

PREFACE

The concept of person is one of the central concepts of philosophy as well as of our ordinary discourse. And it is in the centrality lies the importance or significance of the usage of the concept. It may of course be noted that even great philosophers, right from Plato to Wittgenstein, have offered us concepts of person that may appear rather incoherent on scrutiny. It is in this context that P.F. Strawson's descriptive metaphysical approach to the concept of person has seemed to me satisfying and plausible. He has offered us indeed a new account of the concept. The present work is intended to explicate, evaluate, and defend Strawson's concept of person. I have also sought to give a special emphasis on the methodology through which the concept is spelt out.

I have ventured seven main Chapters apart from the Concluding Remarks. In Chapter I, I have confined myself to a critical examination of Strawson's descriptive metaphysical approach. I have argued that his approach is indeed novel as it shows how traditional philosophical problems of the concept of person, inter alia, could be solved without rejecting the traditional outlook which he calls 'revisionary'. Attempt has also been made to defend Strawson's approach against several criticisms. I have tried to defend this approach and have intended to show that his theory of person is based on his descriptive approach. And I have also adopted the approach while defending Strawson's concept of person and refuting criticisms of his critics throughout my investigation into this concept of person.

It could be asserted that Strawson's account of the concept of person involves two phases of which the first one just presents his critical attitude towards the Cartesian and the no-ownership views of person, whereas the second is solely concerned with his own concept of it. In the next two chapters the views of Descartes, Wittgenstein and Schlick have been introduced and analysed in the light of Strawson's approach. In Chapter II Descartes' account of the concept of human being or person is examined and I have argued to show that his views regarding the concept of person is far from satisfactory.

Chapter III is devoted to a detailed study of Wittgenstein and Schlick's concept of person. It should seem that Strawson's reasons for using expression 'no-ownership views' to denote their views are quite credible. Following Strawson's descriptive method I have argued against some rival views and established his opinion that no-ownership views are incoherent. In Individuals Strawson says that there is evidence of Wittgenstein's no-ownership views in Moore's article "Wittgenstein's Lecture in 1930-33". Accepting this view of Strawson as justifiable, I have argued that Wittgenstein has entertained similar views in his Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus and Philosophical Investigations.

Strawson's view of the concept of person as a basic particular in the single unified spatio-temporal world is outlined and elaborated in Chapter IV. I have compared Strawson's concept of space and time with that of the Kantian concept of space and time. From the comparison it follows that Strawson's concept is more plausible for explaining the concept of person and material bodies. I have also discussed several criticisms raised against the various aspects of the descriptive metaphysical account of the concept of person as a basic particular and defended Strawson's view against such criticisms.

(iii)

To estimate Strawson's anti-phenomenalistic view I have critically examined the views of Russell and Ayer in Chapter V, and remarked that Strawson's account of the concept of person is congruous with his conceptual scheme, and it is satisfactory.

Strawson's concept of person as a primitive entity is explained and evaluated in the Sixth Chapter. Keeping in view the conceptual scheme I have pointed out that this type of concept is the necessary outcome of his anti-phenomenalistic view. That is, if person is a basic particular, then it must be an entity of the primitive type unanalysable in other concepts of body and soul. In this context I have replied a number of objections made by A.J. Ayer, J.A. Shaffer, D. Locke, A. Baier, N. Burstein and J. Teichman, and I have proposed that their criticisms and objections can not undermine Strawson's concept of person.

In Chapter VII, I have argued that it is the descriptive approach for which Strawson's account of the logical character of P-predicates and his logically adequate behaviour criteria are consistent with his account of the primitiveness of the concept of person.

In the part of the thesis, "Concluding Remarks" I summarize that I have attempted to say through the seven chapters. Particularly I have mentioned why Strawson's approach may meet the sceptical challenges in solving the traditional problems of personal identity. Since in his view the concept of person is only prior to the concept of soul, so a person accordingly is identical with the body which he or she has. Strawson thus seems to have entertained a kind of qualified materialism which I have called descriptive materialism. I think that there is hint at this new kind of materialism in his descriptive approach.