquaintance with past sense-data, which immediate memory is, is a strange idea, since this means that the subject is acquainted with something that actually does not exist any more, and therefore, is not present before the mind. We explained that acquaintance with the past is possible if we accept that the object of immediate memory exists as the term of a relation in the past. However, it seemed that there still was a certain ambiguity left as to whether Russell thought that the object of immediate memory was causally active or not. Another difficulty that the acquaintance theory of cognition faced was that it did not distinguish strictly between the different experiential cognitive faculties, as it was intended to do. Russell's theory of cognition in the acquaintance period could not provide a reliable criterion (according to the theory, the distinction was supposed to be based upon the cognitive relation, and not on the different cognitive objects) for distinguishing between the faculties of sensation and imagination, memory and sensation, or memory and imagination. Along the same lines, the distinction between the two

type of knowledge, immediate and mediated or propositional, seems to be a problem in some cases (as in the case of memory) since knowledge by acquaintance ‘behaves’ like knowledge by description (in the sense that it shows characteristics like certainty and infallibility which are characteristics of propositional knowledge).

After 1918 Russell believes that the theory of perception (with sensation at its core), memory, and imagination – the cognitive faculties responsible for experiential knowledge – will benefit from a psychological (and behaviorist) analysis (as well as from an epistemological one), which should incorporate analysis of habit, association, mnemonic phenomena, etc. And since in the neutral monism period our experience of the world is considered ‘integral’ (that is, cognitive experience which is not an experience of the present stimuli, but of the past and the future), things like external stimuli, images, physical and mental causes, mnemonic phenomena, feelings of pastness, familiarity, and recognition are what make up the content of our experiential knowledge. Regarding the distinction between the types of knowledge, the theory of cognition under neutral monism made things simpler in the sense that it did not have to divide knowledge into types, depending on where it comes from (from the senses or from judgment). In the neutral monism period all knowledge, including experiential knowledge, is derivative and all cognitive faculties share the same ‘object’ of cognition, namely, images. This, for example, takes care of the split that occurs in memory in the acquaintance period, and puts all memory under one type of knowledge, namely, derivative knowledge. However, as we pointed out earlier, the simplicity of the theory of cognition under neutral monism comes at a price. Certainty of (experiential) knowledge is what is ‘sacrificed’ in the neutral monism period. Since there is no direct knowledge of the world, even the most certain derivative knowledge is not as certain as knowledge by acquaintance was. This makes all knowledge vulnerable to skeptical doubt, or at least, more vulnerable than it was in the acquaintance period.

Since, in the neutral monism period, all knowledge is considered derivative, the cognitive

faculties are constituted of such propositional entities as images and beliefs. And so belief plays a central role in Russell's account of the experiential cognitive faculties. Russell admits that belief is a complicated notion, which cannot be defined precisely. However, the 'collapse' of act, subject and object of cognition into one entity, which leads to dispensing with the cognitive relation of acquaintance, made him realize that it is difficult to analyze knowledge without a knower and a known. So, Russell reintroduces the act and the object of cognition in his analysis of belief. As we saw, one of the components of belief is the belief-feeling which Russell describes as a 'positive feeling'. It turns out that the belief-feeling is central to Russell's account of memory in the neutral monism period, since it distinguishes memory from imagination.

It seems also that the new theory of cognition has its own challenges. In *The Analysis of Mind*, for example, the account of memory seems to be trapped in circularity, which affects the distinction between memory-images and imagination-images. The difficulty stemmed from the nature of belief-feeling. Belief-feeling (the act of believing), which accompanies memory-images, is what distinguishes memory-images from imagination-images. According to Russell, the feeling of pastness that we get when we remember something is not a characteristic of the image itself, that is, it does not come from the content of the memory-belief, but is a result of the belief-feeling. The belief-feeling that turns pure images into memory-images, however, is a special belief-feeling which Russell calls 'memory' (memory-belief, as opposed to the other forms of belief-feeling, expectation and bare assent). The question to ask, then, is whether memory-images are not also a special kind of images that *actually make* us believe that they correspond to our past experiences. This will place the origin of the feeling of pastness in the content of belief (the memory-images), and not in the act of belief.

In conclusion, what I think our analysis of the theory of cognition in the neutral monism period has shown us that the new theory of cognition is a project under progress, which is becoming increasingly complicated and involves more psychological analysis, and which

continues in Russell's discussion of knowledge until the end of his philosophical career.

Chapter Four

Concluding Remarks on the Analysis of Russell's Theory of Cognition in the Period 1910-1926.

In this dissertation my objective was to clarify Russell's position on the main cognitive faculties – sensation, perception, memory and imagination – from 1910-1926. I have argued that Russell's account of the main experiential cognitive faculties deserves more attention than it has received from commentators to date. His theory of the experiential cognitive faculties is an integral part of his theory of knowledge, and it not only grows more complicated, but also increasingly occupies Russell's interest – which culminates in *The Analysis of Mind*, the first major neutral monist work. I have based my analysis of the four main experiential cognitive faculties on the premise that Russell's account of the cognitive faculties is a part and parcel of his epistemology in the stipulated period. The period covered in this dissertation is a period of dramatic change for Russell's philosophy, in general, and his epistemology, in particular. Nevertheless, I have shown that he never lost interest in the theory of the experiential cognitive

faculties. This is confirmed by the textual evidence from both the acquaintance and the neutral monism periods (particularly, but not exclusively, in *Theory of Knowledge* and *The Analysis of Mind*) from which it is evident that his account of sensation, perception, memory, and imagination, was growing to be increasingly complicated.

My analysis of Russell's work in both periods showed that the theory of cognition (the development of the four main cognitive faculties) is a common thread that runs through his philosophy in both periods. Thus, I agree with Hylton's conclusion that we should not look at Russell's neutral monist theory (of knowledge) as a "product of a new beginning but rather as the outcome of a process of historical evolution".⁵⁴⁹ We started our research in 1910 when Russell admits that his philosophical interests are being directed toward the theory of knowledge, an interest that persists until the end of his philosophical career. In the period from 1910 to 1913 Russell writes a number of texts in which he builds the so-called theory of knowledge by acquaintance. There Russell states that the foundational type of knowledge is knowledge by acquaintance. Knowledge by acquaintance consists of sensation, perception, memory, and imagination, introspection, and knowledge of universals, relations, simple logical laws, and mathematical truths. Knowledge that comes from the senses is what Russell called knowledge of things (as opposed to knowledge of truths). We noted that knowledge of things (or experiential knowledge) is at the root of the theory of cognition, and it is this type of knowledge that explains what the precise mechanism of knowledge is. In other words, in the theory of cognition Russell explores what experiential knowledge consists of. According to the acquaintance theory, all experiential knowledge is knowledge by acquaintance, that is, direct knowledge. The directness of knowledge by acquaintance guarantees its self-evidence and certainty.

In sensation (or in any other cognitive faculty, for that matter) we distinguish *objects* of

⁵⁴⁹ Hylton, p. 391.

sensation, and *acts* of sensation. This distinction is crucial for Russell's theory of knowledge. The objects of sensation are not dependent upon the mind of the perceiver (the only exception among the experiential cognitive faculties is introspection whose objects are, actually, mental). When we sense things, we simply become *acquainted* with them, we do not interpret, infer, or judge *about* them. Russell rejects Hume's view that the ultimate constituents of knowledge, ideas and impressions, are dependent upon the mind of the perceiver, as he thinks this leads to skeptical doubt. And that is why Russell not only insists on introducing new epistemological vocabulary (e.g., knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description), but also feels the need to abolish some of the traditional empiricist concepts such as impressions and images (because they suggest that the objects of experiential knowledge are mental). At first, Russell does not distinguish between sensation and perception. This changes in *Theory of Knowledge*. There the objects of perception are facts of perception, which are always complex entities, and the objects of sensation are sense-data. The act of perception or sensation, just like any other cognitive act, is a mental act. The sense-datum is merely given to the mind of the perceiver, it is not generated by it. Russell believes that sensory knowledge is not only possible but also that it is the foundation of our knowledge of the external world. Propositional knowledge (knowledge by description), which involves judgment, is built upon the direct knowledge with which we are acquainted. It lacks the certainty that knowledge by acquaintance has.

One of the issues that needed clarification is Russell's use of the concepts of knowledge and cognition. Russell disagrees with William James's conclusion that sensation (or acquaintance) is not cognitive. Russell calls knowledge by acquaintance 'knowledge' and refers to sensation, perception, memory, imagination, and introspection as cognitive faculties ('cognition with single objects'). Even though Russell is not explicit about what cognition is, by the way he uses it, we can infer that when he says that something is cognitive, he means that it leads directly, without the addition of any other, propositional or inferential, elements, to

knowledge. Thus, in the acquaintance period sensation is cognitive because it leads directly to knowledge (the objects of sensation are considered pieces of knowledge), and not merely a part of our experience, as he argued in the neutral monism period. Since knowledge by acquaintance does not involve truth or falsehood, it cannot be infallible or indubitable, in the strict sense of these terms. The question, then, is how is knowledge by acquaintance the most certain type of knowledge? I argued that in the acquaintance period Russell uses 'certain' knowledge rather loosely, to mean reliable knowledge, knowledge that we can trust. So, since, technically, infallibility and indubitability belong to propositional knowledge, self-evidence (in the sense of asserting the existence of a sense-datum) is what characterizes knowledge by acquaintance best. Thus, knowledge by acquaintance is (absolutely) self-evident knowledge. This, however, does not mean that it is infallible, indubitable, or absolutely certain, since, as Russell admits, there is no absolutely certain knowledge (since propositional knowledge is derivative knowledge and derivative knowledge is always liable to error and skeptical doubt). On the other hand, however, Russell admits that knowledge by acquaintance is often accompanied by knowledge of truths and it is this knowledge of truths that has the properties of certainty, infallibility, indubitability, and even self-evidence. In 1913 he argues that it is easy to confuse perceptual knowledge, which is knowledge by acquaintance, with judgments of perception, which is knowledge by description. As a result, I argued that the best way to describe sensory knowledge (or any experiential knowledge, for that matter) is as self-evident knowledge, which also makes it the most certain knowledge there is (not exclusive to knowledge of universals, of course). In Chapter 2 we concluded that the confusion surrounding the certainty of knowledge by acquaintance, as well as the notion of *knowledge* by acquaintance itself, might be due to the fact that Russell wanted to have knowledge which is unmediated by our mind in any way and he accomplished that by creating knowledge by acquaintance. Even though there are scholars who believe, not without reason, that Russell conflated sensory knowledge and knowledge of truths which accompanies

sensory knowledge, we concluded that in the acquaintance period he insisted, criticizing James, that sensory knowledge is actual knowledge, that is, that it has cognitive properties. This premise is important for his theory of cognition, and theory of knowledge because it guarantees that there is a type of knowledge which is, in a sense, immune to skeptical doubt.

In Chapter 2, I showed that the act of cognition is mental. Russell argues that the act of cognition is set in physical time, and so are some of the objects of cognition. The temporal nature of the act of cognition and the objects of cognition is, according to Russell, something worth exploring. When the subject senses, the object of its sensation is in the present time of its own existence. However, Russell admits, the sense in which the objects are 'present' to the knowing subject is troublesome and needs further investigation. In one sense, 'present' means happening 'now'; only the objects of sensation (and perhaps, introspection) are present in this sense. In another sense, 'present' means 'being in immediate contact with the mind' which he defines as simply having 'experience, acquaintance, awareness'; objects of all four experiential faculties are present in this second sense. Objects of memory are in the past, yet somehow they are present to the mind which is acquainted with them; objects of imagination are neither in the present, nor in the past, being imaginary, yet they are somehow present to the imagining mind too (Russell actually admits that he does not have a criterion, based on the nature of the cognitive relation, to decide whether the objects of imagination are timeless, or simultaneous to the cognitive subject). I argued that the two senses of 'present' and the complicated nature of knowledge of the past, for example, creates a certain ambiguity in understanding experiential knowledge.

The most obvious ambiguity comes from the fact that the objects of memory are in the past, and yet we know them directly, that is, without the help of images (copies). So, we are acquainted with something that is not temporally present any more. It is a fact, however, that if we are acquainted with something, then the relation of acquaintance presupposes that whatever we are acquainted with is present in the non-temporal sense. So, the objects of memory are

present in the sense that we are acquainted with them, but not in the temporal sense. As we saw from the analysis of memory in Chapter 2, it seems that the matter gets further complicated by the fact that memory is divided into types. The main types of memory are immediate memory and remote memory (physiological memory seems to be a part of sensation). Only immediate memory yields knowledge by acquaintance. The name 'immediate memory', also referred to in *Theory of Knowledge* as sensational memory, might suggest that the objects of memory are causally active, as opposed to causally inactive.

In Chapter 2 I concluded that the textual evidence shows that Russell indeed wanted to deal with one faculty of memory, as opposed to two. However, he had to admit that knowledge of the past is of two logically distinct kinds, knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. Immediate memory provides knowledge by acquaintance, which is considered to be the 'true' knowledge of the past, which means that immediate memory provides reliable knowledge of the past (in fact, as far as certainty is concerned, it is as certain as sensory knowledge). From the analysis of immediate memory, however, we discovered that there is a certain ambiguity as to what is meant by 'immediate'. On the one hand, Russell talks about sensational memory and physiological memory, whose objects are known in psychology as 'after-images'. In other words, sensational or physiological memory yields knowledge which seems to be sensory knowledge, since its objects belong to the specious present. On the other hand, he seems to refer to immediate memory as sensational memory, too, but regardless of what he calls it, he invariably characterizes it as the true memory, whose objects are sensations that have already faded (that is, past sense-data, and not after-images). So, it seems that Russell wants true memory to deal with a past which is beyond the specious present, while at the same time he does not elaborate on how immediate memory works, and does not specify when the specious present ends and the 'true' past begins. Finally, remote memory is the least reliable knowledge of the past since, as Russell finally admits, it operates with images of past sense-data, and images,

which are copies of past sense-data, involve fallible inference rather than direct acquaintance. So, remote memory provides knowledge by description. The fact that knowledge of the past is of two kinds does not go against the principles of the theory of knowledge by acquaintance, but it certainly complicates the theory of cognition and reveals that there are things in the acquaintance theory that need further elaboration.

Toward the end of *Theory of Knowledge*, already realizing that the analysis of memory is being complicated by the fact that there are two main types of memory which yield different types of knowledge, Russell tries another approach to tackle the issue of immediacy (and certainty) of knowledge of the past. He argues that ‘there is a gradual transition’ from acquaintance memory to remote memory. What happens is that the more time passes, the past sense-data turn into images (copies of sense-data), and these images, that resemble past-sense-data, become less and less reliable. So, what looks like a fading immediate memory is “really acquaintance with an image growing progressively less like the past but known throughout to be ‘representative’ of the past”. This suggests that what was immediate becomes mediated knowledge, and as it seems, Russell does not have any account of how that happens, and what implications it has for the reliability of knowledge of the past.

As we also discovered in Chapter 2, since Russell could not decide, by his own admission, could not decide whether the objects of imagination are simultaneous or atemporal in relation to the cognitive subject, because he could not find anything in the nature of the cognitive relation that could help him decide, it seems that distinguishing between imaginary past and real past might be challenging. It seems that the fact that the object of cognition is present before the mind does not make us believe that it is the object of authentic memory rather than an imaginary one. It seems that the distinction between the cognitive faculties (which, as Russell argued, should be based on the cognitive relation and not on the object of cognition) is not as simple as it may have appeared to him at first to be.

As we saw from the analysis of perception in Chapter 2, the distinction between direct and indirect knowledge (knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description) is somewhat challenged in the case of perception. (Things become particularly complicated with regard to complex perception.) The conclusion we reached, based on Russell's own analysis of simple and complex perception, and with the help of Pears' commentary, is that in perceptual knowledge direct and indirect knowledge are hopelessly entangled. It seems that in perception, especially in complex perception, there are two cognitive processes involved, which are separable only upon careful analysis – understanding, and acquaintance. So, then, it might appear that perceptual complexes (i.e., facts) are *understood* as simple objects, even though what we actually *know* directly is their constituents which might include logical forms, as well as the particulars and their relations. If understanding and acquaintance are practically indistinguishable in perception, then it seems that knowledge by acquaintance might have more leaning toward propositional knowledge than Russell initially thought it had. And, in fact, the complexity of knowledge by acquaintance is confirmed by Russell's change of mind about sensation and perception in the neutral monism period. In the neutral monism period Russell states that sensation is not cognitive per se, and that the most certain knowledge is carried by perception which is derivative knowledge. Thus, we could argue that, with the distinction between sensation and perception in 1913, Russell gave the first sign of his later belief that perception carries the 'real' knowledge, while sensation does not provide any knowledge at all.

One of the changes that Russell's theory of knowledge was beginning to undergo in 1914, and that persists throughout the period covered in this dissertation, is the logical construction of physical objects. In 1912 Russell thought that we have direct access in acquaintance only to such cognitive particulars as past and present sense-data, imaginary data, etc., but not to physical objects. We have to infer physical objects from sense-data which we know directly. Even though we cannot prove that there are physical objects (matter), we have an

“*instinctive* belief” that there is a physical world independent of me which corresponds to the sense-data that I have of this world, and since this belief does not lead to any further difficulties, “but on the contrary tends to simplify and systematize our account of our experiences”, then we can accept it as true.⁵⁵⁰ Thus, we do not know physical objects by acquaintance, but we know them by description, the inferred causes of our sense-data. This implies that our knowledge of them is less certain than our knowledge of sense-data. Around 1914 Russell begins to ‘dislike’ the thesis that physical objects are inferred on epistemological grounds. Since physical objects are not known directly, the belief in their existence becomes questionable. This appears to be the main (epistemological) reason why Russell decides to abandon the thesis he held in 1912 that physical objects are inferred entities, and replace it with the thesis he developed in 1914 that physical objects are *constructed* entities. The construction of physical objects allowed Russell to satisfy both the common-sense belief and the scientific belief that there is a physical reality that surrounds us and that it is knowable. As we argued, in *Our Knowledge of the External World*, Russell tries to reconcile, or show the connection between the world of sensation and the world of physics. If Russell manages to show that physical objects are not inferred (in the technical sense) but constructed, he will show that even our scientific beliefs are empirically grounded and therefore verifiable, without having to postulate an unverifiable causal connection between sense-data and physical objects.

The problem with the construction of physical objects out of sense-data that Russell encounters is that sense-data prove to be too momentary to fulfill the demand for wholeness and continuity that the common-sense (as well as the scientific) account of the world demands. (Sense-data are also perceived from a certain subjective perspective and are affected by such factors as the subject’s physical and mental state, atmospheric conditions, etc.). Sense-data are

⁵⁵⁰*The Problems of Philosophy*, p. 24.

perceived, that is, they require an observer for their existence. But this leaves the cases when nobody observes a given physical object, out of reach for sense-data. That is why Russell needs an entity which will be directly known and which will bring certain knowledge, but which does not depend upon the presence of an observer (mind). And these entities are sensibilia. The way that Russell thought about the physical objects in 1914 is that they are classes of sensibilia (which may have sense-data as their constituents). We still infer (in a manner of speaking) the existence of physical objects, but this time, unlike in 1912, we infer it from the sense-data which are subset of sensibilia. So, the introduction of sensibilia is needed for the logical construction of physical objects, which was done to achieve greater epistemological clarity and stability.

The main difference in Russell's ideas about acquaintance in 1913 and in "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism" [1918] is that in the latter he thought that the ultimate cognitive constituents are not sense-data but facts of perception, and because of that, he focuses on the analysis of facts and their complexity, and not on acquaintance with sense-data. For Russell there is an infinite hierarchy of facts. In other words, we can be acquainted even with very complex facts. Whether the facts are more complex or less complex, one thing still remains – the relationship between the subject of cognition and the objects of perception is one of acquaintance, not of belief. So, it appears that in 1918 Russell still believes that the most reliable knowledge that we have comes from some sort of a direct acquaintance with the world. This, however, begins to change in late 1918 and leads, in turn, in 1919 to the abandonment of the idea that there is direct knowledge of the world.

Even though in 1918 Russell is only describing the theory of neutral monism, without embracing it, he states that neutral monism is becoming very attractive because it offers a simpler (and more objective) picture of the world, and of knowledge of the world. According to neutral monism, both mental and material entities are made of the same 'neutral stuff'. Russell sees an opportunity, in accepting (at least some of) the principles of neutral monism, to dispense with the

‘subject’ of cognition, about which he had doubts even in the acquaintance period, by reducing the subject, the object, and the act of cognition to logical fictions and putting them under one entity, which is an event or simply occurrence (such as ‘noise’). This leads to pronouncing sensation non-cognitive.

Even though in 1918 sensation is considered non-cognitive and thus, its status as the primary bearer of knowledge is usurped, out of all the experiential cognitive faculties, memory continues to be central for Russell’s theory of cognition. The main reason for that is that memory meets the expectations of Russell’s new theory of cognition. On the one hand, it is constituted by such propositional entities as images and beliefs (and habits). Images are representations of sense-data, they can be true or false, which is the requirement for being cognitive. On the other hand, memory-beliefs are certainly cognitive and they are the entities that, supposedly, distinguish memory from imagination (or hallucinations, or dreams). It looks like Russell thought that in 1921 he had found a way to distinguish between memory and imagination. Imagination-images are not accompanied by a belief of the past, or a feeling of familiarity. The more familiar we are with a certain image or presentation, the more reliable (believable) the memory of it seems to be. As we concluded in Chapter 3, this account of memory seems to suffer from certain problems that have to do with the belief-feeling. Belief-feeling (the act of believing), which accompanies memory-images, is what distinguishes memory-images from imagination-images. The act of belief seems to be in a complicated relationship with the content of belief. According to Russell, the feeling of pastness that we get when we remember something is not a characteristic of the image itself, that is, it does not come from the content of the memory-belief, but is a result of the act of belief, namely, the belief-feeling. As we discovered, Russell thought that the belief-feeling that turns pure images into memory-images is a special belief-feeling which Russell calls ‘memory’, or memory-belief. The question, then, is whether this special belief-feeling does not *actually* come from the special type of images, memory-images, which

prompt our feeling of pastness.

By the time Russell writes his first major neutral monist work, *The Analysis of Mind* in 1921, he is convinced that beliefs and images, and not sense-data (or sensations, as he calls them in the neutral monism period), are the entities that constitute cognition. Sensations are immediate appearances of objects that exist outside of our minds. When these appearances enter the mind, however, they are not alone. The relations of the particular sensations to past data (or to other present data), and the habit of associating these sensations with other data, are some of the things that accompany sensations upon their entry into the mind. It is these other elements that turn sensations into (primitive) pieces of knowledge. Only when we can associate, remember, expect, and imagine data, do they become cognitive elements. Habit, association, expectation, and belief allow us to turn raw sensations into data that can be related to each other and form a coherent stream of experience, called by Russell 'integral experience'.

The conclusion that we reach at the end of the chapter is that even in the neutral monist period Russell still considered experiential knowledge to be foundational. What changes is that in 1921 he came to believe that experiential knowledge is not direct but always derivative. Indeed, on his new view, *all* knowledge is derivative, since all knowledge requires mediation (through images, beliefs, inferences, etc.). This outcome leads Russell to believe that even the most certain knowledge that we can have is liable to error and skeptical doubt, more than it was in the acquaintance theory of knowledge. This is a definite change of views from what he held in the acquaintance period. And it seems that, even though he thought (in 1918) that neutral monism provides a simpler and more objective picture of knowledge of the world, as it turns out, after he accepts neutral monism, certainty of knowledge is the price that, apparently, Russell is prepared to pay. Some commentators have argued that the picture of knowledge that Russell provides in *The Analysis of Mind* (at least until 1926) is a more 'realistic' one, compared to the unachievable standard of certainty and indubitability of direct knowledge that he had set in the

acquaintance period, which might be considered an improvement over the acquaintance theory of knowledge. Otherwise, neutral monism did provide a simpler picture of knowledge of the world, for which Russell valued it so highly. The distinction between sensation and perception is made simpler, in the sense that one of them is considered a mere experience without the cognitive element. Dispensing with the subject (which dispenses with introspection as a part of the theory of cognition), and replacing the object and act of cognition with one neutral entity, also simplifies the analysis of knowledge. The division of knowledge of the past disappears, and the need to distinguish between the various objects of memory and account for the transition from one to the other, also disappears.

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