

CHAPTER VII

THE LOGICAL CHARACTER OF P-PREDICATES.

From what has already been critically discussed in the previous chapter a question necessarily arises : what is the basic significance of the condition of ascribing states of consciousness to oneself? Or, why has Strawson given so much emphasis on the aspect of ascribing states of consciousness to others in order to ascribe them to oneself? It seems before we get a plausible Strawsonian answer, it is essential to make a clear distinction between two types of predicates. To make clear the characterisation of the type of an entity, viz. person which preserves both bodily and mental identity, Strawson speaks of two types of predicates : M - predicates and P - predicates. 'The first kind of predicate consists of those which are also properly applied to material bodies to which we would not dream of applying predicates ascribing states of consciousness... The second kind consists of all the other predicates we apply to persons.'¹ M -predicates "include things like 'weighs 10 stone', 'is-in the drawing-room' and so on ... P - predicates, of course, will be very various. They will include things like 'is smiling', 'is going for a walk', as well as things like 'is in pain', 'is thinking hard', 'believes in God' and so on".²

1. *Individuals*, p.104.

2. *Ibid.*, p.104.

The actual functions of the predicates are described when they are related to the referring expressions of ordinary language. In order to offer a coherent account of the concept of person, Strawson places importance on the functions of these predicates, specially the P - predicates. He goes on saying that we do apply both types of predicates to the same thing or entity called person. And from this concept of the applicability of two types of predicates to a single entity, he says that it is a mistake to think in the Cartesian style that when a person says that I am, he makes the type difference between himself and his body. He thus locates the Cartesian error or the error which is presented in a different form in the no-ownership theory to the type - ambiguity of mind and body. This view also justifiably stands against any form of dualism between mind and body. 'Indeed, if we want to locate type - ambiguity somewhere', he says, 'we would do better to locate it in certain predicates like 'is in the drawing-room', 'was hit by a stone' &c., and say they mean one thing when applied to material objects and another when applied to persons.'³

What is the logical character of the P-predicates we use to ascribe states of consciousness to others as well as to ourselves ? The logical character of all P-predicates is that they imply possession of states of consciousness on the part of the persons to which they are ascribed. And from this logical character of P-predicates Strawson concludes that when we ascribe states of consciousness to other persons, we do not ascribe the states to them on the basis of any behaviour as the empirical correlate of such states. In fact, it is his view that we should not ascribe states of consciousness to others on the basis of the argument from analogy. One may be tempted to say that I do observe in my own case correlations

3. Ibid., p.105.

between experiences and forms of behaviours, and through introspection I assure myself of what particular experience gets specially associated with what particular form of behaviour; and from this correlation of states of consciousness and behaviours I can rightly ascribe a particular state of consciousness to others, if I see a similar form of their bodily behaviour. From one's own case, however, one can not by this inductive argument successfully argue for the states of consciousness of all other people. Wittgenstein also has pointed out this weakness of inductive argument. He says, 'If I say of myself that it is only from my own case that I know what the word "pain" means - must I not say the same of other people too ? And how can I generalize the one case so irresponsibly ?'⁴

Strawson says that if somebody claims to ascribe states of consciousness to others on the basis of the premise that he ascribes it to himself, then he is back in the position of the defender of cartesianism, he is back in the problem of myself and others. He writes : 'There is no sense in the idea of ascribing states of consciousness to oneself, or at all, unless the ascriber already knows how to ascribe at least some states of consciousness to others. So he can not argue in general 'from his own case' to conclusions about how to do this; for unless he already knows how to do this, he has no conception of his own case, or any case, i.e. any subject of experiences.'⁵

Now let us come back to the question, what is the basic significance of the condition of ascribing states of consciousness to oneself ? Evidently the significance of the condition is that it makes the ascription meaningful in one's own case. Strawson therefore seems to be justified in stating that to ascribe states

4. Philosophical Investigations, Part - 1, Section - 293.

5. Individuals, p.106.

of consciousness to oneself one should ascribe the same to others, since it is a necessary condition of one's ascribing states of consciousness to oneself that one should ascribe them to others. In this context Ayer remarks, 'The novelty of Mr. Strawson's attack lies in his refusal even to allow the argument to start. If my knowing how to ascribe experiences to others is a necessary condition of my being able to ascribe them to myself, then, Mr. Strawson suggests, the argument begins by presupposing what it is intended to justify.'⁶

Ayer, however, has not accepted the view of Strawson. He sharply criticised Strawson's central argument. And we have seen his argument from the solitary child is not tenable. But Chin-Tai Kim states that Strawson's argument is far from being conclusive. For his 'first premise - the thesis that a necessary condition of attributing experiences to oneself is that experiences should be attributable to others - is ambiguous'.⁷ Kim says, 'This thesis may be regarded as a consequence of the more general thesis that to subsume a particular under a general concept is to recognize at least the logical possibility of the existence of other particulars subsumable under this concept.'⁸ Against Kim's objection I would say that Strawson's thesis is not ambiguous. If ascription of states of consciousness to oneself is not possible without ascribing the states of consciousness to others, then the latter is a necessary condition of the former. Again to subsume a particular individual under a general concept 'person', Strawson does not speak in the sense of logical possibility of the existence of other persons. The question of logical

6. The Concept of a Person, pp.87-88.

7. Chin - Tai Kim, "Cartesian Dualism and Unity of a Mind", Mind, Vol. LXXX, 1971, p.339.

8. *Ibid.*, p.339.

possibility is here besides the point. He speaks of the actuality of the existence of other persons in the sense of identifiable basic particulars in the single unified spatio - temporal framework.

Strawson denies the fact that a particular form of behaviour is an empirical correlate of a particular state of consciousness, but from the point of view of his approach it appears that a statement ascribing states of consciousness to others is a logical correlate of the statement that ascribes states to oneself. That is, from Strawson's view, it appears that one comes to understand oneself as the subject of experiences or person from the notion of other subjects of experiences or persons. Does Strawson, then, follow the method of deduction? It seems to be so, since from the general concept of persons, he is interested to come to the particular instance of the same. I think this point Strawson has not clearly mentioned. And particularly for his special emphasis on the necessary condition that one should attribute experiences to others, we may speak of this possibility of deductive approach. But, in fact, his intention was not to establish his view from the ground of deduction. It was not required at all to have one's idea of oneself. If one does not know how to ascribe states of consciousness to others, then for him or her there is no sense in the idea of ascribing states of consciousness to himself or herself. Also for him or her, there can not have any sense in the idea of himself or herself as a person.

If no method of inference is entertained, then how do we actually attribute the states of consciousness to other persons? Strawson says, 'What I have said is that one ascribes P-predicates to others on the strength of observation of their behaviour; and that the behaviour-criteria one goes on are not just signs of the presence of what is meant by the P-predicate, but are criteria of a logically

adequate kind for the ascription of the P-predicate.’⁹ He justifies this view with reference to the conditions which are necessary for ascription of states of consciousness to anything. In his conceptual scheme it is a necessary condition that if states of consciousness are to be ascribed to anything, they are to be ascribed to the thing which has also physical characteristics. So when one ascribes P-predicates to others on the strength of observation of their behaviours, one should not take the behaviours as signs of the states of consciousness, but as logically adequate criteria.

Strawson’s view of the logical adequateness of behaviour-criterion is put to objection. Don Locke says, ‘One of the main difficulties is that Strawson nowhere explains what precisely he means by a ‘logically adequate criterion’.’¹⁰ Perhaps Don Locke has not considered the criterion from the point of view of Strawson’s conceptual scheme. For ‘one who has the concept of a person is able to make reasonable statements about the psychological states of other persons on the basis of evidence that is not just symptomatic but criterial. Criterial evidence is evidence that counts for the truth of a Statement in virtue of the very meaning of the statement.’¹¹ Strawson’s logically adequate criterion may be taken in the sense of criterial evidence. He says that ‘the ascribing phrases are used in just the same sense when the subject is another as when the subject is oneself’.¹² In a footnote at page 99 of *Individuals*, he says, ‘The main point here is a purely

9. *Individuals*, p. 106.

10. D. Locke, *Myself and Others*, p. 133.

11. J.T. Saunders, “Persons, Criteria, and Skepticism,” *Metaphilosophy*, Vol. 4, N. 2, 1973, p. 96.

12. *Individuals*, p.99.

logical one : the idea of a predicate is correlative with that of a range of distinguishable individuals of which the predicate can be significantly, though not necessarily truly, affirmed.'

C.W.K. Mundle raises an objection to this principle of predication. He says that what Strawson says in the footnote is just sufficient to invalidate the application of the central thought he has been concerned with. Mundle says that Strawson virtually has stated two different types of views. The premises which express Strawson's central thought are 'One can ascribe states of consciousness to oneself only if one can ascribe them to others. One can ascribe them to others only if one can identify other subjects of experience.'¹³ But, according to Mundle the first premise is not consistent with the one of his footnote, because the clause in the footnote, viz 'significantly, though not necessarily truly' has been overlooked in it. Mundle, therefore, says, 'In view of that forgotten clause, his first premise should have been : 'One can ascribe states of consciousness to oneself only if one can significantly but not necessarily truly ascribe them to others'. His second premise should then have been : 'One can ascribe them to others only if one can identify what one believes to be other subjects of experience'.¹⁴

I think that Mundle's objection has proper concern with Strawson's central thought stated above. However, it seems that the objection could be removed. Let us take examples of some subjects and one P-predicate.

13. Ibid., p.100.

14. C.W.K.Mundle, A Critique of Linguistic Philosophy, Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1970, p.139.

Subjects : John, Ram, Mahan, etc.

P-predicate : 'is in pain'.

Although this predicate is correlative to all the subjects, yet only in certain situation one can say that John is in pain and then according to Strawsonian sense it could be said that one has properly ascribed the predicate to John. In other situation when John does not undergo any feeling of pain, then if one says that John is in pain, then it will be said that one wrongly ascribes the predicate to John. Thus a predicate can be significantly affirmed of the subjects, and it can not be affirmed necessarily truly. It also seems that the second premise of Strawson need not be revised. So the clause 'What one believes to be' should not be added to it, since in the Strawsonian context the matter of belief is unimportant.

We are now in a position to say that Strawson, on the basis of his logically adequate criterion, has done two cardinal jobs. First, he opposes that behaviours of other people are signs of what we call their mental states. Second, he also opposes the version of behaviourism which states that behaviours of other people are exactly what we call their mental states. In Strawson's view, to admit the behaviours of other people as signs of the states of consciousness is to admit the method of inference and welcome the sceptics cordially. To admit behaviourism, according to him, is to adopt a device to avoid the difficulties which arise necessarily in the traditional explanation of the dualism of mind and body. He says, '... it is not, in all cases, entirely inappropriate. But it obscures the facts; and is needless.'¹⁵

15. Individuals, p.107.

A question may arise : is it a fact that to avoid the challenges of sceptics Strawson speaks of the necessity of a kind of criterion he calls logically adequate? It does not at all seem so. He says that 'we must accept it in order to explain the existence of the conceptual scheme in terms of which the sceptical problem is stated'.¹⁶ He also has stated that once the conclusion, viz. that the criterion of behaviour is logically adequate for the ascription of P-predicates to other persons, is accepted the problem of the sceptics does not arise.

We use P-predicates in order to ascribe states of consciousness to other persons, but this is only one half of the picture about P-predicates. So what is the other half of the picture about P-predicates when one ascribes them to oneself ? Strawson says that there are three different ways in which one applies P-predicates to oneself. These are as follows.

1. One ascribes some important classes of P-predicates to oneself on the basis of non-observation. For example, reporting ones present feeling one may say 'I feel tired, am depressed, am in pain'. That is, all P-predicates when applied to others, they are applied on the basis of observation of those behaviour criteria, but some of these predicates when ascribed to oneself, they are not ascribed on the strength of the same behaviour criteria.

2. The P-predicates related to assessments of character or capability are ascribed to others as well as to oneself on the basis of the general behaviour criteria.

3. There are some P-predicates which one ascribes to oneself not on the basis of the general behaviour criteria, but notwithstanding 'their ascription is

16. Ibid., p.106.

liable to correction by the self-ascriber on this basis'.¹⁷ This type may include predicates like 'am smiling', 'believe in God' and so on.

Now, if all P-predicates are ascribed to other persons on the strength of observation of the behaviour criteria and also some of them are not ascribed to oneself on the basis of the same criteria, but on the basis of different ones, then how will Strawson maintain that the criteria on the basis of which P-predicates are ascribed to others are logically adequate? The criteria of non-observation and behaviour criteria are obviously different, and so it may be thought that one can not be reconciled with the other. And this difficulty may tempt 'to deny that these self-ascriptions are really ascriptive at all, to assimilate first-person ascriptions of states of consciousness to those other forms of behaviour which constitute criteria on the basis of which one person ascribes P-predicates to another'.¹⁸

But if one is tempted to translate one's states of consciousness to those other forms of behaviour, then one surely will fail to recognize the logical character of the P-predicates concerned. For one can not have, according to Strawson, a primary process of learning or teaching oneself the meaning for P-predicates in order to use them to ascribe states of consciousness to oneself, and then a secondary process of learning to apply such P-predicates to other persons on the basis of the correlation one has observed between one's states of consciousness and certain forms of behaviour. Similarly, one can not have a primary process of learning in order to apply P-predicates to other persons on the basis of behaviour criteria, and then a secondary process of learning to

17. Ibid., p.107.

18. Ibid., p.107.

incorporate one's first-person ascription of states of consciousness to those primary forms of behaviour which provide the clue to constitute the concerned behaviour criteria..

Strawson thinks that both of the ways refuse to acknowledge the logical character of P-predicates. He says, 'Suppose we write 'Px' as the general form of propositional function of such a predicate. Then, according to the first picture, the expression which primarily replaces 'x' in this form is 'I', the first person singular pronoun : its uses with other replacements are secondary, derivative and shaky. According to the second picture, on the other hand, the primary replacements of 'x' in this form are 'he', 'that person', &c., and its use with 'I' is secondary, peculiar, not a true ascriptive use.'¹⁹ That is to say, P-predicates must have both first-person ascriptive and third-person ascriptive uses. It is the unique logical character of such predicates that they are other-ascribable on the basis of behaviour criteria and self-ascribable otherwise. One can not claim to have learnt their use unless one learns both aspects of their use. Strawson says, 'In order to have this type of concept, one must be both a self-ascriber and an other-ascriber of such predicates, and must see every other as a self-ascriber.'²⁰

Mundle opposes Strawson's central concept of person as a thing to which one can ascribe both M-and P-predicates. Referring to Strawson's principle that 'that one's states of consciousness, one's thoughts and sensations, are ascribed to the very same thing to which these physical characteristics, this physical situation, is ascribed' (Individuals, P.89), Mundle says that this principle is merely a reminder that one is to use words or expressions like "thin" or "bald" or "angry"

19. Ibid., p.108.

20. Ibid., p.108.

or “in pain” to speak of physical characteristics or one’s states of consciousness. Obviously such words and expressions are to be used in such sentential forms like “I am ...”, “He is ...”, etc., and if it is so, ‘Then this principle would be too weak to prove anything, since it is also common for “I have ...” to be used with such complements as “a thin body” or “a pain”; and the latter idiom suggests that “I” refers to something distinct from both my body and my pain’.²¹

If we look back to Strawson’s scheme of descriptive metaphysics, we will see that Strawson has clearly meant that when one uses the word “I”, it is used to refer to the speaker himself. He says, ‘The expression “I” may correctly be used by (and only by) any one of innumerable people to refer to himself. To say this is to say something about the expression “I”, it is, in a sense, to give its meaning.’²² So Mundle’s remark-that “I” refers to something which is different from one’s body and one’s being in pain - is not plausible. His view implies that a person is different from the body which he has, or there are two things : a person and his body each of which is different from the other. To accept this view is to accept the view that the Cartesian concept of person is coherent. I think Strawson’s arguments are satisfactory enough to show why Cartesianism is incoherent.

Mundle further points out that Strawson’s principle involves a tautology. Strawson says that I have to ascribe states of consciousness to others, if I ascribe the states to myself. That is, if he uses the word “pain” to ascribe a state of consciousness to himself, he has to use the same word “pain” to ascribe the state to other persons. Actually if he does this, then according to Mundle, ‘he is simply affirming the tautology that a general word (e.g. “pain” or “person”) must be

21. A Critique of Linguistic Philosophy, p.139.

22. “On Referring”, op.cit., p.321.

significantly applicable in more than one case'.²³ In fact, Mundle's view seems to be simplistic. Strawson has said why and how we use such general words to ascribe states of consciousness to ourselves and other persons. In other words, he has wanted to say why P-predicates must have two aspects of their use - self ascriptive and other-ascriptive.

Let us examine Mundle's suggestion that Strawson has unsuccessfully been concerned with the actual use of pronouns, and his arguments do not go against dualism but against what we call solipsism. Strawson, of course, has reasonably stated that our uses of first - and other-person pronouns are interdependent. 'But if this is the hidden basis of Strawson's simple central thought', Mundle says, 'he ought to have affirmed its converse - that it is a necessary condition of one's ascribing states of consciousness to others, in the way that one does, that one should also ascribe them to oneself.'²⁴ This principle, according to Mundle, is justifiable on epistemological grounds. To ascribe a state of consciousness to other persons one must know what it is like; and one can not have any knowledge of a state of consciousness without one's personal experience of it. But Strawson has not stated the principle; it is also not deducible from the one he has been concerned with.

Mundle's as well as of Don Locke's objection to Strawson's principle of predication is quite interesting. Indeed, if P-predicates are both self-ascriptive and other-ascriptive, then Strawson's principle that 'it is a necessary condition of one's ascribing states of consciousness to oneself, in the way one does, that one should also ascribe them to others', is significant undoubtedly. And for the

23. Critique of Linguistic Philosophy, p.139.

24. *Ibid.*, p.141.

same cause the principle which has been mentioned by Mundle is also significant. Strawson says that if one knows how to ascribe states of consciousness to others, then one will also know how to ascribe it to oneself. This is quite justifiable as far as his scheme of descriptive metaphysics is concerned. And Mundle wanted to give a hint that from this context Strawson should have stated that if one knows how to ascribe states of consciousness to oneself, then one will know how to ascribe the states to other persons. And this was the view of Descartes. So Strawson's argument does not in principle go against Descartes' view. However, as far as his own principle is concerned, it runs against a solipsist who states that I and my ideas alone are real. Up to this point it seems that we may agree with what Mundle has suggested.

But from Mundle's suggestion it does not follow that Strawson's principle of predication is incomplete. According to Descartes mind will exist even if body ceases to be. And in this sense Cartesian mind alone is real. The solipsist Berkeley says that my mind and its ideas alone are real. But, according to Strawson, all these ideas are revisionary. He says that if all states of consciousness or experiences are mine, they are not mine at all, they are no one's. His argument runs as follows : 'One can ascribe states of consciousness to oneself only if one can ascribe them to others. One can ascribe them to others only if one can identify other subjects of experience. And one can not identify others if one can identify them only as subjects of experience, possessors of states of consciousness.'²⁵ Indeed Mundle's view leads us to Cartesianism which Strawson tries to replace by his descriptive metaphysical approach of the concept of person.

25. Individuals, p.100.

From another point of view Mundle says that there is a serious flaw in Strawson's theory of person. According to him, the principle of predication leads to obvious paradoxes. He says, 'On Strawson's account it is extremely puzzling that my pain, an allegedly single thing, should be so terribly two-faced - should be an ache in the bowels to me, and should be my clenched jaw and trembling hands to you... Strawson's method of 'closing the logical gap' involves recommending that we should describe as 'one and the same thing' what, according to our everyday ways of speaking and thinking, are obviously distinct and separable 'things', namely feeling pain or depression and exhibiting pain - or depressive-behaviour.'²⁶

Mundle has thought that there is a logical gap between feeling of pain and pain-behaviour, between depressive - behaviour and depression. In fact, from our ways of speaking and thinking it clearly appears that feeling is different from behaviour because the former can be felt but can not be observed and the latter can be observed but can not be felt. Now if we accept the view of Mundle, we are back with the so-called difficulties of the mind-body problem. So it seems that Mundle's view is not acceptable. I think Strawson's explanation of his principle of predication is capable to meet the objection raised by Mundle. I shall not be concerned with the explanation right now, but I shall return to this issue very shortly.

Concerning Strawson's logically adequate criterion, Ayer has remarked that if on the basis of this criterion one attributes experiences to other persons, then we have to admit that statements about other persons' experiences are logically equivalent to statements about their physical movements and behaviour ; and also

26. Critique of Linguistic Philosophy, p.144.

as evidence if the criterion supplies empirical grounds for the conclusion, then we have to admit the merit of the argument from analogy. Strawson avoids both the alternatives, so he seems to envisage something between the two. But on examination it will be seen that he has adopted an 'inductive generalization'.²⁷ Don Locke also has criticised Strawson's idea of a logically adequate criterion. He says that the said criterion lacks completeness, since it is only a criterion for ascription of states of consciousness to other persons. 'But if behaviour is not the criterion for the self-ascription of pain, the argument that self-ascription presupposes other-ascription can not possibly prove that behaviour is a logically adequate criterion for the other-ascription of pain.'²⁸

Now if the objections are valid, Strawson's theory will have some serious difficulties of its own. But I think that the objections are not quite serious. If we get returned to what Ayer calls inductive generalization, we certainly will face with the same problem how the general conclusion on the strength of particular instances can be justified. This will obviously keep room for sceptical doubts about the existence of other minds or other persons. If we accept the view of Don Locke, we are to hold that Strawson's criterion is not logical. All these views (including Mundle's view) are not compatible with how we actually use words and expressions of our ordinary language to express our thoughts about persons and things. Strawson says that the philosophical problems of the concept of person, among other things, could be solved by appealing to an analysis of usage of words and expressions of our ordinary speech. The aim of this analysis is to make clear the actual behaviour of our concepts. And from this methodological

27. The Concept of a Person, p.98.

28. Myself and Others, p.137.

context he says, ‘... in order for there to be such a concept as that of X’s depression, the depression which X has, the concept must cover both what is felt, but not observed, by X, and what may be observed, but not felt, by others than X (for all values of X). But it is perhaps better to say : X’s depression is something, one and the same thing, which is felt, but not observed, by X, and observed, but not felt, by others than X. (Of course, what can be observed can also be faked or disguised.)’²⁹

The concepts like depression could only be understood by looking to the way in which they are manifested to language. That is to say, the behaviour of these concepts is to be understood in the context of linguistic usage. In other words, the behaviour of the concepts is to be known by looking at how we use words. And this is the reason why Strawson says that the characters and functions of the P-predicates are what we reveal in our ordinary speech. If we refuse to accept this, we are ‘to refuse to accept the structure of the language in which we talk about depression’³⁰ and other concepts.

But surely it is not all right, if at the same time one pretends to, and refuses to, accept the structure of ordinary language. Strawson says that the familiar difficulties in the philosophy of mind are due to such a failure to appreciate the character of some P-predicates. His view seems to be justified. Indeed, the P-predicates have both aspects of their use. But Descartes seems to have appreciated only the self-ascriptive use of the P-predicates, while behaviourism the other-ascriptive use. ‘It is not seen that these predicates could not have either aspect of their use, the self-ascriptive or the non-self-ascriptive, without having the other

29. Individuals, pp.108-109.

30. Ibid., p.109.

aspect. Instead, one aspect of their use is taken as self-sufficient, which it could not be, and then the other aspect appears as problematical. So we oscillate between philosophical scepticism and philosophical behaviourism.³¹ If the self-ascriptive aspect of the use of some P-predicates is admitted as primary, we must face the problem of logical gap between the criterion on the basis of which it is said that other persons are depressed and the actual state of their depression. The logical gap should not be allowed to open. But if self-ascriptive use of the P-predicates are granted as primary and if the existence of other persons are inferred from one's knowledge of oneself, the logical gap will continue to exist. This indicates that the P-predicate 'is depressed' has two different meanings : one for self - ascription, and the other for non-self-ascription.

But the predicate 'is depressed', according to Strawson, has one and only one meaning irrespective of its self - ascriptive and other-ascriptive uses. He says that the logical gap is the necessary consequence of the argument from analogy whereas there is no need at all to accept this kind of inductive approach to prove the existence of other persons. Yet if one insists to say that the argument is useful, one has to entertain the defects of the logical gap. But Strawson argues that one should not insist. 'For if the logical gap exists, then depressed behaviour, however much there is of it, is no more than a sign of depression. But it can only become a sign of depression because of an observed correlation between it and depression. But whose depression? Only mine, one is tempted to say. But if only mine, then not mine at all.'³²

31. Ibid., p.109.

32. Ibid., p.109.

In fact, it is Strawson's view that one can not even construct the premise on the strength of the ascription of states of consciousness to oneself in order to ascribe them to others. For in order to ascribe the states to oneself one should necessarily ascribe them to others. Appreciating this argument Ayer says that 'any attempt to justify the belief that there are other persons by relying on the premiss that one knows oneself to be a person would be circular; the premise would already assume what the argument is supposed to prove'.³³

Now the question is : how can the P-predicates have single kind of meaning while the ways of ascribing them to the individuals are different ? Strawson says that when one plays a game of cards, one identifies a certain card as the Queen of Hearts for its distinctive markings. Here the distinctive markings constitute a logically adequate criterion for calling this particular card the Queen of Hearts. But in addition to the markings some properties are ascribed to the card in the context of the game and so every player comes to know how the card is to be played. The meaning of the properties of the concerned card does never exhaust in the distinctive markings which constitute a logically adequate criterion for calling it the Queen of Hearts. In the same way, Strawson says, 'The predicate gets its meaning from the whole structure of the game. So with the language in which we ascribe P-predicates. To say that the criteria on the strength of which we ascribe P-predicates to others are of a logically adequate kind for this ascription, is not to say that all there is to the ascriptive meaning of these predicates is these criteria.'³⁴

33. The Concept of a Person, p.104.

34. Individuals, p.110.

One of the positive aspects of Strawson's logically adequate behaviour criterion is that it bars the sceptical approach to the possibility of one's knowledge of other persons. But Ayer says that Strawson's account can not meet the challenge of the sceptics, for there is no logically secure passage between bodily and mental states, and so he is 'still disposed to think that the sceptic can maintain his ground'.³⁵ From the premise that the meaning of P-predicates could not be understood unless the states of consciousness are identified in the outwardly behaviours on the basis of which they are ascribed to other persons, it does not follow that if we accept the meaning of P-predicates in this sense, we can not divorce the meaning in particular instances. Ayer writes : 'Indeed, it is admitted that we can do so in particular instances; and it is not clear what should prevent us from doing so in all. If the suggestion is that we should then be landed in a contradiction, I can only remark that I do not yet see where the contradiction lies.'³⁶

I think that the fact that the P-predicates are meaningful in the sense in which Ayer admits it contradicts the fact that P-predicates are not meaningful in the sense in which he divorces it. In particular instance or all cases, if the sceptic maintains this view, he is to forget the meaning of the P-predicates. And if he gets interested to forget the meaning of such predicates, he is to reject the ordinary language-structure. And if the sceptic does not reject the ordinary language, his problem can not arise. Strawson says, 'So with many sceptical problems : their statement involves the pretended acceptance of a conceptual scheme and at the same time the silent repudiation of one of the conditions of its existence.'³⁷

35. The concept of a Person, p. 101.

36. *Ibid.*, p. 101.

37. Individuals, p. 106.

From an epistemological point of view Don Locke also criticises Strawson's criteria and accuses him for not distinguishing 'between saying that we must be able to tell what we are talking about and saying that we must be able to tell whether what we say is true'.³⁸ It is Don Locke's view that Strawson has been merely concerned with the fact that to talk about something we are to know what we are talking about. So it is not essential for Strawson to know the actual existence of things about which he intends to talk. Even it is not important for him to know whether what he says is true. He proposes to say that to ascribe conscious states to others we require a logically adequate criterion for telling that our ascription of the states to others is right. 'But all that he says is that we have a way of identifying, referring to, those conscious states which, rightly or wrongly, we ascribe to other people.'³⁹

It seems that Don Locke has misinterpreted Strawson's central view of the concept of person. Strawson has not merely casually stated that in order to talk about something we should know what we are talking about, regardless of its existence. He says that ordinary language is used to fulfil one of our purposes, viz. to state facts about persons, things and events. This purpose can not be fulfilled unless we can tell what we are talking about. The task of telling what we are talking about is the task of identification. And his arguments for general conditions of identification of persons and material bodies seem to be satisfactory because of the fact that we possess a unified framework of knowledge of particulars.

38. Myself and Others, p. 146.

39. *Ibid.*, p. 145.

It is also important for anyone to know whether what one tells about persons and other particulars is true or false, correct or incorrect. This task is ascriptive or descriptive. This task is empirically determinable. It is possible to incorrectly ascribe states of consciousness to others because the observed behaviour may be faked or disguised. But what is important is the fact that it is possible to rectify the task of incorrect ascription, since the criterion for ascription of states of consciousness to others is logically adequate. It's logical adequateness is guaranteed by the usage of P-predicates in our language. In our way of communicative speech we successfully identify the states of consciousness of ourselves as well as of other persons. And that is why there is no gap between saying that to ascribe states of consciousness to others a logically adequate criterion is essential and saying that we do have a way of identifying the states of consciousness of other persons.

Let us consider another crucial remark of Don Locke. He says that Strawson has not distinguished 'between 'tell' in the sense of 'identify' and 'tell' in the sense of 'verify'".⁴⁰ Against this view it might be pointed out that Strawson has employed the principle of identification in his scheme of descriptive metaphysics. In this scheme the principle of verification has hardly any role to play. The correctness or truth of ascription of states of consciousness can not be determined by any means of investigation into the actual occurrence of the private experiences of other persons. Ayer, however, has claimed that one can directly and conclusively verify the content of one's own experiences. That is, according to him, basic or experiential statements are conclusively verifiable. But he fails to have conclusively verified the states of consciousness of other people.

40. Ibid., pp. 145-146.

Moreover, the principle is defective as it can not at all help us how we would verify any states of consciousness of the dead moments.

Strawson's principle of identification is free from the above defects of Ayer's principle of verification. and on this ground he is justified in maintaining the use of 'tell' in the sense of 'identify'. I have already said that there is no gap between saying that states of consciousness are ascribed to others on the strength of a logically adequate criterion of behaviours and saying that we have a means of identifying the states of other persons. And as there is no logical gap, so there is no need to make a distinction between the two senses^S of 'tell'. Therefore, Don Locke's remark that 'Strawson fails to notice this crucial, and rather obvious, distinction between verification and identification'⁴¹ seems not to be justified.

Don Locke writes, 'Strawson's arguments may be unacceptable, but his conclusion may still be correct.'⁴² Opposing this view I would say that Strawson's descriptive metaphysical arguments for the primitiveness of the concept of person are plausible, therefore his conclusion that behaviour-criterion is logically adequate for the ascription of P-predicates to other persons appears correct and acceptable.

41. Ibid., p. 146.

42. Ibid., p. 147.