CHAPTER II

REFERENCE AND PREDUCTION
As indicated in the Introduction, Strawson's programme was to find out the conceptual structure involved in our ordinary language, the language that we use for our thought and talk. This language as it was analyzed in the introduction is communication-oriented. Hence, it is now necessary that we study the concepts and categories as and when they are used in communication, i.e., in our thought and talk.

Attempts have been made in past by philosophers to present the concepts and categories that are there in our thought as various faculties of our mind. But such an analysis into the different faculties was psychological and it ignored altogether the use that we make of the concepts and categories in our language.

My attempt in this chapter is to clarify certain misconceptions or inadequate conceptions about Strawson's views on language. I shall attempt to give conceptual clarity which may have important bearings on Strawson's views in particular and other views in general. I shall take up the issues as I go along. For the present I shall try to show how Strawson's views on reference and predication, if given a complete account, can bear importantly on other problems and issues that contemporary philosophers of language face.
2.1 The Basic Combination

In Logic as well as in Pragmatics a certain mode of combination of the elements of our language is regarded as fundamental. The elements being words or expressions, they are combined to produce a sentence. The way they are combined is, therefore, fundamental in any analysis of language. In Logic as well as in Pragmatics singular predication has been regarded as fundamental. Singular predication in Logic gives us a scheme of how a predicate is combined with a variable in quantification. In Pragmatics the fundamental cases of singular predication are those in which the designated individuals are spatio-temporal particulars or more specifically the substantial occupants of space with some endurance in time.\(^1\) The predicates are the general concepts that we have. And the combination of these two is the case of singular predication. Even the scheme given in Logic can be exploited for understanding the structure of our ordinary or natural language. A schema is naturally a form which needs to be filled in to obtain a complete sentence. A complete sentence in our ordinary language is unquantified. Moreover it contains singular terms, not variables. \(\wedge\) wants this schema not to contain singular terms, their place being taken up by variables in quantification. We shall have

\(^1\)F. F. Strawson, *Subject and Predicate in Logic and Grammar* (London: Methuen, 1974) p. VII.
occasion to see what this schema contains. But for the present, we can find even in the schema a place or role for the singular terms and a role for general characters and a way these two elements are combined. Corresponding to the roles, we have an expression that specifies a particular and an expression that specifies a general character. The mode of combination is indicated in the way the general character takes the form of introducing the predicate. The particular is introduced by the referring expression but the mode of combination is not indicated by this referring part. In traditional logic the mode of combination is indicated by 'copula' that is said to join two terms - the subject term and the predicate term. It is demanded of the copula that it should be in the present tense of the verb 'to be', so that it shows how the two terms which occur at the termini of the proposition are combined in the middle by the joining link. But this is a description of functions or roles that expressions perform which constitute a proposition. These elements which are functionally described above may not enter into an analysis of a proposition into terms. We can say that we have only two terms - the subject term and the predicate term. The predicate term performs a double duty here - that of introducing the predicate and that of indicating the propositional mode of combination. The predicate term specifies a general character which, if applicable to the subject term, makes the proposition not only a significant combination but also a true one. If, however, the general
character is not applicable to the subject term or the particular introduced by the expression, then the proposition is a significant combination but false.

This view of basic combination and tripartite division of functions seems to raise a crucial problem - the problem about the nature of that which relates the two terms. According to Bradley the nature of the relation is such that it cannot be viewed as external to terms so related. If it is considered external then, as a first step, we have to relate this relation to one of the terms. Now that again has to be related naturally by a copula which, if viewed externally would necessitate that it be related to the original terms. That would again involve a copula and getting that copula related. This way, it would involve an infinite regress. Bradley's view was that relations were always internal and the subject, on deductive analysis, can be said to possess or show the possession of all qualities. The subject was a substance in which all qualities inhere and the substance was all-embracing, in this sense. Thought was a relational way of viewing the substance.

In order to avoid this infinite regress Strawson says that the traditional concept 'copula' is not a relation, rather, it is a kind of non-relational tie. It ties a universal to a particular, a universal to another universal and a particular to another particular. Now universals and particulars are not
to be treated as simple terms. Terms they are, but they function as principles of collection. A particular collects several universals, a universal also may collect particulars. We cannot make a distinction between them simply by viewing them as principles of collection. The distinction between a particular and a universal lies in the way they collect. A term as a principle of collection shows the way it is attached or combined to another term. The particular collects universals according to its continuing identity and universal collects particulars according to the principle of resemblance among like things.

The distinction will be clear if we allot the subject place to the particular and the predicate place to the universal as the primary or fundamental case and then see how under pressure it can be extended to other cases. A particular in the subject place collects universals, whether sortal or characterizing, in the predicate place according to the continuing identity of that particular. The particular continues to remain the same for different occasions of reidentification, hence it collects those universals which are identifyingly stated to be applicable to that particular on various occasions of making statements. Thus we can say 'Socrates is wise', 'Socrates is honest', 'Socrates is a philosopher' etc. or we can say that Socrates is wise, honest, is a Greek and is a philosopher. This is how Socrates, a particular, collects
universals or general characters such as being wise, being honest, being a Greek and being a philosopher. Now the principle of collection involved in a universal in the predicate place is different in the sense that it collects those particulars (to come in the subject place) that show a likeness or resemblance to one another so collected. This is the sense in which the same universal might be applicable to different particulars. As each term is incomplete for expression of a complete sentence, it shows a gap on either side. A particular such as Socrates shows a gap 'Socrates...', and a universal shows a gap '... is wise'. The universal '...is wise' can be filled by Socrates, Plato, Aristotle and others who are wise.

Now if this is the primary sense in which particulars collect universals and universals collect particulars, then we can extend the sense analogously to cover such cases as universals collecting other universals and particulars collecting other particulars. We say that a musical composition, in itself a universal, is called sonata or a colour might be called bright or sober or soothing. There is a clear sense in saying so. Hence a universal collects another universal as a principle of higher generality. Universal in showing general characters bring higher generality in order to include particulars in their extension. Particulars in being referred to as items over there, show what histories they can have had, under how many concepts and categories they might be possibly
viewed. There is again a clear sense in which a particular collects another particular. But the particular so collecting is always a higher principle, an abstraction from a particular in a way that has not acquired the status of a general character. To be clear, the universal that behaves as a particular is such that it has not forgotten its original home from which it derives. General characters though have such a basis at the source, have forgotten their original homes. Now they have come to be detached and have more or less a free floating character. Their significance lies in the meaning they have acquired in the use of language. Hence in the sense that some characters show the source from which they derive or origin they still retain the character of being a particular. In that sense we can say 'It is a Socrates-utterance' or say a particular catch (in the subject place) collects another particular, say, Carr's or Solkar's.

But this sense of collection cannot be extended in any clear way to cover the putative case of a universal (in the subject place) collecting particulars either as instances of it or as being characterized by that particular. We cannot say that a universal like 'wisdom', in that wide sense in which it includes within itself several sources from whose instances it might be said to have been generalized, is assertively linked to (i.e. it collects) a particular, say, Socrates. If ever we will be logically permitted to say that
a universal collects particulars in this sense, i.e. the universal has to be seen as a set of particulars (in the subject place), then the universal has to be seen only collecting those particulars from whom such universal features have been drawn to be included in the generic concept 'wisdom'. Even if one is permitted to argue like that, the consequent proposition won't be a universal-particular one, rather it would be logically right only if it is treated as a wisdom-particular as evidenced by Socrates tied to a particular individual Socrates. But such cases have already been admitted by Strawson as particular-particular tie, which he names after Cock Wilson who made such a point, as 'attributive tie'.

Of course we can have a universal collecting universal-cum-particulars in an analogous way. Universal-cum-particulars are primarily universals and as such they tie according to the principle of resemblance and thereby collect not particulars to attribute themselves but collect other universals which include within their composition some particulars as their constitutive source.

Now, if particulars can be identifyingly referred to and universals can be attributed to them on the basis of their own principles, then that is the primary sense attached to the principle of collection. It can be extended but not
to the extent to cover cases of universals in the subject place collecting particulars to come in the predicate place.

Against this simplified model for the structure of a meaningful and true sentence of natural language, the way that Strawson conceives of it, there have been several objections. First to the tripartite division of functions. Frege in distinguishing object and concept maintained that they are so made for each other that they do not need a third element to combine them. One is attached to the other in a natural way. Frege maintained that objects have sense besides their normal reference and the concepts have reference besides their sense. They are not intrinsically different from each other in this respect, but the object is not a concept nor a concept is an object. They are attached to each other only when we consider their sense and reference.

Geach distinguishing the subject and predicate not as terms but as linguistic expressions said that the predicables (linguistic expressions for predicates) can be distinguished from subject expressions by being negative and truth-functionally complex whereas it is not possible to have subject negation and their truth-functionally complex characterization. Once this difference between them is overlooked we face the problem of relating them. According to Geach,² Strawson had to bring in the tripartite division.

²P.T. Geach, 'Strawson on Subject and Predicate' in Philosophical Subjects ed. Strangton, op. cit. pp.174-6.
of functions and lay a great stress on the propositional assitive tie because he missed the point that by negation and truth-functional characterization they are to be distinguished. Gossip's charge is that Strawson by bringing in a tripartite division only defends a traditional doctrine that cannot be defended.

Strawson wonders whether the doctrine can be attributed to him. For he wanted to see the rationale of the traditional doctrine and was not very much interested to defend it. To see the rationale, he speaks of the predicate as combining the functions of introducing the universal and indicating the mode of combination. Once we make assertion or proposition our style of introduction as fundamental, we need not bring the copula. Moreover in Strawson's picture the question of introducing a copula does not arise. The reason is that Strawson does not speak in terms of linguistic expressions. But then simply speaking of a subject and predicate might be ambiguous. It is ambiguous between subject and predicate as linguistic expressions, and as introducing terms. The subject term and the predicate term are non-linguistic in opposition to the linguistic expressions which


introduce them. Considered as terms they do have an incompleteness built into them. This incompleteness shows expectancy for each other. It was for Frege that the predicates were incomplete and unsaturated but for Strawson both the terms are incomplete. Once both are declared incomplete they perhaps need no logical adhesive to connect them. If somehow one finds the copula missing in this new model, then Strawson's reply for those who seek the traditional copula would be that its function is being performed by the predicate. Strawson says that this tripartite division was not aimed as an analysis but only as a provisional description of the elements involved, that he has only distinguished three functions performed in a single act of predication. "But this description of functions is not a recipe for analysis."^5

About term negation and truth-functional characterization it is a Strawsonian distinction with which Geach agrees. Strawson's distinction was relevant so far the linguistic expressions are assigned the roles in a proposition. But the functions they perform were to refer and to predicate. The difficulty with Geach was that he was satisfied with linguistic expressions so far as the distinction is concerned and therefore bothered about which linguistic expressions go

Questions have been raised as to why there can't be a symmetrical relation between the subject and the predicate and what is involved if we eliminate the singular terms. Before trying to answer such questions we will do better to discuss the subject-predicate distinction as Strawson advanced.

2.2 Subject - Predicate Distinction

I have so far discussed only that aspect in which a subject term and a predicate term have incompleteness, that they have an expectancy for each other. But the positive criteria by which a subject term and a predicate term are distinguished need explicit mention before we take up the issues involved in such a picture.

The traditional doctrine whose rationale was Strawson's concern in *Individuals* might be expressed as follows: 'Particulars like John, and universals like marriage, and what we may call, universal-cum-particulars like being married to John, can all be referred to by the use of referring expressions; but only universals, and universal-cum-particulars, can be predicated, by means of predicate
What the doctrine says is that there is an asymmetry between particulars and universals in respect to subject – predicate distinction.

The asymmetry between particulars and universals and along with it the distinction between the subject and the predicate has been controverted by F.P. Ramsey. Ramsey commenting upon the doctrine of Johnson and Russell, says that they make an important assumption which 'has to be questioned to be doubted'. 'They assume a fundamental antithesis between subject and predicate, that if a proposition consists of two terms copulated, the two terms must be functioning in different ways, one as subject and the other as predicate.' In the same essay he says that 'there is no essential distinction between the subject of a proposition and its predicate.'

According to Strawson there can be several aspects of the subject-predicate distinction. Ramsey was sceptical only about one. Subject and predicate can be distinguished functionally, i.e. we can distinguish the activity of each term in the complex activity of asserting a proposition. So can refer, name, indicate, designate, mention something as


well as correspondingly describe, characterize, ascribe, predicate and say something. So also we can distinguish the linguistic elements that perform these functions. The linguistic elements can be said to perform their referential role when they are singular terms, referring expressions, subject, subject expression and sometimes proper names. The predicative role is performed by linguistic elements such as predicative expressions, predicate-expression, predicative ascriptive expressions etc.

From a consideration of subject-predicate distinction under these two aspects, we can have yet another distinction when we consider their objects in the activity. In producing the unified activity - asserting a proposition, the linguistic elements introduce terms, the subject expression introduces the subject term, the term referred to, and the predicate expression introduces the predicate-term, the term predicated or the term ascribed to the subject. Hence we can say that subject expression in its referring role introduces a non-linguistic (i.e. logical) term and the predicate expression (linguistic) in its ascriptive role introduces a non-linguistic term, the predicate term, into a proposition.

However, from such linguistic consideration both can be said to introduce terms. But the fundamental anti-thesis between the two is as regards other aspects. Harscoy’s doubts were directed against this linguistic distinction. If we look
at the way they introduce their terms, a significant
distinction can be maintained between the two.

Searle commenting on the term theory of propositions
says that it is easy to see in what sense the term identi-

fied by the subject expression 'the rose' is non-linguistic,
it is a material object, its existence is a contingent fact.
But what about 'is red'? Is it non-linguistic in a similar
sense? Searle's argument is that the existence of a
universal follows from the meaningfulness of the correspond-
ing general term or predicate expression. But meaning in a
perfectly ordinary sense is a linguistic entity. Now the
question is, can the existence of a non-linguistic entity
follow from a linguistic entity? For universals their

essence and existence are the same i.e. general propositions
asserting their existence are or can be tautologies. But the
existence of non-linguistic entities is not so. Searle adds
that entities such as universals 'do not lie in the world,
but in our mode of representing the world.'

According to Searle universals are not linguistic the
way that words, considered as phonetic sequences are, but
they are linguistic in the way that meanings of words are.

\[3 J. L. Searle, \textit{Speech Acts} (London: Cambridge University

\[9 \text{Ibid. p.113.}\]
So on any ordinary criterion for distinguishing the linguistic from the non-linguistic Strawson's remark is false. Searle adds that if universals are non-linguistic then a great many things which we ordinarily think as linguistic become non-linguistic.

Searle means to say that Strawson in admitting subject and predicate both as terms has attempted to draw a symmetry between them and the trick is done by saying that both introduce terms instead of saying that both refer, as was done by Frege. But in saying that they identify Strawson is not committed to say that predicates refer nor is he committed to say that the sentence is a list of terms for he appeals to the notion of a 'non-relational tie'. Searle realizes that Strawson's neutral terminology was not intended as an explanation of the distinction but rather as one possible description which will provide, along other things, a neutral terminology for discussion of certain philosophical problems. Searle contends that even as a description it offers a false picture. According to Searle the correct picture would be:

...if one insists on symmetry, it would be more accurate to construe reference as a peculiar kind of predication: the principle of identification might be regarded as saying that reference is identification via predication. In the utterance (The rose is red) both the subject and predicate convey to the hearer some descriptive or predicative content. The distinction between subject and predicate is one of function. The subject serves to identify an object, the predicate, if the total illocutionary

1C Ibid. p.115.
11 Ibid. p.114.
act is one of describing or characterizing the object which has been identified. This would be one correct description of the matter.\textsuperscript{12}

As discussed earlier, Strawson sticks to predication as the fundamental mode of combination of two terms. But then, there is a difference. What Searle speaks of as reference being construed as a peculiar kind of predication may be true of Quine who explicitly states\textsuperscript{13} that singular terms are inessential for predication and that the singular terms or names can always be replaced by variables of quantification. But the same is not true of Strawson. Strawson sticks to predication not by eliminating singular terms but by bringing them to occupy the referential position.\textsuperscript{14} According to Quine the singular terms lack conditions of identity and individuation and reference to objects can always be secured through the variables in quantification and a general term going together with that device as an indissoluble unit. The trick of eliminating the singular terms or names is provided in its main lines

\textsuperscript{12}Ibid. p.119.


\textsuperscript{14}P.F. Strawson, Subject and Predicate in Logic and Grammar, Op.cit., p.3.
by Russell's theory of descriptions. Russell showed how a descriptive name such as 'The author of Waverley' could be paraphrased in context as an 'incomplete symbol' forming a fragment of the whole sentence in which it occurs. Accordingly if any of the conjuncts was false then the whole sentence was false. A sentence such as 'some one (better: something) wrote Waverley and was a poet and nothing else wrote Waverley' provides the context of that phrase and this descriptive phrase gets 'its full quota of meaning' whether it is true or false. Quine borrows this Russellian analysis and adopts the same to arrive at the ontological commitment of our discourse. Quine argues that all our commitment to entities come as values through the variables in quantification. In such a picture we get a schema such as:

$$( \exists x ) ( fx )$$

where 'x is the variable bound by the existential quantifier 'there is an...$(x)$' and 'f' is the predicate variable. The advantage is that we cannot assign any non-existent entity as the value of the variable. The range of the variable determines the entities to which we are ontologically committed.

The difference between Quine and Strawson is that while Quine thinks that the singular terms or names lack conditions of identity, Strawson has tried to show that they have an inbuilt mechanism of identity and individuation. Hence while
Quine argues in favour of eliminating singular terms, Strawson argues that singular terms, definite descriptions, pronoun names do serve as referring expressions but the referring activity rests with the speaker. It is the speaker who refers and the expressions do not by themselves refer to anything existent or non-existent whatever. Strawson considers the various ways in which we use language and says that the schema is not complete. Strawson wants to keep our logical analysis closer to natural language, by allowing complete sentences not to involve quantification.

As regards other points, Strawson uses 'non-linguistic' in the sense of being terms as distinguished from linguistic expressions. As rightly recognized the talk of symmetry was intended to be used as a neutral terminology for discussion of some philosophical problems. Hence the significant distinction lies in how the linguistic expressions introduce their non-linguistic terms. The particular introducing expression carries an empirical presupposition of facts whereas the universal introducing expression does not have any such presupposition. No doubt, the universals are a matter of language and meaning but Strawson is not committed to admit their existence in the world as spatio-temporal particulars nor is he committed to say that predicates refer to concepts.

\[15\] F. F. Strawson, Individuals, p.184, p.186.
Strawson's notion of a universal cuts clear between Platonic zeal of regarding it as real, existent along with other particulars and the nominalistic zeal of regarding universals as a matter of language and meaning. Searle was still working within a framework of quantificational model in regarding reference as a peculiar mode of predication and in regarding predication as our mode of representation of the world. It is still a nominalistic zeal to regard the referential position committed to the existence of the object so referred to. The model is provided by the variable and the existential quantification binding the variable. For Strawson it is not the model for natural language. We are no more committed to the existence of the particular than we are committed to the existence of the universal. The formal logician's belief in the existence of the referent that substitutes the variable in the quantificational schema was due to what Wigner calls 'ontological commitment' of the object that the expression refers to, while the variable is bound in the existential quantification no such device was available for the predicates. It is a nominalistic zeal that throws universals out of existence. This does not mean that we should populate the world with subsistent entities. The existence of the universal 'wisdom' is derivative, it depends on the existence of wise people. If we have 'Socrates is wise', we can say: 'There is a wise man', and
Wisdom is there' or 'There is wisdom'. In saying so we admit the existence of wisdom. Strawson says:

...why should we think that the force of (1) above i.e. of

'(...is wise) is sometimes true'
is better rendered by 'There exists someone who is wise' than by 'Wisdom exists'? Or, to put it differently why, when I say that 'Socrates is wise', I am to be regarded as committed to the view that there is such thing as a wise man, but not to view that there is wisdom? Admittedly, having said that Socrates is wise, I cannot consistently go on to say that there are, or exist no wise men, but nor can I consistently go on to say that there is, or exists, no such thing as wisdom.\(^\text{15}\)

If we look to what Strawson calls the mediating criterion\(^\text{17}\) between the two (i.e. the grammatical and the category criterion) we can find that he qualifies\(^\text{18}\) that account in terms of empirical presupposition of facts. Strawson says that it is a universally necessary condition for the introduction of any particular term into discourse that 'there should exist, and be known, a true empirical proposition of a certain very definite kind whereas it is not a necessary condition of the introduction of a universal term into discourse that there should exist and be known, a true empirical proposition of any parallel kind'. Now, the qualification concerns the way in which the universal term is introduced. The universal may be introduced by virtue of

\(^{\text{15}}\)Ibid. p.237-8.

\(^{\text{17}}\)Ibid. p.187.

\(^{\text{18}}\)Ibid. p.185.
its meaning or by means of some expression which gives a description of the universal. If it is introduced by virtue of some description then 'for the introduction to be successfully so effected it may be necessary that some empirical proposition is true'. The universal 'wisdom' may be introduced by a description such as 'the quality most frequently attributed to Socrates in philosophical examples' or a type of disease may be introduced not as 'influenza' but as the disease which kept John away from work last week'.

This descriptive way of introducing universals is what may be called admitting reference of the predicate in Fregean terminology. There has been some attempt by Frege's followers (Peter Geach especially) to present the reference of predicates by bringing such facts as:

(1) Suppose Sam and Bob are both drunk

(2) Then it follows that there is something which Sam and Bob both are. Alternatively there is some property which Sam and Bob both have.

(3) Therefore in (1), the expression 'are...drunk' refers; it refers to that property which Sam and Bob both have. Let us call this a concept.

A similar treatment is given by Dummett. But according to

19 Ibid. p.186.


Frege asked what we are asserting something about? The general answer was that it was a concept. Turett says the word is 'being taken to mean, not anything psychological, but rather what it more usually called a property.'

Perhaps Frege's interest in admitting reference for predicates was to introduce quantification into the predicate place. That is one of the reasons why Frege admitted not only sense for proper names but also reference for predicates. That gives the distinction the symmetrical look.

Quine would object to such a treatment by Frege for this would bring relations into our ontology; it would also bring variables and quantifiers to the predicate place which will force us to be committed to countenancing as entities such things as concepts and relations. Quine does not recognize the intermediate stage such as propositions, meanings and concepts to stand between the words and objects. They lack identity conditions.

According to Strawson, in Quine's method the predicative position is supposed to be inaccessible to quantifiers. But it is not the case with natural language. For an example:

Betty is a better date than Sally. Betty is willing and pretty. Sally too is willing and pretty. But

22 Ibid., p.77.
Jetty is witty and Betty is not witty. Surely, if 'willing', 'pretty' and 'witty' are here in predicative position, but is their position inaccessible to quantifiers? As a date, Betty is everything that Sally is (i.e. willing and pretty) and something that Sally is not (i.e. witty). Or, if you like, there is nothing that Sally is that Betty is not and something that Sally is not that Betty is.23

The example suggests that 'pretty', 'witty' are singular terms occupying referential place whereas 'Sally' and 'Betty' are in predicative place. But this, Strawson says, 'will attract no one, and any way would obliterate the distinction altogether.'24 Since there is another test available to yield that 'Betty' and 'Sally' are singular terms and 'witty' and 'pretty' are in predicative position, we can adopt that. The test is the category-criterion.25

The test is that generally, whenever, explicitly or implicitly, 'two terms are joined of which the first stands to the second in that characteristic relation in which 'prettiness' (or 'pretty') stands to 'desirable in a date', then, relative to each other, the first is a candidate for the referential and the second for the predicative position.26


24 Ibid. p.65.

25 P. F. Strawson, Individuals, Chapter V.

In relation to Sally pretty has a predicative position but in relation to 'desirable in a date' it has a referential position. Because it had implicitly referential position that it could comfortably yield its position to quantification. Now we can say that:

Two terms coupled in a true sentence stand in referential and predicative position, respectively, if what the first term designates or signifies is a case or instance of what the second term signifies.27

Hence to summarize, the referential position is occupied by a term of lower type and the predicative position is occupied by a term of higher type. This is what is known as the 'principle of collection'. A predicate is always a higher principle of collection. Quantifiers always occupy relatively lower type positions. According to Strawson, 'it will never be, in general, to the purpose to quantify over items of a higher type unless some still higher type principle of collection is being implicitly used'.28

Now let us see how referring expressions while introducing their terms refer to their objects.

2.3 Referring Expressions

Referring expressions were supposed by Russell to denote

27 Ibis. p.69.
28 Ibis. p.73.
persons, places or things in virtue of their occurrence in
the subject place in a proposition. In discussing the
topics such as referring expressions, definite descriptions,
proper names and the sort, it is easy to commit mistakes if
we do not clearly distinguish between an expression referring
to a thing and the referring use which an expression is put
to by the speaker. Strawson pointed out for the first time
clearly the various uses that an expression is put to by the
speaker. While Wittgenstein thought that the uses were
peculiar to a community of speakers and that the uses are
codified in various discourses or language-games within the
available resources of language, Strawson's thinking in the
matter is unique. According to Strawson the uses may vary
from speaker to speaker even within the same linguistic
community. It is not that each speaker within the same
linguistic community is speaking a private language accessible
to himself, rather it is the intention of the speaker which
fixes the reference of the expression from among a variety
of uses available for an expression. The intention of the
speaker counts in fixing up the reference of the expression
in the complex activity of asserting a proposition.

Strawson pointed out in 'On Referring' that a sentence
may simply be uttered or it may be used to convey a particular
thought. Hence we are required to distinguish between a
sentence, the use of a sentence and the utterance of the
Such a distinction was basic to a proper understanding of philosophical problems.

The philosophical problem which Strawson wanted to solve by distinguishing the role of an expression in the activity of assertion was how a sentence could be meaningful if the referring expression did not denote a particular person, place or thing. Russell in his theory of descriptions and in 'On Denoting' advocated a kind of analysis by which he could say that a sentence was either no subject-predicate sentence or it was meaningless.

Strawson says that though we commonly use expressions belonging to classes of singular demonstrative pronouns, proper names, singular personal and impersonal pronouns and definite descriptions to refer to things, any use of them are not referring uses. There is a difference between:

1. The whale is a mammal and
2. The whale struck the ship.

In sentence (1) 'the whale' is not used to refer, to mention or to identify which whale it is as distinguished from other whales, it is used to talk about. Rather it is used here

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to talk about the class of whales, though in the form of a
definite description, 'whale' being accompanied by the
definite article 'the'. The form of an expression is no
guide. The expressions are there in the vocabulary. A
person puts them into different uses. Referring or mentioning
is one such use. It is exhibited in the sentence (2) whose
expression is intended to pick out a particular whale
and a particular ship. But in occupying the referring
expression of a sentence a referring expression is intended by the
speaker to refer or mention. The point is that the speaker
must so intend to use the expression.

In a functional analysis of a proposition the referring
place is occupied by those expressions that function as
referring expressions and the predicative place is occupied
by general characters that we ascribe to those particulars
specified by the referring expressions. That the speaker
does is to refer to a particular and go on attributing a
predicate to that particular. Strawson calls this use of
expressions 'the uniquely referring use'. Strawson does not
deny that in a sentence we can refer to two particulars. It
does as in the case 'the whale struck the ship'. However
it is the uniquely referring use in the subject place of a
grammatical sentence that is interesting. It is interesting
because Russell wanted this place to be occupied by 'logically
proper names'. Those logically proper names, it was held,
ever fail of reference and as such the sentences in


these logically proper names occur never lack a meaning. Meaning being the object a word stands for in Russellian scheme, a subject–predicate sentence whose subject place is filled up by logically proper names is never meaningless. A definite description that fails of reference i.e. if the definite description does not apply to any object then it does not constitute the subject of a subject predicate sentence. Hence either it is meaningless or it is a subject-predicate sentence.

According to Strawson we do not have a class of expressions which constitute logically proper names in the sense that they never fail of reference. The way Russell used, 'this' and 'that' are logically proper names. According to Strawson 'this' may fail to refer. Strawson gives an example thus: 'Suppose I advance my hands, cautiously cupped, towards someone, saying, as I do so, 'This is a fine rod one'. He, looking into my hands and seeing nothing there, may say: 'what is?', 'what are you talking about?' or perhaps, 'but there's nothing in your hands'. Hence Strawson concludes that 'this' is not a logically proper name in the sense that they never fail to refer. As shown in the instance 'this' has been used here to pretend to refer.

ibid. p.15.
If the logically proper names sometimes fail to refer, then, Strawson comes to the crucial point, it is not expressions that refer to something or the other, it is rather the speaker who makes a reference to the object or mentions an object in order to go on to attribute something to that object. That the object must be there does not depend on the referring expression. It is just the reverse. The object is there and the speaker uses a referring expression to mention or refer to that object in order to go on to say something. The existence of the object is rather presupposed in a statement that the speaker makes.

Further, the meaning of an expression or a sentence for that matter is not the object the sentence is about. Meaning is given by the rules and conventions that may govern the use of expressions. Meaning is a sort of direction that is given for the use of an expression. Hence what matters for a clear understanding of the logical behaviour of these expressions is to see how they are used in different utterances. While meaning is attached by the rules and conventions to the kinds of expressions combined in a sentence, reference and truth are a matter of particular utterances of the sentence in different contexts of their use. The same sentence can be uttered at different times and in different contexts. What we have to see is how such expressions are used in different contexts and with what intentions they are introduced, i.e.
whether they are used referentially or not and to what objects they are intended to refer.

Once the linguistic expressions are free from taking up the burden of reference and human beings, the speakers, have taken up the burden of doing what they want to do with the help of publicly available words and expressions that we have in our language, it is necessary that they know where to use which expressions. If a speaker identifyingly refers to an object then the hearer has to know the same object that the speaker identifies. The objects are there and we know something or other about them when we as human beings occupy the same world. Now this knowledge of the objects constitute in a simple act of reference the basis of our thought and talk. The referential expressions are simple devices that we as speakers and hearers use to talk about. These devices such as a proper name, a demonstrative or a definite description or a pronoun are used by both speakers and hearers to pick up their objects.

Now the crucial question such a view raises is 'Whether the proper name bears the distinguishing marks that a person or place possesses or to which it applies?' or, 'the persons and places bear the properties and the task of a proper name or a referring expression is simply to fix up the reference of the expression?' The properties, naturally belong to objects. They do not belong to the expressions. Now the other question
arises? 'If the language does not have the mechanism of distinguishing one object from its kindred kinds and identifying one object definitely as the desired or intended one, then what means are available to the speaker? Now what is the place where we do connect words and the objects?

This inevitably leads us to a further question about how language is learnt. If we learn language by associating a word with an object then naturally with every occasion of use of the word the object is immediately suggested to our mind. There is no necessity of knowing the intention of the speaker to bring the object he refers to. If that is so, then what exactly do we mean by a language? Is it a simple list of words that stand for objects showing one-to-one relation as desired by some philosophers? Perhaps it consists of a good number of words which stand for one thing or, better, which can be used to pick up one thing and alternatively one word can be used to stand for a good number of persons or places depending on the context of use. The desired one-to-one relation that would have made the business of philosophers an easy one is not available. What as adult speakers of a language we are to do is to select those words that uniquely and identifiably pick up their objects and leave behind those which behave differently on different occasions or those which behave similarly but have different objects in different contexts. The moral is that we must know the logic of words in ordinary language and at the same time see the logic of their uses.
There is a constant threat from a progressively growing community of speakers applying pressure on the available expressions and the media, in view of their changing experience. It does not mean that they do not bring in new words and expressions, they do so always. But at the same time they also change the meaning of the existing expressions. The result is a consequent vagueness and ambiguity in the existing conceptual structure. Any theory of language has to take note of it.

How the question is how do we refer to things with the help of referring expressions? What linguistic means are available to us? When the object is located in our surrounding we can point at the object. But simple pointing without the aid of language might be misleading. There may be many objects in the same direction. There are linguistic means such as the demonstratives which can be used. Though this is not unproblematic in comparison to the enormous complexity of natural language this procedure is relatively a simple means. Strawson calls it a demonstrative identification of a particular. But it is not always the case that we refer to the objects in our surrounding. The object may be far away or might have existed in the past or might come into existence in a future date in which case demonstrative identification is not possible. But then we want to refer to them in order to speak something about them. In the absence of demonstrative identification the means that are available
to us are definite descriptions, or names or we may use both. But identification with the help of such devices is not unproblematic. Let us see what problems are involved.

2.4 The Problem of Identification

The problem of identification appears central in Strawson's Philosophy. It was Quine who wanted that singular terms supposed to identify objects should be eliminated. But, as already discussed, in Strawsonian approach a complete sentence does not contain variables. The task of introducing particulars, therefore, rests with the referring expressions.

We discussed the sense in which referring expressions can be used to identify objects. The referring place is not confined to particulars alone. Anything can be referred to and the expression indicating that can occupy the referring place. Hence a particular as well as a non-particular can occupy the subject place.

The notion of a particular in Strawsonian scheme is that these are the things about which we talk to each other. Then a particular plays the referential role the predicative role has to be played by a higher principle such as a universal or a universal-sum-particular. When a universal plays the referential role, it has to be attributed by a still higher principle i.e. a universal, in higher order of generality.
According to Strawson, 'the history of the world consists of particulars - particular things, episodes and events'. If we have a part to play in them, then these must be in our surroundings and we can demonstrably identify them. If however, we do not have a part to play in them, then those items are referred to with the help of referring expressions. The hearer, because of his place in the community, must have some knowledge about those items. But communication requires that the hearer must understand that the particular he knows of is the same one as being currently referred to by the speaker. Then the hearer is able to pick up the same particular on the strength of the identifying expression used by the speaker, the speaker has not only identifiably referred to but also has identified the particular for the hearer.

Strawson does not define a particular. He is interested in identification of a particular. However he gives examples. 'Historical occurrences, material bodies, people and their shadows are particulars, whereas qualities, properties, numbers and species are not.'

According to Strawson, though particulars can always be referred to, being an actual or possible object of identifying reference does not distinguish a class or type of entities from others. What it does is to distinguish one way of occurrence from the other in discourse. So can define

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negatively that one which cannot be referred to is not a particular though the converse is not true.

As identification is done with the help of referring expressions, the speaker knows the particular to which he is identifyingly referring, whatever be the device he uses. That means the speaker is able to locate the particular at a particular place and time. This kind of identification can be distinguished from story-relative identification where we have a limited number of particulars and one is referred to by a description as given in the story. However such identifications are identification in a weak sense for the hearer places the speaker and hence the picture given by the speaker in his own general picture of the world. As the hearer cannot place the characters directly without the framework of the story, the identification is story-relative. 33

According to Strawson a sufficient requirement for full identification would be that the hearer should pick out or sensibly discriminate the particular as the one being referred to by the speaker. If the hearer is able to sensibly discriminate the particular, it is a demonstrative identification of the particular. But when demonstrative identification cannot be done the speaker uses a name or a description or both. How

33 Ibid. p.18.
a name of a particular, unless it is known by the hearer to stand for the particular, is of no use. Hence Strawson requires that the speaker must be able to give a description on demand.\textsuperscript{34} How a description in purely general terms might result in a massive reduplication of particulars.\textsuperscript{35} Hence the description must be individuating.

According to Strawson the fear of massive reduplication is practically and theoretically baseless. Strawson offers two solutions to an argument of this kind. The practical solution is that it is not required that the speaker's particular should be the same as the hearer's. It is enough if the description fits one particular which he knows. The description that is supplied by the speaker enables the hearer only to identify. But the identifying knowledge in possession of the hearer need not be the same as the speaker's. Nor is there only one description available to a language speaking community. A particular can be identified variously. But the practical requirement is that the hearer must have 'conclusive reasons' for doing that. Strawson's theoretical solution is that whenever a non-demonstrative identification is given of a particular, it does not mean that it is given in purely general terms without mention of any other particular. If there is mention of another particular then in spite of the fact that direct demonstrative identification was not available

\textsuperscript{34} Ibid. p.20, p.181.
\textsuperscript{35} Ibid. p.20.
for the particular, it might be available for the particular that is introduced into the description. As that particular in that sector of the universe can always be related to the sector occupied by the speaker and the hearer, the problem does not arise. The assumption behind the solution is that 'every particular which is not, is uniquely related in some other way to one which is.'

According to Strawson the general requirements for hearer identification could be regarded as fulfilled 'if the hearer knew that the particular being referred to was identical with some particular about which he know some individuating fact or facts, other than the fact that it was the particular being referred to.' To know an individuating fact about a particular is to know, according to Strawson, that such and such a fact is true of that particular and of no other particular whatever. But in our day-to-day life 'it is not required that every speaker should be ready articulators of what they know.' In practice we do not explicitly relate a particular to ourselves or to some other particular in our surroundings. A lot can be taken for granted from the situation of conversation, participant's knowledge and each other's background.

36 Ibid. p.23.
37 Ibid. p.23.
38 Ibid. p.182,n.
That we can take for granted some knowledge of each other's background suggests that for speech it is necessary to have a common unified framework of knowledge of particulars. In this unified framework we and our surroundings have a place. Strawson says:

"It cannot be denied that this framework of knowledge supplies a uniquely efficient means of adding identified particulars to our stock. This framework we use for this purpose: not just occasionally and adventitiously, but always and essentially."

i.e. once we identify particulars, the identified ones form the basis of identification of other particulars. We use this framework to add to the stock of knowledge about particulars. A sophisticated picture of this framework results in calendars, maps and other coordinate systems but then the use of such systems turns fundamentally on knowing our place in the system. If any body forgets his place, the system seems to have no use for him. He has to be pointed out his place in the system.

Though these systems developed or embryonic, help us to escape from story-relative to full identification, Strawson says, nothing in what he says 'has the consequence that a man is unable to identify a particular unless he can give precise spatio-temporal locations for it.'

According to Strawson, there is a mutual dependence between places and things. The identification and distinction of places turn on the identification and distinction of things; and the identification and

41 ibid. p.25.
distinction of things turn, in part, on the identification and distinction of places.  

Here we can contrast Strawson's views with that of McGinn. According to McGinn in defining space in terms of places 'Strawson tends to emphasize the importance of indexical terms for places and times rather than explicitly offering a spatio-temporal theory of the mechanism of reference.' Though McGinn thinks that his account in terms of space and time can be complementing Strawson's account, it is not an account which can be said to be a feature of the conceptual structure that we use in our ordinary thought and talk. Any account in terms of our ordinary language has to take into consideration the least refined thinking in our day-to-day transactions as well as the most refined thinking in specialist disciplines. To give a precise formulation of what we know about a particular may not be possible for an ordinary man not trained in sophisticated coordinate systems. Hence to account for their use, Strawson finds it important to define space not in mathematically precise terms, but in terms of things that occupy places and things which have more or less a stable character.

\[42^\text{Ibid.} \text{ p.37.}\]

The point of giving a pre-eminent place to spatio-temporal relations to a common point of reference is that, 'given an already identified object, '0', it is possible for us to know that there is, in fact, only one thing answering to a certain description which is related to that object, '0'. This is not a very exacting requirement; hence it can be seen that anything which can be related to another satisfies this formal requirement.'

From such considerations a system of spatio-temporal relations has a peculiar comprehensiveness and pervasiveness which qualify the system uniquely to serve as the framework within which we can organize our individuating thought about particulars. Strawson says:

Every particular either has its place in this system or is of a kind the members of which cannot in general be identified except by reference to particulars of other kinds which have their place in it; and every particular which has its place in the system has a unique place there.

Strawson claims that there is no other system of relations between particulars of which all this is true; that any antithesis between this system of relations and other system of relations between particulars would be a 'false antithesis'. Strawson examines in detail the proposal that Ronals be viewed

44 P.F. Strawson, Individuals, p.25.
as non-spatial and non-temporal. Such a system of monads lack reidentifiability which is a characteristic feature of particulars viewed in spatio-temporal framework. Though monads are supposed to be unique and thereby possess their own unity and identity, those are found, on examination, to be hypothetical; they are more like types or classes by themselves. A monad is not identifiable as the same in its relative position to other things or particulars.

In this connection Strawson introduces the important notion of 'reidentifiability'. According to Strawson we can have a referential identity by placing the particular in space and time but the notion of continuing identity of a particular is difficult to have if we do not view the things as residing a particular identity of their own in relation to the comprehensive system of spatio-temporal framework. Even the referential identity of a particular depends on our notion of other things that have already been identified in relation to that system of spatio-temporal type-homogeneous framework. By saying that the framework is type-homogeneous Strawson means that a particular is identifiable as belonging to the type of particulars already identified and constituting the type. The new one is related and identified as belonging to the same type.

Now for identification of a particular it is essential that we must be able to reidentify that particular as the same as at an earlier occasion. If somebody argues that referential identification is sufficient for it locates the object directly, the
the argument has gone wrong for us in our conceptual scheme. Use the same framework on different occasions; it is not the case that we use different and separate frameworks on each occasion of identifying a particular. If we use different frameworks on different occasions, we may not have a type-homogeneous framework of reference. Strawson says:

"we must not only identify some elements in a non-relative way, we must identify them as just the same ones they are of a single continuously usable system of elements. For the occasions of reference themselves have different places in the single system of reference. We cannot attach one occasion to another, unless, from occasion to occasion we can reidentify all this common to different occasions."

It was Berkeley who demanded a continuous observation to guarantee the existence of objects. Having found that a God only could have a continuous observation on: that it was not possible for humans either individually or taken together, he declared that if this is the basis of existence of things then we arrive at no concept of material body. It was left to Hume to conclude that the concept of a person, soul, cause or anything for that matter, was not possible to have. There is, therefore, Strawson concludes, some error inherent in the proposal. The nature of our conceptual scheme is such that a particular is identifiable and reidentifiable. Alternatively if any proposal makes a particular inaccessible then the basis of such a notion has to go. Further the oddity of a sceptic's
position is evident if we look to how the sceptic makes out his case. He uses a conceptual scheme in which particulars have a place, but at the same time rejects one of the conditions of its employment. His doubts make sense only in a framework where a particular is usable from time to time but quietly rejecting or forgetting this condition, he questions now the concept of a particular is so usable on different occasions of reference. This, according to Strawson, being an alternative proposal, we have good reasons not to accept it as representing our conceptual scheme of things.

Strawson argues that places are not very different from things from the standpoint of reidentification. Strawson says:

...the identification of places is not something quite different from, and independent of, the reidentification of things. There is, rather, a complex and intricate interplay between the two.

The reason he offers is that places are defined only by the relation of things and a material thing is identified by saying that its existence and being continuous in time are continuous in place. We say a particular 'X' has fulfilled the conditions of identity if it is at \( t_2 \) the same as at \( t_1 \) and similarly at place \( 2 \) as at place \( 1 \).

Given this general character of the conceptual scheme we may have two types of particulars which do not depend for their numerical identification on particulars of other classes i.e.
for their reidentification it is sufficient to have their own type-homogeneous framework of reference. These type-particulars or basic particulars are such that they have enough of diversity, richness, stability and endurance to make the identification of particulars easy. Strawson says:

"... given a certain general feature of the conceptual scheme we possess, and given the character of the available major categories, things which are, or possess, material bodies must be basic particulars."

Once we have a notion of a basic particular, we can have the notion of those particulars which have a kind of identifiability dependence on another type of particulars. Sense data, neural events and the various groups of overlapping sensations may have a kind of identifiability dependence. They depend on the person who has them, or 'to whose histories they belong'. They lack identity-conditions and hence the principle of their individuation depends on the identity of persons. The sensation of pain is a private particular and has the same identity- and individuation-conditions as that of the person who suffers that. One may say this or that pain, but it has an implicit reference to the person whose pain is being referred to as the pain the person suffers at $t_1$ or $t_2$. But one refers to a public object of perception, say a tree, with the aid of demonstrative such as 'this' or 'that'. It need not be referre
to as the tree I see or he sees. A tree has no identifiability dependence. Hence Berkeley's *esse est percipi* might be appropriate for private particulars which have a sort of identifiability-dependence but the same is not applicable to public objects of perception such as a tree. Berkeley's God need not be assigned the duty of observing a tree for the tree takes care of itself. As for the private particulars that Berkeley during his life time had, Berkeley himself was sufficient to guarantee their identifiability, their identity.

In a sense states, processes, conditions, events, actions have an identifiability dependence on the things to whose histories they belong. It is not possible to have an independent and separate framework for identification of each one of the states and processes etc. that a person, place or a material object might have. States and processes may be numerous and it is a linguistic convenience that material bodies, and those which have material bodies, are accepted as basic categories among the available major ones. The basic particulars are at a further level of generalization. But the material bodies and persons and places are the categories available to us for purposes of identification and reidentification. In other words they constitute our framework of particulars. The states and processes are arrived at only on analysis of the particulars and are not accepted as units or categories having a continuously usable framework of their own. Strawson points out that 'death'
cannot form a type-homogeneous framework of its own. We have to refer to the person who dies or whose death it is.

There is an interesting problem about identification of what has been known as 'process-things'. Mountains and rivers change in their geographical features. The water in a river constantly flows, sometimes the bank of a river is altered due to a change in the course. A river is identified in relation to things that are stable, or relatively stable. It is considered identificationally problematic since the days of Heraclitus. If we look at a man as an organism, he too is subject to changes throughout his life, from his childhood to decay. It can also be argued that Caesar is the name of a series of events, a biography. But such views, according to Strawson, 'draw our attention to the possibility of recognizing a category of objects which in fact we do not recognize, a category of four dimensional objects, which might be called 'process things', and of which each of the temporally successive parts is three dimensional'. Such a thing, instead of being a particular may be regarded as a series of cross-sections. But from the standpoint of identification such processes or cross-sections cannot be recognized either as 'things which undergo such processes or with processes which

49Ibid. p. 50
50Ibid. pp. 56-57.
things undergo. So far the distinction goes, we do recognize an 'identifiability-dependence of processes which things undergo upon the things which undergo them' and not vice versa. It is in this sense that things are regarded as the primary occupiers of space the possessors not only of spatial position, but of spatial dimensions. But to talk of spatial dimensions of such processes as death is to trace the outline of a dying man, and to indicate that of the battle would be to indicate the ground the battle was fought over.

Nations are identificationally dependent on people and the geographical territory they occupy. It is a sophisticated particular. There are two ways in which we can have such particulars. Particles of physics are identificationally dependent on grosser, observable bodies. We refer to these particles only in specialized studies. They are 'theoretical constructs'. The other way is to arrive at a sophisticated particular like 'nation'. A nation is dependent on the people who constitute the nation. According to Strawson we could not have the concept of a strike or a lock-out unless we had such concepts as those of men, tools and factories.

Particulars of a more sophisticated type such as a particular 'political situation' or 'economic oppression' presuppose the notion of a less sophisticated type.

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51 Ibid. p.57.
52 Ibid. p.57.
53 Ibid. p.44.
Strawson examines in detail the notion of a no-space world to constitute a type-homogeneous framework of reference and rejects it on the ground that any conceivable account of it borrows the concepts of our ordinary world of space and time hence of ordinary language.\textsuperscript{54}

The conceptual structure of our ordinary language bears the immense individuating load of particulars in the unifying system. The unifying system, the spatio-temporal framework is not something contingent, to be given in experience, it is, rather, one that conditions our whole way of thinking and talking. It is non-contingent in the sense that it makes possible to have experience. Whatever we experience needs to be ordered and systematized. Perhaps this way of ordering things through particulars is the only way that we have. The moral that Strawson draws from an examination of no-space world and the concept of monads is that any other framework has to borrow the concepts and the language of our actual spatio-temporal world. Hence for understanding of experience through particulars the unifying spatio-temporal framework is necessary and non-contingent.

2.5 The Concept of a Person

Strawson examines the concept of a person from the standpoint of identification. There are a large number of states and

\vspace{1cm}
\textsuperscript{54}Ibid. pp.59-86.
processes, conditions and activities which can be referred to. But these cannot be reidentified as the same states and conditions, processes and activities without being related to particulars of a type that amply fulfil the conditions of identifiability independently. A person can be said to be in possession of P-predicates and M-predicates. We ascribe to ourselves actions and intentions, sensations, thoughts and feelings, perceptions and memory as well as qualities that are corporeal in nature. The latter type of qualities, for example, height, weight, shape, size, colour etc. are also used in case of material bodies. Strawson says:

... among the things that we ascribe to ourselves are things of a kind that we also ascribe to material bodies to which we should not dream of ascribing others of the things that we ascribe to ourselves.55

Now there are two important questions which arise from this way of looking at things. The questions are: (1) Why are one's states of consciousness ascribed to anything at all? (2) Why are they ascribed to the very same thing as certain corporeal characteristics, a certain physical situation etc.?

Strawson answers the questions from the standpoint of identification and reidentification. States of consciousness, though referred to, cannot be independently identified as the same without taking the help of particulars that can be identified independently. Hence they are identified as belonging to

55 ibid. p.69.
persons. How a person being conceived of as one which has a material body, the other set of characteristics is also ascribed to this person, for they are identificationally dependent. But the question 'why should the \( P \)-predicates be ascribed to the same one to which \( M \)-predicates are ascribed?' turns on the question whether there is an independent entity which itself is identifiable and at the same time is rich, complex, stable and durable enough to admit particulars such as states of consciousness etc. 'Mind' was traditionally supposed to be an entity which had these states of consciousness, on the assumption that mind was independently identifiable. On the other hand Schlick and Wittgenstein supposed that these have had no owner at all. They refer approvingly to Lichtenberg's dictum that no ego is involved in thinking or having a toothache; that instead of 'I think' we could use 'Es denkt', 'there is a thought'.

According to Strawson both these views are internally incoherent.

The arguments are that thoughts do not form a type-homogeneous framework of reference and therefore suffer a kind of identifiability-dependence. Hence they must be identified via particulars to whose histories they may be appropriately said to belong. Secondly 'mind', 'ego' or 'I' are not particulars.

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for they lack spatio-temporal identity-conditions. Nor do minds form a continuously usable and extendable framework of reference. Hence the states are to be referred to, and identified as belonging to the person having a material body that occupies a spatial position and is publicly observable. The concept of a person is primary from this standpoint.

There is a problem about the existential identity of a former person or a disembodied person. According to Strawson, disembodied existence might be a logical possibility in the sense that such a thing could be identified as a state of a former person who enjoyed independent identifiability. But as the concept involves a vicarious existence, it has to appeal to memory for its identity. Body having ceased, this is the only criterion available, however weak it might be. A disembodied person or a former person does not have even the chance of appealing to this criterion. Memory being something that gradually fades in a vicarious existence that does not get the chance of being renewed from time to time as in the case of a person enjoying spatio-temporal existence, such an existence might gradually fail to evoke any identifiability conditions. Hence such a concept, Strawson says, may be secondary in the sense it used to, but no longer does, enjoy identifiability conditions. It does not, however, mean that Strawson admits that states of consciousness, not being destroyed with the destruction or decay of the body, continue to survive in some form of its existence known to, or believed by, some religious
people or to those who believe in that form of existence to explain the transition period between one birth and the other, in a cycle of births and deaths suffered by a soul. Nor does it, however, mean that disembodied existence is a form of existence of a fine body; the gross body being extinct, a refined body (Suksma Sarira) lives and continues to be as the bearer of all our actions in the present life. It does not mean, however, that Strawson has violated his own principle of particular-identification by bringing in states of consciousness to retain particular identity, in admitting that it was logically possible for a former person to have some particular identity. Nor does Strawson's position commit to a memory criterion for personal identity.

A detailed examination of the arguments is necessary to show how Strawson's admission of the logical possibility of disembodied existence has given rise to a misunderstanding about particular-identity. But that, I am afraid, will take me beyond the scope of the present work. I shall only indicate

57 As evidenced by belief of some religious people believing in reincarnation of soul or some such substance.


60 Ibid.
the line in which Strawson's statement makes sense.

A particular is referentially identified by spatio-temporal determinants. But for its numerical identity it is a necessary condition that it should be related to the spatio-temporal framework that is type-homogeneous. States of consciousness being dependent particulars, for their numerical identity they depend on persons who fulfil the conditions of independent identifiability. States of consciousness, if they are ascribed they are ascribed only to persons. The advantage of being related to a type-particular is that type-particular is the basis of further identification of states and processes, conditions, actions and events. A person has both h-predicates and F-predicates. These predicates are dependent on persons. The concept of a person is primitive in this sense. By saying that the concept is primitive Strawson means that it is not a compound of 'mind' and 'body'. Mind and body have been regarded traditionally as two independent substances. They are supposed to be mediated by either a God or none. When they are not mediated by anything, they are supposed to run parallel. In Strawson none of such things are in view. A person is not supposed as a compound of two independent substances or two primary kinds of entities. It is the person which is primary. Strawson says:

All I have said about the meaning of saying that this concept is primitive is that it is not to be analysed in a certain way or ways. We are not, for example, to think of it as a secondary kind of entity in relation to two primary kinds, viz. a particular consciousness and a particular human body.61

61P. F. Strawson, Individuals, p.105.
When we consider the specific issue of disembodied existence, and its logical possibility, Strawson is not committed to admit that the states of consciousness retain their identity when the body is destroyed. If it is not compounded of two, the question of one remaining when the other is destroyed does not arise. Strawson says:

So the concept of the pure individual consciousness the pure-ego is a concept that cannot exist; or at least cannot exist as a primary concept in terms of which the concept of a person can be explained or analyzed. It can exist only, if at all, as a secondary non-primitive concept, which itself is to be explained, analyzed, in terms of the concept of a person.62

i.e. if states of consciousness can be referred to at all, then they are to be related to a person, living or a former person. Strawson says:

... states of consciousness could not be ascribed at all, unless they were ascribed to persons...63

Those who criticize Strawson for admitting the logical possibility of a disembodied existence are interestingly duped in the non-primary occurrence or secondary occurrence that Strawson speaks of, first at p.103 and then in section 7 of Individuals.

Strawson in that section 7 says that 'from within our conceptual scheme, each of us can intelligibly conceive of

62 Ibid. pp.102-3 (Italics mine).

63 Ibid. p.102.
his or her individual survival of bodily death. According to Strawson, 'the effort of imagination is not even great.' One has simply to think of oneself as having thoughts and memories as at present, visual and auditory experiences largely as at present, even, perhaps - though this involves certain complications - some quasi-tactual and organic sensations as at present. But then he will have no conception of body related to one's experience and he will have no conception of initiating changes in the environment for he would lack a body. One could, of course, imagine as having the condition relating to his body being fulfilled. But then 'this would be a rather vulgar fancy, in the class of table tapping spirits with familiar voices.'

According to Strawson, supposing we take disembodiment strictly in the sense that we imagine both conditions being fulfilled, then two consequences follow:

1. strictly disembodied individual is strictly solitary i.e. it will be an empty speculation as to whether there are any other members of his class
2. in order for him to retain the idea of himself as an individual, he must think himself as disembodied, as a former person.

64 Ibid. p.115.
65 Ibid. p.115.
66 Ibid. p.115.
It follows that such a conception will always draw from the experience of a person when he was still in possession of a body. But once bereft of a body he will not have a personal life of his own. Of course he must live much in the memories of the personal life he did live. Now when this living in the past loses its appeal, he may achieve some kind of attenuated vicarious existence and would be a mute spectator who would say to himself: 'That is what I should have done (or said)' or 'If I were he, I should ....' Therefore Strawson says, 'the orthodox have wisely insisted on the resurrection of the body.'

What Strawson might be committed to in working out the logical possibility is a conceptual exploration with the consequence that if some people take pleasure in imagining such a possibility then it is not contradictory to the notion of a person we have, rather, it would be dependent on somebody's being a former person from which resources he draws for his supposed personal life. Hence if such states can be imagined, there is a guaranteed reference in such imaginary states.

According to Strawson we can imagine some states as a matter of extrapolation between two states of existence that there was an intermediate stage in which the thing existed. The reference was guaranteed by the definite description.

67 Ibid. p.116.
But the reference in case of an individual (particular) is always a contingent matter depending on the presupposition whereas the specification in case of a universal given in terms of definite descriptions is a guaranteed reference. The guaranteed reference does not mean it is an actual existence. For example, 'the colour intermediate between yellow and red' is guaranteed, a reference in the sense that it is a possible existence. Dummett says that in such a case we can say a priori that there could be an object which had a shade which would fill the gap, but not that there is actually such an object, nor therefore, that there actually is such a shade.

For Strawson this guaranteed reference is a matter of logical possibility, i.e. it is free from contradiction and so it is intelligible or makes sense - it is a matter of meaning. Strawson, as opposed to Russell, believed that meaning of an expression is not the object it denotes. Hence expressions which are bearerless are intelligible and meaningful. The notion of disembodied existence is free from contradiction and the notion of such an existence makes sense. It is in this sense Strawson admits the logical possibility of a disembodied existence. Strawson says:

He (the Cartesian) cannot admit that the idea of a mind (individual consciousness) presupposes that of

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69. Ibid. p.502.
a person; he must hold, on the contrary, that a dualistic reduction or analysis of the idea of a person is in principle possible or intelligible. 7C

What Strawson has done in *Individuals* is to point to a way in which it was possible. Strawson's picture only shows that the logical possibility of such a notion was dependent on the identifiability of the disembodied referent (let us not call it a disembodied person for 'person' as used here may be confusing if we do not attach sufficient importance to disembodied) on its being a former person. Strawson's argument only shows that even if the concept is intelligible, it is intelligible only as a dependent existence on the concept of a person that was used on previous experiences to identify those experiences. Hence it is dependent in this sense and secondary existence in contrast to our notion of a fullfledged existence in space and time in which it is identified as the same.

It is interesting to note the argument that extends the concept of a person to several lives in a cycle of births and deaths. This may be taken as an experiment carried on within our conceptual scheme applying pressure on selected concepts. Applying pressure on the concept of a person, it is seen that the concept not being suitable for a reflective use it might be revised for a particular purpose.

Professor Nayak's view may have some justification in a system of beliefs where the problem of evil can be explained as issuing forth from the actions (karma) of the individual in previous birth. The concept of sukhma sarira that is supposed to carry the cultural and behavioural deposits from one life to the other has a difference from the Cartesian Ego. The Cartesian Ego is supposed to carry nothing - it is pure consciousness, which precludes the possibility of ascription of definite descriptions. It is the sense of being conscious about oneself - self-consciousness where the question of identification does not arise. Though it does not have a moment when it lacks an I-thought, the concept of pure consciousness is the notion of a self devoid of all these I-thoughts. But Nayak retains all cultural and behavioural deposits and as such it is not devoid of content. It satisfies the conditions of identifiability in the sense that definite descriptions as belonging to the former life or lives can play the identifying role. But the only difficulty is that it takes us beyond the empirical self to a reflective use which has justification only in a framework of certain beliefs. He never claims that such a concept is the actual concept we have nor does he claim that he was talking in a framework of ordinary language. He has tried to make sense of the concept of evil, and all that can be claimed for it is that without the concept of such a self it makes no sense. But the method he adopts is to broaden the perspective and see that each empirical concept of a person...
is what Russell calls 'short-term self' and each life is a form that the eternal self takes at different periods of time.

The conceptual experiment also takes another direction. Anscombe speaks of 'I' being ten thinkers thinking in unison.71 This is a conjunctive view of self.

Whether we consider one life as a collection of several short-term selves or as a series of cross sections or slices of a bigger one, what these views amount to is a challenge to the accepted unity and identity of the concept of a person in our conceptual scheme. For these philosophers the concert is open-ended and ambiguous and they have the ability and the necessary acumen to make the concept more and more ambiguous. Whatever be the direction of the revision, Strawson is not tempted to accept them for the actual conceptual structure with which he is concerned.

There is another interesting problem as regards the objective counterpart of 'I' as a referring term. According to Strawson, Kant exposed a natural and powerful illusion (Cartesian) by which we mistake the necessary unity of consciousness for the experience of unity.72 The cartesian conception


of pure ego is based on the idea that there is such a thing as 'awareness of immaterial object' which is the subject of all those experiences. Kant's exposure amounts to pointing to the fact that a temporally extended series of experiences should have a certain character of connectedness and unity, secured to it by concepts of the objective. Now, this being an a priori notion, it makes experience possible. It amounts to the possibility of making a series of experiences a potential autobiography. In other words, it makes the concept of the subject of experiences the concept of self.

The empirical concept, however, is the concept of a person. The full conditions of use of this empirical concept will require empirically applicable criteria of personal identity, i.e. the criteria for numerical identity through time; though this is not the same as the bodily identity, it involves an essential reference to the body. Kant, of course, makes a passing remark to this 'reference to body'. Kant says:

Its (the soul's) permanence during life is, of course, evident, since the thinking being (as man) is itself likewise an object of the outer senses. Strawson approvingly quotes this remark from Kant and uses it to show that the notion of self is an autobiography. For Strawson this empirical self supplies 'an absolutely firm basis

73 Ibid. p.163.
for a genuinely object-referring use of personal names, and of personal pronouns, in sentences in which states of consciousness, inner experiences, are ascribed to the objects referred to by names or pronouns. If so, then we can confidently talk in terms of something perceptibly (though relatively) permanent, a persistent and identifiable object of intuition — a subject of autobiography — a man or a person, to whom a series of experiences can be ascribed and at the same time it occupies a position in the spatio-temporal framework.

The Cartesian illusion was that no criterion of personal identity was involved in case of immediate self ascriptions of current experiences. Against this Strawson says that reference to the empirically identifiable subject of experiences is not lost, rather, in such cases it is redundant. But, then, the use of 'I' in such cases issues forth from the mouth of a recognizable and identifiable person whether it is used publically or in a soliloquy. What Kant exposed was the purely inner reference for 'I', the supposed immaterial subject or soul or ego substance. For Schlick and Wittgenstein, in such cases, experiences have no owners. Strawson has shown that this no-ownership theory is internally incoherent. It is incoherent to maintain that there is no subject of experiences.

75 P.F. Strawson, Bounds of Sense, p.164.
76 P.F. Strawson, Individuals, pp.96-97.
This referential use of 'I' must be treated with caution. Strawson says: 'If we try to abstract this use, to shake off the connection with ordinary criteria of personal identity... what we really do is simply to deprive our use of 'I' of any referential force whatever.' This would amount to what Kant says as 'consciousness in general'. If, however, we continue to think in this line, we will have nothing more than a bare 'I'-reference leading to the Cartesian position – a pure, individual, immaterial substance.

This note of caution seems to have been forgotten by Anscombe. According to Anscombe the expression 'I' has a use of which it would be proper to say that it is not a referring expression. It does not name the person who uses it. 'I' implies 'self-consciousness' which is 'something real'. It is distinct from proper names in that 'self consciousness' is absent from proper names. A proper name is available for public use. Therefore, 'I' is not a referring expression. If it is used to refer to anything, it cannot be anything more than self-consciousness. In the sense of self-consciousness, she says, we have a guarantee against two kinds of failure of reference—the lack of a referent and the risk of wrong reference. But the way 'I' gets a reference is different from

77 P.F. Strawson, Bounds of Sense, p.166.
78 G.E.M. Anscombe, 'The First Person' op.cit.
'A' (a proper name) getting a reference, 'I' is governed by two meaning rules: one, which makes it refer to whatever it is whose self-consciousness it expresses which, at least, is factually and contingently this human being, the person. And the other rule is one which binds it directly, linguistically, as 'A' is bound to the human being who uses it.

J.L. Mackie, commenting on these rules, says that there is an over determination of meaning by such initially divergent rules, but as the rules contingently converse in the end, it does not cause any trouble. According to Mackie our ordinary concept of the subject of experiences, the referent of 'I' in self-ascriptions of thoughts and feelings is none other than the Cartesian ego. But there is another sense in which the referent of 'I' is the human body.

According to Strawson there is a third sense in which ascriptions such as 'I am writing' can be predicated. It can neither be predicated of the Cartesian ego, nor of the body, but a compound of the two. Hence 'I' is ambiguous between three senses. But the ambiguity of senses is quite implausible for

we are ordinarily content to operate with a concept of ourselves and other people as beings who are both corporeal and conscious; and it is to such beings that

we ordinarily employ the personal pronouns to refer.\(^2\)

To bring a contrast between two contending positions, we regard Strawson as concerned with our actual or ordinary conceptual structure but Anscombe, Mackie and others are prepared to accept and accommodate such conceptual possibilities as the imaginative exercise which are known as 'feats of transference' and 'disembodied existence'. From these possibilities Mackie draws the conclusion that we can not make sense of them without making use of a Cartesian ego as the referent of 'I'. Mackie's argument is that because we do indulge in such imaginings we must make room for those by revising our ordinary concept in a Cartesian direction.

Strawson comments\(^3\) that 'feats of transference' have been elaborately dealt by Bernard Williams without using the concept of Cartesian ego. What Mackie does is to see the inference from 'I can imagine such and such' to 'such and such is there' as valid. But there is no such interpretation of the premise such that it is true and it makes the inference valid.

Commenting on disembodied existence,\(^4\) Strawson says it is more complicated. It is not a natural or real possibility.

\(^{20}\) P. F. Strawson, 'Reply to Mackie' _Philosophical Subjects_ op. cit., p. 269 (Italics mine).

\(^{31}\) ibid. p. 269-73.

\(^{32}\) ibid. p. 270.
For Strawson, therefore, it is entirely devoid of practical interest. Strawson says:

If this supposition (disembodied existence) I have described is coherent, then anyone who is prepared to construe the notion of 'his' survival of bodily death in its terms may correctly regard it as a logical possibility. Let anyone who will, take such comfort in the thought as he may.\(^{83}\)

2.6 Proper Names

While Strawson emphatically denies that proper names are truncated descriptions, he accords definite descriptions a place among the various expressions we use to identify a particular. This seems somewhat a very odd position. Let us examine Strawson's position.

Strawson examines the conditions under which names are given to particulars. Among the conditions he finds three of them to be of paramount importance. The conditions are:\(^{84}\)

1. that there is a circle or group of language-users among whom there is a frequent need or occasion to make identifying reference to a particular,

2. that there is an interest in the continuing identity of the particular from occasion to occasion of reference,

\(^{83}\)Ibid. p.274.

\(^{84}\)P.J. Strawson, *Subject and Predicate in Logic and Grammar*, p.42.
(3) that there is no short description or title of that particular which, because, say, of some fact about the relation of that particular to the members of that circle, is always available and natural within the circle as a constant means of identifying reference to that particular.

Strawson says that in a small community such as a family the general kind name of a particular serves the purpose of identifying reference. Such a kind name is preceded by a definite article 'the'. For example, 'the car', 'the kitchen' will normally serve perfectly well for identification. Again a general name that indicates position in an organized community, for example, Commanding Officer or Quartermaster in a regiment, Master in an Oxford College, King or President in a state serve the purpose of identification. In such a community and for its members these general names will be the 'salient' or 'the uppermost' identifying facts about the persons. But because in these cases a short description is available for use within the same community there is no name-needing situation.

But when there is a transition from these mini-names to full-dress names, the situation changes. In course of a man's life, he stands in many relations, in many positions which shows that for different speakers-about-him, at different times, there are different identifying facts available to them for the purpose of identifying reference. In such cases there
is no overriding description which satisfies their common referring needs, in the way 'the car' and 'the C.G.' do. Hence, Strawson thinks,

It is convenient to have in circulation in such groups a tag, a designation which does not depend for its referential or identifying force upon any such particular position or relation, which preserves the referential force through its object's changes of position or relation and has the same referential force for communicators who know the object in different connections and for whom quite different descriptions would be usepermost. It is convenient, in fact, to have personal names; it is natural, given the character of our interest in, and needs to communicate identifyingly about, human beings, that we (i.e. any particular one of us) should use such names for some human beings to refer to, though not for others. 85

In other words, for any human being there is likely to be a group or groups of communicators—about—him such that there is for that group or groups a need for a name for that human being,

Again, in a group of persons united exclusively by 'ties of personal knowledge or intimacy', only the personal name is relevant. Also in a group of persons who both stand in some set of public or official relations to each other, and are also bound by ties of personal knowledge and intimacy, it would be unnatural to refer, in their discourse about each other, by position. It would be natural for them to use personal names. But so far their official relation goes, and in a situation where their official relation counts, the

85Ibid. p.46.
members, in addressing to each other, might use official names. It would be unnatural, 'suggestive of irony', to use official names in a discourse that presupposes personal knowledge and intimacy.

Now, for identifying purposes, Strawson's notion of identifying reference is tied to identifying knowledge in possession of the audience. According to Strawson,

The need for a background of identifying knowledge seems nowhere more evident than in the case of names, though it is hard to state formally and generally what the character of this background must be.86

...that is required for successful communication where a proper name is used is that the hearer and the speaker should each understand the name as having a certain unique reference and that this unique reference should be the same for each of them, as used in that particular communication. According to Strawson this is a **defining requirement** for successful use of the name.

This defining requirement involves that both participants should have in common knowledge at least one **non-name-dependent identifying description** of the person referred to. But this identifying knowledge may be minimal in case of perceptual identification or demonstrative identification and may be maximal through all degrees of richness in case of identification.
that takes place when the object is remotely placed in space and time. "People who live in larger communities have more complicated referring needs."\(^{37}\)

In case of people who lived in medieval villages, "the river", "the church" used to be sufficient for identification. But for people who live in larger communities the only general available form for a pure, place-name free description would be that of a description relating the item concerned to some item which would be demonstratively indicated in a communicational setting. The other system available, without explicit relational description and without reliance on names, is a system of map references or some global coordinate system. These systems, of course, generate singular terms. But such singular terms are not names for proper names, according to Brown, "owe their referential utility to the complexity or varicosness, or both of their descriptive hinterlands."\(^{36}\) The singular terms generated by map references or any other coordinate system have their referential utility only in connection with one particular description, peculiar to the system of generation. As they do not owe their referential utility to the complexity or varicosness of descriptions, the singular terms only serve as identification

\(^{36}\) Ibid. p. 50.

\(^{37}\) Ibid. p. 50.
marks and that too in that system. The difference is that
the proper names not only serve as identification marks, they
are peculiarly free from being tied to the system of their
generation and hence free from any fixed conventional relation
to the system. There is no constant, fixed and conventional
informative value attached to proper names.

Even if a person may bear two names, as in the case of
an identity statement, the cluster of identifying knowledge
that the names 'invoke' may be different in case of different
audiences.

But the problem is about 'the constant informative value,
if any, which it has for everyone who learns anything from
it.' 89 But as 'what goes for one name for a given person
goes for any other name for that person' and the proper names
are referring expressions for particulars, the two names must
mean the same, hence all we get is noninformation. It is
rather a proposition about expressions. Strawson says, in
fact, such views have been maintained. But then expressions
do not introduce themselves; they introduce terms. In that
sense, such identity statements would be tautology, if true,
and self contradictory, if false. Now if we combine this
view with the first answer then we can say that we learn only
the empirical fact that the two names apply to the same thing.

89 Ibid. p. 53.
According to Strawson there is a discomfort still. The source of the discomfort may be located about the content of the statement. But that is a wrong place according to Strawson. The discomfort is due to the pressure of the parallel drawn with ordinary one- or two-place predication. Strawson offers two models\(^9\) to distinguish ordinary subject-predicate propositions from identity statements.

According to Strawson in one model we are to picture a map of the identifying historical or geographical knowledge. On this knowledge-map we represent the unity of every cluster of that identifying knowledge by a dot. The dot represents the particular and identifying knowledge can be written adjacent to that dot. Now we can draw lines that represent the various propositions which a man is able to affirm from his own identifying knowledge about the particular. Some lines will join to other dots, for example, in the sentence 'Caesar loved Brutus' Caesar and Brutus will be represented by two dots and the line between them will represent 'love'. Some lines will join to other dots which will not connect to other dots but they originate from the dot. Such a line will represent reflexively relational propositions, for example, 'Caesar loved himself.' Some lines will be there which will not connect to other dots but they originate from the dot. Such a line will represent non-relational propositions like

\(^9\)Ibid. p.54, p.56.
'Caesar was bald.' These lines represent new information that a hearer gets. But there will be a line which will not originate, as it were, from the dot. This will represent an identity statement which only introduces two names. We can if we please, write the other name adjacent to the original name represented by the dot. Now this is how an identity statement is informative. According to Strawson the name adjacent to the dot will replace the original name. But if we still insist on putting dots for names then the two dots will approach each other and merge or coalesce into one.

Strawson offers another model. In this model man is regarded in part as a machine for receiving and storing of knowledge, of which, of course, he has some identifying knowledge. The machine is to contain cards; one card for each identifying knowledge. On receipt of an ordinary predication one card is brought out and with the information entered, it is returned to the stack. In case of a relational proposition, two cards are brought out, the information is entered and returned to the stack. On receipt of an identity statement invoking two such clusters, the cards containing two such appropriate clusters are withdrawn and a new card is prepared where the sum of the informations is entered and posted in the stack. The two original cards, as it were, are to be thrown away.

Strawson does not claim any perfection for the models. After all, these are models. The point of the models is to bring out
the difference between ordinary predication and identity statement.

For quine the role of singular terms being superfluous the cluster of identifying knowledge associated with the use of singular terms remains unwanted. The linguistic rules for the use of Cicero and the linguistic rule for the use of Tully are such that both refer to the same object. Hence the truth of such identity statements can be established by an appeal to the linguistic rules.

This is a clear divergence from Frege's attempted solution to identity statements. Proper names have not only reference but sense. In a statement like 'Hesperus is phosphorus' the reference is same but the two names differ in sense. Hence 'sense' can be said to be identifying knowledge in possession of the speaker and hearer, of course, in Strawserian terminology.

Recently McDowell has argued that no sense is involved in the use of proper names. The so-called descriptive conventions used in teaching of the use of proper names do not appeal to identifying knowledge of the object, rather the description 'Hesperus was visible above the elm tree' is not a characteristic of the object but an association of the object with certain other things which might properly be called accidents, in no way connected with the object. Once we learn the use of proper names, however we learn that, these learning
procedures no longer form the rule of use of proper names. We forget them or ignore them once we remember with what object the name is associated. Hence proper names have reference but no sense. The rule of language use for reference does not appeal to the sense that an object may have had. What a speaker may have is a set of beliefs, possibly sketchy, possibly false about the object; not that he must know truths about it, sufficiently full to be true of it alone, and thus capable of generating a definite description which could replace the used name in the relevant clause of the theory of sense.*

McDowell's was a reaction against Dummett's reconstruction of Frege's notion of sense. According to Dummett's reconstruction Frege's own view about sense was 'the sense of a name is a criterion for or a way of recognizing or identifying an object as its bearer.' At the same time Dummett maintained that the point of the notion of sense is to capture (in part) a notion of meaning the way it is a theory of understanding. A theory of understanding demands that a sentence represent a state of affairs or show 'how things are' without any via media of what beliefs a particular speaker might have about what words bring into picture.


92 Michael Dummett, Frege: Philosophy of Language, pp.95ff.
According to Davidson\textsuperscript{93} the very notion of reference involves a dilemma. On the one hand a theory of meaning has to give a central place to the notion of reference, to the notion of how words and objects are connected, i.e. their relationship; on the other hand, there are 'weighty reasons' for supposing that reference cannot be explained or analyzed in terms more primitive or behavioural. Davidson finds a solution to this dilemma in Tarski's theory of truth that characterizes what would be true recursively by appeal to each and every sentence. In a way (to be discussed later) a reality may be represented without reference but the notion of truth and truth-conditions which Davidson and his followers employ is not unproblematic.

According to Davidson the two theories of proper names the 'descriptive' and the 'causal' are unsatisfactory. The essential question is 'whether it is the or at least one, place where there is direct contact between linguistic theory and events, actions or objects described in non-linguistic terms.'\textsuperscript{94} If we take 'truth' as the central notion as is required in a linguistic theory then the notion of reference drops out. It plays no essential role in explaining the relation between language and reality.\textsuperscript{95}

\textsuperscript{93} Donald Davidson, 'Reality Without Reference', Reference, Truth and Reality ed. Flatts, pp.131-140.
\textsuperscript{94} Ibid. p.134.
\textsuperscript{95} Ibid. p.146.
There is an attempt by Colin McGinn to present the notion of reference as a central notion in a theory of language. McGinn's notion of reference parts company with the two acknowledged theories of reference - 'the description theory' and 'the causal theory'. According to McGinn the mechanism of singular reference has a two-tiered structure. At the lower tier we have the primary modes of reference, chiefly indexicals. General definite descriptions are to be accounted for in a manner borrowed from the indexicals. Built upon that tier we have the names: their rules of reference recapitulate those meant for the basic referential devices plus the principle of linkage. McGinn says:

The mechanism of reference being what they are, we should look, not to the causal or to the fitting relations a speaker has with objects in his environment, but to the spatio-temporal relations he enjoys - combining with the linguistic meaning of the term will yield the speaker's semantic referent.

According to McGinn the work of hooking language to the world is carried out wholly at the first tier and ascertaining what 'links' a word has with other expressions used by the speaker or with those in his linguistic community belongs to the second tier. Names and descriptions are 'perceptual' notions in the description theory and 'causal-genetic' notions in the causal theory. But, McGinn says, actually these names are a derivative mode of reference. Those derive from indexicals. Indexicals

have a primary mode of occurrence so far as reference is concerned for they invoke spatio-temporal relations in locating the particular.

McGinn commenting on Strawson's method says that Strawson in Chapter I of *Individuals* tends to emphasize the importance of indexical terms for places and times rather than explicitly offering a spatio-temporal theory of the mechanism of reference. Nevertheless I think his discussion can be seen as complementing my own suggestions. 98

The divergent views on the subject of reference mainly centre around two notions - the notion of an individual who bears the name and the notion of sense. A name stands for an individual if it is to be considered as a simple symbol linguistic in character. But when we consider its function in language-use it does not represent itself. It introduces a particular or whatever that can be given a name. Once we come to the 'particular' we forget the symbol and attend to the object. Naturally those particulars bring with them a flood of qualities and relations the way they are or the way they are related to others. Now it may not be possible for one to know some of them which are in a way peculiar to a particular and determine it in a unique way, then the cluster of identifying knowledge is enough to introduce the particular in question.

On the other hand those who maintain that there is a separate rule of use for the proper names, they forget that in ordinary language the precise sense of space and time that generate singular terms for use within the community trained in or acquainted with the system, is not available for use to all the members constituting the community of language users at large. Places and periods replace the precise sense of space and time. The precise sense of constitutive characteristics as for example 'atomic numbers' attached to different elements in a classification or periodic table, is not available for use to all members. Hence 'the possibly sketchy and possibly false' beliefs take the burden of identifying the particular or fixing the reference to the bearer of the name.

2.7 Descriptive and Causal Theories of Reference

The distinction between descriptive and causal theories is of a recent origin and due to Kripke. Kripke's problem was to see whether there was any necessity involved in naming. The problem arises in the context of an analysis of material body as a logical construction out of sense-data or out of a set of predicates with which we are directly 'acquainted'.

It was long back when substance was regarded as a container of qualities or characteristics, and relations. Apart from these qualities the notion of substance was an empty one. 'I know not what it is.' There is a good deal of controversy whether proper names are to be regarded as
connotative or not. Empiricist philosophers found it hard to maintain the unity and identity of material bodies, not to talk of the doubtful concept of soul or spiritual substance. The neo-empiricists or the logical positivists found it easy to maintain that our ordinary concepts are subject to a kind of verification-principle and hence are, on analysis, found to be nothing but a construction of what we are immediately acquainted with.

But the problem was how to come to our ordinary concepts from the given characteristics? Unless the qualities uniquely determine the object, a passage from the object to qualities though available, it is not available from qualities to the object. The only hope is the 'relations'. Our precise sense of spatio-temporal relations might be of immense help. But unless they are aided by some characteristics known to be essentially connected with the object, it would be problematic.

But the case of proper names, as we see from the discussion, is peculiarly different.

Russell believed that the logically proper names which constitute the referring element of a logical-atomic sentence abbreviate descriptions with which we are 'acquainted'.

Wittgenstein prefers to say that a name is a 'family of descriptions'. He invites our attention to what the use

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of name 'Voses' calls for. Wittgenstein says:

Has the name 'Voses' got a fixed and unequivocal use for me in all possible cases? \[100\]

Frege attempted to give some 'loose criteria' for the use of proper names. 'In the case of genuine proper names like "Aristotle" opinions as regards their sense may diverge. \[101\] We may say Plato's disciple and the teacher of Alexander, the Great. Another may accept 'Aristotle was born in Stagira'. As long as the nominatum remains the same, the fluctuations in sense are tolerable. Frege says:

The sense of a proper name is grasped by everyone who knows the language or the totality of designations of which the proper name is a part; this however illuminates the nominatum, if there is any, in a quite one-sided fashion. \[102\]

However Frege does not mean sense to be confused with images and picturisations. In order to facilitate brief and precise formulations, Frege says:

A proper name (word, sign, sign compound, expression) expresses its sense, and designates or signifies its nominatum. We let a sign express its sense and designate its nominatum. \[103\]

Searle has popularized the loose criteria for the use of a proper name. For him proper name is a peg where the

100 Ibid. p. 79.
102 Ibid. p. 86.
103 Ibid. p. 86.
descriptions hang. But what descriptions hang there, there is no fixity about it. According to Searle it would be:

Why do we have proper names at all? Obviously to refer to individuals. 'Yes, but descriptions could do that for us.' But only at the cost of specifying identity conditions every time reference is made. Suppose we agree to drop 'Aristotle' and use, say, 'the teacher of Alexander' then it is a necessary truth that the man referred to is Alexander's teacher — but it is a contingent fact that Aristotle ever went into pedagogy (though I am suggesting that it is a necessary fact that Aristotle has the logical sum, inclusive disjunction, of properties commonly attributed to him).

It seems there is almost a family resemblance among the so-called description theorists. Where they meet is that a proper name stands for a family of descriptions that includes idiosyncratic as well as essential properties. The distinction is not clearly drawn except in Frege's notion of sense.

Kripke says that Kyle saw the difference but somehow glossed over the difference and believed that the idiosyncratic attributes are what descriptions signify. Thus Kyle says:

A descriptive phrase is not a proper name, and the way in which the subject of attributes which it denotes is denoted by it is not that subject's being called 'the so and so' but in possessing and being as a fact the sole possessor of the idiosyncratic attribute which is what the descriptive phrase signifies.


Now there is a different line of approach made by Kripke. His problem was to see whether there was any necessity involved in naming. Names are given to material bodies, persons or places. Some of the objects named are natural kinds. Natural kinds are defined by their essential properties. Essential properties are thought to be identical across possible worlds. But possible worlds are stipulated, not discovered through powerful telescopes.\textsuperscript{106} The usual notion of trans-world identity demands that we give purely qualitative and sufficient conditions for someone being something (any, Nixon). If we cannot imagine a possible world in which Nixon does not have a property, then it is a necessary condition of someone being Nixon.\textsuperscript{107} Now a 'rigid designator' can be used to one if it designates the same object in any possible world, a 'non-rigid or accidental designator' may be used for one if that is not the case.\textsuperscript{108} When we consider the properties of an existent, we can consider rigid and accidental designators. But when we come to a case of necessary existence, the requirement will be 'strongly rigid'. Proper names are rigid designators. But trans-world identity is not to be used to make sense of rigid designators. Reverse is the case. Since


\textsuperscript{107} \textit{ibid.} p.266

\textsuperscript{108} \textit{ibid.} pp.269-70
we have an object or particular we can determine what necessary and sufficient conditions it must have for trans-world identity. Those that stand the test are to be recognized as constituting the rigid designators of the thing or person.

According to Kripke the notion of a particular is important in identification. A thing has properties. It is not devoid of properties nor is it a bundle of properties. Nor can it be identified with a subset of essential properties for that matter. If we are given a set of qualities then it will not necessarily designate the same object in possible worlds, since other objects might have had the given properties in other possible worlds. Hence what use we have of a description is to fix the referent. 'The only use of the description will then have to pick out which men we mean to refer."

Now the central question seems to be whether we need all descriptions, essential and idiosyncratic together which will fix the reference or some of them will do. According to Strawson it is not necessary that the hearer should know all the empirical facts that a particular presupposes. It is enough

109 Ibid. p. 272.
110 Ibid. p. 276.
if he knows some of the facts about the particular in question. But those facts must be such that they apply to that particular uniquely. These descriptions may not exhaust the entire list of descriptions that a particular may have. But they serve to identify the object. These descriptions may not be constitutively connected with the object. But they are utilized for identification.

Kripke maintains a similar view when he maintains that a definite description is used only to fix the reference. But once it is fixed up, the particular rigidly designates the properties it has. Kripke says:

What may be the case is that we fix the reference of the term 'Cicero' by use of some descriptive term phrase, such as the 'author of those works'. But once we have this reference fixed, we then use the name 'Cicero' rigidly to designate the man who, in fact, we have identified by his authorship of these works.\textsuperscript{111} Kripko continues, such examples are not grounds for thinking that identity statements are contingent. Kripke says:

To take them as such grounds is to misconstrue the relation between a name and a description used to fix its reference to take them as synonyms. Even if we fix the reference of such a name as 'Cicero' as the man who wrote such and such works, in speaking of counter-factual situations, when we speak of Cicero, we do not speak of whoever in such counter-factual situations would have written such and such works, but rather of Cicero, whom we have identified by the contingent property that he is the man who, in fact, that is, in actual world, wrote certain works.\textsuperscript{112}


\textsuperscript{112} Ibid. p.157.
Hence according to Kripke the proper names as they are handed down to us are to stand for all the designators that it may have. It is not to be treated as synonymous with the identifying description that a speaker uses in order to fix the reference. According to Kripke identification is an epistemological notion and it has nothing to do with ontological issue as to what properties an object stands for. Whatever identifying knowledge or belief we speak of may not even be a part of the rigid designators that a name is. To take the identifying description as a part of the notion of the particular in counter-factual conditions by this identifying description would result in several particulars responding or answering to the description, hence it would result in a massive reduplication of particulars in Strawsonian terminology.

What has been known as Kripke's causal theory of reference is based upon this notion of a proper name being a rigid designator and this rigid designator peculiar to a particular is to be used on various occasions of reference. The requirement on the part of language users is that they must clearly intend the notion of a name to be used as a rigid designator of qualities without altering them as they like. Kripke says:

A rough statement of the theory might be the following: An initial baptism takes place. Here the object may be named by extension or the reference of the name may be fixed by description. When the name is 'passed from link to link' the receiver of the name must, I think,
intend when he learns it to use it with the same reference as the man from whom he learnt it.\footnote{113}{Saul Kripke, 'Naming and Necessity', \textit{op. cit.}, p.302.}

Kripke remarks in parentheses that 'failure to keep the reference fixed accounts for the divergence of present uses of "Santa Claus" from the alleged original use.'\footnote{114}{\textit{Ibid.}, p.302.}

It seems Kripke's causal theory of reference has dispensed altogether with the notion of reference that we ordinarily have. Ordinarily when we say 'John is wise' we mean to refer to one particular, that he has a number of qualities as we have. When somebody fails to connect John to his stock of knowledge or if he does not have it already, we introduce John by saying 'the man who broke the bank at Monte Carlo'. If the hearer has some knowledge about what is Monte Carlo, where it is and some knowledge about the incident, then it is sufficiently introduced to him. If he somehow fails to grasp the description because he could not connect Monte Carlo, then we give another description that might possibly be there in his stock of knowledge. Hence descriptions are used to fix up the reference but then when the hearer is introduced to the particular as 'the man...' the hearer knows no more than what he learns on this occasion. We do not require, nor is it required to say 'John' whatever that may mean or might mean to its baptizors. In fact, the baptizors...
when they re a the ran as John know very little as to what
attributed the ran so named would possess. All that the
beptigers did by giving a name was fixing up the continuity
of the particulars to be used as a point of reference. By
saying that a name is a rigid designator, Kripke seems to be
concerned only to distinguish it in counter-factual conditions
so that its unity and identity stands out clearly. It does
not purport to throw any light on how it is to be identified.
Kripke's notion will be clear if we remember

This does not eliminate the notion of reference; on
the contrary, it takes the notion of intending to use
the same reference as a given. This is an appeal to
the initial baptism which is explained in terms either
of fixing a reference by a description, or extension.113

The crucial question, therefore, is whether descriptions which
are used to identify a particular or fix the reference should
be regarded as constitutive conditions of the particular or
they are to be regarded as epistemic notions having nothing to
do with the ontological issue of determining what properties
a particular or an object has. In this connection let us see
whether Strawson can be regarded as a description theorist.

2.6 Is Strawson a Description-Theorist?

It was first of all Kripke who classified Strawson as a
description-theorist. According to Kripke 'there is a popular

113AlK, p.302.
modern substitute for the theory of Frege and Russell; it is
adopted by such a strong critic of many views of Frege and
Russell, especially the latter, as Strawson. Kripke
refers to Strawson's views in Individuals (chapter 6). Now
elaborating the substitute Kripke says:

The substitute is that, although a name is not a dis-
guised description it either abbreviates or anyway
reference is determined by, some cluster of descriptions.

Kripke's difficulty with such a view was that if a name\(\text{N}_\text{strawson}\) is defined as a cluster of descriptions or that reference is
determined by some cluster of descriptions, then there could
not be any counter-factual situation in which he did not do
any of those things. According to Kripke, therefore, even if
'Strawson' for an instance, did not do something, e.g. write
Individuals, he would remain Strawson. His writing Individuals
is a contingent fact which, in that case, would not have been
incorporated in 'Strawson', the proper name. But supposing
Strawson is introduced by a definite description such as 'the
writer of Individuals', then it would be wrong to assert that
'the author of Individuals did not write Individuals.' Hence
there is a distinction that cannot be obliterated between
names and descriptions. Proper names are not identical with.

\[\text{116 Ibid. p.278.}\]

\[\text{117 Ibid. p.278.}\]
descriptions, definite or indefinite whatever. In other
words the Russellian theory that it is a truncated description
and Fregean theory that proper names have sense besides their
normal reference are description theories of proper names.

Strawson in Chapter 6 of Individuals was concerned with
laying down the conditions of introducing a particular into a
proposition and also into a discourse. He speaks of particu-
lars being introduced by demonstratives, definite descriptions,
and proper names. One of the conditions of successful communi-
cation is that when the speaker introduces a particular through
a proper name and in case the proper name is not taken up by
the hearer i.e. in case the hearer fails to identify the
particular in spite of the name then the speaker has the
responsibility of substituting the name by a definite descrip-
tion. This is what Strawson says as 'proper names being substi-
tutable on demand.'

Let us now consider the situation in which, according to
Strawson, 'Socrates' is introduced. Both the speaker and the
hearer, in order that conditions for term introduction are
satisfied, must know some distinguishing fact or facts about
Socrates. The facts need not be the same in case of both the
speaker and the hearer. How those are the facts which each is
prepared to cite to indicate whom he now means, or understands,
by 'Socrates'. The facts about Socrates that different members
of the linguistic group who use the name know, may be
different from occasion to occasion of use, though they
use the name with the same reference. All the facts known
to all the members may form a composite list. According
to Strawson 'it would be too much to say that the term
introduction within the group by means of the name requires
that there should exist just one person of whom all the
propositions in the composite description are true. But it
would not be too much to say that it requires that there
should exist one and only one person of whom some reasonable
proportion of these propositions is true.'\textsuperscript{118} Strawson says
it is impossible to give a straight-forward answer whether a
particular porposition is true of Socrates or not. It is
true, perhaps, of Socrates\textsubscript{1} and not of Socrates\textsubscript{2}. It is
neither true nor false of Socrates \textit{simpliciter}, for, it turns
out, there is no such person.\textsuperscript{119} In face of such difficulties
Strawson refines the notion of presupposition. Now the propo-
sitions making the composite description will form a pre-
supposition-set. As we are approaching from the side of
presupposition set, Strawson says, 'neither the limits of
such a set, nor the question of what constitutes a reasonable,
or sufficient, proportion of its members will in general be

\textsuperscript{118} P.R. Strawson, \textit{Individuals}, p.191.

\textsuperscript{119} \textit{Ibid.}, p.192.
precisely fixed for any putatively torn-introducing proper name. From the standpoint of proper names it is an efficiency which they enjoy i.e. proper names cannot be identified with any set of descriptions. However, the particulars, such as persons and places which have space-temporal continuity, can always be identified or specified or introduced by definite descriptions.

From such a view about proper names and definite descriptions, it is not clear, how Kripke arrives at 'cluster of descriptions' theory to be attributed to Strawson.

According to Kripke the notion of a particular is important in identification. A thing is not a bundle of qualities nor is it a bare particular, devoid of qualities. A thing has properties. If a thing is not to be identified with properties then the question arises with what it can be identified? Kripke nicely puts it thus:

i have the table in my hands, I can point to it and when I ask whether it might have been in another room, I am talking by definition, about it. I do not have to identify it after seeing it through telescope. If I am talking about it, I am talking about it, in the same way as when I say that our hands might have been painted green, I have stipulated that I am talking about greenness.*

Now if we compare this view with that of Strawson, we find that for Strawson, states of consciousness that a person has
are not independently identifiable. It is the person who bears a name. States of consciousness are to be identified as belonging to the person. So also in case of material bodies, states and conditions are to be identified as belonging to bodies. Strawson's reasons are that states, conditions, processes, actions and events do not enjoy a type-homogeneous framework of reference. Only that which has spatio-temporal continuity and only that which satisfies the conditions of reidentifiability can be identified or specified, and it is specified through properties it has or through the identifying facts known to the users. In case of our day-to-day use of commodities, they will pass as common knowledge whereas in case of persons and places, as their name-bearing is significant, they will not imply any common knowledge. The role of proper names, therefore, according to Strawson, is to pack unto themselves whatever is known to their users. Perhaps that is their sense.

What needs a closer observation is the difference between descriptions which constitutively belong to a particular thing and the identifying descriptions that can be given by a speaker just to draw the attention of the hearer in order to go on to speak something about the particular. This identifying task can be performed by even a demonstrative. But in no sense a demonstrative can be said to belong to a particular thing. The demonstratives are used like linguistic pointers, they do
not represent themselves but represent others. Now the attributes which can be said to belong to a particular thing, place or person have a loose end. There are essential attributes and accidental attributes. Traditionally the essential attributes constituted the definition of an expression that used to stand for a thing as a class. The thing as a class was taken to be a substance wherefrom, on analysis, the attributes followed. But the attributes were only the essential ones which were packed into the term. It was difficult to decide whether an individual, on the basis of possession of essential properties, belonged to a class or not. Though a normal member possessed essential properties, there were many others which somehow seemed to lack one or of them. The problem was how to include those individuals which did not possess a particular essential attribute either in the required degree or in kind. A plausible alternative was that a particular, whether as belonging to a class or individually, should be identified. This notion of identification was naturally free, therefore, from summing up all properties that can be said to belong to it. But it does not, however preclude the possibility of descriptions or attributes being used in identification. If we inquire into what Strawson means by 'description' we find:

I use the word 'description' in an extended, though philosophically familiar sense. A description of a thing need not tell one what it is like; 'The city
I spent last year in' might be an identifying description of Chicago.'121

Further Strawson says:

'Preparedness to substitute a description for a name' is not to be taken literally for 'people are not ready articulators of what they know'.122

In 'On Referring' Strawson says:

'We do not, and we cannot, while referring, attain the point of complete explicitness at which the referring function is no longer performed.'123

In a language where all expressions are well defined once, the problem of identification does not arise. There is a simple conversion from the expression to its defined equivalent and from the defined equivalent to the term or expression. But in case of natural language it is difficult to have such a simple method.

There is a point in calling a theory 'description theory'. It is a logical point. If a theory only appeals to simply a cluster of descriptions or attributes without in any way presupposing the unity and identity of the particular, as in the case of British empiricists like Berkeley and Hume, then such a theory can be called description theory. The philosophers who advocate for their philosophical purposes that material bodies or persons lack the conditions of unity and identity, have a belief or a strong tendency to believe that they are only descriptions.

121 P.F. Strawson, Individuals, p.152.
122 loc. cit.
There is also a point in calling certain descriptions 'referentially used' or 'attributively used'. There is also a point in calling a certain view 'sense theory' or 'no-sense theory' of proper names. Whether proper names have connotation or not has drawn the attention of philosophers since J.S. Mill. But the way Kripke speaks of a description theory, it seems, it does not serve the logical purpose for which he wanted to draw it. His purpose was to find out whether there was any necessary connection between descriptions and the proper name. His conclusion was that proper names, in bearing the burden of distinguishing the persons in question, do not indicate that they can be substituted for descriptions. Proper names stand as rigid designators in transworld identification. The baptizers know the designators when they introduced the names into language and the users of language or the users of the name must borrow or must have the intention to borrow the designators from the baptizers i.e., they must use names with the same reference. This is possible only if there is incorporated into the names a spatio-temporal continuity. Even though the notion of spatio-temporal continuity in case of material bodies and persons is not unproblematic, it serves the purpose of thought and talk. The very idea that A will remain A through-out the discourse or conversation is a fundamental law of thought. Only the sceptics doubted the unity and identity of material bodies etc.
But a sympathetic reading of their systems shows that they were only showing the problems involved in the fundamental principles of empiricism.

As the referring expressions and predicative expressions are combined in a basic propositional form, let us see what this basic combination involves as to the meaning and truth of what is asserted in such propositions.