

THE THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE ACCORDING TO BERTRAND RUSSELL

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ABSTRACT

The 21st century witnesses rapid and significant changes in numerous components of life, necessitating a re-evaluation of the approach and pace of dealing with these modifications. This entails inspecting the vital branches and sections of philosophy as viewed by philosophers and thinkers of the beyond and attempting to benefit from their perspectives and numerous viewpoints on this area. The goal is for policymakers in education to satisfy these accelerating necessities and convince decision-makers to pick out the form of medical philosophy in curricula that aligns with the character of the curricula and research in the vicinity.

Keywords: Epistemology - Logical Analytical Methodology - Logical Atomism - Descriptive Knowledge.

INTRODUCTION

In the late nineteenth and early 20th centuries, the English College delved into the nation-states of language evaluation and philosophy, laying the basis for experimental philosophy. Bertrand Russell emerged as a key figure amongst English philosophers, rightfully earning his region as a pioneer and co-founder of English philosophy. His mission concerned challenging and winning idealistic philosophies by embracing linguistic analysis and mathematical common sense as strategies to articulate his critical ideas in philosophical discussions. These principles played a vital role in shaping his epistemological principle, exploring its subject matter, resources, and nature (Badawi, 1984: 509-510).

Russell held the perception that science is basically know-how, and he accorded philosophy no less significance than technological know-how in the quest for the fundamental roots of human information. Critiquing the sciences, he directed his attention toward the nation-states of scientific expertise, drawing close attention to age-vintage problems with a contemporary spirit and an advanced attitude. Drawing inspiration from the expansive horizons of philosophical contemplation, which have been centered on the more specialized sciences, Russell's mind gravitated more in the direction of the domain of technological know-how than philosophy. Recognizing Russell's importance as a leading figure in this discipline, 'Bertrand Russell's Theory of Knowledge' has become a study concern, dissected into three major discussions.

The choice of this subject matter stemmed from a critical motivation—to underscore the importance of the theory of expertise by a few of the principal philosophers of the 20th century. The observer's project lay in zeroing in on the theory of information, a pivotal branch of philosophy. Adopting descriptive and analytical strategies, the research aimed to validate fundamental hypotheses, ultimately striving to fulfill the observer's targets.

Defining Concepts

Theory of Knowledge

The theory of knowledge is a subject of philosophy (alongside the subjects of existence and values), and it may be one of its most important subjects. It can be said that the results of these two subjects depend on the investigation of the theory of knowledge (Yan, 2004: 15). This theory examines the principles of human knowledge, its nature, source, and limitations, as well as the relationship between the perceiving self and the perceived object. Due to the importance of this topic, many philosophers and thinkers have addressed it. It may not be clear in the writings of ancient philosophers, but it is evident in modern and contemporary philosophy. The theory of knowledge differs from psychology in that psychology is limited to distinguishing and describing mental processes without investigating their validity or invalidity. Similarly, the theory of knowledge differs from logic in that logic is limited to formulating rules for applying principles without investigating their origin or discussing their value (Al-Taweel, 1976: 297-298).

The English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704) was the first to attempt to present this subject in the form of an independent science in his book "An Essay Concerning Human Understanding," which was published in 1690. This book is considered the first organized scientific attempt to understand the origin of human knowledge, its nature, and the degree of certainty in it. The reason that led him to do so was the diversity and contradictions he found in the problems related to metaphysics, ethics, and religion. Before Locke, there was no serious and clear attempt to study the issues of knowledge independently (Al-Shaniti, 1992: 55). Plato and Aristotle did not concern themselves with drawing a clear line between the subjects of knowledge and the problems of metaphysics, nor between these subjects and purely logical studies. Many later philosophers followed their approach. Due to the importance of the theory of knowledge, some modern philosophers, especially those with metaphysical doctrines, believe that their metaphysical doctrines, especially those related to issues of existence and reality, are logical consequences of their theories of knowledge. Therefore, the philosopher should first investigate the theory of knowledge and then build on what he has reached, which may lead to results related to the philosophical doctrine as a whole. There is a difference between defining the subjects of the theory of knowledge and interpreting them. Some believe that its main subjects are the acquisition of knowledge and the explanation of mental processes. However, this interpretation is rejected by others because it implies that the study of knowledge is a branch of psychology that specializes in studying processes of sensation, perception, memory, imagination, thinking, etc. At that point, the connection between the theory of knowledge and the most important issues related to the boundaries of human knowledge will be severed, and it will be unable to investigate general scientific problems, such as the problem of the self, the object, and the development of sciences (Al-Shaniti, 1992: 55).

There are several interpretations of the theory of knowledge, including the investigation of knowledge that has already been acquired. However, this interpretation is also rejected by many because it leads to confusion between its subject matter and the subject matter of logic and the specific sciences (Al-Shaniti, 1992: 56-57). Logic, as we know, investigates the formal laws of thought, while the specific sciences each investigate the material of information that

constitutes their subject matter. Therefore, the theory of knowledge is left with only the investigation of the material of thought in its general form. However, the field of the theory of knowledge in modern philosophy is broader and more comprehensive (Khalil, 1983: 233). It investigates the general principles shared by the majority of the specific sciences and attempts to benefit from them, making these principles a solid foundation that is indispensable in these sciences. Despite the diversity of opinions in the theory of knowledge and the different perspectives in defining its problems, it remains one of the most important subjects in philosophy. Human beings are curious and eager to search and inquire, and their questioning is inherent in the nature of existing knowledge in their minds. Is the fruit of this knowledge derived from pure intellectual searching, or is it derived from external things and derived from sensory experience, or is it a combination of both? (Khalil, 1983: 134)

The Theory of Knowledge and Epistemology

The term "Theory of Knowledge" (Epistemology) is derived from the Greek word "episteme," which means knowledge or science, and the word "logos," which means theory or study. Therefore, the term epistemology, by virtue of its derivative origin, literally means the theory of science or the scientific knowledge theory that is concerned with the critical study of the principles of different sciences and their results, aiming to determine their logical origin and objective value. This term can generally be used interchangeably with the term "theory of science" in English, while in French, there is a distinction between what is called "Theorie De La Connaissance" (Theory of Knowledge) and "Epistemologie" (Epistemology) (Al-Ashari, 2004: 13; Rosenthal, 1985: 447-448). The theory of knowledge refers to a set of reflections that aim to determine the value and limits of our knowledge, while epistemology, in general, is a critical study of scientific knowledge in terms of the principles it is based on, the assumptions it starts from, and the results it leads to (Badawi, 1978: 68). According to Robert Blanché, there are two positions that distinguish epistemology from the theory of knowledge (Blanché, 2004: 45-46):

First, the use of the terms epistemology and theory of knowledge is equivalent. The relationship between epistemology and the theory of knowledge can be initially defined as the same relationship between gender and type, considering that epistemology focuses on the study of a specific form of knowledge, which is scientific knowledge, while the theory of knowledge investigates the principles of knowledge in general. Among those who have gone further in this distinction is Jean Piaget (1896–1988), the proponent of the constructivist theory of knowledge (Bocskai, 1992: 95).

Second, epistemology and the theory of knowledge diverge, and the theory of knowledge is more similar to only one type, which is scientific knowledge. The representative of this approach is Louis Rougier, the representative of the new logical positivism in France (Bocskai, 1992: 96; Waqidi, 1987: 13-14), who titled one of his books "A Study of Knowledge," which was supposed to be titled "The Structure of Scientific Knowledge," because there is no knowledge other than scientific knowledge (Blanché, 2004: 48).

Russell's View of the External World.

Logical Atomism

Russell leans towards a pluralistic atomic approach in his philosophy of the material world, meaning the multiplicity of entities and facts. According to Russell, the world is based on plurality and multiplicity, which in turn can be broken down into logical atoms. These logical atoms are logical rather than physical, as he states, "The atoms that I want to arrive at as the final results of analysis are logical atoms and not physical ones" (Mahmoud, 1993: 184). When scientists analyze matter into tiny particles, they discover that matter itself is just moving electrical charges held together in different relationships. Therefore, Russell concludes that matter is a collection of sensations, a mere symbol that can be perceived through the senses. Matter has lost its materiality and has become a collection of partial events. These particles are simple and minute things, such as a small spot of color, sound, or momentary things, etc. (Saidani, 2014-2015: 37-38).

Russell coined the term "logical atomism" for his theory because it accounts for everything we perceive in the world, from complex facts to their simplest components. He named this theory "Logical Atomism" because the atoms he aims to reach are logical atoms, not physical ones. Therefore, Russell's theory requires logical analysis. The atoms Russell refers to are the constituents, such as propositions, relations, colors, etc.

Logical atomism is based on two fundamental sources:

1. The source of plurality is the belief that the world consists of a large number of independent entities, whether they are material objects or facts. In reality, the world is composed of these different elements and units, contrary to the proponents of monism, who reduce everything to a single principle, whether in terms of essence or logical laws. Logical atomism is a theory of facts that confirms that the world is a multiplicity of facts, and at its lowest level, we find atomic facts that are independent of each other (Mahmoud, 1973: 185; Saidani, 2014-2015: 39).
2. The use of logical analysis: This involves analyzing complex entities to reach the simple components of reality. Through this process, our ideas about the world become clear, and after the analysis, we reach the following issues:
 - a. The limit of logical analysis, which is the point at which analysis stops.
 - b. The problem of the general and comprehensive issue and the disagreement over its analysis.
 - c. Language is an accurate representation of the world, where there is a correspondence between the structure of sentences and the structure of the reality they refer to (Saidani, 2014-2015: 39-40).

Russell believes that the simple language we speak is like a guide that leads us to understand the nature we are talking about. There is a discoverable relationship between the structure of sentences and the structure of the reality they indicate. Russell states, "I believe that we can use some aspects to gain reasonable knowledge about the structure of the world through the study of linguistic structure" (Saidani, 2014-2015: 42-43). Therefore, logical atomism, advocated by Russell, helps us understand the components of this world, the types of existents within it, and the types of issues that express these existents. We will also know the components of these issues. It starts with searching for the simple components of the world

through the analysis of complex issues that lead to the smallest thing, which is not applicable for simplification. This is what logical atomism is about. Russell named it this way because it accounts for everything we perceive in the world, from complex facts to their simplest components (Mahmoud, 1993: 184). These components are the logical atoms, not the physical ones. Therefore, we rely on logical analysis to reach the constituents, carriers, relations, etc. This theory is a logical summary of thinking in the philosophy of mathematics. Russell's method for establishing the mathematical and logical structure is based on selecting simple ideas from which principles, intuitions, and issues are derived. From these principles, all mathematics is derived. This method adopted by Russell is not much different from its counterparts in atomic philosophy because Russell is searching for the atoms and primordial elements from which knowledge is composed, and he considers his task to be finding the very few principles required to justify scientific inference (Abdel Tawab and Al-Musnad, 1995: 212-213).

The Nature of the Relationships that Connect Atoms

One of the fundamental axes in Resel's epistemological theory is the issue of internal and external relationships that connect atoms or facts to each other. This issue became a fundamental point for expanding the logical atomic issue, as he focused on criticizing the doctrines of Bradley (1846–1924) and Leibniz (1646–1716).

Bradley's concept of criticism focused on the concept of internal relationships, which means that the relationships that connect things to each other are internal. These relationships can be extracted through our analysis of the aspects that connect those things (Mahmoud, 1993: 179). On the other hand, his metaphysical vision is based on an analytical logic based on internal relationships. According to Bradley, the relationships are internal, and they are the ones that connect things to each other. However, Russell rejects this principle. According to him, the relationships that connect things are external, and the essences of things are added to them. The content for Russell is inherent in the subject (meaning that regardless of the issue we are discussing, its content is inherent in its subject). If we analyze its subject sufficiently, we will find the inherent and hidden content in it (Mahmoud, 1993: 179-180). For example, when we say the following issue (glass is breakable), when we analyze the idea of glass, we will find that breakability is inherent in it. As soon as we hear the word glass without any introductions, the idea that glass includes breakability will come to mind. This breakability is the hidden content in it because the nature of glass makes it breakable (Saidani, 2014-2015: 42).

According to Russell, there are no internal relationships here because the existing relationships are external relationships that have the essence of things added to them. Also, the essence of things does not rely on these relationships.

An example of this is the connection between two events in a relationship (before). If we say that event (S) occurred before event (P), we will not find this temporal sequence in the elements of (S) or (P). Instead, the reference or reason for that is the time scale that we know as (S) and (P), and this time scale does not exist in (S) or (P). The importance of relationships being external is that they should be at least partially external. This leads us to the understanding that the world is composed of multiple facts that are connected in various ways by

relationships that we perceive outside the structure of the things themselves (Russell, 1998: 43).

Based on this, it becomes clear to us that the relationship between things, according to Russell, is an independent entity that is not inherent in either party and cannot be attributed to the existence of something else. Therefore, the world is not one, but it is a multiple world that we need observations and experiments to understand.

We find that Russell refers to this in the introduction to his book "The Principles of Mathematics." As for my position on the basic philosophical issues in all their forms, it is derived from Professor George Moore, who took from him the non-existence nature of issues except those that govern existence and their independence from any knowledgeable mind. Also, the doctrine of plurality considers the world, whether the world of existents or the world of abstract entities, as composed of an infinite number of things or existents, each of which has its own independence and is connected to each other by an infinite number of relationships that cannot be attributed to the limits of their properties or the properties of the set composed of these limits, as was prevalent in traditional epistemology, which he criticized because it was limited in its analysis to two main subjects: the search for the self and the objective and the distinction between them in terms of health and corruption (Russell, 1961: 17).

From what has been presented and according to Russell, it becomes clear to us that the material world is based on plurality and multiplicity. This world dissolves into logical atoms, which, according to Russell, are logical rather than physical or material. These atoms are connected to each other by pure logical relationships, which are a type of external relationship rather than internal ones. We can infer this through language, whether it is scientific or the simple ordinary language we use. There is a discoverable relationship between the structure of sentences and phrases and the structure of facts. Therefore, Russell unifies language and the material world to the extent that, according to him, we can reach reasonable knowledge about the structure of the world by studying the structure of language.

Theory of Knowledge according to Russell

Methods of Knowledge

Knowledge, according to Russell, can be divided into two main categories: direct knowledge and descriptive knowledge.

1. Direct knowledge: This is the knowledge that we perceive directly without any inferential process. It is the knowledge of facts that we perceive through our senses, such as knowing the color, shape, hardness, and smoothness of an object that is present before us. This type of knowledge is limited to the narrow boundaries of sensory perception (Russell, 1947: 38-40).

Direct knowledge is a type of direct experience that occurs through intuitive contact with something without any inferential process or theoretical thinking. According to Russell, humans have an independent faculty of understanding that is neither sensory nor intellectual but has the ability to comprehend truth directly. This kind of knowledge provides us with specific partial information, such as when we say, referring to the cover of a book, "This is a yellow spot." In this case, there is no need for confrontation between our senses and the words, as the meaning is understood directly without the need for words (Russell, 1947: 41). However,

this kind of knowledge cannot be achieved through other forms of knowledge, such as descriptive knowledge. There are many things in the world that cannot be ignored, and they are related to the past. How can we know them if direct knowledge does not recognize anything called the past? Furthermore, we do not know any truth related to sensory facts, as this kind of knowledge requires direct knowledge of things that differ in their essential qualities from sensory facts, such as abstract ideas or universals. The first extension of direct knowledge goes beyond the boundaries of sensory facts, and it is direct knowledge through memory. We remember what we have seen, heard, or what has been inclined towards any of our senses, and we remain directly aware of it, even though it appears to us as a distant past. This knowledge is likely to be obtained through the past, as we do not know anything that has passed until we can infer any result from it (Russell, 1947: 41).

The second extension of knowledge is what happens through subconscious contemplation (intuition). A good example of this is our desire for food and all the states of pleasure or pain, as well as all the processes that occur in our minds (Russell, 1947: 41-42). According to Russell, we have knowledge through the sensation of external sensory facts, direct knowledge through subconscious contemplation of what can be called the facts of the subconscious sense, and direct knowledge through memory of things that were facts for external senses or those hidden senses. In addition to this, it is likely that we have direct knowledge of ourselves as knowers (Russell, 1947: 43).

2. Descriptive knowledge: Russell refers to it as knowledge by description. My knowledge of the table, which is a material thing, is an example of descriptive knowledge. It is my knowledge of the image that the phrase brings, and one of the prominent characteristics of this knowledge is that it can only be obtained through direct knowledge and is specialized in specific descriptions (the describer) (Russell, 1947: 44).

Descriptive knowledge is variable and differs from one person to another. This method is based on a type of basic knowledge that includes mental compositions involving inference, memory, and other mental processes. When we say, "This is a table," it is not just an expression of awareness of the existence of something known, but it also includes a mental judgment by which we know that this perceived thing is a table and not something else. We can reach this ladder through an analysis of the language used in our daily or scientific lives (Russell, 1960: 36-37).

Descriptive Knowledge (Theory of Descriptions)

Despite the numerous objections and criticisms directed at the theory of descriptions (descriptive knowledge), Russell remains committed to this theory. Most of the objections to the theory of knowledge are related to the lack of precision in the use of words and phrases (Russell, 1960: 38). Despite the many criticisms, Russell responded to these objections by stating in his book "Problems of Philosophy" that "objections of this kind lack discrimination between proper names and other words. Moreover, many of these objectors have not touched the field of mathematical logic, and their objections cannot be sustained. They are far from being correct" (Russell, 1947: 99). Therefore, adopting the theory of descriptions, according to Russell, means abandoning most of the philosophical ideas and principles that he believed in before the theory of descriptions (Saidani, 2014-2015: 93). Russell further divided descriptive

knowledge into two types: general descriptive knowledge and specific descriptive knowledge (Saidani, 2014-2015: 94).

1. General Descriptive Knowledge: It includes general descriptive phrases, such as the word "human," which refers to any individual, not a specific individual, as long as it is connected to the descriptions indicated by this word.

2. Specific Descriptive Knowledge: It includes specific descriptive phrases, such as "the longest river in the world." This phrase refers to a specific individual, a river that distinguishes itself from all other rivers in the world. This designation is made through description (Mahmoud, 1993: 179).

The fundamental difference between the first general descriptive phrase and the second specific descriptive phrase is that the second one refers to an individual or a named object, while the first one does not refer to any specific entity. Analyzing the specific phrase "author Waverly" in the sentence "The author was Scottish," Russell analyzed it into two possible interpretations: the first being "at least one person wrote Waverly" and the second being "at most one person wrote Waverly." (Mahmoud, 1993: 181)

Knowing things through description is only possible by analyzing the descriptions and applying the direct knowledge that we have from our experience. What I mean by knowledge through description can ultimately be transformed into knowledge through direct acquaintance (Mahmoud, 1993: 182). The basic principle in the theory of knowledge is the principle that we rely on in our analysis of propositions containing descriptive phrases: any proposition whose meaning we can understand must consist of components that we know through direct acquaintance. This is because any part of any proposition that is not directly connected to us is impossible for us to understand (Mahmoud, 1993: 183). From here, it becomes clear to us that Russell has gone through his method of analyzing our knowledge, classifying it into basic knowledge and derived knowledge, and dividing knowledge into direct knowledge and knowledge by description. This is where logical atomism revolves around questioning the components of the world and the types of entities in it, as well as the types of propositions that express these entities, in addition to the components of these propositions (Saidani, 2014-2015: 37).

After distinguishing with Russell that there are two types of direct and indirect knowledge, we must know that Russell followed the same previous method, trying to reduce physical science to its original elementary units, and as we know, he follows in this direction the latest achievements of experimental science in his time and the latest discoveries of the atom (Ghaleb, 1986: 88). In the beginning of his book "The Philosophy of Logical Atomism," he suggests "analyzing facts and propositions... because the main subject that I should investigate is the legitimacy of analysis. If one starts with what I call logical atomism, that means that he really believes that the world can be analyzed into a number of separate things that are connected to each other by certain relations" (Russell, 1998: 43). Russell starts by determining that in the case of analyzing matter, this matter becomes just a collection of sensations that are connected to each other by a certain relationship. Therefore, matter becomes a mere symbol that refers to a category, and that category is a collection of appearances that are sensibly perceived from different angles (Mohammed, 1993: 82). For example, Russell says, "When I see a table... does what I see continue to exist if I shut my eyes?" Russell answers that

it depends on the meaning we attach to the word "see" and asks, "What is there if my eyes are open and there is nothing if I close them?" He answers, "Colored surfaces," and asks, "Can we infer that there are two meanings for the word 'see'? The first is when I see a table, I see something that natural science imagines as a mysterious image that may be wrong, and the second is 'see' colored surfaces that cease to exist when I close my eyes." (Abdel Tawab and Al-Musnad, 1995: 211)

Thus, we find Russell's statement with descriptions achieving a positive step in terms of abandoning most of the philosophical ideas and principles that he believed in before, as this theory made his view of reality based on a foundation characterized by stability and scientific realism (Mehran, n.d.: 31).

CONCLUSION AND RESULTS

1. The French school differs from the English school in its distinction between the theory of knowledge and epistemology. The French view them as the same, while the English do not see any difference. The French argue that the meaning and derivation are the same, originating from the Greek language.
2. The general nature of Russell's theory of knowledge is linguistic. It is a philosophy of language in which analysis is used as a method for his linguistic philosophy.
3. The lack of a scientific method in philosophy led Russell to construct analysis as a scientific method based on mathematical logic for philosophy.
4. According to Russell's logical atomism, the world is composed of plurality and multiplicity, which in turn dissolve into logical atoms that are not physical but rather connected by external relations.
5. Russell unifies language and the material world, and according to him, we can achieve knowledge of the structure of the world through the study of language structures.
6. Russell divides knowledge into two types: direct knowledge, which is a type of direct experience obtained through intuitive communication, and indirect knowledge (descriptive knowledge), which is variable and differs from person to person. This method is based on a type of basic knowledge that includes mental processes such as reasoning and memory.
7. Russell further divides descriptive knowledge into two types: general knowledge and specific knowledge. The former includes general descriptive phrases such as "human," which have a general meaning and do not refer to a specific individual. The latter includes specific descriptive phrases that refer to a particular individual or thing. The difference between the first general descriptive phrase and the second specific descriptive phrase is that the latter refers to an individual or named thing, while the former does not refer to a specific individual or thing in itself.

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