On Bertrand Russell's logical atomism

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Abstract: The theory of logical atomism, introduced by Bertrand Russell, claims for a general correspondence between language and reality. As such, it seeks to describe reality via adopting an analysis of linguistic symbols. Yet, admitting an inevitable mediation of the mind, this theory has to submit to a certain subjectivity and appeal to some *undeniable data*. Opposing to an idealistic monism, Russell claims that one can never access reality unless it is divided into its constituents. However, showing a certain loyalty to a certain form of complexity, Russell's logical atomism is found at a crossroad. Also, showing an hesitation regarding what might be the last residue in the analysis, this theory calls for some refinements, some of which may bring to the ground some basic assumptions of this latter.

Keywords: logical atom, fact, symbol, analysis undeniable

Introduction

Philosophy is generally defined as "the study of the fundamental nature of knowledge, reality and existence" (Naseer 2012, 48). As such, it is a large discipline that encompasses a set of branches, one of which is that of Metaphysics. A major inquiry of this latter is the nature of reality (Ibid.). Different philosophical theories took place in an attempt to describe reality. One of these theories, in fact the one that had a profound influence on analytic philosophy in the first half of the 20th century is that of Russell's Logical Atomism (Stroll 2001). In 1918, Bertrand Russell gave a series of lectures entitled *The Philosophy of Logical Atomism* in which he explained his theory of logical atoms. Worthy of mention, Russell has clearly stated that many ideas included in the lectures were derived from his friend and former pupil Ludwig Wittgenstein (Russell 2010).

At first, Russell was greatly influenced by idealist philosophers especially Kant, Hegel, and Mr. Bradley (Pears 2010). These former

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claim that "thought is the fundamental reality, that there is no 'external' reality to which thought corresponds, and that the criterion of truth must therefore be found in the coherence of thoughts and not in their correspondence to 'things'" (Sofroniou 1999, 146). However, in 1898, and as a result of arguments with G. E. Moore, Russell broke with Idealism and adopted a realistic theory that asserts that there is a reality out there independent of our perception of it (Russell 2010). Russell also opposed the logical monism of idealists which holds that all things in existence belong to the same unified whole. Instead, he claims that:

> The logic which I shall advocate is atomistic, as opposed to the monistic logic of the people who more or less follow Hegel. When I say that my logic is atomistic, I mean that I share the common-sense belief that there are many separate things; I do not regard the apparent multiplicity of the world as consisting merely in phases and unreal divisions of a single indivisible Reality. (Russell 2010, 2)

Monism *vs* pluralism

Admitting a logical atomism, Russell (2010, 16) doesn't deny the existence of complex entities that "seem to be complex systems bound together into some kind of a unity, that sort of a unity that leads to the bestowal of a single appellation". He adds that it is "this sort of apparent unity which has very largely led to the philosophy of monism, and to the suggestion that the universe as a whole is a single complex entity" (Ibid., 16-17). However, he claims that he doesn't believe in complex entities of this kind. For his part, he was driven to pluralism instead. He relied in his theory on mathematical propositions that "could not be explained as even partial truths unless one admitted pluralism and the reality of relations" (Ibid., 127). Russell (2010, 145) explains, "My own decision in favour of pluralism and relations is taken on empirical grounds, after convincing myself that the a priori arguments to the contrary are invalid".

However, one might claim that the whole process of analysis is a "falsification, that when you analyse any given concrete whole you falsify it and that the results of analysis are not true" (Russell 2010, 2). Russell is certainly aware of the fact that when analysing, one cannot keep everything he had before the analysis. He explains:

> I do not mean to say, of course, and nobody would maintain, that when you

> have analysed you keep everything that you had before you analysed. If you did, you would never attain anything in analysing. (Russell 2010, 2)

Language *vs* reality

One of the main claims of Idealism states that the correspondence between language and reality can never be verified "because we can never apprehend reality as it is in itself, unaffected by the medium of thought. Perhaps what really happens is that we project our categorizations onto the world" (Pears 2010, viii). Hume (2003, 120) confirms, "the mind has a great propensity to spread itself on external objects". Russell (2010), for his part, states that there must be a general correspondence between language and reality. As such, we can analyse the nature of reality via the analysis of language. Pears (2010, viii) adds, "If reality did not in fact fall apart in the way in which we carve it up in thought and speech, everything that we think and say about it would be radically mistaken". Russell also adds that just like any other theory knowledge, one cannot avoid a certain subjectivity because one is

> not concerned simply with the question what is true of the world, but "What can I know of the world?" You always have to start any kind of argument from something which appears to you to be true; if it appears to you to be true, there is no more to be done. You cannot go outside yourself and consider abstractly whether the things that appear to you to be true are true; you may do this in a particular case, where one of your beliefs is changed in consequence of others among your beliefs. (Russell 2010, 3)

In other words, his theory of logical atomism has adopted certain undeniable data. He explains that "it does not follow from that that it is true, though it does follow that we shall all think it true—and that is as near to truth as we seem able to get" (Russell 2010, 3). It is the sort of method adopted by Descartes which states that:

> you should set to work to doubt things and retain only what you cannot doubt because of its clearness and distinctness, not because you are sure not to be induced into error, for there does not exist a method which will safeguard you against the possibility of error. The wish for perfect security is one of those snares we are always falling into, and is just as untenable in the realm of knowledge as in everything else. (Russell 2010, 6)

Logical atoms *vs* physical ones

Both physics and metaphysics are concerned with describing reality. However, while physics is intimately concerned with an empirical description that is based on experiment and observation, Metaphysics is mainly concerned with a theoretical description (Nekrašas 2015). In this context, Russell (2010, 3) states that his logical atomism is concerned with logical atoms not physical ones:

> The reason that I call my doctrine logical atomism is because the atoms that I wish to arrive at as the sort of last residue in analysis are logical atoms and not physical atoms. Some of them will be what I call "particulars"—such things as little patches of colour or sounds, momentary things—and some of them will be predicates or relations and so on. The point is that the atom I wish to arrive at is the atom of logical analysis, not the atom of physical analysis.

Not less important, although Russell (2010, 111) states that the logical atoms he claims for are supposed to be the ultimate simples, out of which the world is built, and which "have a kind of reality not belonging to anything else", he doesn't deny that the process of analysis can go further:

> When I speak of "simples", I ought to explain that I am speaking of something not experienced as such, but known only inferentially as the limit of analysis. It is quite possible that, by greater logical skill, the need for assuming them could be avoided. A logical language will not lead to error if its simple symbols (i.e. those not having any parts that are symbols, or any significant structure) all stand for objects of some one type, even if these objects are not simple. The only drawback to such a language is that it is incapable of dealing with anything simpler than the objects which it represents by simple symbols. (Russell 2010, 143)

Logical atoms *vs* propositions

Logical atoms (simples):

As stated above, logical atoms are referred to as 'simples'. A simple is a "simple" symbol "whose parts are not symbols" (Russell 2010, 21). In other words, a simple is an atom as it is indivisible and not supposed to be further analyzable. A simple can be of three sorts: a particular, a predicate, or a relation. Predicates and relations are referred to as 'universals' (Russell 1911b). However, referring back to Russell's

quote "the atoms ... will be what I call "particulars" ... predicates or relations and so on," it seems that the list might still include other simples that the analysis has not yet uncovered. Worthy of mention, throughout all his lectures, Russell has referred to but these three ones.

Particulars

As mentioned above, Russell (1911b) classifies simples or simple entities into two classes: 'particulars' and 'universals'. Both of which are not easy to define. So, intuitively, particulars can be defined as individuals, which exist in one place at a time. Russell (1911b, 23-24) clarifies that they "enter into complexes only as the subjects of predicates or the terms of relations, and, if they belong to the world of which we have experience, exist in time, and cannot occupy more than one place at one time in the space to which they belong". Russell also adds that particulars have the quality of self-subsistence i.e., each particular "has its being independently of any other and does not depend upon anything else for the logical possibility of its existence" (2010, 32). Proper names stand for particulars (Ibid.).

Universals:

A universal can be either a predicate or a relation in a proposition (Russell 2010). Russell adds that universals "do not exist in time, and have no relation to one place which they may not simultaneously have to another" (1911b, 24). Adjectives and verbs are examples of universals (Russell 2010).

Predicate

By a predicate, Russell (2010, 34) means "the word that is used to designate a quality such as red, white, square, round" in propositions such as 'this is red', 'that is high', 'the student is smart', etc.

Relation

Some universals refer to relations hold between two or more particulars (Russell 2010). For instance, particular 'A' *resembles* particular 'B', particular 'A' *is a part of* particular 'B', particular 'A' *is above* particular 'B', etc. Russell (2010, 35) adds that "A relation can never occur except as a relation, never as a subject". Relations are expressed by verbs and can be 'dyadic', 'triadic', 'tetradic', etc.

depending on the number of particulars it relates. A dyadic relation, for instance, is the one that relates two particulars. Russell also refers to quality (the predicate) as a form of 'monadic relation' as it concerns one particular (Ibid.).

Propositions:
A symbol is something that means something else. While 'simples' are simple symbols, propositions are complex ones. Russell states that a proposition is a complex symbol in the sense that it is composed of other symbols. He explains that "In a sentence containing several words, the several words are each symbols, and the sentence comprising them is therefore a complex symbol in that sense" (Russell 2010, 10). In other words,

> A proposition, one may say, is a sentence in the indicative, a sentence asserting something, not questioning or commanding or wishing. It may also be a sentence of that sort preceded by the word "that". For example, "That Socrates is alive", "That two and two are four", "That two and two are five", anything of that sort will be a proposition. (Russell 2010, 10)

As such, a proposition is composed of a particular having a certain quality, or standing in a certain relation with one or more particulars. As the analysis of reality via the analysis of language proceeds, Russell stresses that one should be careful not confuse between the symbol (being simple or complex) and what it symbolizes (the world).

Facts *vs* particulars
As stated above, a fact is what makes a proposition true or false. It is a complex entity. However, a particular isn't. Russell (2010, 7) states, "We express a fact, for example, when we say that a certain thing has a certain property, or that it has a certain relation to another thing; but the thing which has the property or the relation is not what I call a 'fact'" for a particular doesn't make any structure true or false.

Propositions *vs* names of particulars
In comparison with a name of a particular, a proposition is not a name for a fact. Russell (2010, 13) states that:

> A name can just name a particular, or, if it does not, it is not a name at all, it is a noise. It cannot be a name without having just that one particular relation of naming a certain thing, whereas a proposition does not cease to be a proposition if it is false. It has two ways, of being true and being false, which together correspond to the property of being a name.

In short, "Facts can be asserted or denied, but cannot be named" (Russell 2010, 141). Russell adds that the symbol for a fact (i.e., the proposition) is not a name.

Atomic propositions *vs* molecular propositions

There are atomic propositions and molecular ones. An atomic proposition is the one that contains one relation (a quality or a relation / a verb). A molecular proposition is a proposition built up out of atomic propositions related by a connective like: 'and', 'if', 'or', etc. (Russell 2010). This may include:

(1) I read books *and* I practice sport.
(2) *If* you put water on fire, it evaporates.
(3) I go by bus *or* I go by train.

Other two (or more)-verb propositions: beliefs, wishes, desires, etc.

In addition to atomic propositions and molecular propositions, there is another type of propositions which refers to beliefs, wishes, desires, and so forth where there is no connective but "one proposition containing two or more verbs" (Russell 2010, 37). For instance, in "'I believe Socrates is mortal.' You have there two verbs, 'believe' and 'is'. Or 'I wish I were immortal'" (Ibid., 38).

Knowledge by acquaintance *vs* knowledge by description:

According to Russell (2010), there are two sorts of knowledge: Knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description. Knowledge by acquaintance refers to knowledge by experience. It is an immediate and direct knowledge and needs no mediator. In other words, "We shall say that we have acquaintance with anything of which we are directly aware, without the intermediary of any process of inference or any knowledge of truths" (Russell 1912, 73). Russell (1911a) gives the example of sense-data (sensory experiences) like seeing a colour or hearing a noise. Russell also adds that knowledge by

acquaintance can take different forms including memory experiences, introspection, awareness of particulars and awareness of universals.

Also, one must distinguish between 'knowing a particular' and 'knowing the symbol that names the particular'. To clarify, to know a particular is to have access to all true propositions about that particular. Whereas, to know a symbol (the name of a particular) is to know what it stands for

> 'knowing a particular' merely means acquaintance with that particular and is presupposed in the understanding of any proposition in which that particular is mentioned, I think you also realize that you cannot take the view that the understanding of the name of the particular presupposes knowledge of all the propositions concerning that particular. (Russell 2010, 33)

Knowledge by description, is a propositional knowledge (it takes the form of a proposition) that is inferential, mediated, or indirect (Russell 1911a). In other words, when we think about an object under a certain description i.e., that is so-and so, our knowledge of it is a knowledge by description. Russell (2010, 79) states that knowledge by description is of two sorts: "'ambiguous descriptions', when we speak of 'a so-and-so', and what one may call 'definite descriptions', when we speak of 'the so-and-so' (in the singular)". A man, a cat, a tree are ambiguous descriptions. Whereas, 'the man in the black suit', 'the child who broke the toy', 'the house on the corner', etc. are definite descriptions. Russell adds that "It is not necessary for a description that it should describe an individual: it may describe a predicate or a relation or anything else." (Ibid., 80)

Acquaintance with a simple *vs* acquaintance with a proposition

In addition to the above claims about knowledge by acquaintance and knowledge by description, Russell claims for a distinction between acquaintance with a simple and acquaintance with a proposition. In relation to simples, he states that:

> To understand a name you must be acquainted with the particular of which it is a name, and you must know that it is the name of that particular. You do not, that is to say, have any suggestion of the form of a proposition, whereas in understanding a predicate you do...When you understand "red" it means

> that you understand propositions of the form that "x is red". So that the understanding of a predicate is something a little more complicated than the understanding of a name...Exactly the same applies to relations, and in fact all those things that are not particulars. (Russell 2010, 34)

However, understanding a proposition presupposes understanding the simples of which it is composed. Russell explains that:

> propositions concerning the particular are not necessary to be known in order that you may know what the particular itself is. It is rather the other way round. In order to understand a proposition in which the name of a particular occurs, you must already be acquainted with that particular. The acquaintance with the simpler is presupposed in the understanding of the more complex. (Russell 2010, 32-33)

Propositions *vs* facts

As stated above, Russell claims for a general correspondence between language and reality i.e., the world consists of facts which are expressed either truly or falsely in propositions. That is, "The world consists of facts: facts cannot strictly speaking be defined, but we can explain what we mean by saying that facts are what makes propositions true, or false" (Russell 1922, 10). He explains that:

> there are two propositions corresponding to each fact. Suppose it is a fact that Socrates is dead. You have two propositions: "Socrates is dead" and "Socrates is not dead". And those two propositions correspond to the same fact; there is one fact in the world which makes one true and one false. (Russell 2010, 13)

Also, facts are expressed by a whole sentence and "not by a single name like 'Socrates'. When a single word does come to express a fact, like 'fire' or 'wolf', it is always due to an unexpressed context, and the full expression of a fact will always involve a sentence" (Russell 2010, 7). Said another way, an expression like that of 'Fire!' is used, for instance, to stand for 'There is fire!' As already mentioned, single entities like 'Socrate', 'rain', 'sun' are not facts because they don't make a given form true or false.

Typology of facts

Facts are of different types. As mentioned above, facts can be classified by reference to the number of things they relate i.e., monadic fact (one thing), dyadic fact (two things), triadic fact (three things), etc. They can also be classified by reference to their theme into: astronomical facts, arithmetical facts, etc. There are also particular facts (this is white) and general facts (All men are equal). One can also talk about positive facts (Socrates was alive) and negative facts (Socrates is not alive) (Russell 2010). Moreover, Russell states that there are

> facts concerning particular things or particular qualities or relations, and, apart from them, the completely general facts of the sort that you have in logic, where there is no mention of any constituent whatever of the actual world, no mention of any particular thing or particular quality or particular relation. (Russell 2010, 9)

Russell gives the example of a logical proposition like "If one class is part of another, a term which is a member of the one is also a member of the other" (Russell 2010, 9) where there is no mention of a particular constituent. He also adds that "All those words that come in the statement of a pure logical proposition are words really belonging to syntax. They are words merely expressing form or connection, not mentioning any particular constituent of the proposition in which they occur" (Ibid.).

Truth-functions of propositions

For an atomic proposition, there is one fact that makes it 'true' or 'false'. For a molecular proposition like 'p and q', 'p or q', 'p and q', 'if p then q' (referring to 'p' and 'q' as atomic propositions), one should consider two facts instead, the one that makes 'a' true or false, and the other which makes 'q' true or false (Russell 2010). In other words, the truth or falsehood of a molecular proposition of this sort depends on the truth or falsehood of its constituents i.e., the atomic propositions. Russell refers to this operation as truth-functions of propositions. Worthy of mention, when both of them are either true or false (Russell refers to being compatible with each other), the molecular proposition is true if both are true, and false if both are false. The problem arises when they are incompatible with each other i.e.,

one is true and the other is false. In the table below, we have considered the truth-functions of a molecular proposition of the form 'p or q':

Table 1. Truth-functions of propositions

P	True	True	False	False
q	True	False	True	False
p or q	True	True	True	False

Source: Russell, 2010

Contrary to a molecular proposition whose truth value is a matter of truth-functions of its atomic propositions, the truth or falsehood of a two-verb proposition like that of a belief, a wish, or a desire is determined by one fact, not two. That is, "When you take an atomic proposition, or one of these propositions like "believing", when you take any proposition of that sort, there is just one fact which is pointed to by the proposition, pointed to either truly or falsely" (Russell 2010, 38). This can be explained by the fact that a proposition like that of "'I believe p' does not depend for its truth or falsehood, simply upon the truth or falsehood of p, since I believe some but not all true propositions and some but not all false propositions" (Russell 2010, 40). In other words, A may believe a proposition that is true. He may also believe a proposition that is false. In both cases, the truth value of the proposition is determined by the state of mind of 'A' towards the proposition p, and not by the truth value of p (Maslow 1961).

Positive facts *vs* negative facts

In his *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus*, Wittgenstein (1922) states that:

1.11 The world is determined by the facts, and by these being all the facts.

1.12 For the totality of facts determines both what is the case, and also all that is not the case.

As mentioned above, facts can be classified as positive facts and negative ones. Roughly speaking, a negative fact refers to the non-existence of a given fact. This seems somehow contradictory. However, to clarify what a negative fact stands for, we may refer to the proposition 'Socrates is alive' (Russell 2010). To verify this proposition, one checks the sum of facts in the world and finds that 'Socrates is not alive' which is a negative fact because Socrates doesn't

exist; he is dead. In other words, it is the absence of a fact like that of 'Socrates is alive' that gives raise to talking about negative facts. Wittgenstein states:

2.06 The existence of atomic facts we also call a positive fact, their non-existence a negative fact.

Criticism to Russell's work

In spite of being a very credible work, Russell's logical atomism can be criticized on different grounds:

- Russell states that an atomic fact describes one relation between constituents (simples). He also states that we cannot make inferences from atomic propositions, and inferences are only made from molecular propositions. However, when considering the atomic fact 'Socrates is dead', he stated that it "is two statements rolled into one: 'Socrates was alive' and 'Socrates is not alive'" (Russell 2010, 46). This seems contradictory.

- Claiming for "last residue in analysis", then giving an open list, "such things as little patches of colour or sounds, momentary things—and some of them will be predicates or relations and so on" (Russell 2010, 3) seems contradictory as well. It is perhaps why he has stated on several occasions that the analysis can go further.

- Since "lines of thought start from the assumption that there is a general correspondence between language and reality," (Pears 2010, xi) why not to consider other symbols in the linguistic system at both lower and global levels i.e., letters, sounds, morphemes, phonemes, phrases, paragraphs, whole texts, etc. This takes place as they refer to meaningful symbols. Also, one of the main premisses upon which the theory of logical atomism is set is that of *undeniable data* rather than pretended truth. As such, one cannot deny, for instance, that sounds and graphs are a part of the communicative system. A letter and a sound, for instance, are not only physical entities; they also stand for certain identities in the list of the alphabet as well as that of phonetic symbols. A sound can also stand as a subject in a linguistic structure. For instance, one can state: "/f/ is fricative". In this context, perhaps, we have to reconsider the meaning of 'meaningfulness' to englobe all cases, including; particulars/universals (concrete/abstract), simples/complexes, sounds/graphs, linguistic/non-linguistic behaviour, etc. We can also reconsider 'meaningfulness' in terms of categories, and perhaps sub-categories, and suggest new analytical tools (Elbah

2022). Russell seems to support such view, at least at the lower level, claiming that:

> that is, of course, a question that might be argued—whether when a thing is complex it is necessary that it should in analysis have constituents that are simple. I think it is perfectly possible to suppose that complex things are capable of analysis ad infinitum, and that you never reach the simple. I do not think it is true, but it is a thing that one might argue, certainly. I do myself think that complexes—I do not like to talk of complexes—are composed of simples, but I admit that that is a difficult argument, and it might be that analysis could go on forever. (Russell 2010, 30-31)

- Also, if we consider language to include linguistic behavior (words, phrases, morphemes, phonemes, etc.) and non-linguistic behavior (gestures, facial expressions, body language, etc.), it seems clear that Russell has considered but a part of linguistic reality, neglecting hence the non-linguistic one.

- Russell (2010, 24) states that "in a logically correct symbolism there will always be a certain fundamental identity of structure between a fact and the symbol for it; and that the complexity of the symbol corresponds very closely with the complexity of the facts". However, there exist some cases where a connective that relates atomic propositions is implied rather than stated (van Dijk 1977). For instance, one can state

(4) I have not revised. (so) I didn't succeed.

Also, some connectives, 'and' for instance, can stand for different interpretations in different contexts. Accordingly, being part of language communication, inferences and implications have to be dealt with at both local and global levels (e.g., compound and complex sentences, paragraphs, texts, etc.).

- Russell claims for an undeniable "correspondence between the ways in which we divide up reality in thought and speech and the ways in which it divides up in fact" (Pears 2010). He also states that for each fact, there are two propositions, one is true, the other is false. Now, what if people do not agree on what is true and what is false? How can we verify reality? In this context, one may refer to a socio-cognitive analysis of ideological meaning and non-ideological one (see Elbah 2019; van Dijk 1998). Clearly, only agreed-upon propositions are unproblematic. Ideological meanings and individual representations

are expected to show dissimilar descriptions of reality.

- Reality is understood as a set of facts. These former experience change throughout time. Now, how can we refer to and explain such change defined as the abolishing of certain facts and the rise of other ones?

- Just like some propositions relate to each other, facts also do. Hence, research should take into account such topic.

- There are facts with one quality, for instance; 'The dog is white' and others with two or more qualities, like; 'The dog is white and cute'. Obviously, they shouldn't be taken on the same footing.

- This might also be said about structures like 'the house is big' and 'the big house' both of which include 'a name of a particular' and 'a quality'. The only difference is that the first one includes a 'copula' (is). Now, the question to be asked is how do their analyses differ, especially as Russell refers to qualities (big in this context) as predicates, rather than referring to the whole structure 'is big'? Also, one may notice that while the first structure 'the house is big' stands for an atomic proposition, the second one can refer to but a part of a proposition.

- In everyday language use, one may use and encounter propositions like: 'Marry loves Mum and Dad' and 'Marry loves mum and she loves dad' that seem, at least at the semantic level, synonymous. Now, by reference to Russell's logical atomism, the first proposition that is an atomic one refers, truly or falsely, to ONE fact. However, the second one, that is a molecular proposition, refers to TWO facts. Obviously, the theory of logical atomism doesn't consider any convergence between facts whose propositions have similar interpretation.

- In the same context, one can also refer to facts which share some constituents. For instance, 'Socrates is mortal' and 'Aristotle is mortal' share the quality 'mortal'. Also, 'Socrates taught Plato', 'Socrates influenced Aristotle' are two facts about the same particular (Socrates). Also, some facts are related in a cause-effect relationship like: 'A kills B' and 'A goes to jail'. Some facts have a whole-part relationship (van Dijk 1977) like: 'A builds the house' and 'A builds the walls'. Some facts may lead to the disappearance or the rise of others. For instance, 'A discovers the internet' and 'B stops using the ordinary mail', or 'A discovers the internet' and 'B starts using the e-mail'. So, there must be a consideration of different forms in which different facts may relate to each other. In sum, instead of defining the world as a set of

facts, it is necessary to redefine it as a set of directly or indirectly-related facts.

- Russell claims that only expressions like those of demonstratives 'this' and 'that' that denote directly particulars with which we are acquainted. Yet, we can also refer to cases where one may state: 'Ahmed is my friend', pointing at the person (Ahmed) who is next to him.

- Russell states that a particular is self-subsistent. That is, "each particular has its being independently of any other and does not depend upon anything else for the logical possibility of its existence" (Russell 2010, 32). He also adds that "When you have acquaintance with a particular, you understand that particular itself quite fully, independently of the fact that there are a great many propositions about it that you do not know" (Ibid.). As such, one may wonder about Russell's understanding of the term 'knowing' as one usually think of 'knowing' in terms of qualities and possible relations an item may have with other ones. It is this understanding of the term (particular) that enables us to construct, process, and claim for the truth or falsity of different propositions. For instance, it is knowing that a particular like that of 'woman' refers to a female mammal that makes it possible to say: 'The woman gave birth to a baby'. Also, in relation to relations among particulars, Pears (2010, xxiv) claims that "One particular, A, might depend on another particular, α, for the logical possibility of its existence, even though α was not a component of A. For example, A might be a Rembrandt and α the painter himself."

- Classifying facts into positive and negative ones, then referring to that of "Socrates is dead' as partially negative is too much confusing. In other words, what does partial-negativeness refer to?

- Russell states that for each fact, there are two propositions. In fact, there exist cases where more than two propositions refer truly or falsely to one given fact. Consider for instance, that 'The chalk is white' is a fact. Referring to Russell's logical atomism, this fact makes the proposition (a) a true proposition and (b) a wrong one.

a- The chalk is white.
b- The chalk is not white.

However, there exist other propositions like 'the chalk is green', 'the chalk is blue', 'the chalk is yellow', etc. all of which are inferred from that of 'The chalk is not white', and refer falsely to the above fact. As such, one should refer to propositions (a) and (b) as well as those

inferred from them.

- Positive facts (facts that exist), and negative ones (facts that do not exist) can be applied to propositions about the present and the past only. As such, Russell neglects those propositions where one speculates about the future. For instance, for a proposition like 'Man will discover a cure for cancer', the truth value is unknown yet. For now, it is neither true nor false as it corresponds to a reality that is not attained yet. In other words, not all propositions fall into a category of true propositions or false ones; there exist a category of propositions whose truth value is still unknown.

- Russell (2010, 9) refers to a logical proposition like "If one class is part of another, a term which is a member of the one is also a member of the other" as a general fact where "there is no mention of any constituent whatever of the actual world, no mention of any particular thing or particular quality or particular relation". Truly, there is no mention of a particular thing. Yet, a relation of '*being a member of*' is clearly stated.

Conclusion

To conclude, the theory of logical atomism is a metaphysical theory that examines the link between language and reality. Its main aim is to uncover reality via the medium of language. As such, it is of a great interest to discourse analysts whose task is to uncover implied and stated meanings (reality) interwoven with linguistic and the non-linguistic behaviors. As such, integrating some assumptions of this theory within the field of discourse studies after suggesting, of course, some refinements that take into account the aforementioned points, we do expect to achieve great results in the field of discourse analysis.

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