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Unification and Emptiness in Predication. The Stoics, Frege, Strawson, Quine, Nishida; History of Logic under a Topological Enlightenment

Does the *subject* unify properties and attributes, as in a collection? It is rather defined in the "division" (διαιρέσις) that leads to his "definition" and through the "differentiation" from other subjects[1]. Is it the *copula* then? Here is "the problem of predication": in the proposition "the tree is green", how can the copula "is" *unify* subject and predicate?

> "If, in a proposition, the subject and the predicate are considered as concepts of the same nature, and particularly as indicating some classes of objects, then we will find a great uneasiness to understand the nature of the link indicated by the copula. If they are different classes, each of them subsists apart, outside from the other, and they cannot link. If they are identical, we restrict ourselves to judgment of identity. The link of participation Plato had found, and the one of inclusion Aristotle preferred, were possible solutions to these difficulties. However, such solutions that, for the Moderns, concern only thoughts, had for the Ancient, an unavoidable metaphysical impact. Terms of the judgment indicate indeed not only some thoughts, but moreover some real beings. Yet if, according to the Stoics, all reality takes place in individuals, then such a theory cannot be accepted. As a matter of fact each individual not only possesses, but is a particular idea (ἰδίως ποιόν) that cannot be reduced to any other. These realities would participate to each other or be included in one another, if two individuals were indiscernible, or if one individual could hold in itself more than one proper quality, which is absurd. Two realities cannot coincide"[2].

Coincidence between subject and predicate could only dwell at *another level than the "real"*. But if relations are *unreal* how should they connect anything at all?

I. Unreality of the logical predicate: a possibility for conjunction inside language.

> "Some Megarics refused to state judgments under their common form by using the copula *is*. Thus, we should not say: "the tree is green", but: "the tree greenizes". The Stoics precisely show us in what sense this constitutes a solution to the problem of predication. When we

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[1] Here the "unity" is secondly produced through differentiation. See our PhD dissertation *Nishida Kitarō, une philosophie de l'unification (NK)*, (Paris: Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, November 2005), 955-961.

[2] Emile BREHIER (1876-1952), *La théorie des incorporels dans l'ancien Stoïcisme (TIAS)* (Paris: Vrin, 1997), 20. Translations are my own. Nishida (1870-1945) had read and put marks on this book, which is preserved at the Faculty of Letters in Kyoto University, and is classified under the number 156 in Masao YAMASHITA (Ed.) 山下正男編『西田幾多郎全蔵書目録』[List of Nishida Kitaro's complete collection of books (Cat.)] (Kyoto: Institute of Cultural Studies of Kyoto University, 1982), 22.

neglect the copula *is* and express the subject by using a verb where the epithet [in "the *green tree*"] is not emphasized as an attribute [in "the tree is *green*], the attribute, considered as the verb in its entirety, appears then not as expressing a concept (an object or a class of objects), but rather a fact or an event. Ever since the proposition does not require any more the reciprocal penetration of two objects, impenetrable by nature, but does nothing more than express the aspect of an object, performing or undergoing an action".

1. In the proposition: "the tree greenizes", the attribute is an "expressible" (λεχτόν)[3], expresses the "action", the "event", the "fact" of *becoming verdant*, referring to the only *real* individual and corporal subject implied here as a "tree", although this action itself is *unreal*. Moreover, unification of subject and predicate is *expressed by the predicate*, in the very *fact* that it is not corporal, because two individual bodies cannot precisely unify as such; they act upon each other without real "contact" (οὐχ ἐφάπτεται)[4]. The *unifying nature of the predicate* appears with this *event* that, in the verb "greenizes", predicate and copula *unifies*.

   A Copula does not unify; rather the predicate does when the copula disappears in it, because it absorbs the reference to "being" inside itself, both in the sense of the being of the copula, *is*, and of the individual, substantial, or "ontical" body[5]. Reality is full, "united" (ἡνῶσθαι): bodies penetrate each other in such a "blend"[6](χρᾶσις), that there is no room left for any void[7]. Real "being" belongs to "necessity" (*i.e. this scalpel cutting the flesh*). The incorporeal attribute represents solely a temporary "way of being"(Πώς ἔχον), *i.e.* "to be cut", "true" or "false"[8]).

2. But what becomes of a predicate that absorbs any *reference* to being in itself? Is this "non-being" mere nothingness? As for Stoic nominalism, reality lies in the corporeal individual, the absorbing

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[3]*TIAS*, 20, 15. Expressibles are in French: "verdoyer", in English, the barbarism: "greenize", expressing a fact corresponding to a single corporal reality, which has nothing to do with the words themselves. Naming a body has nothing to do with its nature. Relation appears only at a second level, when the "notion" (ἔννοια) of body appears (14). Differentiation precedes unification; individual and substantial *being* constitutes the sole reality.

[4] *TIAS*, 8-9, 14, 16, 39, 57.

[5] In a Heideggerian turn, expressions such as: "tree trees", "World worlds" (*Welt weltet*), "Nothing nothings" (*Nichts nichtet*), "thing things" (*Ding dingt*), reveal Being (*Sein*), apart from the physical reality of a simple "being" (*Seiende*). We might say that the predicate in its unifying nihility refers to being just like nothingness does, like Heidegger argues: "Nothingness in its nothinging refers us to being" (*das Nichts in senem nichten verweist uns gerade an das Seiende*). Cf. NISHITANI Keiji, *The Self-Overcoming of Nihilism*, trans. by Graham PARKES with Setsuko AIHARA (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 169, 223. For a radical counterpoint, see the analysis of "Pegasus pegazises" at the note 90 (n. 90): with Quine, "being" is no more polarized in the subject like in the Stoics, or distinguished from Being, but referred to in quantification. Besides, "reference to being" will be understood in this paper as a reference to *Seiende* rather than *Sein*.

[6] Bréhier had described this theory in *Chrysippe et l'Ancien Stoïcisme* (Paris: Archives Contemporaines, 2005), 122-127. Nishida'edition (Paris: F.Alcan, 1910), *Cat.* 156/22, contains a lot of annotation on these pages.

[7] *TIAS*, 8-9, 38, 44-46. "Void" itself will be classified among the incorporeals.

[8] "Purely a result, an effect which has not to be classified between *beings*", *TIAS,* 10-12, 24-25. "Real and *being* [lie] in the sole individual". Emphasis added (hereafter*).

predicate belongs to the "incorporeals" (τὰἀσώματα)[9]. Only incorporeals can coincide, within inexistence. For example, do the "attributes" (χατηγορήματα) constitute a *physical reality*, apart from the attributed thing? No, because only individual substances ("tree") have reality. Predicate is not a "property" (ποιότης), an epithet reality ("green" in "the green tree"), but an unreal attribute ("is green" in "the tree is green")[10]. Is then the attribute a purely *logical and intellectual reality*? It must be rather understood as the "exterior aspect" ("verdant") of the "internal force" of a body (the "tree"). Therefore, the attribute possesses no reality as an incorporeal, and thus makes the two "realities" (physical and logical) unify inside inexistence[11]. Predicate belongs to "thinking", but "in logic, thought does not come into contact with being, because being is *rebel* to thought; it does not reach the substance". So, predicative unification is purely "unreal"[12] and can only become *logical and epistemic* in this position.

One might think that by simply changing the linguistic form of an expression, we merely operate a manipulation in language. Yet in fact, this expresses by itself the *ideality of language*. For, while transforming "a body *is hot*" into 'a body *warms up*", we should continue the reduction process until "a body", and even suppress the article as well as the quotation marks, because we are doing here nothing more than making appear with a growing accuracy the only existence of the *body*. Speaking of the body as the "cause" of the "effect" that is "heat" is speaking of an unreal and metaphorical causality; true causality lies between beings themselves, not events. "Only language with "conjunctions" allows us to express different modes of connexion, which correspond to nothing real, and that is why we can and moreover we must keep ourselves to the sole analysis of language". Grammatical analysis distinguishes thus connective, copulative, disjunctive, causative, hypothetical

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[9] For Pythagoras, incorporeals were the primary causes, and for Plato, the most beautiful and great beings. But soon, incorporeals were dismissed by Epicurus and the Skeptics as not existing. Please refer to Ivan GORBY, *Vocabulaire grec de la philosophie* (Paris: Ellipses, 2000), 27.

[10] *TIAS*, 24, 10, 20. What we find here is an antique expression of the distinction between "extensions" as "classes", a "transparent", "referring phrase" that can be replaced by another ("the number of the planets is the number of the planets"), and "intensions" as" "properties", an "opaque", "referring phrase" that cannot ("the number of the planet is nine"). A. R. LACEY, *Dictionary of Philosophy (DP)* (London: Routledge, 1996), 158-159 and n. 80. Not to be confused with the use of "attribute" as "intensional" object in W. V. O. QUINE, *From a Logical Point of View (FLPV)*, "Reference and Modality" (London: Harvard University Press, 1980), 152.

[11] *TIAS*, 11. The topic of *coincidence into inexistence and non reality* often returns in Bréhier's account (21-22, 8-9, 34, 59-61): circles can only coincide in a cone because they are incorporeal, neither equal (in a cylinder) nor unequal (in a set of different circles). For Plato and Aristotle A) *different* modes of reasoning apply to different "species of being"; but reasoning concerns *solely* the above incorporeal. B) All events coincide in time, because it does not exist, the laws of destiny are "always true". C) Incorporeal reality of thought and Ideas no longer opposes corporeal spatiotemporal reality of sensible beings, since only the first one exists. In sum, predicative link looses its "essential" or "accidental" characters – such as in Aristotle's – in order to become "incorporeal". Still: why the absence of existence should entail a unification of any sort? Why inexistence should produce coincidence? Could nothingness be capable of producing something? The answer will come with Nishida.

[12] *TIAS*, 61, 26.

conjunctions, which enables a rich life of unification inside language[13].

Predicate unifies *because* it does not exist: "The problem of attribution is thus resolved by refusing any true reality to the predicate". A necessary condition is fulfilled here: "green", "cut", "true", "false" are predicates that *can* unify with their subject inside language, as unreal attributes. Still, is the condition sufficient? Does something that *can* unify *have to* unify? If "necessity" belongs to being, might not such unification in language appear completely contingent? Moreover, if an attribute is an unreal event or fact, how could it possess a kind of efficiency, "activity", "force", to unify?[14] A part of the answer lies in a further distinction, already introducing us into a more recent logic[15]. Some "expressibles" do not need any *completion* through a subject: *i.e.*, if we say that "It is daylight" (φῶς ἐστι), the proposition expresses a fact without any "subject of inherence". Conversely, attributes ("be green", "be cut") are "incomplete", because they need a subject ("tree", "scalpel"), to make them "complete" (τέλειον). We have then to tackle with the following questions:
a) Is predicative unification completion? How can unreal, not existing, incorporeal predicates be described as non-complete, as *necessarily* having to be completed into a real being?
b) Does predicate *exist* really or solely in unification? How could we admit only judgments with an *individual*[16] completing subject, and deal with cases where "unreal" universal is predicated? Can unifying predicate itself become any particular at all?

II. Incompleteness of the predicate: a logical necessity for a link:

1. G.Frege expresses such an "incompleteness" (*Unvollständigkeit*) or "non-saturation"

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[13] *TIAS*, 20, 35, 26. Are we not facing here a purely arbitrary connexion? How can the cosmos be left wide open without real relations? Is being itself not operated from within by another kind of unification? Here is the physics of the "place" (τόπος). Unity "comes from the "double movement" of "extension" and return of the "seminal reason" of the body that "holds together" (συνέχει) its parts inside the "place". Void is not inside being: a body is full of "internal force", the world, filled, opaque, tough. This is rather a vacuity, which opens this extension of bodies and makes the world swell before its contraction, snaps finite being into infinite nothingness. Now, void is still conceived as an incorporeal attribute: if something is *empty*, this means it can be occupied. There is a "quite unintelligible contradiction" between the physical and the logical meanings. Eventually, they coincide in the inexistence of the void, but that does not explain the dynamic origin of the extension (41-42, 44-46, 49).
However, as we will see, for Nishida, "absolute nothingness" represents an operating emptiness that gives room for the affirmation of the world, a "hollowing out" (see n. 102) of being and the world, as well as the predicate, in order to justify their unifying mode. Nothingness makes unify because, it snaps the body and the world into extension, before the contraction, and turns the predicate eager for its subjects, before the completion.
[14] *TIAS*, 21, 26-28, 31-33.
[15] "Attributes are only a certain kind of expressibles, these are the *incomplete* ones we will transform into propositions or *complete* expressibles, answering the question: "Who is the subject of the action?"", *TIAS,* 22*.
[16] *TIAS*, 19*.

(*Ungesättigkeit*) through linguistic and logical "negation". To begin with: "the concept – as I understand this term – is predicative (*prädicativ*). On the opposite, a proper nom, *cannot absolutely* (*unfähig*) be used as a grammatical predicate"[17]. Here is a *subjective incompleteness*: the "predicative nature of the concept" means that we cannot absolutely speak of a "*subject* concept": "it is precisely by qualifying the predicate as predicate that we take away this propriety from it[18]. We find thus incompleteness *in denotation of a subject* at the predicate's level[19]. The "denotation" (*Bedeutung*) of an "object" in the subject "closed on itself" opposes the denotation of a sort of emptiness in the "function" or "predicate".[20] That is why predicate only stands and lives in subjective denotative kind of "vacuity".

Let us continue with the logic negation. The predicate is incomplete because it *resists*, shall we say, to assimilation as a logical subject. In the sentence: "Jesus falls under the concept *man*", it is the expression: "falling under the concept *man*", that represents a kind of "*ing*-predicate", and not the already objectified: "the concept *man*". When one speaks, with a definite article of "*the* concept F", precisely this "concept" vanishes in language and becomes an "object"[21]. Since it is when language is *not satisfied* that the negative logical reality of the predicate effectively remains. But if we speak of "the predicate 'falling under the concept *man*'", we complete the proposition and the predicate disappears. Predicativity stands and lives in the very *impossibility to be completed* as such. The "predicative nature of the concept" according to Frege, *"is not to be cancelled, ignored"* (*nicht zu verkennen*), will resist, witnessing to a negative logical necessity, and correlatively to an effective unif*ying* requirement expressed in the verbal form: "fall*ing*" (*fallend*)[22].

As "subject" and "predicate", "object" and "concept" are different, parallel ways to analyze "thought"[23], are we not compelled to *say* that incompleteness in predicate corresponds to an intellectual necessity? The problem is precisely that this kind of parallelism is falsified[24] by the very same language that provides the analysis. At this point, a kind of "linguistic necessity" overcomes

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[17] Friedrich Ludwig Gottlob FREGE (1848-1925), "Concept and Object" (*CO*, 1892), *Ecrits logiques et philosophiques* (Paris: Seuil, 1971), 128*/*Kleine Schriften* (Hildeshein: Georg Olms Verlag, 1990), 168.

[18] *CO,* 131, 133(171). When we say : "the rose is red" and analyze our *language*, speak of "the grammatical predicate 'is red'", we no longer indicate a predicate, but a "subject", already completed, denoting an "object".

[19] "A concept is the denotation of a predicate, an object is what *can never be the entire denotation* (*nie die ganz… sein kann*) of a predicate, but can be the denotation of a subject", *CO,* 133*.

[20] "Function and concept" (1891, *FC*), *loc. cit.* 92(134).

[21] *CO,* 134(172).

[22] We can modify: "all mammals have red blood", to make the predicate *reappear* in : "*falling* under the concept mammal". In: "there is at least one square root of 4", the concept *does not deny* (*nicht verleugnet*) its predicative nature"", as "possessing the propriety to become 4 when multiplied by itself" (135/173-4).

[23] *Gedanke*, *CO,* 134(173).

[24] "What *once* would appear as object could at another time appear as concept." *CO,* 140-141(177-8).

the logical necessity of though[25]. So, incompleteness of predicate and completeness of subject are necessities for thinking, but inverted in language. Furthermore, Frege argues that, if the parallelism in analysis can be perverted, the very fact of analyzing itself may be insufficient, and thus the proposed parallelism. Apart from *equality in analysis*, could we probe a *difference in thinking*? In fact, in a crucial passage[26], the incompleteness of predicate appears clearly as a logical necessity for "unification", expressed by the verb "to adhere, stick, assimilate" (*haften*). There "must be", say Frege, in order to think, unification of thoughts, words, and expressions. However, the complete and saturated part can hardly furnish this unifying power, which lies, *at first sight*[27], within the uncompleted part, the predicate. Finite and enclosed parts of thought *repulse*, "ignore" each other[28]. Only an open and infinite intellectual entity as the predicate can provide the source of unity$_2$ in thinking.

2. However, what is exactly incompleteness? We saw that it is *subjective* and *denotative*; cannot we take a logical step further? The answer lies in the investigation of the notion of "function", fitted for the predicate[29]. A "function" cannot be reduced to a symbolic formula (*e.g.* "$2x^3+x$"), because here is

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[25] "Under the effect of a linguistic necessity, the literal expression betrays thought: we use a nominal turn of object and aim at a concept", *CO*, 140(177).

[26] "What *once* would appear as object could at another time appear as concept. The words "object" and "concept" would serve only to indicate the different position (*Stellung)* of the terms in the relation. Of course, we can do this; but we hardly can reduce the difficulty this way. We had only transferred it. It is impossible that all parts of a thought should be closed on themselves (*abgeschlossen*), one of them at least must be (*muss*) somehow predicative and unsaturated, unless they could not chain (*aneinander haften*). For example, meanings of the collection [junction] of words: "the number 2" and of the expression "the concept *prime number*" do not chain up without a link (*haftet nicht ohne ein Bindemittel*). We precisely call such a link in the proposition: "the number 2 falls under the concept *prime number*". It lies in the words "falls under" (*fällt unter*) requiring to be saturated in a twofold manner: by a subject and a complement of object; and only the establishment of meaning (*Sinn*) enables these words to be qualified to serve as a link. Once it is completed through the two required manners, we have a meaning close on itself, a thought. I have just said that the words or collection of words "falls under" detonates a relation (*Beziehung*). Still, the relation gives birth to the same difficulty we wanted to avoid concerning the concept. For the words "the relation of subsumption of an object under a concept" does not indicate a relation but an object, and the three proper nouns "the number 2", "the *prime number* concept" and "the relation of subsumption of an object under a concept" behave like ignoring each other (*verhalten sich ebenso spröde zueinander*), all the same as the first two; we can put them side by side (*zusammenstellen*), but still, that will not make a proposition. It is clear enough how we can transfer the difficulty that lies in unsaturated character of a part of thought, rather than avoiding it. "Close on oneself" and "unsaturated" are metaphorical (*bildliche*) expressions, but I cannot help pointing out in this way what I want to say", *CO*, 140-141(177-8).

[27] A more radical question will distinguish two levels of unification, and inquire: why the *unifying$_1$* predicate is itself a *unification$_2$* of words, a "collection [junction]" (*zusammen*)"? We will use these notations from now on.

[28] Just as, at a grammatical level, "subordinate clauses" cannot link, but need a "main clause", "Sense and Denotation" (1892), *loc. cit.,* 119-122(156-159), and, at an ontological level, physical bodies, "ignore" the others.

[29] A concept is predicative, "a *function* which value is always a truth value". Analysis of *functions* applies to *concepts* and *predicates*, so "concept" opposes "object", as "function" and "object": "an object is everything that

a simple number, or a combination of signs denoting numbers, which meaning must be added ("7", "2+5" indicate only, as such, different signs). The "essence" of a function lies in the "common element" to different numerical expressions, in what *remains* of "$2x^3+x$" when we suppress "x": "$2( )^3 + ( )$" or F (), if F(x) = $2x^3+x$.

The first meaning of these brackets is a vacuity of "argument", a *numerical incompleteness*[30]. What the function "needs" is an "argument", "a number, a whole that is "closed on itself" (*abgeschlossen*), which is by no means a function". A *number* does not need a function to be what it is: 3 can be denoted indifferently by "2.1^3+1" or "4-1", or any other expression. A *function* needs a number to state this very lack of number, *this enigmatical empty place we see opening between the brackets*. Identity of a function is given by the use if the numerical expression ("2.1^3+1", "2.2^3+2"): it needs the numbers that make it *appear*.

The second meaning is an emptiness of "place", a *topological incompleteness*. Frege argues that the sign "( )" indicates the "*need* for a complement (*ergänzungsbedürftig*), because it shows an *empty place*"[31]. Open arithmetical space between the brackets, as well as spatial representation of geometrical incompleteness[32], already pointed out a topological significance. Frege claims that there is a sort of topological "demand" of the function[33], like in identification[34]. In a more general turn, all "affirmative propositions", such as "equation, inequation, and analytical expressions" possesses a part "closed on itself" and an open one[35]. In addition, this requirement is expressed through the

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is not a function, the thing whose expression (*Ausdruck*) does not involve [drag with itself] any empty place (*keine leere Stelle mit sich führt*)". Frege *generalizes* these numerical analyses to logical ones: "we need not to limit ourselves to number, and admit as an argument all object in general", even "persons" (*FC* 90-92/133-134).

[30] "Of the function, *taken separately* (*für sich allein*), we shall say it is incomplete, *needing* something else, or unsaturated (*unvollständig, ergänzungsbedürftig, oder ungesättigt*)"*, *FC,* 81-87(126-131).

[31] *FC,* 92(135)*. Hereafter, "topological" will mean what relates to the notion of a "place".

[32] Numerical incompleteness is also vacuity of "point", *geometrical incompleteness*. When dividing a segment by a point, we must not count it twice, but add this "terminal point" to complete only *one* of the half-segments, the "completely closed on itself part", opposed to the "lacking part" (*fehlen*). The first, covered by the dividing point, as the armoured head, is the closed, filled numerical being. The incomplete one, beheaded, is a functional lack, a sort of gushing functional nothingness, aspiring, functioning for completion (*FC,* 84-85/128-129).

[33] In the function "$2x^3+x$", x shall not be considered as belonging to the function, this letter only serve to indicate the kind of complement the function *demands*, by *showing* (*kenntlich macht*) *the places where we must introduce* (*einzutreten*) *the argument* […] expression of the function *must* always *reveal* (*aufweisen*) *one or several places intended to be filled* (*Ausfüllung*) with the sign of the argument", *FC,* 85(129)*.

[34] $2x^3+x$ itself is meaningless, ask for completion, *i.e. identification* through a function (F(x) =$2x^3+x$), or equalization: "In "$x^2-4x = x(x-4)$, the left side taken separately indicates a number in an indeterminate (*unbestimmte*) way, and so do the right side. If we had only "x^2-4x" we could also write: "y^2-4y without changing the meaning, because "y" indicates, as "x," a number in an indeterminate way. But *if we unify* the two sides in one identity (*zweiner Gleichung vereinigen*), we *must* (*müssen wir*) chose the same letter on both sides; we express then something that neither side nor the equality sign contain, generality", *FC,* 87(130-131)*.

[35] *FC,* 92, 99. The open one is: "requiring its complement, unsaturated", *CO,* 133(171).

notion of an "empty place" left or carried[36]. Let us return to the case of the function itself. Incompleteness is not simply denotative: the function demands a complement by *indicating* a certain *place* of a lack of complement, a *place of absolute nothingness* that has to be *filled* with the argument. *Number* possesses its own "completely closed on itself" *determined ontological place*, where it lies in numerical reality. Moreover, the character of the *object* in general corresponds to a topological completeness[37]. On the contrary, a function has to *leave* its own, instable, incomplete place to reveal the one *where* its numerical completion should *be*. It has *no* place such as the filled, full, plain numerical place. Shall we go further, and argue that a kind of numerical "nothingness" compels it to produce, by itself, the place inside which spatiality has to spread, in particular under its numerical and geometrical forms?

Anyway, until this point, a "function" appears as a mathematical reality that stops to confine itself to the prison of numerical space, escapes the borders of number, in order to enfold inside itself numerical space, at first into an unknown x, then into brackets. We can thus discriminate a *first layer of topological transition* from expressions such as "2.1^3+1" and "2.2^3+2" to expressions such as "$2x^3+x$". The "letter" (*Buchstabe*) "x" represents a demand of completion, and a first liberation from the ballast, the load, the filling of numerical being, through the apparition of the unknown quantity sign. A *second layer* will occur from expressions such as "$2x^3+x$" to the functional expression: "$2(\ )^3+(\ )$". The brackets represent then a demand of completion, and a second liberation through the apparition of the enfolding signs. In F(x), F(), F(y)[38] stands for predicative nothingness, because the functional form is nothing, mere manipulation of a variable, mathematical operation. X is subjective determined being, the content of the form. F(x) – or nothingness (being) - represents a determination of the form into a result (*If* x=1, *then* 2.1+3=5). Therefore, in this sense, numerical being *is* self-determination *within* functional nothingness, the ontological rest extracted by the function.

3. This interpretation of the Fregean theory from K.Nishida's "logic of place"[39], enlightens

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[36] "We will analyze for instance the proposition: "Caesar conquered Gallic" into "Caesar" and "conquered Gallic". The second part is unsaturated, *it drags an empty place with itself* (*führt eine leere Stelle mit sich*), and it is only after having *filled* (*angefüllt*) *this place* by a proper noun or an expression which represents a proper noun that a meaning closed on itself comes to appear (*kommt zum Vorschein*)", *FC,* 91(134)*.

[37] Object's expression: "*does not involve any empty place*", *FC,* 92(134)*.

[38] Quine provides a "generalized" (n. 29) account of this "blankness" of "dummy predicates" a "schematic letter" *F* stands for in a "sentence diagram", in the scope of the "logic of quantification". Suggestively, the "blank" of the predicate, as "an unbindable dummy predicate" is the impossibility to "name any *entities*"*, a lack of binding reference to being, provided by the "*bound* variable" *x*, which "*demands* values". Here, unification$_2$ deals with binding$_3$ (cf. III.3) to a certain form of "being", in order to "produce actual statements", while differentiation accompanies "identification" and "conceptualization" in quantification (*ib.*V, 86, VI, 108-110, VIII, 151).

[39] 「場所的論理」 *bashotekironri*. For an account of this theory. Cf. *NK*, 816-884, and our papers: "De la néontologie chez Nishida Kitarō" in『フランス哲学・思想研究』[Review of French Philosophy](Tōkyō: Société franco-japonaise de philosophie, 2006); "The Thought of Unification" (http://www.reseau-asie.com/

predicate's incompleteness, but also leads us to endorse two problems. 1) Why does the *negative* form linguistically, logically prevail here, as when we speak of *un*-completed, or *un*-saturated part? We understood the necessity to "unify₂" (*vereinigen*)[40] at the level of the incompleteness of predicate, but how to conceptualize incompleteness itself in its vacuity? 2) For what reasons are we allowed speaking in terms of place-filling? These metaphysical stakes seems to fall out of the *Untersuchungen*.

For Nishida, the "incompleteness" (不徹底 *futettei*) of the "predicate" (述語 *jutsugo*) expresses the very nature of reality itself, in its "endless" (何処までも *dokomademo*) course for *self-unification₁*[41], more succinctly for *self-predication*. Thus, unifying₁ predicate realizes a unification₂ of words, as reality operates unification₁. "Reality" *is* not, but endlessly pursues *what* it is, "returning to its foundation"[42]. This incompleteness "animates", "awakes" (自覚する *jikakusuru*) the predicate, compels it *to* predicate something, and justifies the necessity of *having to predicate* (something). Its internal nothingness forces it to prospect a completion refused in its essence, precisely the completeness it cannot *be*. Within the "place of determined being", a logical "filling", "achievement", "perfection" of meaning is "completed", and meaning "closes"[43] on itself. Being means no longer *to be*, but rather *being full of meaning by itself*, "repulse" and "ignore" (to rethink Frege's metaphorical words) another thing, independence; negatively speaking: not having to be filled any more, to predicate, to produce a unity. The autarchy of being makes its closure, his "ignorance" of another thing.

However, in "absolute nothingness" (絶対無 *zettaimu*), we find no more a predicate crystallized on its subject, but the place of a predication always participating to the endless constitution of meaning. Predicate *is not* the predicate; it *has to* predicate, stands as "ing-predicate", "predicat*ing*", such as unity *is not* unity, but *has to* unify₁, as a unify*ing* reality[44]. Nothingness makes predicate

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"Congrès"). Hereafter, we will quote the essay 「場所」 [The Place*, P*, 1926] 『西田幾多郎全集』 [Complete Works of Nishida Kitarō, *NKZ*](Tōkyō: Iwanami, 1987), IV, 221-323. Apart from the works of Bréhier, Nishida possesses two editions of the *Fundaments of Arithmetics*, kept in Gakushuin University in Tokyo, 6-7/260.

[40] *FC,* 87(130-131).

[41] 『善の研究』 [An Inquiry into the good, 1911, *IG*], *NKZ* I, 16. Trans. by ABE Masao and Christopher IVES (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1990), 9, 『自覚に於ける反省と直観』 [Intuition and Reflection in Self-Consciousness, *IR*], *NKZ II*, 128, 335. Trans. by Valdo H. VIGLIELMO with TAKEUCHI Toshinori and Joseph S O'LEARY (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1987), 64, 163. *NK*, 150-183, 642-646.

[42] 基に還る *moto ni kaeru*, *IR*, 93-94/185-187. "Reality"="effectivity, 実在 *jitsuzai* = 現実 *genjitsu/Wirklichkeit*.

[43] 限定せられた有の場所 *genteiseraretayûno basho*.満たされる *mitasareru/Vollendung*. Closing is "cornering" (取り込む *torikomu*), *IR,* 88(175-176), "isolation"(遊離 *yûri*), *L*, 68-69, 73(266, 271). *NK*, 449, 923.

[44] 述語的 *jutsugoteki*, *P*, 278-284. Concerning such a translation, please refer to *NK*, 267. Transition from substantial (*jutsugo*) to adjectival (*jutsugoteki*) form is illustrated by the predicative particle 的. In Chinese *de* indicates a determination, qualification of a noun, and can be translated by "of", "belonging to". In Japanese, *teki* is used in adjectival expressions, as well as to express the idea of "target" (*mato*), as if the predicate was

unify₁. Nishida is meditating here Lipps's concept of "snapping out"[45]. *Zettaimu* is similar to the trouble "waves" (波 *nami*) of a "see" that can never reach the shores of being. It snaps out reality, compels it to predicate itself infinitely. Within this place, topological snapping out of nothingness digs out reality, gives the place for a further logical, or phenomenological "filling"[46] of reality with being and meaning.

How can the place "give" the place for a filling process? The "place of being" corresponds to the "geometrical" and "numerical" spaces where mathematical "entities" (物 *mono*) lie. Such "spaces", as well as the "physical place" (物理的空間 *butsuritekikûkan*) of "bodies" (物体 *buttai*), hide the real nature of the *basho*, which is not to be understood as a spatial entity, but as this actuality that gives room for spatiality under all its forms, inside which spatiality takes place, that enables something as a filling. The topological transition to higher levels of description already showed that such a *basho* appears not as a location, but precisely in the very "transition" of the places, the "translocalisation"[47]. In this sense, it is no physical, logical, or intellectual locus, and cannot be mistaken with concepts such as physical "field" (場 *ba/Feld*), or "Field of conscience"[48]. This translocalisation expresses the essence of the *basho*, and helps to understand how a place of nothingness in fact always *leaves the place* to a filling. Frege itself gives us a clue by stating that the unsaturated part does not only "shows" or "reveals" the place to be filled, but more deeply : "*drags an empty place with itself*"[49], that is, belongs to *a place where the place changes,* to allow fulfillment. The *basho* appears in the evanescence of the "determinate" or "opposed" places, in the very place of changing the place, reaching an unfolding higher "space of nothingness".

Of course, according to Frege, the argumentation belongs to a fairly different logic than Nishida's: we must *speak* like this in order to *think*. Furthermore, we are compelled to express this with language, and its limited "metaphors". Our only hope stands in the fact that different thoughts expressed in propositions correspond to a single "meaning", expressed in the same or in different languages[50]. Meaning is the ultimate point of view of thought; for "truth" concerns only the "transition" from the "meaning" to the "denotation". Predicate's unification₂ represents a strict logical problem of "junction", "assembling" (*Zusammenfügung*), not exactly the kind of "union" of

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endlessly *targeting* itself in order to avoid a definitive and "determined" predication of some *thing*. So we can translate *justugoteki* not only by "predicative", but in a more effective vein, by the verbal form "predica*ting*",

[45] 躍入 *yakunyû/Einschnappen.* This key-concept to understand Nishida's theory of nothingness (*IR*, 78, 84, 130, 145(159,164, 261, 294), *NK*, 340-349) already means from one part the negative snapping out, and from the other the effective filling, according to Theodor LIPPS (1851-1914), *Psychologische Untersuchungen* (Leipzig: Wilhelm Engelmann, 1907), 23-24&153. *Cat.* n°581&190, 71&233.

[46] 充実する *jûjitsusuru/Erfüllung*, *P*, 248-266. See: "De la néontologie", and *NK*, 297, 1023-1067.

[47] 推移／移り行き/から…に到る *suii/utsuriiki/kara... niitaru*. See my treatment in *NK*, 414, 472, 815-860, 880.

[48] 意識の野(*ishiki no ya/Bewusstseinfeld*), τόπος χώρα, *Gebiet*. *NK*, 860-875, 1008-1031, 1143-1146.

[49] *FC,* 91(134).

[50] This is the case of the translation, *CO,* note 1, 131(170).

thought and denotation that occurs inside "knowledge"[51].

It is nevertheless true that "denotation" of emptiness is by no means demand of nothingness *as such*, but of a topological filling. In "art", we find "propositions provided with a meaning" but with no requirement of denotation: "Ulysses was left on the land of Ithaque plunged into a deep sleep" does not require that "Ulysses" denotes a person. It is "science" that requires such a denotation: why do *we want* that all "proper noun" not merely mean but moreover denote? Why cannot we be satisfied with thought only? We find a *scientific requirement* here, to criticize those who take the signs for the objects themselves[52]. A sign cannot be left "empty", such as the logical place. Logical necessity for predicative unification$_2$ accompanies a scientific concern for epistemological unification – science seeks unity$_3$ (III.3).

Yet, this *emptiness* of "predicate", "concept", "function", "sign" is never questioned in itself; only unification$_2$ in fulfillment is in question, and this is *Nishida's concern*. Now, does not any "concern" imply a *subject* rather than a predicate? How the anonymous predicate should possibly be "concerned" with something, or "demand" something, unless a *subjective* operation takes place in predication? How to describe the irreducible "intention"[53] of "detonating" some thing? Could we find here the reason for the incompleteness of predicate?

III. Anonymity of the predicate: a metaphysical necessity for coupling:

1. Strawson[54] reconsiders this Fregean analysis of the incomplete, unifying$_2$, and topological nature of predication from a "descriptive"[55], metaphysical, and "ontological"[56] point of view. He discusses

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[51] *SD,* 110-111(149-151). For a contrast between theories of meaning and reference, see Quine, *ib.* VII.

[52] "Never calculate by mistake on *empty signs* (*leere Zeichen*) believing we operate on objects", *FC,* 93(135)*.

[53] *Absicht*, *SD,* 107(147).

[54] Peter Frederick STRAWSON (1919-2006), *Individuals, An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics (I)* (London: Routledge, 1959), 135-147: "logical subjects".

[55] "Description" can be understood as "the finding of reasons, good, bad, or indifferent" for the "actual structure of our thought *about* the world", and thus immediately imply the idea of reference, *I*, 9, 247*.

[56] "Ontological" refers here to *pluralism*: "what there is, *e.g.* material objects, minds, persons, universals, number, facts, etc. There is the question of whether these all "are" in the same sense and to the same degree", *DP*, 205. *I*, 227. Here is "the metaphysical task […] of how we conceive the world to be, what our basic ontology (our working ontology) actually is". Yet, this doctrine concerns the most important kinds of things "that *are*, or that *exist*" or that are "known or thought likely" to be or exist. As ontology encompasses not only *being* but *belief in being*, we must not forget that reference to being is also reference to a *believed* being, that our "ordinary conceptual apparatus" includes "ontological implications […] about what we ordinarily and quite generally *take* to exist". *Analysis and metaphysics. An Introduction to Philosophy (AM)*, (New York: Oxford University Pess, 1992), 23, 30, 34-35, 39, 42-43, 58. For Strawson, the important point dwells into *reference* either to *being* – once again, in the sense of *Seiende* rather than *Sein* -, or *believed being* (Moore), or *quantified being* (Quine). For Nishida, it dwells into this *being* referred to, even under the form of a "belief".

"a traditional doctrine" and its critique by Frank P. Ramsey (1903-1930). This is "the doctrine that particulars can appear in discourse as subjects only, never as predicates; whereas universals or non-particulars generally, can appear either as subjects or predicates"[57]. According to a "logical distinction"[58], "particular" ("John") or "universal-cum-particular" ("Being married to John") can *be referred to*, while "universal" ("marriage") or "universal-cum-particular" can *be predicated*. "There is an *asymmetry* between particulars and universals in respect of their relation to the subject-object distinction". For Ramsey: "there is no essential distinction between the subject of a proposition and its predicate"[59], against Frege: "no reason why one part of a proposition should be regarded as more incomplete than another". Furthermore: *why should we give the predicate such an election through its unifying$_2$ function, why should it be "more" empty than the subject*?[60]

Strawson wants to "discover the rationale of the traditional view, if it has one" by proposing two "criteria" of asymmetrical distinction between subject and predicate[61]. The first criterion *grammatically* draws a line between "substantive or noun-like style of introduction and the verbal or verb-like style of introduction" of "terms". In the proposition "Socrates is wise", "Socrates" is "merely introduced" as in all remarks in an "invariant" manner, while "is wise" is introduced in "a quite distinctive and important style, viz. the assertive or propositional style"[62]. The indicative mood does not here "form a *complete* sentence", it is "incomplete"[63]. Furthermore, the predicate "is wise" not only introduces "being wise" but also carries "the assertive or propositional tie", a unifying$_2$ mode. So, against Ramsey, the first expression cannot be the second or vice-versa, a new occurrence of the *unifying$_2$ nature* of the predicate, responsible for the unification of the "proposition", at least

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[57] *I,* 137-138. "Anything whatever is an *individual*". *Particulars* are "paradigm logical subjects, the fundamental objects of *reference*". "Basic particulars" are "material bodies" or "persons" possessing it. *I,* 39-46, 93, 226-227*.

[58] *AM*, 57. Cf. n. 86. But according to an "ontological distinction", they will differ in regard to "existence".

[59] quoted in *I*, 138*. The Stoics and Frege provided linguistic and logical accounts of this *asymmetry*.

[60] *I*, 153, 160. Radicalizing this objection will show how Nishida himself stands in an opposite position to one of his "mentors". Emil LASK (1875-1915), in *La logique de la philosophie et la doctrine des catégories, Essai sur la forme logique et sa souveraineté* (Paris: Vrin, 2002), argues that there is *poverty* of being, as a "hollowing out" (*Ausgehöhltheit*) categorical form, dependent on - but constitutive of - his content, requiring a standing point (114-115, 153, 121/95-96, 140, 103), whose meaning only appears in the "junction" (*Verklammerung*) with his sensible material (60, 80/34, 57). Being is "vacuous" (*Leere*), predicative, "being-in-relation-with…, being-for…" There is, on the opposite, a plenitude and "nudity" of the categorical predicate, full, impenetrable, more "loaded" in meaning than being, that lies in itself, and comes to "fulfil" and complete being (90-96, 115/69-76, 96). As predicate stands here in the place of determined being, material is logically "encrusted" in form (*logischen Kruste* 90/69). The issue is that, if we follow the Stoics, Frege, Strawson, and Nishida, *predicate unifies in its emptiness*; but, for Lask, *differentiate in its plenitude*, material differentiation producing the hylemorphic *unity* of meaning (84/61). For Quine's view, see n. 38.

[61] *I*, 138. "rationale" refers to "description". *I*, 161. "Term" has not here a linguistic meaning (a word or a phrase), but an ontological meaning, it means "objects or things", *DP*, 347.

[62] As number is "introduced" in an "indeterminate" way, and function in a "unifying$_2$" one, in Frege's account.

[63] *I*, 147-149.

inside "our conceptual scheme" [64] and "our ontology", as well as the *incompleteness* of the predicate[65].

2. Yet, we have to investigate a first problem: why does the predicate appears *at the same time* as a *lacunary* and *unifying* entity? How should we explain that: "it is only *because* their sense is unsaturated *that* they are capable of serving as a link"?[66] Strawson's answer seems to dwell in an imperative of *reference*. "Is wise" is "identified" by "Socrates" when *someone* "subjectively" refers to it, and because there is an "objective" kind of "demand" of a certain kind of completion, a "contextual requirement" [67] of reference to a certain particular, which has been fulfilled[68]. A "subjective" dimension appears inside the predicate *only to this extent* that we act according to an objective situation of reference. Singularity of the "logical subject" and "uniqueness" of a specific "context" make "the uniqueness of reference"[69]. The failure in Peter T. Geach (1916-)'s theory of "aboutness" and in Willard O. Quine (1908-2000)'s "quantification" in providing a real grammatical distinction lies in the lack of "distinguishing powers", the default of identification of "the term introduced in the referring way", because "aboutness" or "quantity" can hardly *definitely* identify[70] anything"[71]. Metaphysics provides such "descriptions" of "given speech-situations"[72] into which a

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[64] "The common *unifying* system of relations" (*I*, 15, 24, 29)* that allows a "*unified* structure" for reference, spatiotemporal relations, and thus grammatical relation such as *tying*. Let us remark, first, that the two parts of *I* match, if we add that *unification*$_1$ of "particulars" respond to the *tie*$_2$ of "logical subjects" and predicates. Secondly, for Strawson "our conceptual scheme" refers to "our ontology" as a basis from which other schemes can be constructed by game. But for Quine, "one's ontology is basic to the conceptual scheme by which he interprets all experiences". There is no "unconceptualized reality" to "correspond" with in a "realistic standard". Moreover, "our conceptual scheme" can be completely "changed", "improved" according to a "pragmatic standard", of ontological "economy", epistemic "convenient" expense, and aesthetic "elegance", which is neither "Platonism", nor strict "conceptualism", but closer to "nominalism". (*ib.* I, 10, IV, 77-79, VI, 128).

[65] Strawson understand the Fregean distinction as "non linguistic", but ontological (*I*, 142).

[66] *I*, 152*.

[67] an "intersubjective" linguistic situation of reference, where the "hearer does, *on the strength of it*, identify the particular referred to" by the speaker, *I*, 16*. This "strength" allows a "definite", "unique reference". "*Which* particular individual is a matter to be determined from the context, time, place and other features of the situation of utterance", "On Referring" (*OR*, 1950), *Logico-Linguistic Papers* (London: Methem, 1971), 14, 17, 19.

[68] *I*, 16, 159, 181: In "John smokes", "John" indicates what particular is *referred* to, and "smokes" what characteristic is *ascribed* to him, only under "an identifying reference to a particular", made "by a speaker and correctly understood by a hearer". He indicates the *vacuity* of the predicate itself and its attributive requirement, by saying only "smokes", and witnesses to the need of a reference to a particular, constitutive of the introduction of the predicate. The predicate *itself* does not refer; its *introduction* requires a "genuine identifying reference".

[69] *OR*, 17.

[70] Quine' concern is the problem of "identification of indiscernibles", *i.e.* how to "rephrase the same old system of particulars", in order to make "conceptual economy" of reference with identity, in the scope of quantification, and not with the idea of an identifying reference to a plurality of particulars (*ib.* IV, 65-79, VI, 118).

[71] *I*, 143-147&153-158, 197*: the forms of quantification are "forms of indefinite reference". It must be noticed that nevertheless, the "referring function", even if it can furnish a unity, *cannot itself cease*, and represents an

predicate is grammatically introduced *as* lacunary and unifying$_2$, under the imperative of an "identifying reference", that enables the description to identify a particular. Both subjective and objective characters of the predicative demand are enlightened by this imperative.

Incompleteness is explained in terms of *lack of identifying power* in the scope of the theory of identifying reference. Strawson evokes "expressions such that one cannot know what they introduce without knowing (or learning from their use) some distinguishing empirical fact about what they introduce". These expressions possess "completeness, self-sufficiency" because they rely on the "weight of fact", on the knowledge of "some empirical fact which suffices to *identify* that particular"*. Completeness means carrying "an empirical presupposition"[73], *autonomy and right*, success "of this kind of expression to present a fact on its own account". It means *epistemic sufficiency* to identify a particular.

On the contrary, "predicates expressions" are "such as one can very well know what they introduce without knowing any distinguishing empirical fact about what they introduce". Epistemic incompleteness indicates "lack" of sufficiency, of objective "strength" to identify, failure of the right to present a fact on the account of the expression itself, thus *epistemic insufficiency, heteronomy*. In this sense, as subjects are (proper) *names*, predicates are *anonymous*. Far from carrying a "weight of fact" in introducing their terms, "they can only *help* to carry a fact, and even this they can do […] only by *being coupled* with some other expression into an *explicit* assertion". This is where *epistemic insufficiency* rejoins the *demand of unification$_2$*[74]. The predicate has to "help" to unify; it transcends itself, placed under the necessity of an identifying reference. We can read its weakness both in

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infinite process of determination of the unity: "We do not, and *we cannot, while referring, attain the point of complete explicitness at which the referring function is no longer performed*. The actual unique *reference made*, if any, is a matter of the particular use in the particular context", *OR*, 17*.

Nishida's topological approach is at work here. 1) A definite "reference *made*" by a singular logical subject to something *that is*, according to a context, produces a finite unity confined inside the "place of determined being". 2) However, we cannot attain a "*complete*" ontological explanation, because "reference" depends on an always changing "context". Thus, reference is forever *incomplete* in itself, but can be "determinate" through a context. This *incompleteness of reference*, this "potency", "latency" (潜在 *senzai*) to refer, takes place within "oppositional nothingness" (対立的無 *tairitsutekimu*), which is no more than a "species of being" (一種の有 *isshu no yû*), just as the absence *of* reference eventually reduces to *a* reference made in context. Oppositional nothingness is the active breach open in being, that keeps it open; an emptiness operating between two situations of determined reference, keeping reference never "performed" - non "explicit" -, and "uniqueness" of reference always floating, fluctuating, falling over into ubiquity. There is a *specular* aspect here we studied in: « The Idea of Mirror in Nishida and Dogen », James W. Heisig (ed.), *Frontiers of Japanese Philosophy (FJP)*, (Nagoya: Nanzan Institute for Religion and Culture, 2006), 99-142. 3) To find a radical incompleteness in reference, we must rejoin "effective" (現実的 *genjitsuteki*), operative" (操作的 *sōsateki*) predication in the "place of absolute nothingness". The sort of "half-incomplete" reference, given in potential and mutual contextualization, is still not the radical incompleteness given in topological and endlessly unfolding predication.

[72] *I*, 181-183.

[73] *I*, 187, 193.

objectivity, *unification*, and *heteronomy* in the sentence: "*help*… by being *coupled* with some *other*". Until this point, the Strawsonian description can provide a fair account of the notion of the predicate under a referential enlightenment, taking Frege's researches to a metaphysical level[75].

Furthermore, his final answer to Ramsey in 1959 provides a more subtle inquiry into predicate's incompleteness. Although "particular has a logical complexity, *completeness for thought*" the universal has not"[76], this thought can appear "incomplete", because it precisely relies on "some further fact"[77]. However, if the particular's epistemic completeness *go with* incompleteness, in the case of the universal, we only find, so to speak, a *complete* - or double - incompleteness, because it rests on no fact at all. Description has thus to consider: "presence or absence of a more fundamental form of completeness". From the universal's "absolute incompleteness" to the particular's relative one, we finally reach the "complete thought" in the completion of the "proposition". Still, once again, this belongs to the *lacking* part, to the "universal rather than the particular", given its radical incompleteness[78]. A predicate is introduced through a lack of completeness producing a unification$_2$ of thought.

However, this lack is only *negatively* defined in regard to completeness: predicate unifies$_2$ only because it has to *enter* into a complete identifying reference situation, *not by virtue of its own incompleteness.* In others words, if "our ordinary concepts" are not "employed" properly into "the role they play in our lives", such as in acts of reference, a conceptual theoretical unification produces "comprehensive and *unified* conception of the world and our relation to it […] metaphysical images of reality"*. Predicative unification without the "use" of acts of reference, unification without employment can maybe have some epistemic "utility", but in itself is void[79]. In sum, predicate is

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[74] *I*, 186-187.

[75] "We find an additional depth in Frege's metaphor of the saturated and the unsaturated constituents", *I*, 188.

[76] "or *need not* to have" *I*, 210*. *A particular* is complex because the *thought* of its introduction implies a language *referring* to it and presupposing facts; it is an irreducible and "independent" subject, requiring such a logical and linguistic apparatus; thus, it has "completeness, self-sufficiency". *A characterizing universal* is simpler, his introduction presupposes no fact, it does not have completeness for thought, but nevertheless implies a principle of grouping or counting particulars; in this sense, it possesses completeness for thought that it does not need to have. *A sortal* one is simpler, because *a)* it implies nothing such as a presupposed principle or fact *b)* does not have completeness for thought *c)* is ontologically "simple", as spatiotemporally existent (in other terms, "extensions are simpler than intensions", *DP*, 159). Although, it is incomplete or insufficient as a "dependent" predicate that only takes place into such a logical and linguistic apparatus. Epistemic completeness is logically polarized on the particular, just as the ontological; while logical priority-in-unification$_2$ is for the universal.

[77] "It is in this sense [the particular resting on or unfolding into, a fact] that the thought of a definite particular is a complete thought. But the thought of a definite particular, while in one sense complete, is also, in another sense incomplete. For when we make the transition from the thought of the fact into which the particular unfolds to the thought of the fact itself, then we are thinking of it as the constituent of some further fact", *I*, 211.

[78] *I*, 180, 212.

[79] "Nothing but houses of cards", *AM*, 14-15. *OR*, 8-9. Strawson does not follow completely Wittgenstein, because of this imperative of *reference* we have emphasized here, that takes place inside our *unifying*$_1$ conceptual

incomplete because it does not make a direct *reference*[80] to a particular *being* we must for the less believe to exist in order to refer[81]. "Attribute or properties are *ontologically secondary* to the objects one attributes them, in so far as *reference to properties* presupposes *references to objects*, but not conversely"[82].

3. But here, we have to face a second problem. Why should vacuity of predicate unify$_2$ whatever at all? Is not unity provided only through the definitive identifying reference to something? Strawson argues that the grammatical criterion is insufficient to completely overcome Ramsey's "skepticism"; by possibly decoupling the unifying link from its introducing function[83] A radical question asks why the link should be essential *to the predicate itself*. How to separate the predicate from its unifying task, unification$_1$ from unification$_2$, *separate something that unify – and thus cannot be separated*? Instead of searching in what way predicate *introduces* terms, would not it be pertinent therefore, to study what material *kind of terms* it formerly introduces, in order to clarify its unifying power?

The new criterion of distinction considers the *categories* of terms, "particular" or "universal", in order to "build up a "primary sense" of "to predicate" adequate with the requirement of the "traditional doctrine". For this, we can find a dissymmetry between the universal and the particular in that the latter *unify$_2$* less than the former[84]. Therefore, we can construct a sense according to which

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scheme, which is not simply a "*unified* conception of the world". Since, this schematic synthesis does not dwell in infinite *predication*, but in the finite coupling$_3$ of the proposition, under the imperative of *reference*.

[80] "Pure" reference is "referring simply to the object", "transparent", "purified" from "opacity in substitution", to borrow, in a different sense, Quine's vocabulary (*ib*. VIII, 142-150), inspired by Frege (*SD*, 124).

[81] Strawson clearly distinguishes between *being* and the logical and linguistic *use* of *reference to being*, *AM*, 33. He adds: "we are really committed to *belief in the existence* of just those things which we absolutely must treat as objects of *reference* if we are to be able to express our beliefs", *AM*, 58*.

[82] *AM*, 46*.

[83] "Could not we undermine the whole distinction by merely making the propositional link something separate in the sentence, not part of the term-introducing expression? Could we not imagine simple sentence in which term-introducing expressions *merely* introduce terms in no particular style, and in which the syntactical jobs at present performed by variations in the style of term-introduction were allotted to linguistic devices?", *I*, 160. We just need to read the chapter seven of *Individuals* to appreciate to what extent this possibility is taken seriously.

[84] The proof is as followed (*I*, 167-172). 1) A term is essentially "capable of being assertively tied to some other terms so as to yield to a significant result, a proposition". 2) *A universal collects particulars through a "sortal tie"* if it specifies by itself a category of collection giving the particular its format and numerical identity (*e.g.* the typology: "to be a wise [man]"). *A universal collects particulars through a "characterizing tie"*, giving from the outside a descriptive character of collection "already distinguished", that provides to the particular simply a qualitative identity (*e.g.* the characteristic "to be wise"). *A particular collects a particular through an "attributive tie"* if it shows *the same* collecting "power" as characterizing universals (*e.g.* Socrates' death or smile). 3) Universals, *smiling* and *orating*, can collect, by the characterizing tie, any number of particulars of the same kind as Socrates, viz. Plato, Aristotle... The universal "to be wise" can be instantied in the case of every wise person. On the contrary, the *particular smile and the particular oration of Socrates* cannot, by the attributive tie, collect any other particular of the same kind as Socrates. Therefore, universals collect *more* particulars than particulars.

universals can be predicated, not particulars, because it *unifies more* than particulars. Thus, the "predicate" recover a remarkable unifying dignity, compared to the "subject", against the sceptical objection. Eventually, apart from the still unexplained *unification₁,* that entails the predicate *unification₂* (the "tie", "propositional linkage"), we find a third level of *unification₃* (the result of the tie, the "unified thing, a thought"). Yet, this progress is not infinite, it *ends*, so to say, at the "third power" of the unity₃, for the unifying₂ predicate aims not at a "list", but at a final "unity"₃ that has to be finished, open and closed. So predicate's unification₂ indicates "coupling in general", in a finite sense[85].

The universal constitutes a more *essential* term than the particular, which only possesses a "*central* position […] among individuals […] in the broadest *logical sense of this word*". Such an asymmetry-in-unification₂ represents a superiority of the universal on the particular, to this extent that it unifies more particulars, and helps to precise the "logical distinction between reference and predication". Though, it must not be confused with the *ontological* "priority" of "existence" of the particular ("the very paradigm or model of the genuinely existent, the real") over the universal[86]; as there is, of course, no room for "Platonism" here[87]. In this sense also, the predicate is *anonymous*, removed from the plane of "proper names". In addition, a universal can be said logically "prior" to another one if it unifies more in its "comprehension" ("expressions of the mouth" unifies more than

Attribution does not provide the generality of collection that the universal offers; moreover, the attributive tie "the smile of Socrates" presupposes the characterizing tie ("smiling", 200). At a more "general" level, universals are linked to each other under a "sub or super-ordination" (169). *E.g.* "smiling", to which "Socrates" is "characterizingly" tied, is linked to "expressions of the mouth".

[85] "The *propositional linkage* of the terms of the thought, are necessarily also indications of something more general. They indicate that we are presented with a certain mode of expression of a *unified thing*, a thought; and thereby they indicate the most general fact that we are presented with *a unified thing, a thought, and not with a list*. The propositional symbolism, because it symbolizes a specific mode of coupling, also symbolize, in a specific mode, *coupling in general*", *I*, 245*. See n.43 for unification₂&unification₃ in a Quinean perspective.

[86] *I*, 17, 246. *AM*, 58. Ontological priority constitutes an "ontological distinction between spatio-temporal individuals (which I shall henceforth call 'particulars' simply) and the general concepts or property or relation of which the particulars provides examples", *AM*, 57. *I*, 17, 59, 247. This categorical criterion can be grammatically expressed in a priority for nominal subjects, *AM*, 69.

[87] *AM*, 52, 90. But no room for an anti-Platonism or Stoicism as well, as Strawson clearly states: "Attribute or properties are *ontologically secondary* to the objects one attributes them, in so far as *reference to properties* presupposes *references to objects*, but not conversely. But agreement on this point would not require us either to deny the *existence* of properties or even to concede that we could, without seriously impoverishing our system of beliefs, dispense altogether with reference to, or quantification over them. And in general we might find reason for saying that reference to item of certain types was secondary to, or derivative from, reference to item of other types without there being any implication that the former should therefore be, as it were, expelled from the domain of *existence*", *AM*, 46*. If we now remember a definition of existence inside the "spatio-temporal" scheme (*I*, 22-30): "you would not, and could not, have *two* leaves thus to differ further, unless they differed spatio-temporally", *AM*, 55-56, we are led to the conclusion that "attribute or properties" exist secondarily to "the objects one attributes them", because they *differ less* in space and time, are "simpler".

"smiling").

We can also grasp, at a second degree of unification$_2$, the reason why a "*compound* of universal and particular" (in the sentence: "Wisdom *is a characteristic of Socrates*") will be logically inferior to a universal. "Language safeguards us" to say that here Socrates is predicated through the introduction of the "dummy universal" *being a characteristic (of)*, which compounded with the particular "Socrates" becomes the "faking universal" *being a characteristic of Socrates*. At this level, universals are simply predicated through others, and we can consider some cases that were problematic according to the *Stoa*'s nominalism.

Nevertheless, this universal is "faking", because it can lead to "infinite regress" in characterization that enables to construct a proposition, that is, to unify$_3$[88]. Therefore, the faking universal appears as inferior to the universal "Wisdom", which precisely completes the proposition. The *fear* of "infinite regression" of not "arriving, in the end, at some *existential* proposition"[89], testify to a refusal *of nothingness* we can also find in Quine[90]. A real (*e.g.* non faking) universal would stop

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[88] *I*, 167&176. Strawson insists on the fact that the propositional link of the "terms" must not be understood itself as a "term", otherwise we would fall into the *infinite regress* Francis Herbert Bradley (1846-1924) had shown about "relations". So the link must be a "non-relational tie". (167). In the proposition, "Socrates (1) is Wise (2)" expressed with the real universal "Wisdom", we have a complete proposition with two terms. But in the proposition "Socrates (a) is characterized by (b) wisdom (c)", we "promote" the invisible non-relational tie (1)-(2) into a "term" (b), we make it appear as a "dummy universal", we materialize it in the "relation": "is characterized by". But still we want our proposition to obey the rule that it must be linked through a non-relational tie, so we make this "dummy universal" (b) disappear into the "faking universal" (b)-(c) and we find ourselves with two "new terms": "Socrates (1) is characterized by wisdom (2)". "But, ask Strawson, if we insist on the promotion at the first stage, why not at the second, thus: "Socrates is characterized by being characterized by wisdom? And so on. We must stop at some point if we are to have a proposition. Why insist on starting? " It is striking how Quine's "dummy predicate"'blankness (n. 38) will disappear with the ontological valuation, while Strawson's "dummy universal" will forever leave the place to a new faking predicate. But in any case, the final point is that nothingness cannot help, and must be exorcized in reference, directly into quantified or indirectly into particularized *being*. By contrast, the *basho* is the place where this emptiness of the "blank" and the "faking" reveals their "neontological" reality, out of the "ontological commitment". That is the performativity of a non-referential context and of an infinite regress, of an empty as well as infinite predication.

[89] *I*, 193*.

[90] For him, "infinite regress" leads to "non sense", as another *reductio* to non existence as a dead end. The "riddle of the barber. A man of Alcalá is said to have shaved all and only those men of Alcalá who did not shave themselves […] is no real paradox, but only a *reductio ad absurdum* proof *that there was no such man* in Alcalá"*. But if it is possible that "nonsense" can refer to nothing, even acceptable that we can remedy to it "by arbitrarily assigning some sense", an "impossible situation" arise when a "self contradictory predicament" refers to *something*. Thus, the real logical task is still to problem-solving the *reference to being*, that has to be saved, not to nothingness (*ib.* VII, 133, VIII, 150).

To defeat the Platonist argument that we must "impute being" first if we want to speak of "non-being", we must save the reference to "what there is" (*i.e.* "Pegasus"), should it "be" or "not", we need neither to *start with being* (radical ontology, or ontologies) nor *with non being* (radical "meontology", or "meontologies"), but with a quantity, with an "entity" that will be quantified in "affirming or denying being" ("reduced ontology"). We must not say, like the Stoics, "Pegasus pegazises", ontologically starting with the subject. We have to write:

the regress, more precisely would make as if it has never started (always been). But "what is predicated of wisdom", or of Socrates in the first and second faking universals is precisely the form "being a characteristic of *X*". The faking universal represents a predicate, but such as flying away in regression, such as "being a characteristic (being a characteristic of (…)). There is a deficiency, from the point of view of an ontological completeness, given by the completion of the proposition through the reference to a particular.

Strawson shows three points. 1) That an anonymous unifying$_2$ predicate lacks a subjective act of reference to a particular, into an objective linguistic context. 2) That it possesses logical priority-in-unification$_2$ as universal. 3) The conclusion is that priority-in-unification$_2$ corresponds to incompleteness in reference to "*things* in general […] what primarily *exist*"[91], to "being", and incompleteness to describe the finite "couple"$_3$ into the proposition. How could we probe deeper that result? Why should an unfinished unification$_2$ take the form of a finite coupling$_3$ under an ontological description? If "being" – as existence - stands, so to speak, "behind", primarily the particular, and secondly the universal, "alpha and omega" that surrounds reality, how could nothingness possibly explain the coupling?

IV. Emptiness of the predicate: a topological necessity for unification:

Why is there such a fear? Where does it take place? Strawson states about the apparition on a "dummy universal" in our language: "what we find here is, as it were, an *anxiety* to preserve the grammatical predicate place for the categorically predictable, even at the cost of faking universals to

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"Something pegazises". Thus: "being", "non-being", "reference to nothing" are eliminated, *not the "reference to entities" as a whole* (*ib*. I, 6-7, VI, 116). For there must be at least "something" as Pegasus, if we want to quantify its existence. From "there is no such thing as Pegasus", we *cannot* throw a quantifying "inference". Nonbeing hinders inference, because we need something to refer to, *a kind of "entity"* which is not a "trait of the object concerned, but depends on the manner of referring to the object" (*ib*. VIII, 145-150). As Quine puts it: "the burden of objective reference" is not eliminated, but "*is now taken over*"* by the "bound variables, variables of quantification, namely, words like 'something', 'nothing', 'everything' […] they refers to *entities generally*, with a kind of studied ambiguity particular to themselves"* (*ib*. I, 6-12). The ideal of "the purely logical theory of quantification", relieved from opacity, is not – against Russell - to practice such "inferences" in "generalization" or "instantiation" in translation, but to operate within a radical eliminated space (*ib*. VI, 122, VIII, 146), although filled with an ontological "demand of value" (n. 38).

From a nishidean perspective, "to quantify" (量化する *ryôkasuru*) is precisely to proceed towards the place of being, and "mathematical" space *L*, p. 15, 54(216, 251), *NK*, 824, 860. "Quantification" of "what there is" will never satisfy a radical "neontology", starting with the consideration of "absolute nothingness" (on this terminology, see: "De la néontologie", *loc. cit.*). To quantify is to make disappear the "old Platonic riddle of nonbeing", while keeping an "ambiguous" reference to being. Is is neither meontology, nor ontology, while maintaining a sort of bridge over the question of a radical form of nothingness, the question that neontology asks.

[91] *I*, 246-247*. *OR*, 15.

keep up appearances"[92]. This sort of "anguish"[93] for nothingness is a "rational"[94] refuse of the infinite regress, of incompleteness, for completeness obtained in the fact of "carrying empirical presupposition" is "reassuring"[95]. It refuses "idle" concepts, not at work and related to being through an act of reference, an "ontological engagement"[96], a "belief" in existence[97]. As he is taking account of "something analogous to Bradley's argument", we cannot help remembering J. Royce's critique of Bradley Nishida deepened, and drawing an opposition line between the first couple of thinkers and the last[98].

For Royce, the fear of infinite regress constitutes a "psychological" human limitation, while thinking, just as "reality", has to be conceived precisely as an infinite "Self-Representative System"[99], constantly renewing "meaning" for the very richness of meaning, an endlessly unifying$_1$ system. Infinite regress turns in fact to the very process. This view is grounded on the analysis of infinity by Richard Dedekind (1831-1916), according to which a system is infinite when it is similar to a proper part of itself. This is mathematically at least explainable. But metaphysically, why should we base reality on such a model?[100]

Nishida's answer is that reality cannot be merely ontological: it must be punctured, in order to explain this infinite regression of the whole through the parts, this endless predication in logic. There must be a "depth" (深さ *fukasa*) in reality, explaining how it can flee away from itself inside itself, "retreat" in itself. Reality is not spatially open on an "exterior" (外 *soto*) or an "interior" (内 *uchi*), but piercing itself, in this sense that it possesses an "issue" inside itself. But this issue is blocked up with being, a "reassuring", simpler approach of reality than nothingness, easier for thought and language to theorize, quantify, or refer to. Fear of infinite regress dreads nothingness as the hole in which reality "operates"[101].

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[92] *I*, 175, 178-179*. "metaphorically", a linguistic "effort", "tendency", "feeling" to match predication's criteria.

[93] In *NKPU*, 103, we confront Heidegger and Nishida's view on a different form of radicalized "anguish" (*Angst*).

[94] *I*, 138, 164, 246.

[95] "It is no doubt *reassuring* to learn that, if we should embark on a journey through successive presuppositions, *we can be sure of reaching an end*", *I*, 193*. See also 201-202: how to "approach the end of the regress"?

[96] See n. 64, and the general expression of "ontological commitment" in Quine (*ib.* I, 12, VI, 103).

[97] *AM*, 4-9, 21, 52, 57, 121: we "know in advance the range of possible fillings" for the "gaps in our knowledge".

[98] Of course historically, Nishida did not know about Strawson, while he criticizes Bertrand Russell's (1872-1970) "projective geometry" (*NK*, 430), and studied William James (1842-1910) and John Dewey (1859-1952). Nevertheless, Nishida's topology of predication allows an interesting interpretation of his metaphysical position, without the charge of anachronism, because topology of philosophy is neither "geographical", nor "historical" (see *NK*, 1000). Thus this article is more to be conceived as an essay than as a study in history of philosophy.

[99] Josiah ROYCE (1855-1916), *The World and the Individual (WI)*, (New York: Macmillan, 1920), note 1, 553.

[100] On this topic, related to the problem of *Selbstbewusstsein* in current German thought (D. Heinrich, E. Tugenthat), cf. John MARALDO "Self-mirroring and Self-awareness: Dedekind, Royce, and Nishida", *FJP*, 143-163, as well as *NK*, 284-301, 403-422, and our paper: "The Idea of Mirror", *loc. cit.*

[101] 退く *shirizoku*, 門口 *kadoguchi P*, 234-236. *NK*, 948-952, 996-1000. 操作する *sōsasuru*. See n. 112.

In such an "evacuation", managed by absolute nothingness as "the very fact of emptying oneself", reality "escapes" from itself, but within itself, through this exit that produces the frame for a temporal form of unity, as the bottleneck unifies the liquid plunging into it. In this idea of a gap that enables reality to *be* and to be *one*, we find the deepening actuality of the *basho*. Because reality takes place within absolute nothingness, it can be conceived as an endlessly unifying$_1$ system. The logical negative idea of an infinite "return" (復帰 *fukki/regressus*) from being to being – through oppositional nothingness -, the "repulsive" character of being, has to be converted into the topological effective idea of an infinite "development" (発展 *hatten/egressus*) of reality *inside* itself[102], the self-hollowing, self-digging, operation of nothingness. However, this idea of an infinite *egressus* in predication is opposed to the idea of a "coupling in general" that aims at a final unity, preserved from any *regressus* or *egressus*. From a Nishidean perspective, if the unifying$_2$ nature of the predicate can be described as a "coupling", an "union" (結合／合一 *ketsugo/gōitsu*), aiming$_3$ at a "final unity"[103], this is because the predicate must be replaced topologically in absolute nothingness - since "nothing" enables something as creating -, in order to produce unity; here we have "unification$_1$" (統一する *tōitsusuru/Vereinigung*) "as such" (その儘に *sonomamani*), and not "such as it *is*"[104].

But let us read once more the above quotation. The fear of nothingness and the ontological cost of faking universals represent also an "anxiety to preserve the grammatical predicate *place*". Just as in Frege's account, and maybe in Quine's[105], the metaphysical description of predication must also encompass an essential topological aspect. A logic of evacuating and coupling predicate belongs to a theory of reference, that itself depends on a *topology*, that Strawson seems to oppose to Quine and his theory of "indefinite reference". Quantification (n.100) cannot make substantial economies on

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[102] 空うすること *kûusurukoto*, 脱する *dassuru*, *IR*, 148(300-301), *P*, 221, 255. *NK*, 1090-1092.

[103] 最後統一 *saigotōitsu*, *IRES* §39 p. 130(260). *NK*, 298.

[104] *NK*, 681-690. "The Idea of Mirror", 115-116. A Quinean approach tries to avoid the ontological "suchness" or the *talitas* of medieval philosophy, without completely escaping the "reference to being", when defining "description" '(*ιx*)' as 'the object *x* such that', or a quantified entity with such a predicate (*ib.* V, 85). If we "rephrase" the sequence this way: *being-suchness-predicate*, it is clear that whereas suchness is preserved from a radical "ontological commitment", predicate itself appears distinct from it. By contrast, from the philosophy of "pure experience" (純粋経験 *junsuikeiken*) in *IG* to the theory of "purification" (純化する *junkasuru*) in *IR*, and in topology, Nishida is meditating a kind of "talitization" dwelling within the "auto-determination" of predicate itself, inside the purifying place of absolute nothingness, dissolving "being" as the false essence of the *thing just as such*, completely, to emphasize Quine's word, "innocent" of being (*ib.*, VI, 116). This is the effective *realization* of the Stoic's idea of the predicate as an unreal "event" of unification. But from the analytical perspective, Nishida's view will appear at best as a variant of the "metaphor of progressive creation" critically referred to as "conceptualistic" (*ib.* VI, 127). For instance, the "real number" (実数 *jissû*) represents for the former a "value of a variable", an object of reference for ontology (*ib.* VII, 131), for the latter a step into the "self-enfolding" of "number" (数 *kazu*), as a self-awaking system plunged inside nothingness (*NK*, 446).

[105] *FLPV*, VI, 111. About "paraphrase", see Quine, *Méthodes de logique* (Paris : A.Colin, 1972), 55.

reference and all subjects expressions, because "linguistic terms" in quantification presuppose the very existence of subject-expressions, of "linguistic singular terms". However, this presupposition is topological[106]. Topology of ordinary speech determines topology of formulary language and not vice versa, "reference" is topologically prior to logical "paraphrase". This topology of ordinary *speech* corresponds to the conceptual scheme of *thought* that allows the "location" or "placing" of objects into spatial "places", as well as the "housing" of "objects which are not themselves intrinsically spatial, such as sounds"[107] .

Still, "our conceptual scheme" refers to "our ontology", and the topology is always conceived in mutual reference to "particulars"[108]. This necessary reference to "beings" or "objective particulars" confines the predicate to an incompleteness that seems efficient, but ontologically determined. It can appear "prior" to the subject, as a universal, because it unifies$_2$, "collect" more; since, this must end into the finite link, attribution, couple$_3$ that leads to a proposition about some "thing". But is unification the simple union$_3$ that leads to an ontological statement? Will not the predicate appear in a deepest form if we try to disclose precisely what, so to speak, from one "side" of the predicate, Strawson refuses, *i.e.* the "absolute incompleteness, a propositional incompleteness" of a predicate-expression in the scope of an infinite regress; and what, from another "side", Quine refuses, *i.e.*, the absolute blankness of the predicate in the scope of the absence of any "ontological commitment"? When the former refuses the latter's analysis as "unacceptable" and rejects it as "a whole", this come obviously more from a fear of the "dissolution" of the subject-expression, rather than from an exegesis of the "absoluteness" of the "incompleteness" of the "predicate-expression".[109] Conversely, when the latter constructs a "logic of quantification", it is well known that this project endeavours to eliminate the reference to particulars, and leave behind the pure symbolical blankness of the

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[106] Forms of quantification "appears *in* ordinary language", have, as such "a *place*, a role in language, which is to be brought out or elucidated in contrast with the *place*, or role, in language which linguistic singular terms have. No sense can be attached to the idea they can have the *place* they have even if there is no such *a place*", *I*, 196*.

[107] *I*, 36-37, 47, 53-54, 74. In addition, topology of ordinary speech determines topology of "primitive pre-particular level of thought" left as "vestigial in language" such as "naming games" 206.

[108] "The identification and distinction of *places* turn on the identification and distinction of *things*; and the identification and distinction of *things* turn, *in part*, on the identification and distinction of *places*. There is no mystery about this *mutual dependence*", *I*, 37*. Also *AM*, 78-79. The formulation is *not symmetrical*, as reference is ontological before being topological: things are "ontologically prior", that is "more fundamental or more basic" (*I*, 17) than places, so "being" determines "place", and "place" cannot but be the location for something: here is the "place of determined being". Moreover, this entails a description in terms of "mutual dependence", which corresponds to "oppositional nothingness": things oppose things into "relative positions": "this is the framework for spatial locations in general" (37, 47, 54). But this topology of space belongs to *being*, either *occupying* the place, either *changing* from place to place. Moreover this "mutual dependence" in identifying references of "things" and "places", depending on the "context" of identification corresponds to the transition from the "place of determinate being" to the "place of oppositional nothingness"; from a "reference done", that has *been*, to the infinite topological making of the "referring function", in its incompleteness.

[109] *I*, 195.

predicate, in Frege's opening space into brackets.

The Nishidean perspective makes the transition from the "place of being" to the "place of nothingness", and explains how a fear of infinite regress is in fact *a terror of nothingness*, since being represents the reassuring aspect of a reality in fact plunged into nothingness[110]. The impressive insight of the "logic of place" is to show that the predicate can be understood in a rather radical turn, if we get out of the place of being, into a topology of nothingness. A purely ontological analysis of propositions belongs to the place of being in descriptive metaphysics. Here the "translocalisation" can only be described and explained in terms of our conceptual scheme, in a space that belongs to *oppositional nothingness*.

This topological negative character appears clearly in 1992. Strawson criticizes as "circular" the linear "analysis" that reduces a "complex structure" into "ultimate elements", "completely simple" physical, sensible, or logical atoms or "foundations", because "*simple* elements" cannot rely on "*simpler* elements", which is the very principle of analysis, and are thus non analyzable and unknowable. But here, an "analytical philosopher" wants to avoid the rational deception of the infinite regress, for there should be always "simpler elements" for analysis to work, *ad infinitum*, and that is "hateful", "damaging" for him. To escape this, we must conceive a "connective" model of analysis that eliminates the worry of regression[111]. Here we find a new model of description of "our conceptual scheme", incorporating from within circularity as a "performative" item. The autonomous simplicity of the "basic" element, responsible of a vicious circularity, becomes the connective "irreducibility" of the *fundamental* concepts as "presupposed" within the *reciprocal* relations inside an operative "network", where thus "asymmetry" and "mutual dependence" match[112].

In Nishidean terms, the "absolute priority" of the "simple elements", as "beings", "things" and "concepts"[113] belongs to determinate entities where *being* takes place. Reductive analysis takes place inside *oppositional nothingness*, and strives to return to being, to simple elements, in order to avoid regression and circularity. Connective "elucidation" tries to dominate circularity inside a general

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[110] See his critique of Husserl's concepts of "categorical intuition" and "original impression", *NK*, 1042-1109.

[111] *AM*, 17-20, 92-93*. See the "narrow" circularity of belief, *AM*, 78-79. "Let us imagine, instead, the model of an elaborated network, a system, of connected items, concepts, such as the function of each item, each concept, could, from the philosophical point of view, be properly understood only by grasping its *connections* with the others, its *place* in the system – perhaps better still, the picture of a set of interlocking systems of such a kind. If this becomes our model, then there will be no reason to be *worried* if, in the process of tracing connections from one point to another of the network, we find ourselves returning to, or passing through, our stating-point […] So the general charge of circularity would lose its sting, for we might have moved in a wide, revealing, and illuminating circle." *AM*, 19-20. A "wide" circularity is saying: "*our* world" is the one of "*social* beings", 81*.

[112] *AM*, 21, 22, 24. We use the word "operative" here in the sense of a sort of "operationalism" Strawson seems to describe in his account of the theory of "manipulation". Here also, we find the oppositional nature of our conceptual scheme in "mutual dependence", *AM*, 78-79. For a operationalist Nishidean account, *NK*, 1344-1346.

[113] *AM*, 19: "this process has not even begun if one of the alleged pieces turns out to *be*, or to contain, the very *thing*, the very concept, that was to be dismantled"*.

scheme of infinite "mutual opposition and dependence"[114], *which includes nevertheless asymmetry*. But why Strawson, like Frege (n. 26), refuses a complete logic of mutual determination without any kind of fundamentals? From a topological point of view, this is because oppositional nothingness "returns" to being, in such a way that the "ultimately irreducible" dimension is transferred from the "element" to the "structure", although we are still enclosed into an ontological picture.[115] Once more, reality finds itself wrapped into a "framework" that "totalizes" our picture of the world, "stuck" so to speak, by the connections. In ontological pluralism, "properties", "universals" exist as well as "subjects", "particulars"[116], and reality is surrounded by "being".

However, where should stand this conceptual scheme itself, in order to be described as a "common, *unifying*₁ system of relations"? What kind of vacuity allows the places to empty themselves in order to be filled? Where can we find the "snapping out" that enables the very transition from place to place? In a Strawsonian approach, there are surely other conceptual schemes, but these can be constructed only through "analogy" with ours. The very idea of a "place of absolute nothingness" can be described as a "game", but does not correspond to something effective for us, except perhaps as an intellectual tool[117]. Nothingness *is* outside being not because it unfolds it, but because it *is* conceived from it[118]. There is no other place for nothingness in the "working ontology" (n. 56) of reference, no other room to think a "neontology" of predication, not such as it is, but of predication "as such".

With the Stoics, the predicate begins to reveal at an unsubstantial level its potential unifying₂ power. Frege showed why this power has to be necessarily founded in incompleteness, in relation to a logical topology. But this "breach" into nothingness was rapidly closed, as Strawson and Quine established how this cannot avoid a dimension of reference to being, inside metaphysical topology, or quantification.

The "logic of place" appears as a turning point from this perspective, exploring the incompleteness of the predicate as such in the scope of a larger theory of unification₁. This labour might help us to begin to investigate deeper the relation between unification and emptiness in predication, outside the context of "formal" logic(s) and ontology(s) in a broad sense, establishing

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[114] 相反/相互限定 *sôhan/sôgogentei*. *NK* p. 626-631, 881, 1372-1375.

[115] In other words, the Strawsonian defence of "asymmetry" implies the recovering of a sort of "opacity" from a purely "transparent" context, in the technical sense of these words already exposed (n. 10). Quine's "plan" of purification of opaque referential contexts in quantification goes in the opposite way (*FLPV*, VIII).

[116] *AM*, 46.

[117] *I*, 76-79. A "conceptual mapping or charting", *AM*, 2, 64*: we cannot *step outside* the entire structure of the conceptual scheme which we actually have – and then to justify it from some extraneous point of vantage". For Strawson, if we can speak of "places" inside philosophy, it is more in the sense of "departments" to describe, *AM*, 43-44. Yet we demonstrated how Nishida refuses the very idea of a topological "description", *NK*, 1090-1092.

[118] We study the opposition between Nishida and Bergson on this topic in *NK*, p. 784.

more clearly how the dynamic poverty of the predicate leads to the construction of a unity, as nothingness constitutes the place of *creation* of being. To escape the "reference to being" is not to eliminate being, but to explain 'being' as secondary. Predicate stands in emptiness: it has to predicate, to let *be* a logical unity.