

CHAPTER IV

PERSON : A BASIC PARTICULAR IN THE SPATIO-TEMPORAL FRAMEWORK.

For Strawson persons are a type of basic particulars or things. This basicness of the concept of person, I think, is the descriptive metaphysical foundation of his concept of person.

To examine Strawson's view about the basicness of the concept of person I shall begin with his general view that material bodies are basic particulars. I hope this will help us understand more clearly his concept of person. Strawson claims that material bodies are basic particulars because they constitute the spatio-temporal framework. This also implies that to understand his concept of person it is essential to understand his concept of, basic particulars, and the spatio-temporal framework. I shall try to explain these concepts in their right contexts. In fact, strawson's emphasis on the metaphysical relevance of the principle of identification leads him to the fundamental issue of basic particulars. He states that a particular will be called basic if it is ontologically prior to others, i.e. if and only if it is identified or identifiable without reference to particulars of other type, whereas the identification of other type of particulars is dependent on the identification of it. The dependent types of particulars accordingly are non-basic.

Strawson argues that basic particulars composed of material bodies constitute our unitary spatio-temporal framework. He mentions some salient

features of the basic particulars which are as follows:

First, they must be four dimensional, i.e. they must have length, breadth and height with some endurance through time.

Second, they must be accessible to our ordinary means of observation so that we could be able to pick them out as and when necessary.

Third, 'they must collectively have enough diversity, richness, stability, and endurance to make possible and natural just that conception of a simple unitary framework which we possess.'¹

From what are stated above about the fundamental characteristics of basic particulars it is clear that every type of particular objects can not constitute the framework of ours. Strawson says, 'The only objects which can constitute it are those which can confer upon it its own fundamental characteristics.'² In other words, according to him, Spatio-temporal 'framework is not something extraneous to the objects in reality of which we speak.' He therefore says, 'If we ask what constitutes the framework, we must look to those objects themselves, or some among them.'³

Strawson's interpretation of the concept of our Spatio-temporal framework importantly differs from that of Kant's. In Critique of Pure Reason Kant raises two questions about space and time. He says, 'Are they (space and time) only determinations or relations of things, yet such as would belong to things even if they were not intuited ? Or are space and time such that they belong only to the

1. Individuals, p.39.

2. Ibid., p. 39.

3. Ibid., p. 39.

form of intuition, and therefore to the subjective constitution of our mind, apart from which they could not be ascribed to anything whatsoever?’⁴ He, then, by his metaphysical and transcendental exposition of the concept of space and time, proves that they are not relations of things, but are two pure forms of sensible intuition. Kant gives therefore affirmative answer to the second question and negative to the first. It is interesting that Strawson opposes this view of Kant in his Individuals and says that space and time can be explained in terms of the relations of things which, possess material bodies, or are basic from the point of view of identification.

According to Kant space and time are necessary a priori representations. We can not think of their absence, but we can think of them containing no objects at all. Contrary to this view of Kant, Strawson holds that objects are inherently spatio-temporal; so we cannot think of empty space and time. He says that identification of things depends on the identification of space (place) and time, and identification of place and time also depends on the identification of things. This dependence is mutual and not mysterious. One might say that ‘there is, rather, a complex and intricate interplay between the two’.⁵

If the Kantian ideas of the space and time are entertained as a priori forms in our sensibility, our actual world made up of identifiable and reidentifiable particular things would be reduced to a world of appearances which is different from the world in itself. We could know nothing of the objects of the world in itself. Strawson discarded this Kantian view of the world; and offers a descriptive

4. Immanuel Kant’s *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. N.K. Smith, Macmillan, 1973, B 38, p. 68.

5. Individuals, p.37.

metaphysical view of the spatio-temporal framework or world in which material bodies are admitted as basic particulars.

In his book The Bounds of Sense Strawson maintains a similar view of space and time that he expresses in his Individuals. He, however, has done this in a different way. He says, 'Spatio - temporal position provides the fundamental ground of distinction between one particular item and another of the same general type, hence the fundamental ground of identity of particular items.'⁶ To make a distinction between one particular item and another of the same general type, he follows a method which from the epistemic point of view is partly Kantian and from the ontological point of view is completely descriptive. He explains the ontological or metaphysical distinction of particular object and its general type in terms of the kantian epistemological distinction of intuition and concept. He holds : 'The duality of intuition and concept is merely the epistemological aspect of the duality of particular instance and general type.'⁷ According to him, 'The theory of being, the theory of knowledge, and the theory of statement are not truly separable.'⁸

Kant stated that sensibility is the source of intuitions and the understanding that of concepts. We know that with these two subjective sources he explains the possibility of experience and knowledge. Strawson also agrees with this view of Kant. He says that to ask what are the conditions of the possibility of knowledge 'is to ask a question reminiscent of kant's investigation into the conditions of the possibility of experience in general'.⁹ Here Strawson seems to

6. The Bounds of Sense, Methuen & Co Ltd, London, 1968, p. 49.

7. Ibid., p. 48.

8. Ibid., p. 47.

9. "My Philosophy" op. cit. pp. 4-5.

be a faithful follower of Kant. But it is a matter of philosophical interest that he also discarded his revisionary view that space and time, the forms of perceptual awareness are a priori, and the concepts of understanding are pure. And for this reason the method he pursued in The Bounds of Sense is partly Kantian, and completely descriptive.

Strawson argues that a particular object is the particular instance of its general type or concept. A general concept is not something pure, but a general principle to recognise or classify some particular items according to their similar characteristics. He says, 'Take any general concept you please, any idea you like of a general type of item- provided only that the items falling under it, if any, are such as conceivably could be encountered in experience and become the objects of empirical awareness- and it will seem evident enough that any particular instances of it which actually occur must actually occur *some-when*, that any particular instances of it which can actually be found must actually be found *Somewhere*.'¹⁰ Strawson therefore comes to conclude that existence and identity of particular objects of general kinds are bound up with space and time.

Kant, however, says of the reality of space and time. According to him, we can not have any experience of any objects which are not in space and time, i.e. space and time are empirically real. But as far as his transcendental idealistic view is concerned, strawson strongly opposes it. Kant stated that space and time are also transcendently ideal since they are after all a priori forms of our sensible intuition. They must continue to be even if no objects exist in them. In The Bounds of Sense Strawson tries to detach this transcendental idealism of Kant from his substantial doctrine of things.

10. The Bounds of Sense, pp.48-49.

Strawson's view of the concept of the spatio-temporal framework seems to be systematic and acceptable for the following reasons.

First, he explains the particular things and the spatio-temporal framework in terms of their necessary relation. According to him, one can not be thought of in abstraction from the other. In Kantian scheme the relation is loose, in the end rather that was not maintained ^{at} all.

Second, we may say that Kant's things 'when they are considered in themselves through reason, that is, without regard to the constitution of our sensibility', are non-spatial and non-temporal; but Strawson's basic particulars which may be called real things or things in themselves, are inherently spatial and temporal.

Third, as far as Kant's view is concerned, the relation between things of our outer experience and space and time is occasional, but Strawson says that the said relation is not occasional and adventitious. According to him, every identifiable particular must have its place in space and time; only we can have knowledge of the particulars which are empirically encounterable or bound up with space and time.

Four, in Strawson's descriptive metaphysical scheme the character of the spatio-temporal framework must be as fundamental as the character of the major categories of particular objects. Therefore the relation between them is symmetrical from the point of view of identification. Kant obviously precluded such type of mutual relation between them.

Not only has Strawson said that the major categories of particulars or material bodies are three-dimensional things with some endurance through time, but he also mentions that they must 'tend to exhibit some felt resistance to touch'.

This last one he thinks of as a necessary condition of any material bodies. He gives importance to the tactual qualities of material bodies, for he thinks that it will make the requirement more stringent than that of the three-dimensional occupation of space. If simply it is said that a material body is three-dimensional, certain items, such as shafts of light, volumes of coloured gas, ghosts, etc. are to be admitted as material bodies. But these items can not satisfy the stringent requirement of material body. Thus in Strawson's scheme the stringent requirement will not allow only purely visual occupiers of space to be treated as material bodies. This requirement seems to be satisfactory; it is also satisfactory for the blind persons who can tactually identify material bodies. Strawson therefore says : 'Given a certain general feature of the conceptual scheme of particular - identification which we have, it follows that material bodies must be the basic particulars.'¹¹

Strawson makes a category distinction between things possessing material bodies, and persons possessing material bodies. Schematically we may then say that according to him basic particulars are of two types: material bodies and persons. It seems that he would not object to the claim if anyone makes that particulars be divided into material bodies and animals. However with regard to the category distinction he has made between material bodies and persons, he thinks that there we can not have any confusions. For persons which possess material bodies are also fundamentally different from material bodies.

In respect of Strawson's use of the expression 'material bodies', however, there is scope of being confused. He should have used only the expression 'basic

11. Individuals, p.40.

particulars' to mean both persons and material bodies. But he says symmetrically that material bodies from the point of view of identification are basic particulars; and basic particulars from the point of view of identification are material bodies. Now if we consider his proposed category distinction between material bodies and persons, it becomes like this. The material bodies are of two types : (1) material bodies, and (2) persons. This is not pleasant to our ears. But had he used only the expression 'basic particulars' to denote material bodies as well as persons; it would have rather been easier to divide these basic particulars into two major types or categories, viz. (1) material bodies, and (2) persons. I think that Strawson has failed to unambiguously use the expressions 'material bodies' and 'basic particulars'; but he has meant it straightforwardly that persons are different from material bodies. We may therefore agree with Strawson that material bodies (in a broad sense) or basic particulars are of two types.

In his book What is a Person? Mrinal Miri says, '...Strawson is an avowed anti- Cartesian, and yet for him the categorical distinction between persons and material bodies is almost a matter of fundamental assumption.'¹² This opinion of Miri does not seem reasonable. Strawson's distinction between material bodies and persons does not indeed rest on any fundamental assumption; but on conceptual necessity which we get from the very feature of our conceptual structure of thought. The conceptual necessity justifies the difference between material bodies and persons in the sense that states of consciousness can not be ascribed to material bodies, but to persons. This ascription again is not a matter of assumption, but a matter of fact.

12. M. Miri, What is a Person? Shree Publishing House, Delhi, 1980, p.2.

Referring also to the distinction Strawson makes between two kinds of basic particulars, Miri says, 'He does not, for instance, even consider the possibility of theories according to which there is nothing conceptually wrong in ascribing P-predicates to material objects themselves.'¹³ I think this view of Dr. Miri is not founded on reliable premises. We can not ascribe P-predicates to material objects we see around us; it is conceptually wrong to ascribe P-predicates to material objects themselves, since if we do so, there shall be no distinction between persons and material bodies. The requirements of identification are logically enough to make the distinction between material bodies and persons.

It seems that Miri has not considered the aspect of Strawson's principle of identification according to which basic particulars must be of two types; i.e. persons and material bodies. To make the category distinction between the two types of basic particulars then is not at all a matter of any assumption; and as there is no question of any assumptions in making the fundamental distinction between material bodies and persons, it seems irrelevant to say, 'Much that seems to me to be unacceptable, inadequate and inconsistent in Strawson's theory is derivable from the fact that Strawson, in spite of his avowed anti-Cartesianism, shares this assumption with Descartes.'¹⁴

From another direction Strawson's way of making the categorical distinction between material objects and persons may be defended. We know that Strawson's metaphysics is descriptive in character. This aims at describing things as they are there in our spatio-temporal unified world. What are there in the world? According to Strawson there are basic particulars which are

13. Ibid., p.2.

14. Ibid., p.2.

fundamentally spatio-temporal in character. How does he classify the basic particulars into two kinds? It is the principle of identification which leads him to the classification of basic particulars into two types. We talk about things and identify them. And we can not talk about things unless we know them. Strawson says that we can not know any things unless they are somehow identifyingly connected with our framework. He therefore stated that the theory of entities or things, the theory of statements, and the theory of knowledge are interrelated. We have knowledge of things of the spatio - temporal world, we do identify things and we do talk about them by using words and expressions of our everyday language.

To sum, in Strawson's ontology two questions are important. First, what do we talk about? Second, What do we say of them ? To the first he answers that we do talk about things some of which are basic. Then it is a requirement that to talk about them we are to identify them; and we are to use certain expressions to refer to them. Answering the second question he says that what we say of particular things are characterized by the predicates we use to describe them, i.e. to describe that the particular things are such and such. The way we use predicates justifies the categorical distinction Strawson makes between material bodies and persons. It therefore seems that Strawson has not shared any assumption of any form in making the said distinction between the two types of basic particulars.

Descartes has founded his dualism on the assumption that mind as a non-material substance must exist even if the body with which it is intimately connected ceases to be. But the foundation of Strawson's concept of person is descriptive metaphysical. According to him a person is a basic particular from the point of view of identification and reidentification. But could he not be

accused of admitting dualism of material bodies and persons? It is true that there is no hint of substance dualism in his exposition of the concept of person; yet could we not say that there is hint of property dualism in it? He said that two types of properties we do ascribe to persons. So it appears that he can not avoid the dualism of states of consciousness and corporeal characteristics.

However, as far as strawson's concept of basic particulars is concerned, it seems that he has not indulged in any ideas of dualism. All the basic particulars irrespective of their types have some common salient features, i.e. they are four-dimensional things having some qualities of the tactual range. But dualism holds that all substances can not have characteristics of the similar type. According to this theory the property of matter is extension, while the property of mind is thought.

It may be tempting for us to think that Strawson is an advocate of a relatively modern form of materialism. But those who champion the materialistic view and opine that persons are only material bodies; and there is no category distinction at all between material bodies and persons, they can not explain the concept of person. According to behaviouristic version of materialism mental states and processes are nothing but bodily behaviours. Even the last version of materialism known as identity theory seems to be defective. The supporters of this theory hold that mental states are identical with bodily states. Strawson's concept of person is, therefore, fundamentally different from that of materialistic concept. The problem of materialism is what we may call its inability to plausibly account for mental states and processes. According to Strawson, persons as basic particulars possess material bodies; yet they are fundamentally different from material bodies. We can not ascribe all types of predicates to material bodies, but to persons. Thus the patent problem of materialism does not arise in

Strawson's account of the concept of person.

Those who hold that persons are a kind of material bodies they also failed to explain the concept of person. To say that person is a kind of material body is not to say that a person is identical with material body. We say horses are animals, and also we say men are animals; but we never say men are horses, or horses are men. Similarly material bodies are basic particulars, and also persons are basic particulars; but persons are not exactly material bodies though they possess material bodies. It seems that strawson's exposition of the concept of person as a basic particular, is an alternative to both materialism and dualism.

In spite of the above account of basic particulars it could be said that Strawson yet rested it on general and vague arguments. So it is urgent to show more directly that there is reason to suppose that basic particulars are particulars on which the identification of particulars belonging to other categories is in fact dependent, whereas the basic particulars can be independently identified without reference to particulars of other types. Strawson claims that material bodies and persons are basic in this respect. According to him, events, states, processes, conditions, theoretical constructs or physical particles, political situation, economic depression, etc. are generally dependent on material bodies. These particulars he calls non-basic particulars. There is another type of non-basic particulars which he calls private particulars. Private particulars, e.g. thoughts, intentions, sensations, feelings, perceptions, memories, etc. for their identification are completely dependent on persons.

Strawson says that theoretical constructs or particles of physics from the scientific point of view are objects; but from the point of view of identification they are not observable. We can not identify them without reference to grosser material bodies. Our world is material, in a broad sense a grosser material body;

and not merely a sumtotal of atomic particles each of which is independent of the rest.

Regarding political situation or economic depression Strawson says that we can observe such phenomena. Also we can observe market, religious community, Strike, lockout, etc. But these particulars can not be treated as basic; they are obviously non-basic. we can not have a concept of a strike or lockout, if we do not have the concepts of men, tools and factories. Identification of some non-basic particulars thus are dependent on both material bodies and persons.

Events, processes, states and conditions are also observable non-basic particulars. Death means the death of some particular creature. We can not explain the concept of lightning without the concepts of cloud and collision. It is true that we observe directly a process like lightning; but to locate it, to identify it, we must identify the material body of cloud. Similarly the condition of the end of life is death, and we can observe this condition in observing the death of some creature.

From the instances of non-basic particulars it could be stated that any non-basic particulars whatever they may be, must depend for their existence and identification on material bodies in a broad sense. Strawson thus rightly says that material bodies are basic particulars. He writes : 'They supply both literally and figuratively, both in the short and in the long term, both widely and narrowly, our physical geography, the features we note on our maps. They include, that is to say, a sufficiency of relatively enduring objects (e.g. geographical features, buildings &c.) maintaining with each other relatively fixed or regularly changing spatial relations.'¹⁵

15. Individuals, p.53.

Let us return now to Strawson's concept of persons as basic particulars. I have already mentioned that persons are basic because non-basic private particulars have direct identifiability-dependence on them. Like the relation between material bodies and non-basic particulars the relation between private particulars and persons too is asymmetrical. That is to say, they are not mutually dependent. It is not possible to have the concept of persons on the basis of the concept of private particulars or experiences comprising of sensations, mental events etc. To have such experiences individuated, one essentially needs to turn on the identities of the persons. These experiences belong to their histories. We can not generally identify a twinge of toothache in our ordinary language, if no reference is made to the particular person who has suffered or is suffering from it. This is the reason why Strawson says, 'Identifying references to 'private particulars' depend on identifying references to particulars of another type altogether, namely persons.'¹⁶

Objection might be raised to this view of Strawson. It might be stated that without making any references to a person, it is possible to identify a private experience. For example, a person X can say 'This pain is terrible' while he is twisting on the ground and thus makes an identifying reference to his private sensation of a stabbing pain without making any identifying references to himself. And his hearer Y can identify the pain. Replying to this objection Strawson says that from this example it is rather clear that in our linguistic context it is not always essential to make identifying references to persons in order to identify their experiences; but this does not mean that their experiences could be independently identified without making any references to them. According to

16. Ibid., p. 41.

him, X has not made an explicit reference to himself, nevertheless his hearer Y identifies the pain in the context of the speaker or sufferer X. With reference to X's pain Y can also say that 'That pain was terrible'. Therefore, identifying references to private particulars, if not made explicitly, they must involve implicit references to the persons.

If we analyse the two sentences 'This pain is terrible', and 'That pain was terrible' used by X and Y respectively, we shall see that the first sentence is really a shorthand for the sentence 'The pain I am suffering is terrible', and the second sentence a shorthand for 'The pain you(he) had just suffered was terrible'. This analysis strengthens the view that the referential expressions of these two sentences have identificatory force, and they are used to refer to the person X in each occasion.

It might be said that the view of Strawson that private particulars can not be talked about except as the private particulars of some identified persons, is wrong. For we can reasonably use a demonstrative phrase 'This pain' to speak of a kind of private state of consciousness without having a reference to a subject or possessor of such a private state. This possibility can be explained with the help of an another demonstrative phrase 'This tree'. We reasonably use this demonstrative phrase to speak of a tree. And in any situations of the referential use of the expression 'This tree', it can not be said that it in fact stands as a shorthand for the expression 'The tree you can see over there' or 'The tree I can see over there'. In fact no reference at all is required to be made to any persons to speak of a particular tree. Similarly to speak of private experiences it is not essential to make identifying references to persons. To state it the other way we can say that without making any references to a person someone can say, 'This pain is terrible'. And once it is said, Strawson's thesis that persons as basic

concerned? It is obvious that as far as our ordinary language is concerned, we do not generally do this. Strawson therefore says, 'It would be possible for an experience to be identified as the one experience of a certain kind suffered in a certain identified place at a certain time; it would be possible for someone to be authoritatively told that such a description had application, and hence to identify the experience when it was referred to, without any independent knowledge of the identity of the sufferer of the experience.'¹⁸

But if Strawson admits that without independent knowledge of the identity of any persons it is possible to identify experiences, then between persons and experiences or states of consciousness no relation of identifiability dependence would hold. So he says that this qualification is not indeed far-reaching. According to him we do identify an experience without asking a question whose experience it is, because already we have knowledge of the identity of the sufferer of the experience. We have knowledge of the identity of the sufferer of the experience, because we are able to identify the sufferer of the experience. He holds, 'So even though, on a particular occasion of reference, the identification of a private experience need not be directly dependent on the identification of the person whose experience it was, it must still be indirectly so dependent.'¹⁹

From the above study it is sufficiently clear what is meant by Strawson's descriptive metaphysical account of the concept of person as basic particular. Now it should be examined whether this concept is satisfactory or not. Strawson says that persons are basic particulars, and he defines basic particulars in terms of ontological priority. That is, a type of particulars or things, for instance A, are

18. Ibid., p. 43.

19. Ibid., p. 43.

basic iff it is ontologically prior to other particulars or things, say, of type B. What is ontological priority? Strawson explains this in terms of referential priority, i.e. A is ontologically prior to B iff all particulars of the type A can be identified without reference to particulars of the type B, whereas the particulars of the type B can not be identified without reference to particulars of the type A. Strawson says, 'The meaning given to the term 'basic' is strictly in terms of particular-identification... It seems to me also unobjectionable to use the expression, 'ontological prior', in such a way that the claim that material bodies are basic particulars in our conceptual scheme is equivalent to the claim that material bodies are ontologically prior, in that scheme, to other types of particular.'²⁰ Here at this point it is possible to accuse strawson of making a confusion in explaining the concept of ontological priority in terms of the concept of identification. In fact, he uses the two concepts symmetrically to express the view that persons are basic particulars, or generally four - dimensional things are basic particulars. So let us see if it is possible to use the two concepts in this sense.

J.W. Cornman in his article "Language and Ontology" writes, 'Traditionally, it has been thought that ontology is the job of the metaphysician who sits pondering about reality.'²¹ In this traditional philosophical sense a reality -for example, Platonic Form- is ontologically prior because all categories of worldly things are dependent on it for their existence. Considering this concept of ontological priority objection might be brought from the camp of revisionary metaphysicians against Strawson's concept of basic particulars. Obviously in this sense Strawson has not claimed that four - dimensional particulars are basic. In

20. Individuals, p.59.

21. J.W. Cornman, "Language and Ontology" in R. Rorty (ed), The Linguistic Turn, The University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 1968, p. 160.

his metaphysical theory we have seen that a particular is basic if it is independently identifiable and other particulars belonging to different categories depend on it for their identification. So plausibly we may say that Strawson explains the concept of basic particulars in the sense of referential priority and not in ontological priority. From this also one can conclude that Strawson's conception of basic particulars is vague, ill-defined, and untenable. But if we consider this way Strawson's concept of basic particulars, we will do injustice to him.

In the traditional metaphysics what strawson calls revisionary metaphysics, ontology has been regarded as a branch of metaphysics which deals with the nature of reality, and this reality has always been non-empirical or transcendent reality. It is important to note that according to revisionary metaphysicians a reality is ontologically prior in this sense; the reality which can never be identified. But Strawson's descriptive metaphysics importantly changes this concept of reality; his reality is empirical. In other words, his ontology consists of objective or basic particulars. We may say in this sense, then, that his ontology is 'the study of what kinds of entities are basic'.²²

So far as Strawson's scheme of descriptive metaphysics is concerned, the spatio-temporal framework consisting of basic entities is the empirical reality. So the question is of understanding and of accepting the point of view to interpret the concept of reality. But if it is true that 'revisionary metaphysics is at the service of descriptive metaphysics', then we can say that four-dimensional things are basic because they are independently identifiable. To identify non-basic particulars we

22. Ibid., p. 160.

must have to depend on them; they are ontologically prior to non-basic particulars. To know what kinds of particulars are ontologically prior or basic we must have to know what kinds of particulars are independently identifiable. More specifically it can be said that which is independently identifiable is ontologically prior or basic. In both ways, then, we may say that persons are basic particulars because they are ontologically prior or referentially prior to non-basic private particulars or experiences. This ontological priority of the former to the latter does point to an 'ontological hierarchy'.

Criticising Strawson's view of the relation between things and places, J.O. Urmson says, 'It is no doubt true that places are recognized by the material objects which occupy them but it does not seem to me to be a conceptual truth 'that places are defined by the relations of material bodies'.²³ If this criticism is true, Strawson's concept of person as basic particular will not be tenable. Urmson opines that places should not be defined in terms of the relations of things. He considers things as merely signs of recognizing places. That is, according to him, places are independent of basic particulars. But this type of view can not explain the nature of particular things, of persons and material bodies. It is reminiscent of Kant's concept of space and time. And we have seen in the background of descriptive metaphysical account of the concept of basic particulars the defects of Kantian concept of space and time.

Norman Burstein is of the opinion that Strawson has not clarified how the body of a dead person differs from the body of a living person. He says, '... the body of a dead person is a material body which can be picked out from others,

23. J.O. Urmson, "Individuals" *Mind*, Vol. LXX, 1961, p. 260.

identified by ordinary physical criteria, and described in ordinary physical terms, but it is not equally clear that the body of a living person is a material body which can be picked out from others, identified by ordinary physical criteria and described in ordinary physical terms.²⁴ This view of Burstein seems to be noteworthy. Strawson himself has stated that 'for that which one calls one's body is, at least, a body, a material thing' (Individuals, p. 89). Now, if the body of a dead person is material, then in that same sense perhaps we can not say that the body of a living person is material. By the same criteria a dead body and a living body should not be identified. By the same ordinary physical terms they also should not be described. But Strawson has not used different criteria to identify them in different ways, similarly he has not stated different ordinary physical terms to describe them differently.

It seems that Strawson has not clarified the aspect mentioned by Burstein perhaps because it was not essential for his descriptive approach of the concept of person as basic particular. He clearly distinguishes between persons and material bodies. According to him, we do ascribe to a person physical as well as mental characteristics; whereas to material bodies we ascribe only physical characteristics. A person has a body means a person has physical characteristics. The categorical difference between a material body and a person thus is made on the basis of mental characteristics.

24. N. Burstein, "Strawson on the Concept of a Person", *Mind*, Vol. LXXX, 1971, p. 450.

Let us examine another argument which Burstein considers to be most effective to refute Strawson's view of a person as basic particular. The argument runs as follows:

'... a living person's body, like his consciousness, is not an independently identifiable particular; its identification ultimately rests on the identification of the particular person to whom it belongs. A corpse, on the other hand, can be identified as the body of a particular person (who no longer exists), but it also can be identified as a particular material body without reference to any person at all. Using Strawson's terminology, one might say that a corpse is, while a living person's body is not, a "basic particular".'²⁵

Burstein's objection seems to be a serious one. However, I would say that Strawson's argument may stand in the face of this objection. Never has Strawson stated that a body of a person is a basic particular; but he says definitely that a person is a basic particular. So it seems irrelevant to state that the identification of a body of a living person depends on the identification of the person whose body it is. It is conceptually unwarranted that a person John Smith and the body of John Smith are two different entities. The expression 'John Smith' is used to name a particular person, and to identify this particular person is to identify the person John Smith. Regarding Burstein's view that a corpse is a basic particular I would also say that if he says this, he does not seem to oppose Strawson's view of persons as basic particulars. In one sense a dead body may be thought as a material body which can be independently identified without reference to particulars of the heterogeneous type. According to Strawson, in a secondary sense

25. *Ibid.*, pp. 451-452.

when 'we speak of a dead person'²⁶, we speak of a body.

It may be argued that Strawson's concept of person as basic particular is based on a very weak metaphysical foundation. In addition to basic particulars- persons and material bodies- he admits abstract or intensional entities to widen the domain of his ontology. He says, '... if we allow the connection between being an object of reference and being an entity, something that exists- if we accept the logical and ontological connection- we broaden the domain of existents, of entities, to include abstract or intensional entities : qualities, properties, kinds, types, numbers, sets, relations etc.'²⁷ Basic particulars as items of his ontology are identifiable, but intensional particulars as items of the same ontology are not identifiable. Therefore, no longer it can be said that his ontology only comprises of persons and material bodies. Furthermore, following^o_k the criterion of what you identify as particular things and persons are what you get as objective particulars in your ontology, it can be stated that Strawson himself contradicts his concept of basic particulars. In Individuals he has stated that 'our ontology comprises objective particulars'.²⁸

If we critically study Strawson's view of intensional entities, we would see that he has not included these in his ontology in the sense of identifiable entities. He says that we speak of particular persons and things and what we speak of them are characterised by the predicates or general concepts. An intensional entity is a general concept. For example, Socrates is one particular individual, but 'man' is a general concept. This way we may find a relation between particular

26. Individuals, p. 103.

27. P.F. Strawson, "My Philosophy" op. cit., p.4.

28. Individuals, p.15.

items and general concepts. So if we speak of intensional entities, it will be compatible with our general structure of thought. But although Strawson speaks of intensional entities, he never has meant that these entities are basic. It is therefore very important that ontology in the Strawsonian sense will not be only a study of basic particulars because it comprises of both basic and intensional particulars. It seems that the very account of intensional entities does not indeed weaken Strawson's metaphysical foundation of the concept of person as basic particular. Even the inclusion of intensional entities in his ontology will not affect his general view that basic particulars are ontologically prior to non-basic particulars. So we would say that in Strawson's descriptive metaphysical sense persons are basic or ontologically prior to non-basic private experiences or sense data.