How Does Strawson Unify Epistemology, Ontology and Logic?

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Abstract
Strawson's conception of analysis as a 'connective linguistic analysis' makes it possible for him to achieve an indefinitely large range of ideas or concepts among them are certain numbers of fundamental, general and pervasive concepts or concept-types which not only are *pre-theoretical* or *ahistorical*, but also together constitute *a structural framework* only within which logic, ontology and epistemology is possible. He takes it as a foundation for this conclusion that logic, ontology and epistemology are three aspects of one unified enquiry (or trio) and strengthens it by this assertion that we can understand this unity through considering the fundamental operation of our language. In this paper, after tracing the line of development of Strawson's philosophical idea of the trio and specifying the fundamental operation of our language (or the common thread which makes this unity possible), we stipulate that it is by means of 'connective linguistic analysis' that Strawson was able to unify epistemology, ontology and logic.

Keywords: Strawson, Logic, Epistemology, Ontology, Trio, Connective Linguistic Analysis.

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Introduction

In his enterprising work *Analysis and Metaphysics*, P.F. Strawson (1919-2006) explicitly attempts to make unity between epistemology, ontology and logic. He discovers a single thread running in and through these three branches of philosophy. On his view, the epistemological problem of the distinction between sensibility and understanding, the ontological problem about the distinction between particular and universal, and the logical problem regarding the distinction between reference and predication (or between subject and predicate) are at root one and the same problem viewed from different perspectives.

That how he links these concepts can be best understood in his conception of the task of analytic philosophy as a 'connective linguistic analysis''. Such analysis, in opposition to 'reductive atomistic analysis', does not bound itself only to (formal) logical structure of language or logically independent elementary propositions and its simple-unanalyzable names or concepts, but by setting judgment (which is formed by combination of reference and predication) as the most fundamental operation of ordinary speech or (if we use our analogy) as a single thread running in and through above-mentioned trio, and thereby by asking about the objects of that operation, it makes way for formation of unity between parts of that trio (i.e. between epistemology, ontology and logic).

To give an explanatory note, it should be said that every judgment, according to Strawson, not only consists of a particular individual referred to by the subject (or singular term) and a general concept referred to by the predicate (or general term), but also does cognitively assert that the individual possesses the general characteristic referred to by the predicate. Thus, concepts only by being related to particulars of possible experience become cognitively significant. So, it is only by being ascribed to subjects that predicates become logically significant. And finally, universals only by being related to particulars become objectively real.

In this paper, after tracing the line of development of Strawson's philosophical idea of the trio in his works and specifying the central concern of that trio, we stipulate that it is by means of 'connective linguistic analysis' that Strawson managed to unify epistemology, ontology and logic. Therefore, to understand how this unity is established, we must take 'connective linguistic analysis' and its difference with another conceptions of analysis within analytic philosophy seriously.

The Nature of Strawson's Philosophical Trio

Strawson's attempt to establish explanatory links between epistemology, ontology and logic is not a matter that has occurred only in some of his later works (especially

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1. This is a favorite name that Strawson in (chapter 2) of *Analysis and Metaphysics* ascribed to his own idea of analysis and distinguished it from Russell's idea of analysis as 'reductive atomistic analysis'. For detailed studies, see: Sultana 2006, chapter 2; and Hacker 1998, 3-34.

in *Analysis and Metaphysics*), but it is a general aim (or idea) prevailing in all of his writings, from 'On Referring' to *Entity and Identity*. In other words, he has evolved and revealed his main intention step by step and in every step has opened the way to another step.

The first step begins by criticizing and replacing Russell's famous theory of definite descriptions. In 'On Referring', which its principal debate is the nature of reference, Strawson criticizes Russell's conception of reference particularly when it confronts definite descriptions, that is, phrases beginning with the definite article followed by a noun, qualified or unqualified, in the singular (e.g. 'the table', 'the old man' and 'the king of France') (Strawson, 1950: 320-21). According to Russell's theory, a sentence of the form 'The **F** is **G**' is equivalent to, or is to be analyzed as, 'there is an **F**, and only one **F**, and it is **G**'[2]. Hence, he believes that by resorting to this kind of analysis (i.e. by representing the real logical form of sentences), we can resolve certain problems about such phrases.[3] It is in this regard that Strawson combats Russell and argues that Russell's theory misrepresents the true character and function of those phrases by neglecting pragmatic, contextual and communicative aspects of their use (Ibid, 336). Here, there is no space to go into details of Strawson's criticism, but we can paraphrase his critical attitude as: if the last aim of analysis of the objects of our references or the subjects of our predications is precisely to consider their existence, and if we confirm that logic (and grammar) begets ontology, then Russell's analysis cannot display (or represent) the true character or function of these phrases and therefore his logic cannot beget ontology correctly, since it takes objects of our references imperfectly (i.e. without regarding them in the large context of the world).[4]

It is through this attitude that Strawson by formalizing it in *Introduction to Logical Theory* pinpoints the limits and defects of modern formal logic (and Russell, in contrary, attempts to authenticate it absolutely). For, there, by criticizing the unfounded pretension of formal logic, he asserts that formal logic is not a sufficient instrument for revealing clearly all the most general structural features of language as we use it. Rather, it is a sort of idealized abstraction, revealing certain fundamental structural features of discourse and hence of thought, but abstracting from, or leaving out, others (Strawson, 1952: 53-6). Then, his main question is to determine how far the devices of artificial formal logic provide an accurate account of the significance of the expressions in natural language. Since, on his view, natural language expressions have a meaning because their use is governed by various context-relative and imprecise rules. Therefore, the system that formal logicians advocate gives neither an exhaustive nor a totally accurate account of the complexities of natural language. For this reason, he endorses the general slogan that

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2. For this reason, David Kaplan called Russell's theory of description as Russell's fundamental *equivalence*. In this regard, see: Kaplan 1970.

3. See: Russell 1905, 479-93.

4. For more details, see: Strawson 1950.

'ordinary expressions have no exact and systematic logic' (Strawson, 1952: 57). This means that the utility of formal logic in its application to ordinary speech does not imply that the meaning of ordinary language is captured by the semantics of standard formal system.

Strawson expands this attitude in *individuals*, in order to draw ontological and (sometimes) epistemological results from that. And this is a task of second step. At this stage, after further remarking upon the importance of reference and predication as the basic operation of ordinary language, he attempts to describe the ontological implications of ordinary speech (i.e. the referentially basic subject matter of our speech or thought about the world). On his view, nothing could be more fundamental in speech or thought than the operation of picking out some individual item—referring to it by name or description—and saying or thinking something about it—predicating something of it (Strawson, 1959: 18). Then, it can be argued that:

(1) The most primitive or fundamental objects of reference, or subjects of predication are spatio-temporal individuals of a relatively substantial and relatively enduring sort (i.e. people, animals and inanimate material objects). These spatio-temporal individuals are, generally, divided into two particulars: (a) *bodies* as enduring, perceptible and reidentifiable entities, and (b) *persons* as enduring entities with both material and psychological features.

(2) What we characteristically say about such individuals, that is, what we predicate of them, is their possessing certain general qualities or properties and their belonging to certain general kinds, etc.[5]

Remarking on these two points, we can understand Strawson's means of the conclusion that 'we identify particulars in speech' (Strawson, 1959: 5). In the meantime, material *bodies* are very important. They are 'basic particulars from the view point of identification'. When a speaker refers to an object and the audience is able to identify the object being referred to, he is identifying a particular object for an audience. Sometimes, the identifiability of some kinds of particular may be dependent upon the identifiability of other kinds. In any case, if one asks 'how identification of particulars is possible?' or 'what are the general conditions of particular-identification?' the answer will be that there is a spatio-temporal framework within which all kinds of particular-identification are possible. In fact, our knowledge of particulars forms a unified structure of a spatio-temporal character. A condition of our possessing such a scheme of knowledge of particulars is the ability to reidentify particulars, because the intelligibility of locating items in the spatio-temporal framework requires relatively abiding structures of reidentifiable items.

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5. These two points are the extraction of (the first and third sections) of the part 1 of *individuals*. To keep away from repetitive references, I have preferred that I use reference wherever I find it necessary. For more details, then, the reader is referred to those sections.

Hence, to talk of objects within this framework is inconsistent with skepticism about reidentification.[6]

Material *bodies* are not the only particulars we identify them in speech. Sometimes, the subjects of our predications or the objects of our references are *persons* (i.e. enduring entities with both physical and psychological features). At this time, when we are asked 'why do we ascribe states of consciousness to anything?' and 'why do we ascribe them to the same thing to which we ascribe physical predicates?' the answer will be that because the concept of *person* is a primitive concept in our language, it is a primitive practice, then, to recognize oneself and others as objects with both physical and psychological characteristics (Strawson, 1959: 101-?). From this Strawson draws the epistemological conclusion that at least for some psychological properties the ways of telling 'that they apply to others must constitute logically adequate kinds of criteria' (Ibid, 105).

On this account, Strawson reacts against two theories that did not accept primitiveness of the concept of *person*, since, on both theories, it is only a linguistic illusion that both kinds of predicate are properly ascribed to one and the same thing (Ibid, 94):

The first of these two he calls the 'no-ownership' or 'no-subject' theory of the self. According to it, which pertains to Wittgenstein[7] and Schlick,[8] consciousness is not really ascribed to any subject at all. Strawson's reaction against this account is that it is incoherent because it needs to explain how conscious states are associated with *bodies*, and it can do that only by picking out a range of experiences as being someone's.

The second of these two he calls 'Cartesian' theory of the self. According to this view, which is generally known as 'Cartesian dualism', we do not ascribe the two sorts of properties to the same thing; rather we ascribe the physical sort to our body and the mental sort to ourselves (i.e. a non-physical ego or substance). When we speak, then, of a *person*, we are really referring to one or both of two distinct substances, two substances of different types, each of which has its own appropriate types of states and properties; and none of the properties or states of either can be a property or state of the other. States of consciousness belong to one of these substances and not to the other.

Strawson detects one problem for this Cartesian philosopher who thinks he can identify states of consciousness within himself before identifying them in others. The problem Strawson sees is this: if one ascribes mental predicates to oneself as the result of inward reflection, it looks difficult—if not impossible—to distinguish one's own mental experiences from those of another, because,

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6. This paragraph is the summary of (first section) of *individuals*. For more details, see: Strawson 1959, 15-58.

7. For further details on Wittgenstein's 'no-ownership' theory, see: Moore 1955.

8. Also, Schlick's 'no-ownership' theory is found in: Schlick 1949.

> [I]t is a necessary condition of one's ascribing states of consciousness, experiences, to oneself, in the way that one does, that one should also ascribe them, or be prepared to ascribe them, to others who are not oneself. (Strawson, 1959: 99)

It means that until we can identify several different individual consciousnesses, it is hard to see how we can speak of any individual consciousness. Therefore, Strawson's reaction against the Cartesian view (and its problem) is that we must start not with the individual subject of consciousness but with the whole *person*, since:

> What I mean by the concept of a *person* is the concept of a type of entity such that both predicates ascribing states of consciousness and predicates ascribing corporeal characteristics, a physical situation, etc. are equally applicable to a single individual of that single type. (Strawson, 1959: 101-102)

Hence, the concept of a *person* with which one begins, Strawson says, must be taken to be a 'primary concept' or 'logically prior' to that of an individual consciousness. Accepting the primitiveness of the concept of a *person* in our conceptual structure makes it possible for him to ascribe psychological predicates both to himself and to others. It implies that where we are identifying a *person* we are identifying something that has a body as well as states of consciousness. Also, when we ascribe states of consciousness to another *person* we do this on the basis of our observation of other *person*'s behavior. With the exception that when one ascribes mental concepts to oneself one does not observe one's behavior. This is simply characteristic of our mental concepts. In fact, our mental concepts are such as to apply to others on the basis of the observation of behavior while being such as to apply to oneself without the observation of any behavior.[9]

Strawson's investigation in *individuals*, thereby, exhibits some general and structural features of the conceptual scheme in terms of which we can speak and think about particular things (i.e. material bodies and ourselves). These are general conditions of possibility of experience of the world and by means of which we can think about or predicate of particulars. Indeed, we think of the world as containing particular things some of which (as material *bodies*) are independent of ourselves

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9. Strawson's concept of *person* has an important role in resolving the conceptual skepticism or the conceptual problem of other minds. Conceptual skepticism, on his account, is precluded once we recognize that the logically dominant concept is not that of a mind but that of a *person*. While Cartesian philosophy introduce a logical gap between the mind and its body, Strawson is beginning with a whole (i.e. a *person*) to which different types of predicate are applicable. Presenting his objection against Cartesian view, he says: 'for really the history of a human being is not the history of one two-sided thing; it is the history of two one-sided things' (Strawson, 1974a: 170). Following it, he writes: 'The difference between the Cartesian and his opponent (i.e. himself) is a difference of view about the relation between the concept of a person on the one hand and the concept of a person's mind on the other. The anti-Cartesian holds that the concept of a person's mind has a secondary or dependent status' (Ibid, 171).

   For more details in this regard and to compare Strawson's view with Wittgenstein's, Davidson's and Nagel's, see: Avramides 2001, 217-253.

and some others (as ourselves) are *persons* which both kinds of predicate (psychological and physical) can be ascribed to them; we think of the world's history as made up of particular episodes in which we may or may not have a part; each of us distinguishes between himself and states of himself on the one hand, and what is not himself or state of himself on the other; and we think of these particular things and events as included in the topics of our common discourse, as things about which we can talk to each other. These are remarks about the way we think of the world, about our conceptual scheme. A more recognizably philosophical, though no clearer, way of expressing them would be to say that our ontology comprises objective particulars. It may comprise much else besides. And for this reason, after explaining the general conditions of the possibility of identifying reference to particulars (or after explaining how we predicate universals of particulars as subjects), Strawson goes on to continue that the scope of ontology is not limited only to particulars, but one can propagate the sphere of ontology to universals, too. He does so, in fact, by explaining the basic traditional association or asymmetry[10] of the logical/grammatical distinction of reference and predication or subject and predicate with the ontological distinction of particular and universal.[11] Accordingly, universals may be objects of our reference or subjects of our predication, as well as particulars; though particulars can never fill the predicate role:

> Particulars, like John, and universals, like being married to John, can all be referred to,
> by the use of referring expressions; but only universals, and universals-cum-particulars,

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10. Some philosophers, like Ramsey, do not agree with the subject-predicate distinction, and therefore emphatically deny the reality of traditional association of the subject-predicate distinction with particular-universal distinction. In this regard, see: Ramsey 2007, 116-117.

11. Strawson's full theory in this regard is given in *subject and predicate in logic and grammar* (1974b). There, Strawson starts with a series of what might be called marks of the subject/predicate distinction. Having referred to some of these marks, for example: (1) predicates have a number of places, whereas subject expressions do not (2) predicates can be negated and genuinely compounded, whereas subject expressions cannot, and (3) subject expressions are open to quantification, whereas predicates are not, he asserted that these marks need to be explained and do not give the basic distinction. He proposed to explain them by linking the logico-grammatical distinction to an ontological one, namely, the distinction between particulars and universals. With this went the idea that universals form structures; thus, if an object falls under one classification it follows there are others under which it does not fall; or, if it falls under one classification it follows there are others under which it does fall (Snowdon, 2001: 344).
   This is the summation of Snowdon's description of Strawson's idea about asymmetry of the logical/grammatical distinction of reference and predication or subject and predicate with the ontological distinction of particular and universal in *subject and predicate in logic and grammar*. For more details, see: Strawson 1974b.

> never particulars alone, can be predicated, by means of predicative expressions. (Strawson, 1959: 138)

Hence, if we allow the connection between being an object of reference and being an entity, and if we accept the logical and ontological connection (or asymmetry), we broaden the domain of entities to include abstract or intensional entities: qualities, properties, kinds, types, numbers, sets, relations, etc. (Ibid, 227). Consequently, we have an endless variety of categories of individuals other than particulars and, thereby, we cannot neglect their realistic status, because 'practical recognition of particular things entails practical recognition of general things' (Strawson, 1979: 3). In other words, we do in practice readily identify particulars on the basis of our ability to identify general features. To deny theoretical ontic status to the general features would therefore compel us to retract theoretical commitment from perceived particulars as well. Then,

> Those philosophers who are suspicious of general properties, sorts, relations and types usually have no doubts about the reality of people, physical objects, datable events and tokens. This partiality of theirs has sometimes seemed paradoxical. For it has seemed unclear how they, or anyone else, could distinguish and identify the particular individuals they so readily accept unless they could distinguish and identify some at least, of the general sorts or kinds to which those individuals belong and some, at least, of the general features that characterize them. (Ibid)

After illustrating the connection between logic and ontology, it remains to highlight their connection with another (i.e. epistemological side of the trio). And Strawson attempts to elaborate it in the last step. But, it is not a matter that is due to happen now abruptly, because the preliminary steps have been taken already, especially, at the previous stage (i.e. in *individuals*) where he found himself frequently enquiring into the conditions that make possible certain kinds of knowledge and experience. As we reminded, the most part of Strawson's *Individuals*, which certainly is Kantian in tone, gave the impression of relying on transcendental arguments[12] to establish the absurdity or illegitimacy of various kinds of skepticism.

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12. Transcendental arguments are non-empirical and anti-skeptical arguments focusing on necessary enabling conditions either of coherent experience or the possession or employment of some kind of knowledge or cognitive ability, where the opponent is not in a position to question the fact of this experience, knowledge, or cognitive ability, and where the revealed preconditions include what the opponent questions. Kant and Strawson use of it included arguments aimed at refuting epistemic skepticism, as well as arguments with the more fundamental purpose of showing the legitimacy of the application of certain concepts—in particular those of substance and cause—to experience. The best material concerning transcendental arguments is found in: Stroud 2000.

The difference between Strawson and Kant becomes clear when we remember that Strawson never attempts to explain those necessary conditions (that described by transcendental arguments) through transcendental idealism such as Kant's (Strawson, 1966: 44).

For in that book, by 'describing the actual structure of our thought about the world',[13] he demonstrated that the skeptic's doubts about objective particulars (i.e. material *bodies* and *persons*) are illegitimate, since they amount to a rejection of some of the necessary conditions of the existence of the conceptual scheme within which alone such doubts make sense (Strawson, 1959: 35). Now, Strawson resumes pursuit of that enquiry (especially, in *The Bounds of Sense* and also in *Skepticism and Naturalism*) this time more to draw epistemological implications (or results) of his attitude. Therefore, *The Bounds of Sense*, which is again certainly Kantian in tone,[14] does not attempt to provide an analysis of knowledge, but the main aim is to describe the necessary conditions of possibility of experience and its limits in order to make a response to skepticism. In this regard, he says,

> It is possible to imagine kinds of world very different from the world as we know it. It is possible to describe types of experience very different from the experience we actually have. But not any purported and grammatically permissible description of a possible kind of experience would be a truly intelligible description. There are limits to what we can conceive of, or make intelligible to ourselves, as a possible general structure of experience. The investigation of these limits, the investigation of the set of ideas which forms the limiting framework of all our thought about the world and experience of the world, is, evidently, an important and interesting philosophical undertaking. No philosopher has made a more strenuous attempt on it than Kant. (Strawson, 1966: 15)

It is obvious that Strawson seeks and thinks he finds, in Kant and in his own investigation, 'statable necessary conditions of the possibility of experience in general', or 'what is necessarily involved in any conception of experience which we can make intelligible to ourselves' (Strawson, 1966: 120-21). But, as is well known, Kant by assigning 'synthetic *a priori*' to empirical judgments as their distinctive character, explained empirical knowledge by means of human subjective sources (i.e. psychologically). This connection between synthetic *a priori* knowledge and the subjective source of that knowledge is well expressed by Kant in the below sentence:

> For this unity of nature has to be a necessary one, that is, has to be an *a priori* certain unity of the connection of appearances; and such synthetic unity could not be established *a priori* if there were not subjective grounds of such unity contained *a priori* in the original cognitive powers of our mind, and if these subjective conditions,

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13. The interpretation of the *Critique of Pure Reason* is not an easy matter. Then, Strawson before making an effort to interpret it in *The Bounds of Sense* (which is an essay on Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*) has brought about the means of it in *Individuals* subtitled by 'An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics'. Thereby, he appropriates or interprets the *Critique of Pure Reason* through descriptive metaphysics which is content to describe (and not explain) the actual structure of our thought about the world.

14. Strictly speaking, it must be said that not only *The Bounds of Sense* but also *Subject and predicate in logic and grammar* is Kantian in tone, because even in the later work he appealed implicitly to the Kantian idea of certain categories of human thought and forms of human experience.

inasmuch as they are the grounds of the possibility of knowledge any object whatsoever in experience, were not at the same time objectively valid. (Kant, 1964: 147)

Strawson evaluates this part of Kant's philosophy as negative. He believes that Kant traced the satisfaction of such necessary conditions to subjective sources, that is, human cognitive constitution (faculties) which are matters for empirical or scientific, not philosophical, investigation. And this, according to him, opens the way to transcendental idealism (Strawson, 1966: 15). For this reason, having scaled down the Kantian enterprise by dismissing the 'complications' (Ibid, 170), the 'incoherences' (Ibid, 39), the 'phantasmagoric quality' (Ibid, 235) and even 'doctrinal fantasies' (Ibid, 51) of transcendental idealism,[15] he appropriated transcendental arguments, which the main programme of them is to determine the fundamental general structure of any conception of experience such as we can make intelligible to ourselves by descriptive metaphysics. What attracted Strawson to this Kantian transcendental argument were that: (1) it discovered what we find to be necessarily involved in any coherent conception of experience; (2) it showed that Experience is necessarily experience of objects that hold irrespective of particular experience of them, and (3)

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15. Strawson's attacks on the incoherences of transcendental idealism can be presented as follow:

   1. Supersensible things exist.

   2. Supersensible things are unknowable.

   3. One knows [a priori] that experience is the outcome of complex A-relations that hold in the sphere of things in themselves. Supersensible things are the terms of the A-relations. They are the objects that appear in the appearances.

   4. Therefore, one knows that supersensible unknowable things, which are distinct from their appearances, are real if one knows that the objects of experience are real.

   5. Significant application of the contrast between appearances and reality must involve the concept of the identity of reference and the concept of a correcting judgment.

   6. Kant's principle of significance determines the limits of our kind of possible knowledge.

   7. Statement (4) cannot be known if one does not significantly apply the contrast between appearance and reality.

   8. All relevant correcting judgments necessary for a significant application of the contrast between appearances and reality violate the Kantian principle of significance.

   9. The application of the transcendental contrast between appearances and non-sensible real things is therefore incompatible with Kant's principle of significance and a theory committed to both is internally incoherent.

   For further details about the nature of Strawson's attacks on the incoherences of transcendental idealism, and also Allison's attempt to reestablish its coherence, see: Senderowicz 2005, chapter one.

it demonstrated that unity of diverse experiences in a single consciousness required experience of objects.

Strawson's this kind of argumentation has been attacked by Barry Stroud. His criticism is that how does Strawson recognize or identify the necessary conditions of the possibility of our having any thought or experience at all? In fact, such recognition is something that might call for explanation even if he is never tempted by the doctrinal fantasies of transcendental idealism (Stroud, 2000: 227). Therefore, Strawson's further reflection in recent years, affected especially by Barry Stroud's criticism, has led Strawson to draw back from the hope of extracting positive metaphysical /epistemological conclusions from the more austere form of Kantian transcendental argument and turn to some kind of Heumean naturalism in this regard. That is why, in *Skepticism and Naturalism*, by viewing the issue of skepticism as completely idle, he pursues the whole programme of 'determining the fundamental general structure of any conception of experience such as we can make intelligible to ourselves', this time, to show that:

(1) 'we simply cannot help accepting or believing [those general structures]' (Strawson, 1985: 20); because they are an expression of a 'naturally implanted disposition' (Ibid, 13) which we are powerless to resist. Any kinds of traditional skepticism about them, and consequently, any kinds of argument against or in support of skepticism are totally idle (Ibid, 11).

(2) There is still good reason to investigate the major structural elements of our thought and experience of the world and to trace out the connections between those elements in that structure (Ibid, 22).

A Common Thread

The notable thing here is that all the three stages that, hitherto, we have discussed are about or concern with a certain fundamental operation of speech and thought and with the objects of that operation. This central concern as a single thread running in and through parts of Strawson's trio is not but identifying some individual item and characterizing or describing it in some general way. This is a basic combination that makes judgments possible and we can recognize it in current logic or ordinary speech as the combination of subject and predicate or reference and predication, in epistemology as the combination of sensibility and understanding, and in ontology as the combination of particular and universal. That is why Strawson in *Analysis and Metaphysics* explicitly appreciates the relations between the members of that supposed departmental trio and announces that,

> The general theory of being (ontology), the general theory of knowledge (episte-
> mology), and the general theory of the proposition, of what is true or false (logic) are
> but three aspects of one unified enquiry (Strawson, 1992: 35).

Therefore, Strawson's main question in this regard is that: what is it, in reality or in our thought about reality, that underlies and accounts for the formal distinction of

the two types of term which enter into this basic combination? This is the question which he has tried to answer in most of his works (i.e. those works which we referred to in the previous section). Although in each one he has tried to answer this question in different way, they are not conflicting ways: they are (as we observed in the previous section) complementary. Since, the central to them is that: what, in fact, underlies the formal distinction of two types of term in the fundamental combination is the ontological distinction between spatio-temporal particulars on one hand and general concepts or universals on the other. It is spatio-temporal particular individuals which fill the role of the basic objects of identifying reference or the basic subjects of singular subject-predicate propositions; and it is general concepts or universals which are predicated of them. Thus, concepts only by being related to particulars of possible experience become cognitively significant. So, it is only by being ascribed to subjects that predicates become logically significant. And finally, universals only by being related to particulars become objectively real.

Connective Linguistic Analysis

Hitherto, we have discussed Strawson's idea of trio (or unity) and its common thread, but never mentioned directly his mode of analysis; what through which he can develop his idea of unification (or trio). Notably, only this model of analysis could allow Strawson to link three members of the trio. And now I want to conclude the paper by exposing his proper idea of analysis (i.e. connective linguistic analysis[16]). According to Strawson, human thinking in general (i.e. ordinary non-philosophical thinking about the world and ourselves) is a vastly complicated affair. For this reason, he (as an analytic philosopher) has followed one model of analysis that was able to respond to all complications of ordinary language (or thinking). Then, he abandons all models of analysis that believe analysis must always be in the direction of simplicity or greater simplicity of concepts (a kind of analysis which we can find it, for example, in Russell's 'reductive atomistic analysis'). And, instead, he imagines 'the model of an elaborate network, a system, of connected items, concepts, such that the function of each item, each concept, could, from the philosophical point of view, be properly understood only by grasping its connections with the others, its place in the system' (Strawson, 1992: 19). It is through this kind of analysis that Strawson confronts an indefinitely large range of ideas or concepts among them are a certain number of fundamental, general and pervasive concepts or concept-types (for example, such concepts as space, time, body, person, object, event, mind, knowledge, truth, meaning, existence, identity, action, intention, causation, explanation, etc.) which together constitute the structural framework, as it were, within which all detailed thinking goes on. On his view, the task of analytic philosopher (as he

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16. For a detailed study (especially regarding this term), see: Hacker 1998, 4-6, 23.

reminded it) is that of making clear or elucidating the character of such concepts as these and their interconnections. What is important here is the concept of interconnection, because it is only through these interconnected concepts (and within the conceptual structure that formed by those concepts) we build up our detailed systems of belief, our pictures or theories of how things are, how we know them and how we really speak. In other words, it is only within this structure that Strawson managed to unify logic, ontology and epistemology. What this amounts to is the description, for purposes of philosophical elucidation, of the interconnectedness of related concepts, of their implications, compatibilities, and incompatibilities, of the conditions and circumstances of use of philosophically problematic expressions. Such analysis does not terminate in logically independent elementary propositions, or in simple, unanalyzable names or concepts. It terminates in the clarity that is obtained with respect to a given question when the network of concepts has been traced through all its relevant reticulations. Strawson's term 'connective linguistic analysis' felicitously indicates this model of analysis.

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