

## Bertrand Russell's Theory of the Nature of Reality.

A man's Metaphysics must always depend largely upon his theory of knowledge, <sup>and vice versa</sup> for the facts which he regards as having fundamental metaphysical truth must be obtained by what he considers to be a valid cognitive process. If, for example, a <sup>proposition</sup> fact given to us only through intuition is regarded as true, the fact that it is so regarded must be based on an Epistemology which treats intuition as a <sup>truth-giving</sup> ~~valid cognitive~~ process. With Bertrand Russell, the relation of Metaphysics to Epistemology is especially close, ~~for~~ <sup>as</sup> his whole theory of the nature of reality has its ~~true~~ roots in his view of the difference between knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. Let us, then, begin our discussion by the investigation of how he treats this problem.

Russell says, "We shall say that we have acquaintance with anything of which we are directly aware, without the intermediary of any process of inference or any knowledge of truths. Thus in the presence of my table I am acquainted with the sense-data that make up the appearance of my table - its colour, shape, hardness, smoothness, etc.; all these are things of which

I am immediately conscious when I am seeing or touching"  
"The Problems of Philosophy, P. 73.

my table. The particular shade of colour that I am seeing may have many things said about it - I may say that it is brown, that it is rather dark, and so on. But such statements, though they may make me know truths about the colour, do not make me know the colour itself any better than I did before. as far as concerns knowledge of the colour itself, as opposed to knowledge of truths about it, I know the colour perfectly and completely when I see it, and no further knowledge of it itself is even theoretically possible. Thus the sense-data which make up the appearance of my table are things with which I have acquaintance, things immediately known to me just as they are."

I make this rather lengthy quotation that we may clearly keep in mind the fundamental distinction between knowledge by ~~acquaintance~~ acquaintance and knowledge by description; the former is immediate and indubitable, the latter is inferential and liable to error. Even in dreams and hallucinations, <sup>according to Russell,</sup> our acquaintance remains unobscured, for the dream is just as genuine a fact as the waking state; it <sup>is</sup> ~~is~~ when we falsely describe our dream in terms which are only suitable for waking

states that we err. The object of acquaintance is, but it is not true in any sense in which truth is the correlate of falsity. When I look at a book, I see certain irregular black figures on a white background which, in spots, shades into gray. At the moment of this experience, I neither ~~can~~ question it nor affirm it; I simply have it. The ~~only~~ first point at which error can enter into our experience is when we try to discover the meaning of all these immediately given sensations; when we see the splashes ~~of~~ and spots of white, grey, and black as a ~~flat~~ <sup>curved</sup> sheet of paper, or when we ~~see~~ see the black zig-zags and loops as letters, these letters as words, or these words as sentences; in a word, when we begin to describe our experience.

Before we can ~~proceed~~ to search for Russell's ideas concerning the nature of description, we must see how far he makes acquaintance <sup>extend within</sup> ~~go~~ in experience. The cardinal point which one must keep in mind there is that it is things only, and not facts, with which we may be acquainted. To begin with, we are acquainted with all our sense-data, as the paragraph quoted above shows, ~~Do~~

acquaintance is not, however, ~~limited to~~ <sup>thing</sup> 'sense-data' merely in the narrower sense, such as data of vision, hearing, etc, but also includes our thoughts, feelings, desires, and all the rest of the varied furniture of our mental life. It is ~~even~~ <sup>believed strongly</sup> probable, says Russell, that we have direct acquaintance with our selves. ~~Russell is not sure, however,~~ <sup>he</sup> that the phase of his experience which he thinks is his self is really his self. Finally, it is important to remember that we have, in Russell's opinion, direct acquaintance with universals. Our immediate experience is no mere flimsy aggregate of disparate particulars, but a closely-knit system. Relations belong to it as well as terms, so that it has a definite structure. For this reason, we are not to confuse <sup>with the raw empiricism of</sup> Russell's reference of all description ultimately to some acquaintance.

We are now in a position to understand the nature of description. ~~It is~~ The description of a thing is its orientation with reference to experience in so far as it is not immediately known to acquaintance.

As Russell says, "Every proposition which we can understand"  
 "P. 11, ~~Principles of~~  
 Problems of Philosophy

must be composed wholly of elements with which we are acquainted." Descriptive knowledge is inferential knowledge, is the knowledge of the context of the object described rather than of the object itself. Thus, to give an example of my own, I can describe the properties of an atom, although I am not directly acquainted with any atom. Descriptive knowledge of anything is the knowledge that if it did not have the properties which we allege of it, something in our immediate experience, in our acquaintance would be different. If, for example, the law of gravitation did not hold, the observed behavior of falling bodies would be different. If George Washington, <sup>whom we all</sup> ~~had not existed,~~ <sup>know simply</sup> ~~or had had a different~~ by description as the first president of the United States, the man who was known by the name, George Washington, etc, had not lived, we can see clearly that the present ~~also~~ condition of the United States, with which we are more or less acquainted, would be other than ~~it is~~ we find it. That is, the described object or person is something essential to the <sup>things</sup> ~~experience~~ with which we are acquainted, <sup>yet</sup> ~~but~~ <sup>we</sup> ~~not~~ <sup>of</sup> ~~it~~; it is the system resulting from the <sup>postulation</sup> ~~postulation~~ of the terms and relations which

presented to us.  
we find ~~an immediate~~ experience.

Before proceeding further in my exposition of Russell's views, I ~~shall~~ should like to criticize them. Acquaintance, it seems to me, if we take it in Russell's sense, is not really even a knowledge of things, but ~~a more or less vague~~ <sup>on the one hand,</sup> a more or less <sup>formless</sup> vague experience of immediacy, on the other hand, an aspect of all experience. That is, we may <sup>speak of as</sup> call ~~acquaintance~~ our 'acquaintance' with a thing, an ~~idea~~ <sup>idea</sup>, vague and indistinct picture of the thing as a whole, a view of the thing without any analysis into parts or phases or aspects. But such a state of mind is hardly a view of a 'thing' at all; it is ~~too~~ <sup>imarticulate</sup> too diffuse and ~~indefinite~~ <sup>chaotic</sup>, so that the more immediate it is, and the less of discourse and 'description' it has about it, and the less it pertains to anything in particular. The mystic, who makes the complete attainment of <sup>such</sup> a state like this his end, admits that 'things' stand to it only as inadequate symbols, simply

just because they are 'things'; artificially separated

thing as to its outline, although, perhaps, clear and strong in its feeling-tone

phases of the universe.

On the <sup>Again</sup> other hand, we may regard <sup>the word</sup> 'acquaintance' as really representing the fact that, in logic, as elsewhere, 'ex nihilo nihil fit', that we must always have some ~~an~~ empirical stock-in-trade to start from, before we begin to analyse it ~~from~~ <sup>and</sup> to criticise it, ~~and we may believe that this stock-in-trade is the subject matter of what Russell calls 'acquaintance'.~~ The difficulty with this view is that the idea of 'thingness' is already the product of a certain process of analysis. Let us take, to begin with, such a simple example as that of a mathematical system. ~~On~~ The subject matter of our 'acquaintance' would here constitute the postulates, and what are called the 'primitive terms', - the terms which enter into the postulates.

Now, we find clearly that any term which enters into the system may be taken as one of the elementary terms, and any proposition which holds true of the system may be taken as

Russell now admits as much in his 'Principia Mathematica' one of the postulates. That is, the character of indemonstrability which belongs to certain facts in any system may be transferred from them to other facts, and the <sup>attribute</sup> character of immediacy which ~~belongs to~~ <sup>phases of experience have</sup> certain terms does not belong to them as such. And the most ~~of~~ complicated aspect of the matter is this, that ~~if~~ if we have analysed a set of terms, A, in by means of another set, B, we may reverse the process, and analyse B in terms of A. If, for instance, <sup>it</sup> one defines in his geometry a line as a class of points having certain properties, <sup>which make together collinearity</sup> one may define a point as the class of lines of ~~which it is a member~~, <sup>having</sup> ~~such~~ <sup>certain other</sup> properties, <sup>which, together,</sup> are called <sup>concurrency</sup>. Similarly, if we analyse ~~one~~ <sup>into</sup> experience ~~as made~~ <sup>elementary ones</sup> up of certain ~~ones~~, we can also analyse an 'elementary experience' by describing the complex experiences into which it enters. The fact, then, that we believe that we are acquainted with a thing, does not preclude the psychologist from saying, 'no. You only imagine that it is this experience

with which you are acquainted. If, however, <sup>if</sup> you will take a little pains to look, you will find that you really were acquainted with those <sup>our sensations</sup> things over there, and that you described this, <sup>experience</sup> in terms of them; and any one with another point of view can, in turn, say the same thing to the psychologists. The moment we speak of a thing, we <sup>thereby</sup> segregate it, <sup>is thought, at least,</sup> from the rest of the universe, and give it a certain description, Since, as Russell says, facts cannot be presented, we <sup>can</sup> never consciously be acquainted <sup>twice</sup> with the same thing, <sup>twice for</sup> since we can <sup>not</sup> be acquainted with 'A is the same as B.' In short, acquaintance is a <sup>to</sup> necessary and fundamental aspect of all experience, <sup>although its</sup> ~~but~~ whose very nature prevents us from localizing it in any item or phase <sup>thereof</sup> of experience. Now, this view of acquaintance as a property of experience as a whole rather than of any part <sup>of it</sup> thereof removes a difficulty which runs through all Russell's work; the <sup>concerning</sup> difficulty of the nature of the introspective process. Russell <sup>talks</sup> ~~proceeds~~

represented by an  
 as if the self were, an item in its own experience.  
 "We know," he says, "the truth 'I am acquainted  
 with this sense datum'. It is hard to see how  
 we could know this truth, or even understand  
 what is meant by it, unless we were acquainted  
 with something which we call 'I'. It does not seem  
 necessary that we are acquainted with a more or  
 less permanent person, the same today as  
 yesterday, but it does seem as though we must  
 be acquainted with that thing, whatever its nature,  
 which sees the sun, and has acquaintance with sense-  
 data. Thus, in some sense it would seem  
 if we must be acquainted with our Selves  
 as opposed to our particular experiences. But  
 the question is difficult, and complicated argu-  
 ments can be adduced on both either side. Hence,  
 although acquaintance with the self seems  
 probably to occur, it would not be wise  
 to assert that it undoubtedly does occur."

The whole trouble here is Russell's notion of

'thing'; the self, if it is to have any meaning, is precisely that in our experience which is not an item. It is that in us which knows, and if it is known, <sup>directly</sup> it ceases to be the self. ~~It is the~~ <sup>When we</sup> say that we have a self, <sup>and give our statements any metaphysical connotation,</sup> we simply mean that our experience is somehow or other given, and does not deposit itself from a mental vacuum by means of a power inherent in itself, as the ~~old~~ rationalistic philosophers would have it do. The self, in other words, is the very fact of acquaintance, and, ~~is therefore, if experienced~~ is not a thing with which we are acquainted. On the other hand, the self of <sup>the psychologist, being a part of the content of experience, is metaphysically on precisely</sup>

the same plane as any physical object.

We have seen how ~~also~~ a more or less <sup>enters into</sup> atomistic view of experience ~~creeps in~~ in Russell's <sup>also</sup> treatment <sup>view</sup> of acquaintance; the ~~same~~ thing happens in his <sup>discussion</sup> ~~view~~ of knowledge by description. Russell says, "By a 'description' I mean any such phrase of the form 'a so-and-so' or 'the so-and-so.' A phrase of the form 'a so-and-so' I shall call an 'ambiguous' description; a phrase of the form 'the

'so-and-so' (in the singular) I shall call a 'definite' description. Thus, 'a man' is <sup>an ambiguous</sup> ~~a definite~~ description, and 'the man in the iron mask' is a definite description.

There are various problems connected with ambiguous descriptions, but I pass them by, since they do not directly concern ~~the~~ the matter we are discussing, which is the nature of our knowledge concerning objects in cases where we know that there is an object answering to a definite description, though we are not acquainted with any such object. I shall therefore, in the sequel, speak simply of 'descriptions' when I mean 'definite descriptions'. Thus ~~a~~ description will mean any phrase of the form 'the so-and-so' in the singular.<sup>2</sup> That is, Russell tacitly assumes that there are, to use his own words, 'cases where we know that there is an object answering to a definite description'. This I ~~flatly~~ <sup>flatly</sup> deny; I deny, that is, that any condition we can put on an object can absolutely and uniquely determine it, since the words, the phrases, the thoughts which we use

all more or less ambiguous and changing. Here  
 The mere words, 'man in the iron mask' do not constitute  
 a description, for there might have been several men  
 in iron masks, and ~~the fact~~ it does not ~~impose~~ make  
 our expression less ambiguous to say, 'the man in  
 the iron mask', for we are not told which man in the  
 iron mask it is. We may proceed to specify more  
 and more clearly which man in the iron mask it is,  
 but at no stage in our specification is the last pos-  
sibility of ambiguity removed. Take ~~such an~~ <sup>Russell's</sup>  
 own example, ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> candidate of a description, 'the  
 candidate who will get the most votes', and analyze  
 it. In the first place what constitutes ~~the~~ the nature  
 of a candidate? for what office is the man in question  
 a candidate? what ~~do~~ do we mean when we say,  
 A gets the most votes? ~~How~~ do we count votes? and lastly  
 what is a vote? We can easily see, then, that the ~~subject~~  
 of the candidate who ~~get~~ will get the most votes' is  
 the description, not of an individual, but of a large  
 and ill-defined class of <sup>instances</sup> cases. Even in the ~~case~~ of <sup>intimate</sup> ~~to~~

and elaborate descriptions the possibility of a plurality of applications remains; I can <sup>well</sup> conceive how one person might give another <sup>a detailed</sup> ~~an intimate~~ account of ~~his~~ the character of his closest personal friend, and how his hearer might agree perfectly with everything which he had said, although <sup>he might apply</sup> ~~applying~~ the description mistakenly to an entirely different person. It is only when we have previously agreed that, as in certain parts of symbolic logic, that there shall be things having certain unique properties, that we ever <sup>know that</sup> ~~know~~ obtained any definite description, for at no moment are we able to tell, <sup>for certain</sup> whether the property which hitherto we have found exemplified only in one place in the universe will not be ~~exemplified~~ <sup>found</sup> ~~at another place also.~~ <sup>discovered elsewhere</sup>

we have

We have seen, then, that Russell's epistemology foredooms him to the false belief, ~~that~~ (1) that we are immediately sure of the existence of certain things, <sup>including sense-data, etc</sup> while of other things we have only a derived knowledge; (2) that the self is a thing of which we have immediate consciousness (and not ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> fact

immediacy  
~~of our immediate~~ of our experience itself; (3), that  
 we have knowledge of certain descriptions which  
 can apply to one thing, and one thing only. At  
 the same time, Russell's distinction between  
 description and acquaintance is certainly a valid  
 one, for it is the old distinction between ~~discursive~~  
 discursive and intuitive knowledge; ~~to speak~~ <sup>all our experience,</sup>  
~~however~~ <sup>acquaintance</sup>, must at once be more or less structural in  
 nature, and <sup>yet</sup> must be, somehow or other, given. Still,  
 these are two distinguishable aspects of all  
 mental content; we can look upon a thought  
 or a sensation, or any part whatsoever of the  
 furniture of our minds, on the one hand, as a  
 certain position in the system of experience, or,  
 on the other hand, as a given starting point from  
 which to orient experience. This is the truth  
 underlying the doctrine of acquaintance and  
 description.

~~We have now come to the threshold~~  
~~of Russell's theory of reality proper induction,~~

which is the immediate ground of his Realism.

We are now prepared to enter upon the discussion of that portion of Russell's philosophy which treats of the nature of reality. But before we pass on to his ~~direct~~ <sup>direct</sup> treatment of the problem of Realism and Idealism, it is well to ~~see~~ <sup>find out</sup> what views his epistemology has committed him. It is easy to see that he must be more or less of an atomist in his treatment of ~~the~~ reality, for he believes that we are immediately sure of the existence of <sup>certain</sup> individual things (connected, I might add, by certain individual relations, — the universals ~~with~~ with which he supposes us to be acquainted), and that ~~out~~ <sup>by</sup> means of these we are able to ~~locate~~ <sup>describe</sup> certain other individual things. He must also be a dualist, for he finds the self <sup>as a thing</sup> among the things with which we are acquainted. Both of these views he develops in his doctrine of Realism.

With this in mind, let us read the first ~~chapter~~ paragraph of the chapter in his 'The Problems of Philosophy' entitled, 'The Existence of Matter'. "I n

this chapter," he says, "we have to ask ourselves whether, in any sense at all, there is such a thing as matter. Is there a table which has a certain intrinsic nature, and continues to exist when I am not looking, or is the table merely the product of my imagination, a dream-table, in a very prolonged dream? This question is of the greatest importance. For if we cannot be sure of the independent existence of objects, we cannot be sure of the independent existence of other people's bodies, and therefore still less of other people's minds, since we have no grounds for believing in their minds except such as are derived from observing their bodies. Thus if we cannot be sure of the independent existence of objects, we shall be left alone in a desert - it may be that the whole outer world is nothing but a dream, and that we alone exist. This is an uncomfortable possibility; but although it is uncomfortable, there is not the slightest reason to suppose that it is true. In this chapter we have to see why this is the case."

Now, if you regard the self as an item in <sup>the</sup> vast  
 inventory of things with which we are acquainted,  
 Russell is right. There is absolutely no reason why this  
 self should condition all other things. Any sane man  
 must recognize that ~~everything is not influenced~~ there  
 are things independent of his personality, just as  
 there are things independent of the personality of  
 others. Anyone can see, <sup>for example,</sup> that a cube  
~~is not nailed down~~  
 has six sides, although he can see only three  
 sides at once. To make this discovery, he simply  
 walks around the cube. The important point to keep  
 in mind, however, is that, ~~we~~ although we are  
 not nailed down to <sup>a single</sup> ~~any single~~ particular standpoint  
<sup>from which to</sup> ~~our~~ view of things, although we can take a more  
 or less impersonal attitude, and <sup>think of</sup> ~~treat~~ other persons  
 much as we would think of ourselves, we always must  
 look at things ~~from~~ from some particular  
 standpoint, and we <sup>can</sup> have no evidence that there  
 is a way of looking at things <sup>as things</sup> ~~apart~~ <sup>except</sup> from ~~any~~ <sup>some</sup>  
~~particular point of~~ ~~particular stand~~ view. This fact of that we <sup>are forced to</sup> ~~must~~ always

definite  
limited

take ~~some~~ ~~absolute~~ standpoint for any ~~res~~ description of anything, <sup>is what we</sup> ~~and that it~~ have previously seen ~~to~~ <sup>is</sup> be the significant aspect of Russell's doctrine of acquaintance, — what we found to be the self. It is not something personal, something individual, but ~~that~~ <sup>the</sup> fact that to know we must take a more or less personal, individual attitude. It is the <sup>subjective</sup> ~~real~~ <sup>self</sup> ~~self~~, whose existence is proved by the 'cogito, ergo sum'. ~~The objective self is truly, as Russell says,~~ ~~but~~ As for the objective self, personality, there is no valid reason which I can see for treating it as anything but one phase of the ~~ext~~ objective world among a vast multitude of others, differing from them only in degree.

When Russell tries to find out what the self in the 'cogito, ergo sum' is, he <sup>falls</sup> ~~gets~~ into this confusion between the subjective or true self and the objective self, or personality. He says, 'The real self is as hard to arrive at as the real table, and does not seem to have that absolute, ~~owing~~ convincing certainty that belongs to

particular experiences". Of course not, for it is not found in experience at all, - it finds other things in experience. ~~It is most assuredly not what Russell supposes it to be, another mental state.~~

Russell's strongest argument that there must be something over and above what is known <sup>seemingly</sup> is, that otherwise we would not be able to make predictions concerning the behavior of things if they were nothing more than 'a mere collection of sense-data', that we could never talk of the same thing twice. "Thus it is the fact", he says, "that different people have similar sense-data, and that one person in a given place at different times has the ~~same~~ <sup>similar</sup> sense-data, which makes us suppose that over and above the sense-data there is a permanent public object which underlies or causes the sense-data of various persons and various times". It is quite true that if you swallow the camel, and believe in the existence of unmistakable sense-data, uncorrupted by any taint of description, which give us direct

access to the true inward nature of reality, it is, to say the least, foolish to strain at the gnat of a faith in the existence of objects which, in themselves, cannot be known. It is indeed, necessary to attach the ~~sense data to one another~~ <sup>objects of our immediate</sup> acquaintance to one another somehow; ~~and even it is fatal to~~ <sup>for</sup> ~~any~~ <sup>thought to have its</sup> ~~thought~~ <sup>for</sup> if one does not, one can have no science, no ~~course~~ <sup>discourse</sup> of any sort. If ~~the~~ <sup>the</sup> things with which one is acquainted are altogether self-complete, what earthly need can we have to describe anything? Even though we can, as Russell says, we are acquainted with universals, we cannot use them to connect up the various sense-data, for we are not, <sup>ever</sup> acquainted with any propositions about them; i.e. we can be acquainted with 'red', but not with 'this is red'. In such a world as this, it is no wonder that Russell says, "If the cat appears at one moment in one part of the room, and at another in another part, it is natural to suppose that it has moved from the one to the other, passing over a series of intermediate positions."

But if it is merely a set of sense-data, it cannot ~~ever~~ have ever been in any place where I did not see it; thus we shall have to suppose that it did not exist at all while I was not looking, but suddenly sprang into being in a new place. If the cat exists whether I see it or not, we can understand from our own experience how it gets hungry between one meal and the next; but if it does not exist when I am not seeing it, it seems odd that appetite should grow as fast during non-existence as during existence. And if the cat consists only of sense-data, it cannot be hungry, since no hunger but my own can be a sense-datum to me. Thus, the behaviour of the sense-data which represent the cat to me, though it seems quite natural when regarded as an expression of hunger, becomes utterly inexplicable when regarded as mere movements and changes of patches of colour, which are as incapable of hunger as a triangle is of playing football.

It is perfectly clear that the cat cannot be a mere mass of sense-data, but let me ask, does it make matters any more clear to say that it is a mass of sense-data plus a nomenclal, real cat. If it is hard to see how a mass of sense data can have another sense-datum, hunger, it is equally hard to see how ~~a sense data~~ <sup>a nomenclal</sup> can have it. What is the relation between the nomenclal and the sense-data through which we know it? ~~How does it help our knowledge of the cat to duplicate what we know about~~

When we come to think this over, we come to see that we have now two problems where before there was but one; the previous problem, which concerned the interrelation of the sense-data among themselves, is still as far from a solution as ever, and we have the additional problem of the place of the realities behind the sense-data. Order cannot be introduced from the outside into a system which is not inherently orderly, ~~there is~~ it must be there to begin with.

If, however, <sup>if</sup> we adopt the view that the given is not a heterogeneous mass of sense-data, but the more

or less coherent experience which we always find it to be, solipsism loses its terrors. The cat, ~~is not now~~ to revert to Russell's example, <sup>the cat</sup> is <sup>more</sup> and not a <sup>mere</sup> mass of patches of color, etc., but a whole way of behaving, which we isolate from other things simply because, for certain interests of ours, it is profitable to do so.

<sup>similarly,</sup> <sup>1</sup> Our objective selves are certain other ways of behaving, <sup>we</sup> we have learned to call a <sup>one</sup> certain familiar manner of acting in ourselves hunger, and we have extended the term to apply to <sup>similar</sup> actions in the cat.

Just in so far as we find <sup>that</sup> the cat <sup>has</sup> ~~to have~~ existed, we say it did exist; if, for example, our view of hunger implies that hunger takes time to develop, and if we find that the cat is hungry, the cat must have existed long enough for that hunger to develop.

That is, <sup>the cat</sup> things exist just as <sup>in so far</sup> ~~much~~ <sup>to the extent that</sup> as the evidence shows that <sup>it</sup> they exist. Whether <sup>it</sup> they exist when there is no evidence of any sort for <sup>its</sup> their existence is, then, ex hypothesi, absolutely indifferent

to anyone, and any attempt at proving either

<sup>its</sup> their existence or <sup>its</sup> their non-existence is foredoomed to failure. Of course, this ~~demanded~~ view demands that there is no such thing as an absolutely eternal truth, but it permits facts to be fixed enough for any practical purpose. This seems to me the only way out of the dilemma which Russell is in, between an atomistic theory of ~~experience~~ <sup>reality</sup> and one which ~~puts~~ <sup>makes</sup> reality as such inaccessible by putting it behind experience. If one <sup>segregates the</sup> separates unity of things ~~and~~ <sup>to begin with</sup> their multiplicity, and puts them in absolutely distinct parts of the universe, it stands to reason that he will be unable to bring them together again, for this would suppose some unity principle of unity which would include both ~~the~~ unity and ~~the~~ plurality in its sphere of action. The only <sup>consistent</sup> way we can ever get unity and coherence into experience is, if I may be excused a Xibernicism, to have had it there from the beginning. If this is the case, a thing 'exists' whenever it is significant for us, <sup>and to the extent that</sup> just as far as it is significant for us; not so far as it is immediately present to us, for <sup>no thing</sup> nothing is ever

immediately present in any absolute sense, ~~What~~  
~~Whether things exist~~ and a scientific hypothesis is  
 true just so far as it is <sup>explicitly or implicitly</sup> verified. Whether anything without  
 significance for us is true, is, as we have seen, <sup>in the case of the cat</sup> an  
 empty, meaningless question.

Russell admits that he is unable to prove in  
 any strict sense the existence of ~~an external world~~ <sup>things in themselves</sup>. ~~In his~~  
 independent realm. In his own words, "Of course, it is  
 not by argument that we originally come by our  
 belief in an independent external world. We find this  
 belief ready in ourselves as soon as we begin to  
 reflect: it is what may be called an instinctive belief.  
 We should never have been led to question this  
 belief but for the fact that, at any rate in the  
 case of sight, it seems as if the sense-datum itself  
 were believed to be the independent object, whereas  
 argument shows that the object cannot be the  
 sense-datum". This I deny utterly. We have often  
 a very strong belief, it is true, that the world is  
 to some degree independent of the particular stand-

point which we adopt at the present moment, but whether it is independent of ~~all~~ <sup>all</sup> ~~any~~ standpoints what soever is a thing which we neither know <sup>about</sup> nor care about, ~~unless we have been crammed from early childhood with the dogmatic empiricism which is characteristic of~~

The scientist is satisfied when he sees that his conclusions are ~~not mere~~ <sup>not mere</sup> ~~reiterations~~ <sup>reiterations</sup> of his problem, but it ~~is not dependent on the parts~~ never occurs to him to ask whether there would be any conclusions possible if there were no problems; he ~~never~~ always has a problem, so he does not care. So long as ~~the~~ <sup>with which he is dealing</sup> object is sufficiently independent of us to fulfil the requirements which he finds (n. b) it must fulfil, he is utterly indifferent to any other characteristics which they must have. ~~The requirement the instinctive~~

As to ~~the~~ any absolute, unconditional independence in which Russell seems to believe, the question would never even occur to anyone but a <sup>philosopher</sup> ~~meta~~ ~~physician~~ ~~physician~~ accustomed to all the over-niceties of modern metaphysics.

We have seen, then, that Russell believes

in the ~~the~~ existence of a matter entirely  
 distinct from and independent of our knowledge  
 of it. What, then, is this matter? It is, ~~as we~~<sup>colorless</sup>  
~~have seen~~<sup>and soundless</sup>, as we might have expected, for  
 color and sound are ~~now~~ sense-data. Russell, ~~however,~~<sup>also rightly</sup>  
 makes it also spaceless and timeless, in so far  
 as space and time are names for sense-data or  
 combinations of sense-data. But what is the <sup>connec-</sup> ~~connec-~~  
 tion between, <sup>the sense</sup> space, time, etc, and space and time  
 as they are experienced? Russell says, concerning space,  
 "If, as science and common sense assume, there  
 is one public, all-embracing physical space in which  
 physical objects are, the relative positions of physical  
 objects in physical space must more or less corres-  
 pond to the relative positions of sense data in our  
 private spaces". and again, "assuming that there  
 is a physical space, and that it does thus  
 correspond to private spaces, what can we know  
 about it? We can know only what is required  
 to make the correspondence". Similar statements

are made concerning time, and other relational aspects of our experience. It becomes clear, then, that Reality is ~~an unknowable~~ a system whose terms are unknowable, ~~so responding~~ <sup>larger than</sup> experience, <sup>perhaps</sup> but similar to it in its relational nature, <sup>as far as it goes</sup>. This requires that experience should be a system itself. That is, Russell's real world, ~~is~~ <sup>can be of no help</sup> ~~in no presupposes that~~ <sup>in the organization of experience,</sup> for it merely ~~repeats~~ <sup>repeats</sup> that organization. It can give us nothing which was not already present.

So much for Russell's arguments for Realism; now for his criticisms of Idealism. Idealism, it should be noted, means for Russell Berkeley, and it is impossible to deny that a close affinity exists between Russell and the whole line of English empiricists, beginning with Locke, Berkeley, and Hume. To quote Russell says concerning Berkeley, "Berkeley was right in teaching the sense-data which constitute our perception of the tree as more or less subjective, in the sense that they depend upon us as

much as upon the tree, and would not exist if the tree were not being perceived. But this is an entirely different point from the one which Berkeley seeks to prove that whatever can be immediately known must be in a mind. That is, Berkeley is right in supposing that the sense-data are in us, Russell would say, but wrong in supposing that the objects of ~~the sense-data~~ <sup>our experience</sup>, the things we have knowledge about, are mental. This is a sound argument against Berkeley, for Berkeley, as Russell, ~~has~~ ~~believes~~ in individual ~~ideas~~ has an inventory-theory of experience, and believes that there <sup>our mind is built up of</sup> are single, individual ideas, and therefore needs some sort of cement to hold these ideas together, but he is wrong in not seeing that no cement can hold these ideas together, unless they were united at the beginning. Two incoherent worlds are no better than one; it does not strengthen a rope of sand to double its cross-section. And Russell seems to recognize no ultimate <sup>difference between</sup> ~~On the one~~ the type of order found in the phenomenal world and that found in the noumenal.