

## Old Acquaintance:

### *Russell, Memory & Problems with Acquaintance*

1. While still in prison for breaching the Defence of Realm Act, Bertrand Russell filled up his time in the summer of 1918 drafting material that would eventually form the basis of *The Analysis of Mind* (hereafter AM) (Russell, 1921). In those notes, Russell repudiates the notion of ego or the subject and with the relation of acquaintance that he had employed in earlier work. In its place he embraces the Neutral Monism that he had hitherto resisted in, for example, *The Theory of Knowledge* manuscript (hereafter, TK)(Russell, 1992) and the lectures *Philosophy of Logical Atomism* (hereafter, PLA)(Russell, 1986).<sup>1</sup> Among those manuscript pages are three notes bundled together on the topic of memory. In the first of these he proclaims:

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 the present mental occurrence than on the old theory.

And in the third of these he writes:

In memory, the “subject” is represented by images, the “object” by the past event. Having extruded “acquaintance” as an ultimate relation, we shall now say that, in memory, the image is accompanied by a judgment that there was a past object resembling... (261, 262 (Russell, 1986))

These notes give us definitive proof that Russell abandoned the claim that memory involves acquaintance with the past by the middle of 1918. It also provides some evidence that for Russell there were two stages to his views on memory – the ‘old theory’ that we can find in *Problems of Philosophy* (hereafter, PP) (Russell, 1912), and the new theory that was to turn up in full form in lecture IX of AM. This is notable only because repeatedly commentators have suggested otherwise.

JO Urmson’s critical notice of David Pears, (Urmson, 1969), first suggested that Russell never seriously held the view that memory involves acquaintance with past objects. RK Perkins, (Perkins, 1973, Perkins, 1976), defends Pears against Urmson’s scorn, but in doing so suggests that Russell modified his views between 1912 and 1921 before giving up the idea that mental acts involve acquaintance. And Pears’s later reflections on these matters includes the suggestion that Russell revises his views between 1912 and the writing of TK, and again prior to his rejection of acquaintance in AM (Pears, 1975). There remains a dispute between Pears and Perkins over when Russell repudiates the PP view, and also when he repudiates any role for acquaintance, but both are agreed that he is moved to reject the simplicities of the PP view rather rapidly.

This verdict on the PP theory of memory is echoed in Sajahan Miah’s discussion of Russell’s theory of perception, (Miah, 1998), and in David Bostock’s recent discussion of Russell’s logical

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atomism, (Bostock, 2012). Bostock, citing Pears, Perkins and Miah as support, offers a picture which synthesises the common perspective among these commentators:

When he was writing PP he also included perceptions that were not at the time being experienced, but were being remembered (e.g. PP, pp. 48–9, 114–15, 117; KAKD pp. 210). But he soon revised his view of this, on the ground that what we seem to remember may not have occurred at all, from which it follows that the existence claim must in this case be admitted to be meaningful...

In fact it is now clear that he had given up the idea that I am presently acquainted, by memory, with what I once experienced in the past, by the time that he was working at a book on *The Theory of Knowledge* in May and June of 1913. (The book was never completed, and never published.) He retains the idea only for what he calls ‘immediate memory’, which is my present experience of what happened only a moment ago, and which still counts as part of what I am experiencing now, since it is still part of my ‘specious present’, though I am aware that its original experience was in the past. (On his account, one needs such a view of ‘the specious present’, as including some past experiences that still persist, in order to explain how we can tell, from our present experience, that something is now moving. For it seems that this must involve a present perception both of its past positions and of its present position, if we can see that they are not the same.)

If we set aside this special point about ‘immediate’ memory, and ‘the specious present’, we may say that Russell quite soon came to reject the idea that if I was once acquainted with *x*, and still remember it, then I am still acquainted with it. ((Bostock, 2012) pp.118-119)

The aim of my remarks here is twofold. This current orthodoxy among the commentators on Russell’s views on memory offers us speculative reconstructions of Russell’s views which have no textual basis to recommend them. We are better off looking at Russell’s theories of memory as the note cited at the beginning suggests: there is the old theory, associated with PP and further elaborated in TK; and then there is the new theory, developed once the notions both of subject and acquaintance have been abandoned. There is no robust evidence to be found in Russell’s texts to suppose that the changes in account of memory from PP to TK amount to a substantial revision of the view presented in PP, to some new view, intermediate between the PP and AM accounts. Moreover there is no good evidence that Russell abandoned memory acquaintance until the notes of 1918, while there is decisive evidence as late as August 1917 that he upheld the idea that we have immediate knowledge of the past in memory.

The main purpose of spelling out these details, which really should be obvious to even a cursory reader of the relevant texts, is that it sets up an interesting puzzle for us. Why, at least since the early 1970s when the relevant manuscripts were accessible and accessed, did commentators continue to over-elaborate the development of Russell’s views on these matters? And, more specifically, why should all of the commentators have been inclined to emphasise that Russell quickly retreated from the PP theory?

I think the answer to this relates to the charity, or rather excessive charity, with which many philosophers are wont to read past philosophers they admire. Without exception, readers of Russell find the view that we have access to the past through acquaintance an absurd view. Given their esteem for Russell, they are thereby motivated to find in him a repudiation of this absurd theory, even if they cannot deny that the print on the page commits him to it, at least in 1912. Now, typically what is supposedly absurd about the PP view is not spelled out by these commentators, or anyway not explicitly articulated in enough detail.

So the dual task of this paper is first to settle the textual matters and then to attempt to unpack this sense of absurdity in Russell's early view of memory. For seeing why there is a special problem about memory – why there should be something absurd in the notion of memory acquaintance even if there isn't in the case of sensory acquaintance – teaches us something about the notions of acquaintance and representation. Commentators often highlight fallibility as a key idea here. But that won't sufficiently distinguish sensation and memory. If we need to think of memory as the kind of thing that cannot be a form of acquaintance, even if sensation can be understood in these terms, then that tells us something about the possible nature and limits of acquaintance. In spelling these issues out I hope to highlight both something significant about acquaintance within Russell's epistemology, but also a problem in the way in which the notion of acquaintance has been received and put to work among his later readers.

## PART ONE: A QUESTION OF TEXTUAL INTERPRETATION

2. I'll turn in the next section to the contrasts and alleged contrasts between PP and TK, but for the moment I want just to remind readers of the main outline of Russell's claims about memory in these two texts, the one published in 1912 (drafted in 1911), the other a manuscript written in 1913.

One of Russell's earliest discussions of the epistemology of acquaintance is 'Knowledge by Acquaintance and Knowledge by Description'. Russell offers the following preliminary sketch:

I say that I am *acquainted* with an object when I have a direct cognitive relation to that object, i.e. when I am directly aware of the object itself. When I speak of cognitive relation here, I do not mean the kind of relation which constitutes judgment, but the sort which constitutes presentation. In fact, I think the relation of subject and object which I call acquaintance is the converse of the relation of object and subject which constitutes presentation. ((Russell, 1910-11) p.108)

Russell returns to the topic in PP, but his position alters in minor ways. Here he defines knowledge by acquaintance more simply:

We shall say that we have *acquaintance* with anything of which we are directly aware, without the intermediary of inference or knowledge of truths. (PP p. 46)

Gone is the contrast between acquaintance and the relation which constitutes judgement (although Russell still contrasts acquaintance and judgement in the contrast between acquaintance with things and knowledge of truths).<sup>2</sup> Gone too is the association of acquaintance with presentation. In the earlier paper, Russell's two examples of acquaintance with particulars are sensation and introspection. But PP introduces Russell's account of memory as acquaintance, and memory is inserted before introspection in the list of particular-acquaintance relations. The dropping of the explanation in terms of presentation suggests that Russell does not think of memory acquaintance as a kind of presentation. His initial account of memory acquaintance is as follows:

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<sup>2</sup> For a useful survey of Russell's principle of acquaintance and its origins see (Ian Proops, forthcoming).

It is obvious that we often remember what we have seen or heard or had otherwise present to our senses, and that in such cases we are still immediately aware of what we remember, in spite of the fact that it appears as past and not as present. This immediate knowledge by memory is the source of all our knowledge concerning the past. (PP pp.48-9)

When he returns to the topic later in PP in his discussion of intuitive knowledge he succinctly states the doctrine so:

Thus the essence of memory is not constituted by the image, but by having immediately before the mind an object which is recognized as past. (PP p. 115.)

Move forward two years to TK. Russell's initial definition of what he calls 'immediate memory' is offered as follows:

...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. (TK p.70)

Russell's use of the phrase 'immediate memory' as a term to designate a distinctive kind of memory which contrasts with what he dubs 'remote memory' is new to TK, though the contrast between things we remember in our recent past and those from longer ago has already played a role in PP.<sup>3</sup> To further confuse us, Russell is happy to use some of these new terms in later discussions where we cannot assume he intends the same interpretation: 'immediate memory' turns up again in AM where Russell explicitly offers a representational theory of memory. So one of the questions we need to pursue below is whether and to what extent there is a shift in understanding between PP and TK, and what the shift in understanding amounts to between TK and AM. But the minimum we can note in both of the early discussions is that our knowledge of pastness is associated distinctively with memory acquaintance, and that there is a contrast to be drawn in types of acquaintance with particulars, acquaintance in sense perception versus acquaintance in memory, as a result.

Likewise, in both of the early discussions Russell draws our attention to the need to distinguish between memories proper and mere images associated with them. In PP he writes:

There is some danger of confusion as to the nature of memory, owing to the fact that memory of an object is apt to be accompanied by an image of the object, and yet the image cannot be what constitutes memory. This is easily seen by merely noticing that the image is in the present, whereas what is remembered is known to be in the past... (PP 114-5)

At the outset of TK he writes:

In the first place, we must not confound true memory with present images of past things. I may call up now before my mind an image of a man I saw yesterday; the image is not in the past, and I certainly experience it now, but the image itself is not memory. The remembering refers to something known to be in the past, to what I saw yesterday, not to the image which I call up now... But in the immediate memory of something which has just happened, the thing itself seems to remain in experience, in spite of the fact that it is known no longer to be present. (TK 9-10)

What is also introduced and discussed in relation to our experience of time in TK, but plays no significant role in PP is the specious present. Russell's comments are as follows:

"One (momentary) total experience", is a group of experiences such that the objects of any two of them are experienced together, and anything experienced together with all members of the group is a member of the group.

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<sup>3</sup> PP p. 117 talks of the high degree of self-evidence associated with immediate memory, and later in the paragraph contrasts that with the diminishing self-evidence of ever remoter memory.

The “specious present” of a momentary total experience is the period of time within which an object must lie in order to be a sense-datum in the experience...

Sense-data belonging to one (momentary) total experience are said to be *present* in that experience. This is a merely verbal definition. (TK p. 68)

Russell refers us back to James in his discussion of the specious present, but as we shall see below, Russell’s understanding of the specious present in TK is different from James’s (and also different from Russell’s own later views in AM). Most specifically, in TK, Russell contrasts the status of objects which one experiences in the specious present, and the objects of immediate memory. As the final sentence quoted above indicates, Russell takes all objects which belong to the specious present of a subject in an interval as being objects of sensation, as being present. In contrast, the key significance of immediate memory is that while objects are experienced in immediate memory we are acquainted with them in a way different to that of sensation, in being past rather than present.<sup>4</sup>

Note that in these early discussions, and particularly in PP, Russell’s conception of what is memory is idiosyncratically narrow. In recent psychology of memory it is common to contrast iconic memory with working memory, and both of these with long-term memory; to separate out recognition from recall; to distinguish semantic memory, practical memory and episodic memory; and to recognize a special role for autobiographical memory. In the philosophical tradition, on the other hand, it has become common place to mark the existence of factual or propositional memory, where someone has learned some fact and retained knowledge of it over time, as when one remembers that Caesar is alleged to have said ‘alea iacta est’ when crossing the Rubicon. And in turn to mark the existence of personal or direct memory, memories which are properly reported using a gerund in the complement rather than a sentential clause, such as when one remembers kissing a frog, and which seem to require fulfilling the constraint that Shoemaker dubbed, ‘The Previous Awareness Condition’, that one can genuinely recall only what one has previously done or witnessed, (Shoemaker, 1984). Finally there is what Russell himself came to call habit memory in AM, and which others call practical or know-how memory. Russell’s notion of memory certainly does not cover the full range of these phenomena. Indeed, it is most plausibly interpreted as a subset of episodic or direct/personal memory: those memories which seem to involve some recall of past encounter with an object, what Malcolm later dubbed ‘perceptual memory’, (Malcolm, 1963). Russell is presumably not unaware that we ordinarily call a much wider range of phenomena examples of memory, so the narrow focus should probably be interpreted in the light of Russell’s interests here: in both PP and TK, he insists that memory acquaintance is needed to explain our grasp of the concept of the past.

Starting with PP, Russell puts forward a theory of memory focused on what we might otherwise think of as a narrow class of acts of recall. This takes memory to be an instance of acquaintance, as involving a two-term relation between subject and object. The object is in the subject’s past at time of acquaintance and its pastness is recognized by the subject. This relation of memory is classified as an example of immediate knowledge, and of awareness, but not of sensation, or presentation.

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<sup>4</sup> In AM, Russell includes immediate memory as a feature of the specious present, and as playing a key role in explaining our experience of change (in contrast in TK, Russell allows that the specious present covers an interval during which we can experience change). Immediate memory in AM is the bridge between genuine sensation and imagery without quite being either. For further discussion of the AM theory see the latter half of (David Pears, 1975) , (Lindsay Judson, 1987/88) and (Thomas Baldwin, 2003).

3. With the bare bones of the account on the table, let's go back to the question of what Russell rejects of the early theory, and when he does so. In 'Russell's Theories of Memory', Pears suggests that Russell has abandoned the idea that memory involves acquaintance at least by late 1917, at the point at which he is drafting the lectures PLA given at the start of 1918 in Dr Williams's Library in Bloomsbury. The evidence that Pears cites is Russell's discussion of acquaintance at the end of lecture II. And one must presume that Pears cites the discussion as the basis of his opinion because Urmson appeals to it in his original criticisms of Pears. The textual evidence Pears offers in a footnote is citation of three pages of PLA without offering any immediate commentary on them. This might lead the casual reader to suppose that the text cited contains a definitive repudiation of Russell's earlier views. But in fact this discussion contains no mention at all of memory, or the possibility of memory acquaintance. Nor does it claim that acquaintance with particulars solely occurs in perception. The nearest to the latter point occurs in the summary of the general discussion: Russell is asked by a member of the audience how it is possible to reason through an argument given that according to him particulars vary from instant to instant, in responding, Russell omits any appeal to the possibility of remembering the term of a premiss when drawing a conclusion, he simply suggests that though sense-data perish, they can survive for some seconds or minutes, and thereby long enough for one to hold together in the mind all the elements of an argument.

To see the alleged relevance of the passages Pears cites, we need to turn back to Urmson's critique of Pears's earlier discussion of these matters. It is Urmson who originally cites this part of PLA in support of the contention that Russell never held the view that we are acquainted in memory with the past. Since no aspect of this text is directed at the matter, its bearing on the issue must turn on further assumptions. To turn the text into decisive evidence, Urmson must believe the omissions to be distinctively significant. That is, he must suppose that had Russell continued to believe in memory acquaintance, then he could not have failed to mention it at some point in the lectures: that he would have written the words 'or memory' in the initial elaboration of acquaintance, and that he would have pointed out the availability of memory acquaintance in response to the puzzle of arguing over time. The speculation that Russell fails to mention memory in either context because he no longer accepts the existence of memory acquaintance is not without some plausibility. But in neither context is this the only, or even the most salient, explanation of Russell's *omerta*. In the first passage, one may point out that Russell is barely concerned with epistemological matters in PLA, and so has little reason to belabour the point that there are different varieties of acquaintance in the way that he does in PP and TK. And, in respect of the informal discussion at the end of lecture II, there is an obvious caveat to be introduced: as Urmson might well have known, the audience in Dr Williams's Library is very much one drawn from the general public and not necessarily one with which one would go into the niceties of the psychological facts which underpin reasoning. (A more careful Russell who still kept to the doctrines of TK might have said that sense-data are accessible for up to two minutes, even if they no longer exist, because one would have access to them through memory. The informal discussion would then have required of him exploring the psychological doctrines at the outset of TK, which PLA otherwise leaves aside.) Rather than there being decisive evidence for Russell's recantation, there is simply the lack of evidence one way or other as to his opinion at the time.

Now we should compare this absence of evidence with a review Russell wrote for *The Nation* no earlier than the end of August 1917. In that he insists somewhat floridly:

[Atomistic Realism] regards it as a pure accident that we remember the past rather than the future... It would be perfectly willing to concede, if empirical evidence were forthcoming, that there are people in this world who have the same kind of immediate knowledge concerning the future that memory gives us concerning the past. ('Review of *A Defence of Idealism*, in *The Nation*, 21, p.108 (Russell, 1986))

So we know that at least shortly before drafting PLA, Russell was still happy to affirm that we have immediate knowledge of the past; and at this point of his theorizing, Russell associates immediate knowledge with acquaintance. He fails to mention that we have such immediate knowledge in the course of PLA. Of course that may be because he had in that short time realized that the old theory of immediate knowledge doesn't work; and that regardless of his attitudes towards the ego and acquaintance, memory acquaintance has to go. But we have no record of that realization. Since it is no less intelligible that Russell fails to mention it in PLA simply because it is not germane to his concerns at the end of lecture II or elsewhere in those lectures, there remains no evidence to date his change of mind earlier than the notes in July 1918; and no reason to link the rejection to anything other than the wholesale rejection of acquaintance.

What might still sway us in favour of the Pears interpretation is independent and additional evidence that Russell is unhappy with the PP theory. If we already have reason to think that Russell is on course to abandon the view as soon as he can, then his failure to mention it at a point where we expect him instead to underline it might be taken in context to provide stronger support for the Pears hypothesis. And Pears certainly does think Russell is busy trying to give up on the view from much earlier on. On Pears's account of the transition between PP and AM, there is a slow rejection of the PP theory of memory as Russell comes to recognize its inadequacy. So Pears supposes that Russell has already mainly given up the PP theory when he drafts TK. If this is the right diagnosis of the change between the two texts, then perhaps that provides a slight evidential weight to the embellished interpretation of Russell's silence in PLA.

One key piece of evidence is the contrasting attitude to error and fallibility in memory between PP and TK. In PP, Russell acknowledges that there is an issue about the consistency of acquaintance and fallibility but heroically seems to deny its relevance to his account:

The case of memory, however, raises a difficulty, for it is notoriously fallacious, and thus throws doubt on the trustworthiness of intuitive judgements in general... (PP 115)

This is a problem that Russell provides a twofold answer to: first, memories come in degrees of self-evidence; second, in the case of wholly false memories, where one entirely confabulates a past remembered event, the current recall is not really memory at all 'in the strict sense' (PP 116-117). So at the stage of PP, fallibility is associated with memory *per se*, but Russell still thinks that this should not lead us to reject the acquaintance theory.

Contrast this with how Russell deals with questions of fallibility and self-evidence in TK. One of the methodological observations which Russell puts forward concerning theory of knowledge in TK is as follows:

(2). *The possibility of error in any cognitive occurrence shows that the occurrence is not an instance of a dual relation...* For the present, its chief importance is negative: where error is possible, something not acquaintance or attention or any other two-term relation is involved, this applies, for instance, to the case of memory, in so far as memory is fallible. (TK p.49)

Two years on, Russell seems to be less sanguine about reconciling the presence of error with fallibility in memory. That is, he seems to recognize that in as far as memory is fallible it cannot involve acquaintance. And as a consequence, he admits that there are forms of memory in which acquaintance with the past is not involved. He writes:

No doubt, in cases of remembering something not very recent, we have often only acquaintance with an image, combined with the *judgment* that something like the image occurred in the past. (TK 72)

And this is echoed in his later discussion of degrees of certainty, when he claims:

We have, then, to ask ourselves whether perceptive acquaintance-memory extends beyond the narrow range of the immediate past. I think not. I think that this kind of memory is coextensive with immediate memory, and is indeed the analysis of immediate memory. Objects further in the past seem to be no longer given in acquaintance, but only indirectly accessible through images known to have a reference to the past. (TK p.173)

The minimal change that this involves for Russell is then: a.) he introduces a label for a distinctive kind of memory, immediate memory, and contrasts this with what he labels ‘remote memory’; b.) he allows that there is a form of memory which does not in itself involve acquaintance with the past object remembered, and that this is typical of the form of memory we have of events more remote than the last few seconds.<sup>5</sup>

Without a doubt, then, Russell revises his theory of memory between 1911 and 1913, and a primary motivation for the revision concerns the proper treatment of the fact that we can be mistaken in our memory judgements, and with it a more systematic treatment of self-evidence and certainty. But the question germane for our discussion is the significance of this contrast from the perspective of what Russell labels ‘the old theory’ in 1918. Pears takes it as clearly a sign that Russell is in the midst of giving up the older doctrine:

...he soon began to lose confidence in this doctrine. This is why in 1915 he transfers the two important functions, making the past intelligible and making it accessible, from remote memory to immediate memory. The article in which he makes this move is part of *Theory of Knowledge*, and in the unpublished part of that work he poses the question whether we are ever acquainted with particulars in remote memory, and his answer is that he is inclined to think that we are not, but that he is not quite sure. In 1917 his agnosticism turned to certainty that we are not. So he gradually abandoned Theory I about paradigmatic cases of memory before he ceased to believe in the existence of the ego. (pp.227-8)

Pears’s reference here to 1917, is presumably back to his claim about PLA, which we have already considered and found wanting if considered in isolation. While this summary of Russell does correctly mark the shift between PP and TK, it puts a cast on it not to be found in Russell himself. First, Russell does not introduce or discuss the notion of immediate memory in PP, and so does not discuss the contrast between immediate and remote memory at that stage. A less loaded description of the shift would say that Russell introduces a division in TK within the class of memories unfound in PP, and with it restricts acquaintance in memory to just one of these. This does lead him to introduce a new category of memories about which he has very little to say – memory judgements involving imagery. From the perspective of AM, this new category is of interest as the origin of the account of true memory, that is to say non-habit memory, in the later work. So described, there is as yet no reason to suppose that Russell is beginning to doubt the status of memory acquaintance. Indeed, as we will see below, the shift can as equally be seen as providing for a description of memory judgement which coheres with what Russell already has to say about judgements of perception in PP; rather than abandoning the theory of memory acquaintance, TK can be seen as consolidating it within Russell’s overall account of acquaintance.

If there is substance in this disagreement it is over whether we should count immediate memory as genuinely or interestingly *memory*. Urmson, presumably, would suppose otherwise. In his original critique of Pears, he complains of the parallel passage in PP, ‘This is surely a version of the doctrine of the specious present, an appeal to such facts as that we hear the consecutive notes of a melody as a succession.’ (511-2). And it is presumably in acceding to Urmson’s critique of his

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<sup>5</sup> Note that Russell retains the term ‘immediate memory’ in the AM theory, see the previous footnote. But the notion of acquaintance plays no role in the account any more, and the specious present is explained in different terms.



earlier views that Pears too claims that the doctrine of TK is that ‘in immediate memory acquaintance with perceived particulars lasts as long as the specious present’ (236). Now Pears, like Urmson before him, may be intending to use the phrase ‘specious present’ in a non-technical sense, gesturing at some phenomenon that we might all acknowledge is part of our conscious lives. What they are *not* doing is using it as Russell himself in 1913 is inclined to do. Russell notes that James would include immediate memory within the scope of the specious present (72), but insists strictly that immediate memory involves experience of objects as past, and hence is excluded from the specious present as Russell has here defined it.<sup>6</sup> The objects of immediate memory are experienced as past, in contrast to all of the objects experienced as present. Moreover, Russell insists that our experience of the present involves temporal structure, and that some parts are earlier than others (77). So for Russell, present experience excluding memory can present a temporal interval and not just a moment; and so there is no reason to suppose that in 1913 Russell holds that the distinctive role of immediate memory is to provide a sense of some things being earlier or later than others, or there being change within our experience of the present.<sup>7</sup>

Urmson and Pears write as if what is of concern is whether our experience of past objects can be assimilated into our current sensory awareness of the world. If it can, then Russell’s view is not absurd (and, according to Pears, is a revision of his PP view); to the extent that it cannot, the view is problematic, and felt by Russell to be problematic. But this doesn’t really reflect Russell’s own stated perspective on matters. For Russell, the key concern is whether there is any experience in which an object is immediately before the mind in a way which contrasts with presence in sensation. Although the concern with the fallibility of memory leads him (even in PP) to restrict the relevant examples of memory to relatively recent memory, he comments on the hypothesis of how far such acquaintance with the past might extend so:

It may also happen in exceptional cases that immediate memory extends much further into the past than it usually does. These are purely empirical questions, the answer to which in no way affects our analysis. (TK 173)

Rather than fitting Pears’s characterization as an expression of uncertainty or agnosticism, this passage indicates that the question that is of such concern to Urmson, and following him Pears, is taken by Russell to be of relatively little importance to his central concern with the character of memory.

We might then suggest that what is held over from PP to TK is the claim that there is a distinctive kind of acquaintance with past objects, one in which we experience them as past, and recognize them as belonging in the past. This contrasts with all present sensation, and all sense experience of sense-data, including what Russell himself labels the specious present in TK. Russell is more careful in TK than PP in the way that he handles fallibility in memory and the challenge it poses to the connection between acquaintance and self-evidence. This leads him to introduce discussion of a kind of memory which involves notions of the past but no acquaintance with the past. For readers looking back from AM it is no doubt tempting to read much into this admission; for the kind of imagistic memory judgements that Russell talks of here seem an early anticipation of his account of true memory in the later work, when acquaintance has been abandoned in its entirety. But this is surely over-reading the earlier manuscript: we need to keep in mind that Russell

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<sup>6</sup> Russell appears to be relying on Chapter XV of *The Principles of Psychology*, ‘The Perception of Time’ and more specifically the discussion on p. 593 (William James, 1983).

<sup>7</sup> And it is tempting to speculate that Urmson, Pears and Bostock are mistakenly reading the AM conception of immediate memory (sketched in notes 4 and 5) back into the discussion of TK.

fails to discuss memory in its widest understanding, and he fails to give us anything like a full-dress theory of any form of memory.

Despite Urmson's and Pears's insistence to the contrary, PLA offers no good evidence that Russell had given up the opinion that we have an acquaintance with the past. Although there is some evidence that Russell alters his opinions about the significance of fallibility between PP and TK, as we will see later, it is misleading to suppose that the introduction of the category of immediate memory really turns on this. Moreover, a key part of Russell's psychology and epistemology in TK is that acquaintance comes in three flavours: presenting objects as present, past, or in a manner indifferent to their temporal location. So it is puzzling to have commentators characterize TK as the intermediate position in which Russell is already beginning to give up on memory acquaintance.

This brings us back to the historiographic question. Why, when the evidence is at best uncertain, but more plausibly construed as stacked against this hypothesis, has it nonetheless become commonplace among commentators to suggest, or even confidently declare, that Russell abandoned the idea of memory acquaintance shortly after publishing PP? A partial answer might look to the sociology of philosophy. Urmson had a certain standing in 1968 when he vigorously disputed Pears's claims. And so the more junior Pears may have been moved by Urmson's disapproval to revise his views, even though he was confident that, at least with respect to PP, Urmson was just wrong. In turn, one might hypothesise that Pears's own standing has had an influence on later writers. But this cannot, I think, quite be the whole story. For there remains the question why Urmson was so unhappy to attribute the view to Russell, and Pears so ready to concede that Russell was inclined to change his mind. As Pears makes clear, part of the pressure on interpreters to read Russell as unhappy and prepared to abandon his PP theory is that it is somehow an implausible doctrine for anyone to hold. Many of my teachers were inclined first to attribute a view to Frege before commending it as one to be believed. Here Urmson, Pears, and the commentators who follow them, are inverting this form of deference: they are concerned with due charity not to attribute a view they find to be absurd to Russell; and, where evidence uncontroversibly settles that he held the view, inclined to find a change of mind where no textual evidence supports the point.

But why should these commentators find the idea of memory acquaintance so absurd? Note the question is not, or should not be, why Russell's general notion of acquaintance is absurd. One may well feel that. But these writers are not proposing that Russell is inclined to give up the theory of sense perception he advocates between 1912 and 1918 because of its absurdities. Nor are we in the kind of position with Russell's view on acquaintance with the ego: we have explicit textual evidence that Russell rejects the claim that we are acquainted with the ego in TK, and in the associated paper in *The Monist*, 'On the Nature of Acquaintance', while still holding to the doctrine that we are acquainted with other particulars. In that case, the texts direct us explicitly to suppose Russell proceeds through a complex revision of his views about acquaintance and the ego. The case of memory is different. There is no such explicit revision by Russell of his earlier discussion for us to follow through. Rather, the commentators suppose both that there is a distinctive problem about memory in contrast to sensation or imagery which Russell should be sensitive to. And they then hypothesize that although Russell does not make explicit either his acknowledgement of this distinctive problem, nor the specific revision needed, still we ought to read Russell as moved by these concerns, and read into any silence on his part the hypothesised revision. Why should charity force us to find Russell's recantation when he offers no explicit evidence that he has recanted? In what way is the theory so absurd, that we must assume he has rejected it?

Despite the importance of this question for interpretive methodology, Russell's critics among his commentators offer only rather cursory observations. And in fact all of these fail as explanations of their rejection of the doctrine, or so I shall argue below. So the explicit grounds commonly offered as demonstrating the absurdity of Russell's fail to do so. In underlining this, I am not seeking to rehabilitate Russell, or commend his theory of memory to you. Ultimately what is of interest here is quite how elusive the problems with Russell's early theory of memory turn out to be. It is no accident that the commentators have thought the theory absurd: there is something distinctively problematic with it. The problems it has extend beyond the general issues one might raise about Russell's views of acquaintance and sense-data. Unpacking this problem, I suggest, turns out to be informative about the notion of acquaintance and its continued legacy in later analytic philosophy.

## PART TWO: HUNTING RUSSELL'S SNARK

4. So what is so absurd about the idea of memory acquaintance? I want first to look at the suggestions made by Perkins and Bostock which fix on the external connection between recall and its objects: that memory is fallible and that acts of recall are logically independent of their objects. I suspect that at first blush these lines of objection are popular ones: how can memory be acquaintance with the past, if one can seem to recall something and yet the past event not be as one recalls, or even not have happened at all?<sup>8</sup> But as attractive as this explanation of the absurdity might first appear, it faces an obvious, and eventually fatal, problem. A satisfying explanation here needs to show that memory acquaintance in contrast to sensory acquaintance is somehow absurd. But the considerations of both fallibility and apparent logical independence apply no less to sense perception than to memory. So ultimately this line of attack, however promising it looks at first, will turn out to be unsatisfactory.

Fallibility and Perkins first. He suggests that Russell has definitively given up the idea of memory acquaintance in remote memory by 1914 (more strictly by 1913, since the paper Perkins cites derives from a chapter from TK) precisely because he sees the fallibility of memory to be inconsistent with acquaintance (Perkins, 1976). In support of this he cites the passage quoted above from p.49 of TK. As with Urmson and Pears, Perkins associates TK immediate memory with the specious present, and so supposedly immune to this affliction.

Perkins is surely right that Russell's attitude towards the fallibility of memory shifts between 1911 and 1913 and that this leads to a revision in the theory. But the grounds for the revision are less perspicuous than Perkins's interpretation suggests. The first thing to note is that Russell himself emphasises the fallibility of memory in PP: that, after all, is the basis of ascribing a diminished degree of self-evidence to memory as it concerns remoter and remoter objects. So why should a concern with fallibility lead to any revision in the theory? Second, and more puzzling, fallibility is not the preserve of memory alone. As Russell is well aware, we commonly think of our senses as fallible and our perceptually based judgements concerning the world around us as subject to error. Why, then, should the discussion of fallibility and self-evidence focus on the case of memory rather than take in sense perception as well?

At the outset of PP, Russell reminds us of the possibility of conflicting appearances when he introduces the notion of a sense-datum. So he is well aware that the judgements we take to be perceptually grounded concerning the ordinary objects around us are subject to error. GE Moore

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<sup>8</sup> Compare Anscombe in 'The Reality of the Past' arguing against an assimilation of memory to sensation on the basis of the distinctive ways in which memory judgement can go wrong (GEM Anscombe, 1981).

uses the phrase ‘judgments of perception’ to highlight a class of identificatory claims concerning ordinary objects, such as ‘This is an inkstand’, ‘That is a hand’ (Moore, 1918). And Moore and Russell would agree that just such judgements are fallible. In PP, Russell uses the phrase ‘judgments of perception’ to pick out a different class of statements, ones concerned solely with the sense-data now presented to the subject. And in his discussion of intuitive knowledge, Russell claims that such judgements fall into two classes: on the one hand, that where one’s sensory awareness is of a simple sense-datum, in which case one has a judgement which affirms the existence of this sense-datum; on the other hand, that where the sense-datum is complex, in which case one has a judgement concerning the relation of the simpler sense-data as arranged into this complex. The latter kind of judgement allows for the possibility of error in failing to analyse correctly the complex into its related components. Russell is prepared to accord these judgements the epithet the highest degree of self-evidence (117) and that suggests that such a degree of self-evidence is a mark of infallibility (118). In his later discussion of knowledge and certainty, Russell contrasts self-evidence, which relates to the truth of what is judged, with the certainty with which a subject judges it. Even for absolutely self-evident truths concerning complex sense-data there is not absolute certainty since one may have analysed the complex incorrectly (137).

We should acknowledge that this account of judgements of perception is not as clear as one might hope. Russell’s initial category of intuitive judgements of sense seem to suggest that existence is predicated of the sense-datum, but Russell denies that ‘exists’ is a first-order predicate. Moreover the discussion seems to suggest that we are classifying the sense-datum as brown or circular (compare what is said of the relational case): but for Russell officially such a judgement would also involve acquaintance with the relevant universal. Moreover this category would seem to remain not only infallible but absolutely certain given the explanation of uncertainty at p. 137, but in fact Russell does not return to this category of judgements in the later discussion of certainty. So it remains unclear what their epistemological status ultimately is. Leaving aside these complications, though, at least the following is clear: the fallibility of our ordinary empirical judgements does not lead Russell to deny that sensation is a form of acquaintance. Instead a division is made among our sensory judgements: those that concern no more than the sense-data with which we are acquainted are infallible and close to certain; judgements which go beyond the sense-data are fallible.<sup>9</sup>

Once Russell has introduced the distinction between immediate and remote memory in TK, a parallel such move to that of sensation is made for the case of memory. Immediate memory involves acquaintance with a past sense-datum, and the presence of acquaintance predicts infallibility. The evident fallibility of memory judgements noted in the PP discussion of intuitive knowledge is handed over to two kinds of representational memory judgements: ‘judgment descriptive memory’ which is ‘peculiarly fallacious’ (172) and ‘perceptive descriptive memory’, which were it the usual case would make memory usually trustworthy (173), although it allows for mistake.<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>9</sup> Compare this with the discussion in (Ian Proops, forthcoming). Proops seeks to explain away the absolutely self-evident judgements of perception as no more than acquaintance with the sense-datum, and so acquaintance with particulars. But that seems a heroic re-interpretation of the text, given Russell’s concern with intuitive truths at this stage of discussion. Proops main point, though, that Russell denies absolute certainty to any of our judgements conflicts with a traditional foundationalist interpretation of his epistemology at this stage seems absolutely on target.

<sup>10</sup> Strictly, Russell introduces four categories of memory judgement: ‘judgment-acquaintance-memory’ and ‘perception-acquaintance-memory’ in addition, the latter of which arises in immediate memory, and the former of which he takes to be rare. The four are defined in relation to the question whether an object is given or described in memory, and whether its pastness is given or described (171).

As Perkins presents matters, the move to this account in TK amounts to a significant revision and rejection of the PP account. Given the parallel with what has already been said about judgements of sense in PP, though, this would be too hasty a conclusion to draw. We should rather ask: What prevented Russell from explaining fallibility in this way and making the move for memory judgement, parallel to what he says about perceptually grounded judgements, already in PP?

Throughout the discussion of memory in PP, Russell uses commonplace examples of remembering and recall to illustrate his thesis: recalling what he had for breakfast; lightning striking the house next door; George IV brandishing his sword at Waterloo. Indeed it is precisely this fact about the examples which Pears and Perkins use to illustrate the fact that Russell is fixated at this stage on 'remote memory' in his examples. What they fail to remark on, however, is how it is the use of this kind of example which creates a problem for Russell's standard explanations of the appearance of fallibility in acquaintance. And it is this which marks the key disanalogy between memory judgements and judgements of perception.

Were Russell concerned to focus attention on the strict parallel between memory and sensation, he would need to present us with cases of recalling a sense-datum, simple or complex. Neither the event of the next door house being struck by lightning, nor Russell having kedgeree for his breakfast exactly fit this model. And, I think, it is fairly clear why, in the PP discussion, Russell would not have adopted this strategy when discussing judgements of memory. He wants the reader to accept that there is a distinctive acquaintance with the past that we have through memory. But the case for this is surely significantly weakened if he has to bring into play a state of mind which otherwise his readers need not have noticed. Ordinarily the examples we are wont to give of remembering our past lives involve judgements much richer than Russell would allow as judgements of sense. Sense perception presents Russell with a different kind of problem. Russell can hope that even if his reader is recalcitrant and denies that his or her judgements are ever about the entities Russell labels 'sense-data' (as indeed, the 'muddle-headed' Dawes Hicks did in the pages of *Mind* (Hicks, 1912)), Russell can force such a reader to pay due attention to his or her current experience in order to reveal the existence of such judgements and the evident existence of sense-data. But past sense-data are past, and no longer present to mind. They can only be called up through suitable reminiscence. Russell can't guarantee that his reader will do the right thing in calling up no more than a sense-datum. As we have noted, our commonest examples of personal memory are much richer in character than simply the bare presentation of sense-data as Russell conceives of them. If the recalcitrant reader were to profess ignorance of memory acquaintance, there is no sure recipe Russell could employ to have the reader instantiate the relation in question. So in the discussion of PP, Russell's only hope to get his reader to focus of memorial experience is to fix on examples which are too rich in character to be guaranteed self-evidence.

So we can think of Russell's focus on immediate memory, the moment just after a sense-datum has ceased to be part of the specious present, as a way of providing the recipe for focusing on the simplest cases of memory. In effect, the shift to immediate memory in TK allows his discussion of memory to focus precisely on the proper analogue in memory for what in PP he called judgements of perception: cases which involve no more than acquaintance with a past sense-datum. The mismatch between memory judgements, in terms of their richness of description, and what can strictly speaking be immediately given through memory acquaintance then drops away. Fallibility is certainly part of this, but it is in the end not the most pressing element.

If that is right, then ultimately there is no fundamental shift in Russell's attitude towards acquaintance and fallibility between PP and TK: in both texts, the presence of acquaintance conflicts with fallibility. There is no assumption that fallibility is a function of time, as if acquaintance has a half-life. The salience of immediate memory in TK is rather that it offers us a candidate example of

genuine past experience which manages to fit the model of immediate knowledge employed otherwise for sense perception and sensuous knowledge. If we are looking to fallibility as Russell's reason to jettison memory acquaintance, the texts do not support it. And, given an evident parallel between sense perception and memory, there is no more evident reason to write out memory acquaintance on these grounds, while leaving perceptual acquaintance in place.

5. Perhaps, though, we have not yet pressed the problem of fallibility far enough. So far, our concern has been with how Russell should have dealt with the fact that memory judgements are liable to error. We have seen that he can adopt a move parallel to that he made in the case of judgements of sense: delimiting a class of episodes of genuine acquaintance where error is ruled out. But one might complain that this response does not take into account the proper lesson to be learned from fallibility: it is not just that some of our judgements are open to error, but that for each case in which a judgement made is a response to what one recalls, there is the logical possibility that one has seemingly recalled an event while the event recalled has never happened. And, this, one might argue, shows that there is just no scope for memory acquaintance.

Bostock brings out this line of criticism nicely when he appeals to an element of AM to show the supposed unworkability of the PP view:

...he soon revised his view of this, on the ground that what we seem to remember may not have occurred at all, from which it follows that the existence claim must in this case be admitted to be meaningful. (As he famously said somewhat later, in *The Analysis of Mind* [1921a: 159], it is *logically possible* that the world sprang into being five minutes ago, with all our apparent memories just as they are, and none of our current experiences will show conclusively that this hypothesis is false.) ((Bostock, 2012) pp.118-9)

How should we understand the line of reasoning here? As Bostock presents it, one element is epistemological. Were the Russell hypothesis true, any apparent act of recall for remote objects would be a false memory and fail to relate to any suitably temporally remote object, since the world has come into existence only five minutes ago. Bostock then reasons that were our actual memories relations to temporally remote objects, then we would thereby have conclusive evidence that we are not in a world where the Russell hypothesis holds. Since we cannot rule out Russell's hypothesis as an epistemic possibility, recall cannot involve acquaintance with remote objects.

It is simpler, initially at least, to bleach out the epistemological elements in this argument. The first step is to argue that were the Russell hypothesis actual, apparent acts of recall would not be relations to past objects. Now Russell is not committed to the hypothesis that you can read off how remote in one's past the object of recall is, as if pastness in acquaintance came in degrees (TK 170 Russell suggests that in immediate memory one can judge of temporal distance, that one thing is one or two seconds ago, but claims for all other memory we are aware of objects just as past). So, on the official theory, acts of recall require that there be some sense-datum that is past relative to one's current experience. And with Russell's example of wholly false memory from PP, George IV giving up his literary interests to reminisce about his non-existent exploits on the battlefields of Waterloo, Russell still on holds on to the idea that this acquaintance with the past, since he hypothesises that George in fact recalls his past telling the lie of having been present, and then confuses that with the fictitious event allegedly being recalled (116-7). So the AM hypothesis is in fact strictly consistent with memory acquaintance, given that five minutes is certainly long enough for some sense-data to have passed out of current consciousness. The apparent memories one would have in such a situation would be 'wholly false' in Russell's terms, since they would conflate

immediately past sense-data with non-existent events long in the past, but could nonetheless exhibit the dual relational structure spanning across times.

So, to use the Russell hypothesis decisively against the early view, we need to consider a situation in which the world together with one's experience, including current acts of recall, has just this moment sprung into existence, and for which there is no past which could have contained merely past sense-data for one to be related to. In this circumstance there will be no past sense-data beyond the bounds of one's current experience whatsoever for one to be related to, and hence the apparent acts of recall whatever else they may be, cannot be relations to past entities.

The second step is to introduce the principle that for any kind of act  $R$ ,  $R$  is a binary relation only if each of its instances is an example of a binary relation. Given that the apparent acts of recall in the hypothesised situation are not relations to anything, then the kind of mental act they exemplify is not relational. The final move would then simply be to assume that whatever mental acts occur when we actually recall, acts of the same kind occur in the hypothesised situation when we have acts of apparent recall. So, given that the apparent acts of recall in the Russell hypothesis are not relations to past sense-data, my actual acts of recall cannot be relations to any past entity either.

This is certainly what the Russell of AM would endorse, when he has given up on acquaintance as an ultimate relation and treats all memory as representational. But how would the earlier Russell, for whom acquaintance was central, respond to this? In TK, Russell makes clear that an act of recall does not have a unique position in time, since the relata of memory acquaintance occupy distinct positions in time (TK 42). Moreover, Russell's method in 1911-1913 seems to involve introspective reflection on mental acts in order to reveal their nature. So, Russell seems to assume that the relational character of mental acts can be read off by a suitably attentive subject. That suggests that Russell does think at this stage that it is self-evident that the world extends into the past beyond our current experience, and that we can be certain or rather close to certain that things are so. This is indicated, for example, by the following passage in his discussion of the experience of time:

Since, however, the word "past" has significance for us, there must be perception of facts in which it occurs, and in such cases memory must be not liable to error. I conclude that, though other complications are logically possible, there must, in some cases, be immediate acquaintance with past objects given in a way which enables us to know that they are past, though such acquaintance may be confined to the very recent past. (TK 72)

The actual Russell hypothesis from AM is consistent with this position, but the revised one we sketched above involving the immediate past is not. Given the passage above, though, it is clear that Russell would stand firm against this alleged possibility and insist that our knowledge of our own acts of recall reveal to us that the world extends beyond the current moment in time. That which Bostock seems to think is manifestly possible, Russell thinks is ruled out, once we pay suitable attention to the nature of our experience.

It is worth comparing this stand-off with a more familiar use of this style of argument in relation to sensation. Although the causal argument from hallucination was not central to debates in the early twentieth century about sense-data, it became more popular after the Second World War in discussions of the nature of sensory experience. A parallel argument for sensation to the one concerning recall works through considering a hypothetical situation in which no suitable candidate for being an object of sensory awareness exists, but in which the local causally sufficient conditions for producing an apparent act of sensory awareness do. If there is no suitable object of awareness, then the apparent act of sensory awareness cannot be an instance of a dual relation. Again, we can

elaborate the argument in different directions: One might argue along Bostock's lines that we cannot rule out the epistemic possibility of being in such a situation, but would be able to do so were our actual acts of awareness relations. Alternatively, one might press more directly metaphysical considerations and simply insist that whatever sensory awareness is, it is the same kind of mental act in the actual world as in such a hypothetical situation, so it is relational in both or neither.

Standardly the causal argument is used against forms of naïve realism about perception which suppose acts of awareness to relate us to ordinary environmental objects existing independently of us, JL Austin's medium-sized dry goods. But it is rarely used on its own to decisively demonstrate the representational nature of perceptual awareness in opposition to either naïve realism or some form of sense-datum theory. In its standard formulations, those who employ the reasoning assume that the occurrence of psychological acts is logically independent of environmental conditions which are remote from more immediate causal conditions. But it is not assumed that we can tell *a priori* that awareness is independent of all objects. In later formulations of sense-datum theories of perception, it has been common to assume that sense-data are *mental* objects. That is, it has been assumed that when a subject has an act of sensory awareness, that awareness thereby brings about the existence of a suitable sense-datum as object of awareness for the subject. On such a view, acts of awareness would be independent of any potential environmental object of awareness, but would not be independent of objects of awareness *tout court*. Those who seek to employ the argument from hallucination in favour of representationalism typically appeal to further considerations to rule out this option.

Might the same manoeuvre be exploited in relation to the case of memory? That is, could one seek to hold on to a relational account of memory by positing mental objects of recall? This would require the supposition that an act of mind at one time constituted the existence of an object of awareness at an earlier time. At least a couple of further issues arise on this supposition. First, one might find troublesome the idea of a constituting or grounding relation holding among entities at different times. It may make sense to suppose that a pain's existence, say, is constituted by someone's awareness of it where we mark no temporal gap between constituting awareness and pain object constituted. Isn't it more mysterious, though, to suppose that the occurrence of awareness at one time could sustain the existence of an entity at any other time? One might wonder, for example, why the constituted entity should come into existence at one particular time rather than any other. (Could constitutive acts of awareness project objects into variably different temporal locations – across different remembers, or across different occasions of recall?). Second, one might find particularly troublesome the temporal ordering of constitution for memory recall: that a later act should bring into existence an entity earlier than its own occurrence.

A consequence of admitting this possibility requires that the immediate causal conditions for producing recall be deterministic rather than probabilistic, given the standard direction of causation. For suppose that the causal conditions merely raise the probability of an act of recall to a very high level without making certain that that act occurs. If no suitable past object of recall had existed, the probability of producing the episode of recall is presumably zero: for a necessary condition of the memory acquaintance being instanced is that there is an object of memory to recall. Given that there is a positive probability of recall occurring, the non-existence of the object of recall is not certain. But, given that the causal circumstances are not deterministic, there is then some probability, however low, of the act not occurring, and so some possible outcome in which no act does occur. In that situation, the act would not have occurred, and yet *ex hypothesi* the object of recall did exist, since the causal conditions for producing the recall did occur and did give it some positive probability of occurring. But how could the object of recall have existed if that which constituted its existence did not occur? Since this seems an absurd result, we must require that any



stage of the causal chain which occurs after the putative existence of the object of recall must determine that the act of recall occur.

All in all, then, the mental object strategy for recall is much more problematic than the parallel case for sense experience. In addition to these complexities, one might also observe that the dialectic with the causal argument for the case of sense perception is less stark than that involved in Bostock's complaint. When we consider the world absent the act of sensory awareness, we have no difficulty conceiving it empty of potential objects of awareness. This supposition is not contradicted by the introduction of the act of awareness, even if we suppose that that act must be relational. For in the act bringing about the existence of its object, we have thereby introduced into the domain entities which were previously absent: we simply observe that bringing about sensory awareness also involves bringing about objects of awareness. If we suppose that we can exhaustively describe time slices of the world at one time without mention of what is the case at any later time slices, then the Russell hypothesis leads to a description of the world which is inconsistent with the later assumption that there is an act of recall. When we formulate the hypothesis that the world comes into existence at  $t$  with one's current experience, we assume that at  $t-1$  no objects yet existed. When we hypothesise that at  $t$  the subject has acquaintance with a past sense-datum, there must have been prior to  $t$  at least one object, contradicting our initial hypothesis. Supposing that the act of recall plays a constitutive role in relation to the object does not remove this inconsistency. So even if one thought the primary objects of recall were mind-dependent, one would still have to reject Bostock's starting assumption that nothing about the character of our acts of recall rule out the strong Russell hypothesis, that the world came into existence with one's current experience.

Does this suffice to show that there is a distinctive difficulty in maintaining the idea of memory acquaintance, and one which Russell is, or should have been, at least implicitly sensitive to? I think not. We should take seriously two lines of reservation. First, with respect simply to the question of Russell interpretation, it is important to bear in mind that Russell denies, following Moore, that sense-data are mental, or 'in' the mind. Russell accepts various forms of the argument from conflicting appearances, and at times relies on various causal considerations to show that we should not identify sense-data with the environmental objects that we typically take ourselves to perceive. But the alternative to this is not that they should be mental objects, entities within the mind, whose existence our awareness conjures up. Rather, Russell insists that anything which is a sense-datum must exist independent of our sensing it, and exist outside of the mind.

There are interesting questions of interpretation why early sense-datum theorists insisted on the mind-independence of sense-data, and problematic consequences for their arguments about the nature of perception given this commitment. One such consequence relates to our current concerns. While Russell would be happy to concede that it is possible to produce an act of sensory awareness in a world otherwise lacking medium-sized dry goods, he would insist that once one introduces an episode of sensory awareness, it is manifest that there must be at least one distinct entity which is the object of that awareness. And given that, the stand-off between those wish to use the causal argument to show the non-relational nature of sensory awareness and those who insist it is a form of acquaintance is no less stark than the stand-off between those who find in memory a form of acquaintance and those who think it is quite possible that the world came into existence immediately before one's current experience.

There remains, it is true, one structural contrast between the two cases: in the sensory case, Russell's position would be consistent with the doctrine that the state of the world at any time is logically independent of its state at any other time; his view of memory acquaintance does not allow such independence. But the discussion at TK 42 makes absolutely clear that Russell is aware of this commitment and is unbothered by it. He stresses the rejection of it in AM only at the point at which

he has given up on acquaintance entirely. To sum the thought up: since Russell is not inclined to deal with the sensory case by appeal to mental objects, the additional costs of positing mental objects for the case of memory does not explain why the notion of memory acquaintance ought to be thought more problematic than sensory acquaintance by Russell's own lights.

On the other hand, leaving Russell himself to one side for a moment, these considerations shouldn't lead *us* to suppose that memory acquaintance is less cogent than sensory acquaintance. What early Russell and Bostock have in common is the assumption that there is a relevant similarity between actual memories and mere apparent recall: either these are acts of the same kind, or they provide us with exactly the same evidential potential. We have not surveyed all options until we have considered whether one can coherently reject this assumption. In the sensory case, one notorious response to the causal argument from hallucination seeks to block the parallel assumption by claiming that the kind of acquaintance one enjoys in genuine perception is not the kind of thing that could occur were one merely causally induced into hallucination without any suitable object for one to view. Such a view of sense experience, 'disjunctivism' is a common label, accepts that it can seem to one as if one is in the position of being aware of some suitable object of awareness without any such object existing. It will accept that it is conceivable that we should be in a situation apparently the same as this from the subject's point of view, but in which no suitable objects of awareness exist. Disjunctivism denies, though, that this possibility shows that successful perceptual awareness is not constituted by such a relation of awareness.<sup>11</sup>

If disjunctivism about sense perception is at all coherent, then one might ask why there should not be a form of disjunctivism about episodic recall too. Such a view could grant Bostock that there is a conceivable situation in which the world came into existence with my current experience, even though I now have apparent memories of a more distant past. It would agree with Bostock that such acts of recall do not reveal the existence in that world of a remote past. But it would resist the claim that this shows anything about the actual world in which there is an extensive past for us to recall.<sup>12</sup>

The general concerns with the fallibility of memory that Perkins highlights, and the considerations in favour of the logical independence of acts of recall from the object of recall that so impress Bostock don't really manage to explain the absurdity of Russell's 1911 position, or why we should think of him as differentially rejecting the theory of memory while retaining his view of sensation.

6. The objections of Perkins and Bostock look to the external relations between the act of recall and the objects of recall. Does it really make sense to suppose that the act of recall is other than independent of its object? Perhaps, though, the absurdity in the notion of memory acquaintance lies in our conception of the act of recall itself, and in making sense of it as a kind of experience. Crudely, one might simply complain: Russell's early view of memory is absurd because it makes remembering too much like sense perception.

Certainly the objects of acquaintance in Russell's account of recall are in the past and not the present, but is that in itself enough to make a difference to the kind of experience one has? If

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<sup>11</sup> This response to the causal argument was initially developed by JM Hinton, see (J. M. Hinton, 1967) and (J. Michael Hinton, 1973). For later elaborations of the account and some critiques see the various papers collected in (Alex Byrne and Heather Logue, 2009).

<sup>12</sup> Just such disjunctivism about memory is argued for by (Dorothea Debus, 2008). One might also interpret the view of autobiographical memory in (John Campbell, 2002) as committed to disjunctivism about memory, see the discussion in the text below.

our experience includes environmental objects, then we may perceive events involving them which have occurred at times we consider past relative to our current experience. If one observes a sunspot from the Earth, then the event in question has occurred eight minutes before. One enjoys this dangerous observation (which might lead to retinal damage) as a current visual experience. Recalling even recent events, such as what was behind the door just closed, seems to have a very different experiential character. Assimilating memory to acquaintance appears to deny this salient difference, or so the objection goes.

But objecting to Russell in these crude terms ignores a key element of his view: that although sensation and memory are both examples of acquaintance, they are intrinsically different from each other in involving different determinations or subordinate forms of the acquaintance relation. This is how Russell sums things up at the end of part one of TK:

Towards particulars with which we are acquainted, three subordinate dual relations were considered, namely sensation, memory, and imagination. These, we found, though their objects are usually somewhat different, are not essentially distinguished by their objects, but by the relations of subject and object. In sensation, subject and object are simultaneous; in memory, the subject is later than the object; while imagination does not essentially involve any time-relation of subject and object, though all time-relations are compatible with it. We considered also, though briefly, a fourth relation of subject and object, namely attention, which, however, does not require that the object should be particular. (TK p.100)

Russell's position at this point stands in stark contrast to Moore. For Moore, in a notorious passage which is appealed to for rather different philosophical purposes in many philosophical discussions of perception and consciousness, insists that the relation of sensory awareness is colourless:

To be aware of the sensation of blue... is to be aware of an awareness of blue; awareness being used, in both cases, in exactly the same sense.

...the moment we try to fix our attention upon consciousness and to see *what*, distinctly, it is, it seems to vanish: it seems as if we had before us a mere emptiness. When we try to introspect the sensation of blue, all we can see is the blue: the other element is as if it were diaphanous. Yet it *can* be distinguished if we look attentively enough, and if we know that there is something to look for. ((Moore, 1903), p. 450.)

And the same commitment can be found in HH Price's book *Perception* when at the outset he affirms that acquaintance is the same in all acts of mind:

Are there several different sorts of acquaintance, e.g. sensing, self-consciousness, and contemplation of mental images? I cannot see that there are. The differences seem to be wholly on the side of the data. If so, *a fortiori* there are not different kinds of sensing. ((Price, 1932), p.5.)

Were this Russell's own view of acquaintance in PP and TK, then he would face a dilemma concerning sensation and memory. If there is a logical possibility of perfect memory (as in popular conceptions of eidetic memory), a later act of memory would have as its object the same sense-datum as an earlier sensation. If the character of an act of mind which involves a dual relation (as Russell labels acts of acquaintance in TK) is determined solely by object, subject and the acquaintance relation, then there could be no intrinsic difference between this sensation and the corresponding memory. The passage we have just excerpted from TK indicates how Russell avoids this problem: memory and sense perception may not differ in either subject or object, but will still differ in terms of how subject relates to object. In the case of sensation the subject is related to a present object as present; and in memory they are related to a past object as past.

Note that for Russell pastness comes into the act of recall initially in the relation of acquaintance itself, as indeed does the present in respect of sensation. This is made clear in the passage above, but also in Russell's explanation of our acquisition of the concept of the past. Russell claims in his discussion of the experience of time that we can define 'past' to mean earlier than the whole of the present (71). This is logically adequate but not epistemologically correct: it doesn't capture the fact that a subject can recognize the object of recall as in his past without having to survey all elements of his current experience. As a consequence, Russell takes the concepts of past and present to have partly psychological explanations: one must introspect one's act of recall in order to recognize the distinctive relation that past objects can stand in (73).

This shows that we shouldn't interpret Russell's talk of being acquainted with the object of memory 'as past' as requiring complexity with ultimate acquaintance to be analysed out of it, or to suppose, in contrast to sensation, that memory is 'quasi-conceptual', as Thomas Baldwin has put it (Baldwin, 2001). While judgements that result from immediate memory may involve acquaintance with the past as a term (cf. TK 171), according to Russell our immediate awareness of past and present come through introspection of memory and sensation and our recognition of the differences between them. Were we to attempt to isolate an ultimate relation of acquaintance which lacked any temporal mode, by Russell's official account of the varieties of acquaintance we would simply end up with imagination: that mode of acquaintance with particulars in which no temporal position is given to the subject. And it is clear from KAKD on, if Russell is take any mode of experience as a paradigm of particular-acquaintance, it is sensation and not imagination.

So, by the time of writing TK, Russell has elaborated a view of immediate awareness or experience, according to which acquaintance with particulars exhibits three distinct modes: sensation, memory, and imagination. These need not differ in their objects, although they commonly do, but fundamentally only in the variety of acquaintance involved in the act of awareness, and that difference is introspectively accessible and a central part of the explanation of our concepts of past and present. So, in response to the simple objection, Russell can reject the complaint that in treating memory as acquaintance, he treats memory as a form of sensation. Sensation, according to Russell involves present awareness, but memory involves past awareness.

Now Pears, fully aware that the simple minded objection will not work (citing the passage from TK 42 discussion of Meinong mentioned above in relation to Bostock), still wishes to insist that Russell is subject to some such complaint, and is responding to it in the alleged revision of his views:

If we are reluctant to attribute the theory to him even in 1912, the reason may be that it seems to entail that the remembered particular somehow persists as it was when perceived, so that now, when it is remembered, the relation between the act and the object does not need to span the interval of time. But, though he treats paradigmatic remote memory rather like perception, he does not go so far as to update its object to the time of remembering. (228)

One may well question whether Russell's discussion of memory really is adequate as an explanation of how we can acquire or correctly deploy the concept of past. To suppose that the contrast between the presentness of sensation and the pastness of memory resides in the contrast between a relation of presentness to the object versus a relation of pastness is little better than to suppose that there is a quality of being present in sensation and a contrasting quality of pastness in memory. (Little better, but with a notable advantage: Russell requires the pastness to be bound into the object with which one is acquainted, for it is that which is in the past. If we model pastness as a property of the object rather than an aspect of how we are related to the object, our memory will falsify how the object was in the past: whereas it is now in the past from the perspective of the remembering subject, that is not how the sense-datum was at the time existed; then it was present.) But typically our grasp of

the concept of the contrast between past and present involves a rich set of cognitive capacities, anticipating how we can interact or fail to interact with objects and events depending on whether we locate them in our past or present. As many discussions in both philosophy and developmental psychology continue to stress, to suppose that pastness is a simple quality of experience hardly explains how these cognitive capacities should develop in response to such a quality, or connect with the development of infant understanding of temporal structure. However plausible it is to suppose that there is a distinctive temporal consciousness present in some memories, more needs to be said than Russell does at the stage of PP and TK.

But that complaint about the incompleteness or inadequacy doesn't revive or justify the contention that Russell is really thinking about memory as a kind of perception. We can move to that conclusion only if we can show that Russell is mistaken to suppose that there could be different species or determinations of acquaintance. Pears attempts to make the naïve suspicion stick in a different way. Having acknowledged that Russell locates the object of memory awareness entirely in the past, Pears suggests that Russell still needs to think of the connection between object and act of recall illegitimately along the lines of perception, at least in causal terms:

Consider, for example, the reason for describing paradigmatic remote memory as acquaintance. It is supposed that it must be acquaintance because the impressions are under a continuous constraint. (229)

As Pears's discussion continues over the paragraph it becomes clear that he thinks of the notion of 'continuous constraint' in causal or quasi-causal terms: the way the object actually was in the past should continue to act on the operation of the mechanisms of memory, such that the present memory, and any other future memories of the object that one retrieves should come to reflect the way the object was. This would parallel the idea that in genuine perception, the object and ways it is influence and impose a constraint on how we perceive them: a feature long exploited in debates about the causal theory of perception.

Now one should surely grant Pears that little can really be done with this supposed parallel between sense perception and memory. Russell would not (and should not) deny that objects have had a causal impact on physiological mechanisms and psychological structures in the initial laying down of memories; and for all that we have so far said, one might concede that these mechanisms operate by preserving a memory trace or impression brought about through that first impact. But there could be no further role for the original object, the object as it then was at the time of perception, to play in the preservation or activation of any such memory trace: causal activities of maintenance and preservation have been handed over entirely to the subject's brain. And this does contrast with the idea that throughout a period of perceiving and attentively inspecting some object, a perceiver is in a kind of continuous causal interaction with it.

But this conclusion furnishes us with a new objection to Russell only on the assumption that Russell tacitly appeals to some such fanciful picture of causal interaction when he endorses the idea of memory acquaintance. And in support of this, Pears seems to assume that Russell's talk of the dual relation in both perception and memory only has explanatory potential if it carries over the assumptions we make about underlying mechanisms and neurological structure that is appropriate in the case of perception to the case of memory. Yet he gives us no reason to suppose that Russell would accept this, or why we, Pears's contemporary readers, should take his word on this.

A parallel riposte is invited by Pears's final summary of the problem that Russell's account is supposed to face:

It would be a superficial verdict that he simply pushed the analogy with perception too far. Certainly, that is what he did, but the interesting question is, why he did it. The reason seems to be that he

required a philosophical theory to be too like a scientific theory. He apparently wanted Theory I [i.e. the PP theory] to be more than an apt description of certain features of paradigmatic remote memory. It had to provide an explanation by suggesting the way in which that kind of memory works, and the suggestion had to be verifiable. But this demand led only too rapidly to the final dilemma, that either Theory I is non-explanatory or it is false. (230)

It's somewhat unclear what Pears supposes the confusion between philosophical theories and scientific theories to be. If he supposes that to treat memory as involving acquaintance requires that we adopt the causal story mentioned above, then Russell can simply reply that he does not accept that causal story, but that this doesn't rule out telling a more familiar causal story concerning memory traces. So Pears certainly hasn't shown that any account of the causal mechanisms that Russell could offer must be false. But suppose we stick with the first half of the dilemma, the description just of the act of memory itself without paying any attention to the mechanisms which would subserve it. Would Russell's theory thereby necessarily be unexplanatory? The account predicts something about how memory and judgement interact which is not entirely trivial, nor yet consistent with all views of memory and recall. Russell certainly does not think of himself as offering a trivial account of acts of recall – for the account is one he comes to reject in 1918, as we have seen.

There may well be something to Pears's complaint that there is something bogus in Russell's talk of memory acquaintance. But Pears's detour through worrying about verifiable causal mechanisms doesn't manage to make explicit what form the complaint should take. Whatever the merits of these further constraints, by this stage of the dialectic we surely have lost sight of anything which is not merely wrong but is *manifestly* absurd in Russell's original story. Pears's subtle and elusive discussion may give us a sense of how we ought to worry about the PP theory, and indeed about the theory of acquaintance as a whole. But given the terms in which that discussion is framed, it can hardly capture what commentators have found so patently ridiculous in Russell's original take on memory.

The simple objection that Russell conflates memory and perception rests on a mistaken interpretation of Russell's own text: a failure to notice the ways in which he is committed to there being a multiplicity of acquaintance relations. On the other hand, the most elaborated attempt to revive the complaint in the light of this additional detail rests on somewhat obscure or tendentious assumptions about the form that an explanatory claim about the nature or structure of memory should take. Either way we lack a sound and compelling articulation of what is absurd in Russell.

7. Other than repudiating the idea that memory is a kind of perception of the past, the simple objection left open exactly what the key difference between memory and perception should consist in. Our fourth objection makes that concern properly articulate.

In his discussion of what he calls 'the information system', Gareth Evans suggests that we should think of memory and testimony as 'recursive' elements of how the mind gathers and uses information: in memory we draw on information that we have gathered in some other way; memory is not a self-standing source of evidence or information about the world ((Evans, 1982), 127). John Campbell applies this idea in a criticism of Russell's early view. As he puts it:

Russell was unusual in that he attempted to deny the stepwise character even of episodic memory... Without the stepwise conception of memory, one loses the right to say, for example, 'I must have been in the town center this afternoon, because I remember seeing Carfax' ((Campbell, 1994) pp. 237-8)

Just before this passage, Campbell has introduced the notion of being stepwise in a way reminiscent of Evans's earlier discussion:

Testimony is not an independent channel to the truth; testimony depends on there being ways of finding things out other than testimony. Memory also has this stepwise character. It is, as it were, the testimony of one's earlier self. (233)

Campbell's complaint against Russell is that the stepwise character of memory is not just something that we as theorists are committed to when we attempt to give an account of what is distinctive of episodic memory. Rather, thinking of our memories as arising in this dependent way is part of our ordinary practice of testing the correctness of our memories, and so understanding how memory could in the first place put us in a position to know anything about the past. We might put Campbell's concern so: it is part of our ordinary practice of reasoning on the basis of evidence provided through memory, that we employ hypotheses about where we were at a given time, or what time something must have occurred, given our then location as witness to it. Reasoning now from memory involves hypotheses about our past perceptions, and the conditions under which they could have occurred. Such reasoning is warranted, one may plausibly conjecture, only if all such memory evidence is acquired in this way, through particular acts of past perception. If Russell rejects this assumption, then he undermines a familiar pattern of reasoning about memory evidence. So, if treating memory as a form of acquaintance equates with rejecting the hypothesis that memory is causally dependent on past perception, and if that assumption is essential to our standard of pattern of reasoning about memory, then one has a tension between Russell's view and our ordinary picture of memory. To agree with Russell about memory as acquaintance is to give up a plausible picture of how we treat our memories as providing evidence.

The first question here is whether Campbell is right that Russell conceives of memory as giving us a direct access to the past of a sort that is inconsistent with the stepwise character of memory. Evidence in favour of this claim comes early in TK when Russell insists:

It would be logically possible to remember an object which we had never experienced; indeed it is by no means certain that this does not sometimes occur. We may hear a striking clock, for instance, and become aware that it has already struck several times before we noticed it. Perhaps, in this case, we have really experienced the earlier strokes as they occurred, but we cannot remember to have done so. (TK p.12)

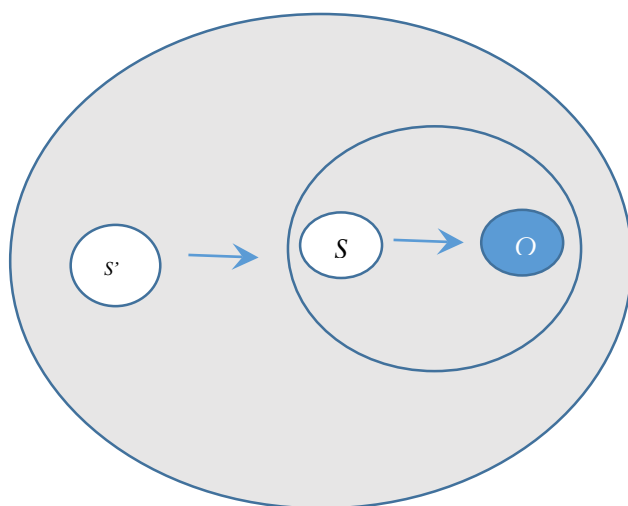
This final example is somewhat elusive: if one has previously experienced the striking of the clock, but now does not remember it, then we do not in fact have memory without prior experience. But perhaps what Russell intends us to notice is that this hypothesis is just that, a hypothesis. He may consider the fact that we see this as merely possible or probable leaves open the possibility that we have simply remembered what we didn't in fact previously experience. And hence would give us an actual example of memory without past experience.

Even if Russell goes as far as to think that memory occurs without prior sensation, this does not commit him to the view that we can now reach out in recall to past objects which have not affected us in ways liable to give rise to experience. Rather, Russell's picture seems to be that the causal history that leads to memory passes through the past causal impact of an object on us, but needn't pass through past perception or experience. Given that Russell thinks that this is the correct empirical theory of how memory comes about, he might suggest in response to Campbell's challenge that it is through knowledge of this theory that we come to formulate hypotheses about where we must have been in the past, and so come to sort or sift our memories into a temporal order, separating the true from the fanciful and misleading. I don't mean to suggest that this is enough to answer Campbell's challenge about the epistemic role of autobiographical memory – indeed in fact

I think there is much more to the challenge, than the brief words Campbell officially offers – but it shows that the point at issue here is a delicate one.

In the end it doesn't suit our purposes to pursue that question further. I am inclined with Evans and Campbell to suppose that we take the stepwise character of memory to be an essential aspect of at least some such memories. Moreover, I am inclined to agree that this guides us towards what we should find so evidently unacceptable in Russell's early theory. But it doesn't help us with the interpretative question about Russell himself, since there is no evidence that Russell was concerned that he had violated this intuitive condition on memory. That leaves us with the more general evaluative question, is this enough to show Russell's early theory of memory as manifestly absurd? I want to change tack for a moment and step outside of pure interpretation of Russell: grant that he denies that memory involves dependence on prior sensation, did he *have* to deny that? That is, does Russell's theory of acquaintance have the resources to accommodate the idea of dependent states of awareness or evidential support?

Arguably, it does. To see why, we need to look at Russell's initial discussion of the structure of experience. Russell suggests that we are aware of all of our experiences as present through introspection, and that it is through introspection that we acquire the concept of the present (and presumably the concept of the past) because the concept answers to the kind of acquaintance relation we stand in to objects in sensation, and which we are aware of when we are aware of having a sensation. Modifying slightly the diagrams that Russell employs at this stage of his discussion (TK 38-39), we have in introspection of experience the following structure:

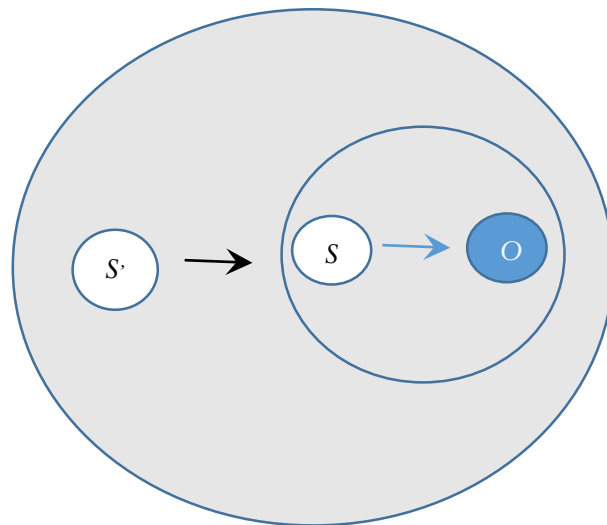


O is the current sense-datum. By TK, Russell no longer believes that one is acquainted with the ego, so S should not be taken to be the subject of the act of awareness, it is rather one's awareness that there is such a subject. (How this can be kept consistent with the idea that acquaintance relates one to complexes of objects and thereby to all component elements, is an issue that we should pass over in silence at this point. Note that Russell insists on p.39 that we have experience of the complex which is not knowledge of the fact. It really is unclear how Russell can offer a consistent story about introspection; but the problems that arise are not special to the case of memory.) Russell also does not want to assume that the subject who introspects (and so is ultimately the self properly speaking) need be strictly identical with the subject of the act of awareness. The relation that the outer ego bears to the experience is the relation of present acquaintance, and Russell is later happy to draw the consequence that this makes introspective awareness a mode of sensation. This structure holds



for all introspective acts of one's experience, regardless of which species of acquaintance the inner act exemplifies. But in the case of introspecting sensation the inner and outer relations of acquaintance coincide in the species of present acquaintance, and one is thereby aware of the simultaneity of the object with one's awareness of it.

Suppose now we allow that there is a distinctive mode of introspective awareness which relates us not to our current experiences, but to some of our past experiences. This would have the same general structure as that of the introspection Russell actually discusses with the exception that the outer relation of acquaintance would no longer be of the form present acquaintance, but should rather be an instance of past acquaintance, that relation which Russell in fact supposes we bear to past sense-data. We end up with the following diagram:



Here the outer relation of acquaintance contrasts with the inner one: the outer relation is one of past acquaintance, and the inner one is one of present acquaintance. If introspective experience could take this form then one would have past awareness of one's then present awareness of some sense-datum. Given the doctrines of infallibility that Russell propounds in both PP and TK, one's strict judgement of the complex that one is aware of introspectively should be infallible, and since it contains as a proper part the past sense-datum, one's judgement about that would be no less liable to error than on Russell's official theory. At the same time, the subject of such introspective experience would be guaranteed in virtue of the structure of the experience to be provided with the kind of evidence that Campbell takes us to exploit in our ordinary reasoning about memory. If this structure makes sense, Campbell's observation about the stepwise character of memory might give us reason to reject Russell's official doctrine, but it doesn't yet give us reason to reject the picture of memory as acquaintance.

But does this really make sense? The first point to note is that it violates a common intuition, one that Russell himself emphasises, that we remember things in the world and not just our own psychological states. However, this complaint is somewhat blunted when we are in the context of Russell's hyper-realism. Given that this is genuine acquaintance with a past episode of genuine acquaintance with a sense-datum, it is guaranteed that every term of the structure exist: in being aware of one's past experiential states, what one is thereby aware of is a complex involving a non-psychological entity, the original sense-datum. The earlier experience is logically dependent on the sense-datum of which it is an awareness. So it is unclear why awareness of this complex should not qualify one as thereby being aware of its immediate components, and thereby aware (now, through

introspection) of the past sense-datum. That one remembers one's earlier experience does not mean that all that one remembers is some psychological state of affairs. Such an acquaintance model does not confine the rememberer entirely within the bounds of his or her mind. And it was this that Grice complains of when he rejected this hypothesis about memory in his early discussion of personal identity (Grice, 1941).

The second matter to raise is that the view requires a modification of Russell's proposals about how to understand the concept of the present. As Russell writes in his official theory, it is one's introspective awareness of the presence of the acquaintance relation in sensation through which one comes to acquire the concept of the present and come to utilize the term 'now'. But that strictly won't be sufficient if there can be a case of introspectively remembered sensation. In introspectively remembering the sensation one will be aware of an instance of present acquaintance borne to the sense-datum, but that does not warrant a judgement that the sense-datum exists now. We need to index, at least implicitly, the awareness of the instance of presentness to one's present awareness of it, to conclude that an object is now. In fact, when we look at the terms of Russell's discussion he seems already to grant this implicitly, given his account of how we acquire the concepts of the past and present (73).

The third point to make is that parallel to the claim in Russell's official theory that one acquires the concept of the present only through introspection, through being aware of an instance of this relation in introspecting sensation, we should predict that one acquires the concept of the past only through a higher level of introspection, introspecting one's introspective remembering of past sensation. For on the stepwise revision of Russell, the past acquaintance relation is only ever borne to one's past experiences, and not to the proper parts of them, the sense-data that were then experienced.

The view sketched here really isn't Russell's, and the way in which past acquaintance enters the story is very different from that which Russell intends. But still, I think we learn something from this. The account we have sketched is not one that is immediately or obviously absurd, or no more so than the commitments that Russell has already undertaken in his official view. If there is something absurd in supposing that memory involves acquaintance, then, it cannot simply reside in the idea that while we ordinarily think of memory as having a stepwise character, a proponent of memory acquaintance must be committed to denying that.

Although the theory is consistent, as currently stated it offers a somewhat arbitrary restriction. If acquaintance is just the same in introspection and in sensation, and we can bear past acquaintance to our own experiences, why shouldn't we just bear the same relation to external objects?<sup>13</sup> This reconstruction represents a way in which memory might be stepwise, but it doesn't explain why it should go that way. As forceful as this worry is, it must be said that Campbell himself fails to explain why we should think of memory as stepwise, and even whether our commitment to this need go beyond the kind of causal reasoning that is quite consistent with Russell's official acquaintance theory. So the stepwise conception of memory may yet offer the explanation of absurdity in Russell's theory. But to do so we need to see what the deeper motivations might be for this conception.

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<sup>13</sup> As Robbie Williams reminded me, there is perhaps a more acute problem for Russell himself here. If acquaintance with particulars presupposes the possibility of atomic acquaintance with a simple particular, then this account violates this: for introspective recall will necessarily be complex. This reflects the fact that Russell's classification of introspection as sensation is not arbitrary in TK: were introspection a distinct example of acquaintance, its objects would all have to be complex.

Where, then, should we look for the key to Russell's original failure? In what follows I'll suggest we need to connect these concerns about the stepwise character of memory with Russell's views about imagination. Critics are right, I'll suggest, to suppose that Russell's hyper-realism about acts of mind is untenable. But the key case that illustrates this is imagination. The lessons of that carry over to memory because of close connections between memory and imagination; close connections which we've seen Russell is keen from PP on to deny.

### PART THREE: THE SNARK IS NO BOOJUM

8. As popular as the concerns of fallibility and independence remain, they are unable to explain a contrastive attitude towards memory and sense perception. On the other hand, the complaint that Russell conflates memory with sense perception has so far proved to be elusive. Now I suggest that the root of this latter problem lies in fact in Russell's own discussion, albeit in an aspect which reflects a more intractable problem. It is difficult to pin down the problem with Russell's account simply because Russell himself equivocates between two different conceptions or ambitions for the notion of acquaintance.

This problem is not one which develops after PP and during the drafting of TK or shortly after. It is an issue which is already to the forefront in PP, and repeated in the same terms in TK. Recall that in the original discussion of memory, Russell offers the following caveat:

There is some danger of confusion as to the nature of memory, owing to the fact that memory of an object is apt to be accompanied by an image of the object, and yet the image cannot be what constitutes memory. This is easily seen by merely noticing that the image is in the present, whereas what is remembered is known to be in the past... (PP 114-5)

Undoubtedly there are examples of acts of recall which fit Russell's description here. One of the sexist running gags in the television comedy *The Fall & Rise of Reginald Perrin* involved Perrin calling to mind an image of a hippopotamus whenever his mother-in-law was mentioned; represented in the show by cutting away to a short clip of a hippopotamus. If mention of this person could lead Perrin to visualize, no doubt the same might happen just on some occasion when he had a memory of her. Clearly the visual image of the hippopotamus would not constitute Perrin's remembering his mother-in-law, but just be an accompaniment. This simply exemplifies for us in popular form the association of ideas, common in philosophical discussion at least since Locke, and in popular culture at least since *Tristram Shandy*.

Of course one might not think of the image simply as accompanying the recall, but rather something which is constructed in the activity of trying to recall. HH Price suggested that the need to distinguish recall itself from any image is the alleged fact that one can always raise the question, 'But was it really like that?', and revise one's imagistic reminiscences in the light of further constructive endeavour (Price, 1953). But that we can contrast our grip on the past with some experiential element in some cases does not show that this holds in full generality. An equally familiar kind of example suggests otherwise. One of my early childhood memories is an occasion of resentment, on which I saw my elder siblings allowed to go out to the cinema on a cold winter's afternoon, while I, at three years old, was forced to stay in. When I recall the incident, aspects of my act of recall involve visually imagistic elements: looking out of our living room window onto snow and balaclava-ed heads; these are mixed together with some reminiscence of the keen sense of injustice in it all. I would not, in reflecting on the memories, draw a sharp distinction between on the one hand my memory of this event and its protagonists, and on the other the imagery which

arises in my mind. Rather in this kind of case, the imagistic component seems to constitute the remembering.

In support of this, we might note a move Hume first mooted in the appendix to the *Treatise*, drawn on by Ayer, Evans and Campbell in turn. Imagine a situation in which my elder brother or elder sister recount to me the tale of their wintry outing to the cinema and my frustration at being left behind. With such testimony as my only source, I might attempt to make things vivid to myself by visualizing the occasion, and imagining from the inside my reaction. So far, the character of my images is controlled by the information provided by my siblings, and I give the imagistic aspect of this event no authority. In contrast, as I do actually recall the occasion (one my siblings have never bothered to mention), it is precisely the details as I now visualize them in recall which guide me as to the scene, and I don't appear to have any access to how things then were independently of the imagistic aspects of recall.

Russell's warning seems to indicate that he is aware that there may be experiential aspects to acts of recall, just as there is an experiential dimension to sense perception and sensory imagination, but that for the case of memory there can be no distinctive experience which is itself a form of memory, as opposed to an accompaniment to memory. Anything which is experience-like in an act of recall must be assigned to present imagery. (Or, in the case of immediate memory in TK, to one's current sensation of present objects given their relations to the immediately past sensation.) And it is this which commits him to an ambivalent and equivocal attitude towards acquaintance.

A continual bone of contention among commentators is the question how empiricist we should construe Russell's understanding of acquaintance. On the one hand, one can think of acquaintance as a kind of achievement by the thinker, present in their relation to an object, that which is reflected in the fact that the entity in question can act as term in proposition or judgement. We know from the fact that the thinker is in this state of grace with respect to the entity that the thinker can frame thoughts in a peculiarly intimate and direct way about that entity. On this conception, to say of some entity, some term of judgement, that it is an object of acquaintance indicates that it can play a role in the thinker's thoughts. But the fact that the thinker is acquainted with the entity in itself tells us nothing about how this capacity has, or should have, come about. With such a *bookkeeping* notion of acquaintance, it makes little sense to suppose that there are different varieties of acquaintance. Acquaintance on this conception is simply the mark of a sufficient condition: that an entity or term is so related to the mind that the subject can employ it in thought. And there is no reason, given this conception, to suppose that acquaintance imposes any interesting constraints on what we can most immediately think about: that question is ultimately settled simply by discerning what entities get to be the terms of our judgements.

A more empiricist construal of Russell, though, takes acquaintance to reflect certain psychological or epistemological conditions which are more substantive in nature and which ground or explain the capacities for thought about the objects of acquaintance; and hence which offer a possible constraint on what things we can succeed in thinking about. Commentators who like to see Russell in these terms, emphasise how Russell introduces acquaintance in relation to sensory awareness and sense-data. Only some things in the world are perceptible. If the paradigm of acquaintance is sense perception, then we should anticipate that only some things and not others get to be objects of acquaintance.

Once we focus on the case of sensory awareness as a paradigm of acquaintance, it is easy to shift from the bookkeeping conception of acquaintance to this more substantive idea of acquaintance as that which might explain and so constrain our abilities to think of objects. It is a common sense thought that our sensory awareness of the world not only puts us in a position to

single out objects in thought, but also makes evident to us how this comes about. You hold up a piece of chalk, it is one whose character is replicated in thousands of lecture halls across campuses worldwide. Yet your audience, transfixed by the white cylinder between your fingers, gets to single out just that entity, among all the pieces of chalk there are. It is no surprise to anyone, in the context of that hall, why that particular piece of chalk should be the topic of conversation or thought: that one, in contrast to all of the other similar pieces, is the one which is salient to the room. It is that piece of chalk, and that alone, which is currently seen by the group and visually attended to by each of them. Vision both delivers up the object for thought and provides the awareness of the fact that it is the route of delivery. So when Russell takes sensory awareness to offer the paradigm of acquaintance, we may take him to assume that there is an explanatory story to be told of why one comes to think of one entity rather than others. And further support for the contention that Russell associates acquaintance with substantive psychological conditions comes from the fact which we have already noted that in TK Russell supposes that there are three different varieties of acquaintance: that which one bears in sensation, in immediate memory, and in imagination.

So which interpretation of acquaintance should we favour: the bookkeeping notion or the substantive, explanatory notion? The passage which we have just returned to from PP reflects how unstraightforward Russell's thoughts on these matters are. The example of sensation suggests that Russell thinks of acquaintance, at least in some cases, as having an explanatory role. But this seems to be denied when we turn to the case of memory. For, if the experiential is the mark of something explanatory in the account of acquaintance, then the discussion of memory becomes puzzling. According to Russell, in as much as there is anything distinctively experiential in my act of recall back to that bitter Camberley afternoon, that element is to be associated merely with present imagery accompanying my memory and not anything that constitutes the memory. The only guide that we have to the existence of acquaintance with the past is the fact that I can make judgements, and indeed apparently knowledgeable judgements, about the past event drawing solely on such episodes of recall and not routed through any extraneous path of information. But that doesn't underwrite the substantive or explanatory conception of acquaintance which would indicate how it is that memory puts us in a position to make such judgements. It offers us no more than the bookkeeping conception; it simply leads us back to the picture of acquaintance as a state of grace. Since Russell clearly does at times emphasise sensation as the key example of acquaintance, it leaves us with the puzzle the extent to which sensory awareness can be taken as a paradigm to be generalized across all other examples.

Indeed, the position in TK presents matters very starkly for us. If perception and imagination have something imagistic or experiential about them which memory lacks (since currently experienced imagery is assumed always to exist in the present), then we need just consider a case of first having sensation of some red patch, and the moments later just the immediate memory of it. The minimal difference according to Russell is that we have shifted from the subordinate acquaintance relation of present acquaintance with a present sense-datum to the subordinate acquaintance relation of past acquaintance with a past sense-datum. Experientially, though, the contrast is more severe. In the case of sensation, the red sense-datum helps characterize my current state of mind. I now enjoy a sense experience or sensation which we classify in terms of the object it has; and we all know what it is like to see a red patch. On the other hand, in the case of memory, assuming that this is a case of pure memory, with no additional imagery, the sense-datum in the past can play no role in determining the character of any experience I now have: the role of the past red sense-datum turns up solely in the judgement that I now make of its being past.

This leads us back to Pears's original final complaint, albeit by a different route. Given Russell's use of sensory awareness as a paradigm and his insistence that there are different varieties of acquaintance, we are led to assume that some explanatory purchase should be offered in each

case of acquaintance. When it comes to memory acquaintance, however, we are told that any experiential element belongs to imagery, and so not to memory itself. There is no psychological state to be picked out independent of acquaintance itself, and the consequence that has for the judgements we make. To the extent that there is anything independently identifiable as a kind of experience, Russell will treat that as a form of present experience, sensory acquaintance or imagery, and to that extent the account of memory must be false. In avoiding such falsifiability, though, Russell ends up with something entirely unexplanatory. That there is acquaintance with past objects or events is reflected solely in the terms of the judgements we make: that we have terms for the past entities and that we can judge of things that they are past. Moreover, to the extent that we are inclined to find any attraction in Russell's early theory, it is presumably because we can make some sense of the idea of memory experience. But for Russell this precisely must be something other than memory.

This may be enough to indicate why Russell's theory feels so unsatisfactory even if we cannot pin a specific absurdity on it.<sup>14</sup> But it immediately raises a further question: Why is Russell so convinced that there can be no genuine memory experience? Settling the consequences of this will lead our discussion to a close.

9. The first part of the answer to this question simply reflects something about Russell's hyper-realism: his insistence that all of this mental acts are examples of a dual relation between subject and some object. In TK Russell discusses and dismisses Meinong's contrast between content and object, commenting that there is no need to draw this distinction: every act of mind has an actual object. Now one might think that one phenomenon that speaks most strongly to the contrast between content and object is precisely the case of imagining. When I visualize a pink elephant in a tutu demonstrating the cancan, I have not thereby brought into existence more pachyderms, lovers of late nineteenth century popular dance, or even pink things. But, to characterize properly the manner in which I succeed in visualizing, just such things must be mentioned. This is just the hallmark of what Sartre (Sartre, 1991) was so fond at one point of calling presence in absence, and which the content/object distinction that Russell repudiates fits so nicely.

Russell insists that there is a difference in kind between the data of sense and images: the former are presented as in the present, as well as existing in the present; the latter exist in the present, but are not presented as having a determinate position in time. But this difference between them, Russell acknowledges, is not sufficient to ground our common understanding of images as mere fantasy, and so Russell appeals to much the same considerations as Berkeley, about the order and coherence of the objects of awareness, despite otherwise being utterly opposed to Berkeley's claim that the objects of awareness are in the mind (TK pp. 62-63).

Memory is not mere imagination, but Sartre's talk of presence in absence fits certain paradigms of memory experience as well as it does visualizing. When I recall the balaclavas of my siblings, it is not for me now as if I was literally seeing them (although on some accounts of PTSD, flashbacks do have the character of current experience). There is an experiential element to the memory, but as with its external objects, that experiential element belongs in my past and is not part of the present scene. It is this aspect of recall which makes Evans's talk of the recursive character

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<sup>14</sup> It must be said that this kind of problem is perhaps not unique to memory. After all, how exactly are we to characterize an explanatory conception of acquaintance with universals, logical objects or forms? Likewise, the assimilation of introspection to sensation does not seem to lead Russell to hypothesize that there are sense experiences of sense experiences: any imagistic character of introspection will be inherited from the act introspected. Here too, acquaintance sometimes comes with a further explanatory element, and sometimes fails to.

of memory and Campbell's label of the stepwise character so compelling. There is an aspect internal to remembering which takes us back to past perceptions. But Russell cannot acknowledge this, insisting that all experience be modelled on the dual relation of acquaintance and object, and (seemingly) insisting that all elements of imagistic experience (though not acquaintance in general) exist at the time of one's awareness.

Once we recognize that pastness affects the experiential elements of recall in this way, is that sufficient to lead us to reject Russell's theory of memory, even if we do not join him in assuming that there is no role for the content/object distinction? Once we acknowledge the commonality among memory recall and imagination, is that tantamount to saying that memory experience is representation and not acquaintance? That might be too quick. For we might think that memory still connects with the past in a way mere imagery could not.

This is suggested by Campbell in a later of discussion of memory and Russell than the one we discussed earlier. He returns to the topics of memory and acquaintance in his *Reference and Consciousness* and puts forward the following considerations for adopting what he calls a relational view of memory:

Since the use that we make of memory demonstratives depends in general on compilation of images, the correctness of your current use of the memory demonstrative will depend on whether you have compiled together perceptions that are indeed all perceptions of one and the same object. So your grasp of the memory demonstrative will depend on its being true that there is just one object from which your current memory derives. And that in general will not be something that can be guaranteed by the contents of your memory images or perceptual images alone – they could be exactly the same whether they derived from one object, a number of objects or no object at all... since the grasp of the memory demonstrative has to validate your using the demonstrative as if there is just one object in question, your having grasped the memory at all will depend on the existence and uniqueness of the thing from which your memory image derives. (*Reference & Consciousness*, p.191.)

In effect here Campbell claims that memory demonstrative judgements based on episodic recall are 'object-dependent' – a notion originally introduced by John McDowell and Evans: what is judged exists, or anyway is available to be entertained in judgment, only if the object judged about exists.<sup>15</sup> One might think there is something to his claims here, even if a certain reservation is called for too. First, one might be sceptical of the claims of object-dependence in general about judgements which are held to be 'object-involving', those for which the truth-conditions may involve reference to how things are with some specific object. Campbell's grounds here do not go beyond those favoured by McDowell and Evans, and their case is open to challenge.<sup>16</sup> For all that, one may concur in the case of memory, that there is something to the idea. Second, Campbell seems to insist that the genuineness of memory is conditional on there having been a genuine earlier perception which is to be recalled. That seems revisionary of our picture of memory. Sir Edmund Backhouse is generally held now in contempt for his unreliable memoirs of the last years of the Qing dynasty. But if his memoirs had purported to record not the events of the court, or even his own acts or deeds, but rather the strange course of delusions and hallucinations he had suffered, then the vicarious pleasure of his indiscretions would not be criticisable as a falsification. Surely one's autobiography could as much be based in one's experiences even if delusory, as in the actual events that occurred in the world around one.<sup>17</sup> And such a record of one's past life could be based in episodic recall. Campbell's take requires that one have access in memory only to past perception and not past hallucination. And that restriction needs stronger support than Campbell offers.

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<sup>15</sup> See (John McDowell, 1982), 1984) and (G. Evans, 1982) for initial formulations of the idea.

<sup>16</sup> For a useful recent, critical engagement with these arguments see (RM Sainsbury, 2005).

<sup>17</sup> Compare Anscombe's discussion of memories in (Anscombe, 1981) and 1974).

The lesson one might still wish to draw from Campbell is that where a would-be act of recall now does not trace back to any past experience one once enjoyed (leaving aside for the moment the question of quasi-memory), we are inclined to classify such experience as mere imagination, and not to treat it as a distinctive class of experiential state, some kind of seeming memory, to be contrasted with imagination. So the very status of an experiential state, an act of recall, as being memory at all is treated as contingent on some specific relation to a past event. And so this might be taken as grounds for still resisting a purely representational construal of experiential remembering, even once one has rejected Russell's hyper-realism as untenable.

How then might one seek to explain this element? Campbell seeks to reconstruct something in Russell's original account. Object-dependence, that the proposition exists only if its object does, or that one can think this way only if the object in question exists, is not equivalent to Russellian acquaintance, although they are closely related. Nonetheless, Campbell suggests that the object-dependence he argues for should lead us to adopt a relational picture of memory parallel to what he has said about sense perception:

A view which would accommodate all of these points would be one on which (a) your current experience, in memory, of the past object, reaches all the way to the past object itself. That is, just as on Russell's original theory, the memory includes the past object as a constituent, so that there is a sense in which the existence and uniqueness of the object referred to is apparent to the subject. Nonetheless, (b) there is a further aspect to your current experience of the past object, the 'way' in which the past object is given to you, which does provide you with the capacity for deep decentring to a past perception of the thing. (*loc cit.*)

Campbell earlier in the book endorses a form of naïve realism about sense perception (and with it, accepted a disjunctivism about sensory experience) according to which sensory awareness is a relation between perceiver and object perceived. In his initial presentation of the consequences of that account Campbell states the purpose of the view boldly so:

On a Relational View, the phenomenal character of your experience, as you look around the room, is constituted by the actual layout of the room itself: which particular objects are there, their intrinsic properties, such as colour and shape, and how they are arranged in relation to one another and to you. ((Campbell, 2002), p.116)

Now Campbell is explicit in his discussion that recall and memory experience contrast with sense perception, and with the character of sensory awareness. Although recall is an experience, and although its character reflects something of the corresponding perception, recall is a very different kind of experience from sense perception. Moreover, Campbell claims that a subject who is in a position to make memory judgements on the basis of their memories of past events must also have an appreciation of the fact that their current memories derive from earlier perceptions, the stepwise character of memory that in Campbell's earlier writings, he pressed as a problem for Russell.

For all that, Campbell's attempt in his newer account of autobiographical recall to recapitulate something of Russell's early theory appears to face the same problems and tensions that we have just highlighted in the discussion of Russell. On Campbell's view of sense experience, an object's having a constitutive role in experience correlates with an explanation of the phenomenal character of that experience. Campbell seeks to explain the distinctive character of sense experience by reference to the sensible features of the environmental objects which partly constitute the experience. So given that tight connection between having a constitute role in experience and that experience's phenomenal character, one might predict that the same should hold in the case of episodic recall. Campbell claims in the above passage that we understand the role of memory in guiding judgement only if we suppose that the object of recall is constitutive of the experience. So does Campbell also think that the object's being as it is thereby determines the character of recall?



Were that so, we would predict a commonality of experiential character across perception and memory. As we saw above, Russell seems to be threatened with this consequence, but he resists it. And does so twice over: making acquaintance in memory a different mode from acquaintance in sensation; and insisting on contrast between the experience-related aspects of recall from its genuinely memorial elements. Just as Russell resists this consequence, Campbell does too. Indeed there is something very close in what Campbell says to Russell's view: imagistic aspects of recall are a matter of current construction; memory of the past object controls this construction, but is to be contrasted with it. For Campbell, the experiential aspects of recall are referred to the currently constructed image, and the constitutive role of the objects recalled play a rather different role.

We don't have to settle here whether all episodic memory must involve the construction that Campbell supposes. Our concern is not so much with the need for constructed images in reminiscence as with the question whether recalled objects can have any experiential role over and above that provided by constructed images. Consider again my reminiscence of my siblings in knitted hoods in snow bound search of cinematic pleasure. On the story I suggested earlier, there is an aspect of this episode of reminiscence which we attribute to my much earlier perception of these events: my recall is determined in its character by what it earlier was like for me to see, and to respond to that occasion. On Campbell's story, however, anything imagistic here should be understood in terms of constructive images. The objects of recall are still constitutive of the episode, but their role is different.

And this introduces a contrast between the perceptual case and the reminiscence. In the former case, the constitutive role of objects of perception are sufficient to determine the character of the experiential episode which occurs; in the latter case, although the objects still have a constitutive role, no such consequence follows for the character of the episode, the occasion of reminiscing. According to Campbell recall is partly constituted by the objects of recall, just as in perception. If we have a memory directed on the same objects as a past perception, what resources do we have to explain the difference in experiential character between memory and perception?

Does this problem only arise because we have ignored one important element of Campbell's story? When Campbell wishes to sum up the relation between the character of sense experience and its objects, he appeals to the constitutive role objects play in sense perception (and which they also play in memory). But in the full dress version of his account of sensory awareness, Campbell introduces a further parameter, his second condition (b), the 'way' in which an object is given. According to Campbell, the way in which the object is given in memory is clearly different from that in which it is given in sense perception, and it is a requirement on a competent user of memory that he or she is sensitive to this contrast.

Can this third element really bear the additional explanatory weight? When Campbell discusses variations among sense experiences, the further things he has to say about how ways contribute to these differences appeals to perspective and the kinds of spatial relation we can bear to objects. But there seems a more fundamental difference than this in the contrast between sense perception and memory: although they can vary in contribution, the sensible characteristics of perceived objects explain the character of our sense experiences; the sensible characteristics of remembered objects play no such parallel role in the case of memory. And that is to say, that once we reject the most direct interpretation of how objects being constitutive explains the character of the two mental states, we are left with no explanation on hand, other than the formal similarity between the two: both involve constitution, while allowing for a difference in way.

No doubt there is more to be said here. But I suggest that we have got far enough to underline the moral which I wished to draw. Above, I suggested that we can find a partial source of Russell's difficulties in Russell's attitude in TK towards the Meinongian notion of content, and the

hyper-realism Russell embraces concerning imagery. For Russell, when one imagines a pink elephant, then there must actually be some instance of pink one is thereby acquainted with. The puzzles we have raised for Campbell, though, suggest that whatever the fundamental problem is here, it is more intractable than Russell's addiction to the act-object conception of mental acts. Although Campbell supposes that constructive imagery is part of episodic recall, and is to be contrasted with the memory of the objects which controls the construction, nothing in what Campbell writes about such imagery suggests that he would endorse a Russellian view of it. Campbell's images in memory are not like Russell's images, sensible objects located in the present whose temporal location is obscure to us.

Even without Russell's additional commitment, though, Campbell seems to face the same kind of double bind that Russell faced in his early theory of memory. On the one hand, there is a pressure to emphasise a commonality among sense perception and memory: in the case of both we need to think of the object as constitutive in the act of awareness. On the other hand, there is the need to recognize the evident phenomenological contrasts between sense perception and memory. So objects as perceived are taken to determine an aspect of sense experience which they fail to do in the case of recall. The two commitments come into tension when Campbell (and Russell before him) appeal to the common role of objects in perception and memory to explain what they take to be distinctive solely of perception.

If we want to respond positively to the intuitions which led to Russell's early theory we need to find a way of recognising the way in which memory experience should not purely be a relation, without simply falling back on a representational account. The difficulty of teasing out the absurdity of Russell's view that we have seen over the last few pages indicates how we, no more than Russell, have a clear overview of these matters. Many recognize the idea that there is something *prima facie* attractive about the idea that sense perception involves an experiential relation to the objects around us, even if philosophical reflection then teaches us how difficult it is to hold on to that idea. But the various commentators on Russell we looked at above suppose that there is something more problematic than that in extending the idea to the case of memory. There is an inarticulate and visceral rejection of the idea as somehow absurd. When we sought to make good their rejection of this picture, though, the most obvious lines of objection all turned out to be inadequate.

In the end, we have settled with the idea that there is nonetheless something right about their rejection. We cannot both hold on to the idea that the kind of experienced relation in sense perception makes for the character of our experiences, and suppose that memory involves just the same sort of relation. In as much as there is anything experiential in our recall of the past, the experiences in question are the past experiences we enjoyed, and not our current acts of recall. We need an account of current recall which somehow brings past perceptual acquaintance into the picture as well as the object recalled. Russell's early theory cannot accommodate this thought. And it is unclear how any purely relational account of memory awareness could.

Hume at the outset of the *Treatise* claims that we all clearly perceive the difference betwixt feeling and thinking before offering an account of that distinction that no one since can accept. Russell faces something like Hume's embarrassment in his early account of memory. He both needs memory to be like and to differ from sensory awareness. He has no satisfactory way of articulating either demand. The tradition of criticism of Russell indicates how easy it is for us to recognize that something has gone wrong in Russell's account. But our discussion of what is so problematic in Russell, and what could be done to avoid it underlines quite how elusive the fundamental problem is. Until we have a good overview of the problem, then we should acknowledge ourselves to be much in the same predicament as Hume and Russell.

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