

THE SELF

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The discussion of the nature of the self will be divided into two parts: firstly, in what sense can we say that the self is distinct and separate from body and mind? Here we will be concerned with the analysis of the various uses of 'I'; secondly, we shall examine three theories about the self: the no-ownership theory of the self, the inner-elusive self and the self as a person.

Various uses of 'I'

To show that the self is distinct and separate from body and mind, we shall examine the various uses of 'I' because 'I' is synonymous with the self, or it is its concrete expression. When we get clear about the use of 'I' we shall also be considering an analogy with a physical object e.g. a car.¹⁴² As a human being possesses mind and body, a car has bodywork and an engine. As a question arises: how is the self related to mind and body? a similar question can be asked: how are the bodywork and the engine related to the car?

(A) First take the normal uses of 'I' and 'my body' where there is a sense of possession-'I have a body' 'This body is mine' 'This is my body.' Sometimes we identify 'I' with 'my body' in this way, but sometimes we do not. Similarly, we identify 'I' with mind, but sometimes find it difficult to do so. When we say that the car has a bodywork and an engine, we make a similar identification. A crucial issue arises in both cases: whether or not 'I' can be identified with body and mind, or the car with the bodywork and the engine.

(B)(Bi)'I see, hear, taste, touch, etc...'

(B2)'I sleep, dream, imagine, etc'

Can we here say that the body does all these things, or the mind does them, or are these the activities of the 'I' or the self? Can we say that 'I' do these things with the help of the body and the mind? In (B₁) 'I see' cannot be replaced by 'my body sees' (though 'my eyes see' will be more appropriate), yet 'I see with the help of the eyes' will be a normal expression. The case of (B₂) is rather different. We cannot say 'my body sleeps' or 'my mind dreams

¹⁴² Similarly we can consider an other analogy with some animate object, say a horse, or a flower. I think that the results in such cases will be the same as they are in the case of a car.

or imagines,' but that 'I sleep, dream or imagine.' Here also we can say that 'I dream or imagine with the help of the mind.' Ryle examines some such uses of I. "'I am warming myself before the fire, the word 'myself' could be replaced by 'my body' without spoiling the sense; ..."¹⁴³ He further says: "There are even some cases where I can talk about a part of my body, but cannot use 'I' or 'me' for it. If my hair were scorched in a fire, I could say 'I was not scorched; only my hair as,' though I could never say 'I was not scorched; only my face and hands were.'"¹⁴⁴ For Ryle¹⁴⁵ there are cases where 'I' or 'me' certainly cannot be replaced by 'my body' e.g. 'I remember' cannot be replaced by 'my head remembers', nor can we say 'my brain does long divisions' or 'my body battles with fatigue.' He says:" It makes perfect sense to say that 'I caught myself just beginning to dream, but not that 'I caught my body beginning to dream.'"¹⁴⁶ Similarly, we say that the car is moving and not the bodywork is moving; the car is running and not the engine is running (sometimes the engine may be running but the car may be still e.g. when we start a car). 'The car rattles' cannot be replaced by 'the bodywork rattles.'

(C) Now examine cases where 'I' can be identified with the body. 'I am naked or clothed.' 'I am hungry or thirsty.' Apparently we cannot say: 'my body is hungry but I am not,' 'my body is naked but I am not.; In the former case, however, there is a sense in which I can control my hunger and so differentiate 'myself' from any body, but in the latter case it is difficult to do so. One cannot say that my body is naked but in the latter case it is difficult to do so. One cannot say that my body is naked but I am not, because this will be injuring the common sense use. But in the above cases there is something more. It is not any body which is naked or hungry, but it is my body which is so and this 'my' brings in the sense of possession, that I possess this body. Without such a reference to its relation to me, the sense is not complete. C. Lewy says: "I cannot explain what I mean by 'my body' without bringing in reference to myself, whereas the meaning of 'myself' cannot be

¹⁴³ Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, p.180.

¹⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, p.180. here H.D. Lewis would disagree with Ryle and say that there is a sense in which we can say 'I was not scorched' because 'I' cannot be identified with either face or hands. We shall examine his views later on.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, p.181

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, p.181

further explained in terms of a body..."¹⁴⁷ In the above examples 'I' can be understood as some conscious subject who has these experiences and can talk about them.

Similarly in the analogy of the car, we cannot say that the bodywork is painted (or smashed or rusty), but the car is not. Also we cannot say that the engine is still but the car is not; the engine broke down but the car did not. The bodywork and the engine refer to the car, as mind and body refer to 'I'.

(D) We shall now examine two very different uses of 'I' which are crucial to our whole discussion.

(D₁) I have a body. (D₂) I am a body.

I have a mind. I am a mind.

I have a mind and a body. I am an embodied mind. I am a person.

The sense of 'having' in (D₁) is clear as we normally use the expressions, but in (D₂) there is the question of identification. In (D₂) the first two are extreme theses, which cannot both be accepted, as the one excludes the other; but the third one is a compromise between the two, and the last one seems to be the most appropriate, as it is an advancement on the third one.

In the car analogy the position is as under:

(D₃) The car has a bodywork. (D₄) The car is the bodywork.

The car has an engine. The car is the engine.

(D₃) is acceptable but (D₄) is not. We cannot identify the car with the body or the engine. Neither can we say which is more important for the car, the engine or the bodywork. A bodywork can be without an engine, or an engine can be without a bodywork, but neither one can be called a car. The car is a unity of both. There can be no question of the elusiveness of the car, as it is alleged in the case of 'I'.

Mind and body are said to be qualitatively different from each other, and if 'I' is identified with both of them (embodied mind), a question arises: to which of the two is it more near, mind or body? And here opinion differs.

¹⁴⁷ C. Lewy, "Is the notion of disembodied existence self-contradictory?" Proceedings of – the Aristotelian Society, 1942-43, PP. 62-63

For example, Campbell and Lewis think that mind is more near to the self; for Schlick, Ayer and Hampshire the body is the essence of the self. For Stout and Moore, 'I' is an 'embodied self or mind'. This has been more appropriately put by Ryle and Strawson in the view that 'I' or 'self' is a 'person'¹⁴⁸. We shall briefly summarize these views and will discuss the theories which they give rise to.

Among those who identify 'I' with mind, Campbell says: "...it can be granted that mind at any rate belongs to the essence of the self ... and one can ask: does also body belong to the essence of the self? ..." ¹⁴⁹ He calls the union of mind and body within the self a "merely de facto union ... and not an essential one."¹⁵⁰ For H.D.Lewis "my real self is my mind and it is only in a derivative and secondary sense that my body is said to be myself at all."¹⁵¹

Schlick, Ayer and Hampshire identify 'I' with the body. They want to account for self-identity in terms of the body alone. Though Ryle talks of the 'systematic elusiveness of I', he treats 'I' as a 'person'. For him all personal pronouns are "index words." "I' is not an extra name for an extra being; it indicates, when I say or write it, the same individual who can also be addressed by the proper name of 'Gilbert Ryle'¹⁵² He says: "'I' in my use of it always indicates me and only indicates me. 'You', 'she', 'they' indicate different people at different times."¹⁵³ The utterance of an 'I' sentence, he calls a "higher order performance" of self-reporting, self-exhortation,..."¹⁵⁴ What is elusive in his sense is body's self which perpetually slips out, though he says that "my last year's self, or my yesterday's self, could in principle be exhaustively described and accounted 'for,..."¹⁵⁵ What is important for our purpose is that 'I' or 'self' cannot be identified with body or mind. It is 'I' which is capable of both physical and mental acts and is better known as a 'person.' Strawson tries to give a unitary account of 'I' or the self as a person. His thesis is that we ascribe physical and mental characteristics to the

¹⁴⁸ Hegel also treats 'I' as a person. He says: "By the term 'I' I mean myself, a single and altogether determinate person....While the brute cannot say 'I' man can, because it is his nature to think...." *The Logic of Hegel*, trans. by W. Wallace, p. 48

¹⁴⁹ C.A. Campbell, *On Selfhood and Godhood*, p. 95.

¹⁵⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 95.

¹⁵¹ H.D. Lewis, *The Elusive Mind*, p. 151.

¹⁵² Ryle, *The Concept of Mind*, p. 180.

¹⁵³ *Ibid.*, p. 189.

¹⁵⁴ *Ibid.*, p. 188.

¹⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 187.

‘person’ and do not ascribe them either to the pure ego or to the body alone.

The above three views can be put in the form of three theories of the self: The no-ownership theory of the self, the inner-elusive self theory and the self as a person.

The No-ownership Theory of the Self

This theory is held by Mach, Wittgenstein and Schlick. It has two theses: one is the extreme one that “primitive experience is absolutely neutral,”¹⁵⁶ and the other is that of the ‘Elusive I’ of Wittgenstein in the Investigations. He says that ‘I’ is not the name of a person. All three agree to the extreme thesis. Mach denies that original experience “has that quality or status, characteristic of all given experience, which is indicated by the adjective ‘first person.’”¹⁵⁷ The unique position of the self is not a basic property of experience. Mach says: “The primary fact is not the I, the ego, but the elements (sensations). The elements constitute the I. I have the sensation green, signifies that the element green occurs in a given complex of other elements (sensations, memories). When I cease to have the sensation green, when I die, then the elements no longer occur in their ordinary, familiar way of association.”¹⁵⁸ For him body and ego, matter and mind are “intellectual abridgements and delimitations which have been formed for special, practical purposes and with wholly provisional and limited ends in view.”¹⁵⁹ He regards the ego not as a real unity but as some kind of a practical unity.

Wittgenstein presents two views about the self, one in the Tractatus and the other in the Investigations. The Tractatus view is the ‘no-ownership view’- “... the philosophical self is not the human being, not the human body, or the human soul, with which psychology deals, but rather the metaphysical subject, limit of the world-not a part of it.”¹⁶⁰ In the Investigations, he talks about “I” in the way which later on Ryle characterised as the ‘systematic elusiveness of’ I’, Wittgenstein says: ‘I’ is not the name of a person, nor ‘here’ of a place, ... But they are connected with names. Names are explained

¹⁵⁶ Schlick, "Meaning and Verification," p. 162.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid., quoted by Schlick, p. 162.

¹⁵⁸ Mach, "Contributions to the Analysis of Sensations," Body and Mind, ed. G.N.A. Vesey, p. 177

¹⁵⁹ Ibid, p. 174

¹⁶⁰ Tractates, 5,641

by means of them.”¹⁶¹ “When I say ‘I am in pain...,’ I do not point to a person who is in pain, I do not name any person. Just as I do not name any one when I groan with pain.”¹⁶² Here he is objecting to the view of (W. James) which claims an introspective knowledge of the self i.e. we can look inward and see the self. He says: “you” that after all you must be weaving a piece of cloth: because you are sitting at a loom even if it is empty and going through the motions of weaving.”¹⁶³

Schlick starts with the presumption that ‘primitive experience is absolutely neutral.’ But what about the secondary level when we speak of the self (mind) and body? He seems to give importance to the body over the ego at the secondary level. He says: “All experience is first-person experience’ will either mean the simple empirical fact that all data are in certain respects dependent on the state of the nervous system of my body M, or it will be meaningless. Before this experience physiological fact is discovered, experience is not ‘my’ all, it is self-sufficient and does not ‘belong’ to any body. The proposition ‘the ego is the centre of the world’ may be regarded as an expression of the same fact, and has meaning only if it refers to the body.”¹⁶⁴

The no-ownership theory is purely negative. When it talks of ‘primitive experience being neutral,’ it does not give any positive answer. But the moment it attempts to give some positive answer as to who owns the data in the secondary sense, there could be three answers, that the body, or the mind, or the person owns the data. We have seen that Mach needs body and

¹⁶¹ Investigations, 410.

¹⁶² Ibid., 404

¹⁶³ Ibid., 414.

¹⁶⁴ Schlick., "Meaning and Verification," p. 168.

mind for 'practical purposes' at the secondary level. But Schlick wants to say that the data depend on the body M alone and cannot belong to the ego or the self. For him the says: self or the ego of the solipsist is absolute empty. 'my' indicates possession;¹⁶⁵ "but he wants to restrict it as referring to the body M. and the ego is denied any owner-ship. But normally ' my' is not defined with reference to the body alone, but also to the mind or mental acts as 'my thoughts,' 'my imaginatio", 'my feelings,' 'my motives,' ect. In all cases 'my' can be easily substituted for 'his' or 'yours' (which is the purpose of Schlick in such a manoeuvre). Schlick in denying any ownership of mental and physical acts by the self and giving all to the body seems to be moving to the other extreme end of physicalism, though he actually does not.

The Inner-Elusive Self Theory¹⁶⁶

In this theory the self is given a primary place and the body a secondary one. It is held that the self is qualitatively different from the body (as consciousness belong to it) and it is that which is responsible for our physical and mental acts. It exists independently of the body and its processes cannot be translated into any bodily process. The self is characterized as something inner and elusive. The theory has three theses: (a) the self is qualitatively different from the body; (b) the body is causally and not logically dependent on the self, and (C)the self is elusive.

(a) According to this thesis, I or the self is qualitatively different from the body. The body is something physical, whereas the self is not. Even those who talk of 'primitive experience as neutral' have to concede that even as constructions, mind and body are qualitatively different at the secondary level. Some acts are called mental and some physical. Though there is no border line between two, yet a clear distinction is there. Even Hampshire who tries to show that the analysis of the concept of action can be done purely in physical terms constantly speaks of I-'I control,' I manipulate,' etc. What is 'I' here. It is but the self which is distinct from the body and which acts and uses the body as an instrument. C.S. Sherrington Says that in the awareness of an action there are tow parts: a sensual and bodily part which is perceived as the body acts, and there is the awareness of 'I-doing' which is

¹⁶⁵ Schlick.,MV, p.167.

¹⁶⁶ In the form I have put it the theory is not held by any one in particular. It is a combination of two complementary views about the self as something inner and elusive.

not derived from sense. “It is the I’s direct awareness of itself acting”¹⁶⁷ so the self in this sense is not an entity or a thing, but it is the subject of experience or the agent who acts.

(b) As regards the second thesis that the body is causally and not logically dependent on the self, we can

(c) take our experiences of seeing, hearing, etc. We can say that such experiences causally depend on the existence of the body. Other mental acts such as imagination, intention, motive, etc. do not depend on the body but on the mind. Campbell takes the union of body and mind within the self as a “merely de facto and not an essential union”¹⁶⁸ with the result that their separation is at least conceivable. He says: “It can be granted that mind at any rate belongs to the essence of the self, so does or does not body also belong to the essence of the self?”¹⁶⁹ For him “the self to which self-consciousness testifies is a self which has, rather than is its experiences.”¹⁷⁰

(c) H.D. Lewis¹⁷¹ holds the thesis that the self is ‘elusive.’ There are two things to be noted in his theory. What does he think the self is an entity or a person, etc.? and how does he characterize it by calling it elusive? He says that the self is not to be identified with its characteristics or its experiences and it should not be thought of as existing “in a void”¹⁷² without experience or nature or character of any sort. It is not a substance which has a nature over and above the fact of being a subject who thinks or feels. When he wants to characterize it as ‘elusive’, he says: “I am not strictly related to my experiences in the way external things are related to one another. I am in my experiences in a much more inclusive way and yet I am not to be reduced to my having this or that experience... I am more than my having a particular experience, but no indication of this ‘more’ can be given beyond the awareness that every one has of it in his own case in having any kind of experience.”¹⁷³ He talks of the unique sense of self-identity by saying that

¹⁶⁷ C.S. Sherrington, *Man on his Nature*. Selection reprinted in *Body and Mind*, ed. Vesey, p. 324.

¹⁶⁸ Campbell, *On Selfhood and Godhood*, p. 95.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, p.95.

¹⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 108.

¹⁷¹ Lewis seems to hold views similar to Ryle and Strawson, but he differs from them with regard to the self and so I have put him in this group rather than that of the person theory.

¹⁷² *The Elusive Mind*, p.245.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.*, p.233.

other persons can identify me by my birth-place, date education, profession, etc., “but I could inwardly know myself to be the person I am if all these things were different. They do not give the uniqueness of my being the person I am in any experience whatsoever.”¹⁷⁴

We shall now examine the three theses of the inner-elusive self theory. The theory claims that the self is logically different from the body. According to Lewis “By material standards mental entities are odd, for although they take time, they are not in space and extended at all. This is what makes them so elusive,...¹⁷⁵

A difficulty with the inner self is that it is conceived as a substance or a thing which cannot be introspected or known. A better way suggested by Hegel is to treat it as a subject which has experiences. Veer is right that Hegel’s saying that the self is a subject and not a substance “ was meant as a warning against Hume’s error of treating the self as a ‘thing.’”¹⁷⁶ Hegel said: “By the term ‘I’ I mean myself, a single and altogether determinate person... While the brute cannot say ‘I’, man can, because it is his nature to think...”¹⁷⁷ “The ‘I’ is the primary identity- at one with itself and all at home in itself ...The ‘I’ is as it were the crucible and the fire which consumes the loose plurality of sense and reduces it to unity.”¹⁷⁸ Veer says: “... one need only

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p.244.

¹⁷⁵ Lewis disagrees with Ryle about the two different senses of 'exist.' He says it is not that there are two different uses of exist when applied to mental and physical, but that the nature of things (mind and body) is different, and existence in both the cases is the same. Ibid, p.43 [Ilabis mine]

¹⁷⁶ Vander Veer, Bradley's Metaphysics and the Self, p.212.

¹⁷⁷ Hegel, The Logic of Hegel, trans. by Wallace, p.48.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p.88.

claim that there is a 'subjective reference' in all experience, that any description of experiences that omits it will at least be felt to be incomplete,..."¹⁷⁹ This is also what Broad calls the 'unity of a centre. ' He says: "Our self does seem to have the unity of a centre. This is when I see or hear or introspect, there does seem to be a relation between the object of these states and something that perceives and that I call 'I'¹⁸⁰ The self so far considered as embodied is not difficult to characterize as something qualitatively different from the body, but a difficulty appears when we went to speak about its 'disembodied existence.'" ¹⁸¹

Something more needs to be said about the elusive self as characterized by Lewis. I agree with Lewis that 'I am tall' is only about my body and not about my mind, but some difficulty arises in his other example 'I am bald.' He says: "... in the strict sense I am not bald at all, and cannot be; it is only part of my body that can be bald, my body is not something that I am but something that I have..." ¹⁸² Consider the two experiences 'I am bald' and 'I have a bald; head. 'Can we say that my head is bald but I am not bald; cases)? Certainly not. But perhaps a part of the clue is here i.e. I can both be bald and have a bald head. In terms of our earlier car analogy we can say that the car is rusty and that the car has a rusty body. Earlier we pointed out that sometimes 'I' can be substituted for the body or a part of the body and by this no common sense expression is violated. Lewis's aim is to characterize 'I' as different from the body, and in the above example he does not succeed. On the other hand, if he is interpreted as characterizing 'I' as a person, then 'I' can be taken as more than the body. Let us see what happens when we refer to personal characteristics, attitudes and other experiences. Take some examples: 'I am honest, I am kind, I am benevolent,' 'I am lonely, I am happy. Here 'I' does not refer to body or mind but to a person who has these characteristics, or who goes through these experiences. Thus 'person' becomes a biosocial unity of mind and body in a social setting. There does not seem to be anything elusive in the idea of a person, in the way Lewis wants to characterize it with regard to the self. Lewis, no doubt, draws a sharp distinction between mind and body"¹⁸³ and wants to think of ourselves

¹⁷⁹ Veer, BMS, p.196.

¹⁸⁰ C.D. Broad, Mind and its place in nature, pp.569-70.

¹⁸¹ This will be discussed in connection with immortality.

¹⁸² Lewis, EM, p.151.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p.16

as “composite entities, as being (or having) a mind and a body”¹⁸⁴, and he denies that “the self can be some kind of an entity other than the person that thinks, perceives...¹⁸⁵ yet he wants to say that”... a person is his mind in a way in which he is not his body. I can say in seriousness that I have a body, but in serious thought it would be odd to think of my mind as just belonging to me’, I am my mind in a quite fundamental sense.¹⁸⁶ But I think that such an identification of person with mind is not correct. Why identify the self with mind or mental states? Contrast ‘I have a mind’, I have a good memory or imagination,’ ‘I had a sudden thought,’ etc. What status we can give to mind or body with reference to person is the issue which leads us to examine the theory of the self as a person.

The Self as a person

Before I discuss Strawson’s theory of a person, I think it desirable to discuss the embodied self theory of Stout and Moore, which I think can be interpreted as a precursor of the theory of a person. Stout hinted at this when he said: “What we are primarily aware of is the individual unity of an embodied self. It is this which is signified by the personal pronouns ‘I’, ‘you’, ‘he’...We cannot, at any rate without a radical change of meaning, substitute for the personal pronoun in the statements either ‘my body’ or ‘my mind.’”¹⁸⁷ He further says: “In cases where ‘I’ and ‘my body’ can be used interchangeably ... ‘I’ has no longer its proper and primary, but only a transferred and derivative meaning. I may say indifferently that ‘I’ or ‘my body’ will sometime be moldering in the grave. But I readily cognize that the dead and buried body will not really be I. I continue to speak of it as ‘I’ or even as ‘my body’ only because it is thought of as connected by a continuous history with my present individual experience as an embodied self.”¹⁸⁸ So Stout here seems to give ‘I’ (mind or self) a primary sense and it is derivative when ‘I’ can be replaced by ‘my body.’ On the other hand when he talks of the individual unity of the embodied self, He could have attributed that unity to the ‘person’ (here at least one can move towards the person theory).

Moore says: “... that I am an entity, distinct from every one of my

¹⁸⁴ Ibid., p.17.

¹⁸⁵ Ibid., p.227.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p.23.

¹⁸⁷ G.F. Stout, *Mind and Matter*, selection in *Body and Mind*, ed. Vesey, p.260.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p.260.

mental acts and from all of them put together;...” but he continues that “... even if I am such an entity, it does not follow that it is a mental entity. There is still an other hypothesis,... that this entity which hears and sees and feels and thinks is some part of my body.¹⁸⁹” He thus offers a compromise conclusion which comes to the embodied mind thesis, “that ‘my mind’ was the collection of my mental acts; and that what made them all ‘mine’ was not any direct relation they had to one another, but the fact that they all had a common relation to my body.¹⁹⁰ Here also lies the germ of the person theory.

We can now move to Strawson’s theory of a person. At the very start Strawson¹⁹¹ says that we ascribe to ourselves ‘actions and intentions’ ‘thoughts and feelings’ ‘perceptions and memories and attitudes’, and not only temporary conditions, states and situations but also enduring characteristics including physical characteristics such as height, colour, etc. What he means by the concept of a person is that it “is the concept of a type of entity such that both predicates ascribing states of consciousness and predicates ascribing corporeal characteristics, a physical situation, etc. are equally applicable to a single individual of that single type.¹⁹² What is important is that both the mental and physical characteristics are ascribed “to the very same thing ...”¹⁹³ A consequence of all this is that “the concept of a person is logically prior to that of an individual consciousness. The concept of a person is not to be analyzed as that of an animated body or of an embodied anima.¹⁹⁴ The concept of pure individual consciousness- the pure ego “cannot exist; or, at least cannot exist as a primary concept in terms of which the concept of a person can be explained or analyzed. It can only exist, if at all, as a secondary, non-primitive concept, which itself is to be explained, analyzed, in terms of the concept of person.”¹⁹⁵ He says: ‘I’ never refers to this, the pure subject It refers, because I am a person among others.¹⁹⁶ Strawson presents his thesis that “self-ascription depends on other

¹⁸⁹ G.E.Moore, "The Subject Matter of Psychology," *Body and Mind*, Vesey, p.244. The above article originally appeared in PAS, 1909-10

¹⁹⁰ *Ibid.*, p.245.

¹⁹¹ Strawson, "Persons," *Minn. Studies in the Phil. of Science*, Vol II p.331.

¹⁹² *Ibid.*, p.340.

¹⁹³ *Ibid.*, p.340.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid.*, p.341.

¹⁹⁵ Strawson, "Persons," *MSPS*, Vol II p.341.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.341.

ascription” with the example of depression. “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.”¹⁹⁷

Strawson’s theory cuts across different views about a person, and those who are affected naturally criticize him. When Strawson tries to establish his theory of a person, he is criticized for not establishing it. One great difficulty is that his concept of a person cannot stand where he wants it to i.e. at the primitive level, because every body wants to go from the primitive concept of a person to its secondary level, where the mental and physical characteristics are ascribed, and here lies the real difficulty. Ayer finds the primitiveness of the concept of a person in the “presupposed ownership of the body” by which he claims all his experiences as ‘his.’ Lewis wants to hold that “my real self is my mind. “Both Lewis and Veer object to the ascription of mental and physical characteristics “to the very same thing or being”, and they ask who is that or what is that same being? So according to Veer, the concept of a person on its primitive level appears to be ‘empty’ and on its further analysis at the secondary level it dissolves into mind and body. We shall now examine their criticisms.

Veer sees the merit of Strawson’s theory in the fact that it accounts for the unity of mind and body “without denying their differences.”¹⁹⁸ For him it is a compromise¹⁹⁹ between the two extreme claims of Ryle and Cartesianism. The basic aim of Strawson seems to be that “if we take ‘person’ as our basic notion, we shall avoid certain problems associated with ‘self’. We shall stop referring to an imaginary entity called the ‘self’ and shall instead concentrate on what really exists,

¹⁹⁷ Individuals, p.109.

¹⁹⁸ Vander Veer, Bradley’s Metaphysics and the Self, p.291.

¹⁹⁹ “... a compromise between the two extreme claims of Ryle (that one knows his mental states and one knows those of others, that there is no privileged access, and so forth) and the equally extreme results of Cartesianism (that one can never know of the existence of other minds, that the self has its own identity and so forth)” Ibid., p.282.

namely persons.”²⁰⁰ This seems to be all right, but does Strawson succeed in his attempt? The main objection is that mind and body are qualitatively different. When they form a unity of what he calls a “person” what is that ‘single thing’ or single unity called ‘person?’, what is to be both a body and a mind? When we analyze a person, it dissolves into body and mind. Strawson says that ‘I’ does not suffer from ‘type-ambiguity.’ I does neither refer to a pure ego nor to a certain body but to a person about whom both kinds of ascriptions are possible. But Veer asks: “What or who is the person who is the same and yet so different?” Mind and body are two mutually exclusive categories and here a ‘third thing’ (person) seems to unify them. But “‘person’ is from this standpoint in danger of being an empty “‘promissory’ note....Whether on analysis does not ‘person’ also dissolve into somehow related entities?”²⁰¹ Lewis says: “my real self is my mind and it is only in a derivative and secondary sense that my body is said to be myself at all.”²⁰² “My body is not strictly myself, or some part of me. It is something to which I am very specially related, no more...”²⁰³

As regards the ascription of mental and physical characteristics, Strawson seems to reverse the Cartesian order of ascription. But is he justified in doing so?

²⁰⁰ Veer, BMS, pp. 281-82.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.284.

²⁰² Lewis, *The Elusive Mind*, p.151.

²⁰³ Ibid., p.159.

There may not be pure ego or pure individual consciousness, as Strawson says, but from this it does not follow that we are not acquainted with something called an 'inner self'. To deny it is surely to "contradict the most convincing empirical testimony we have."²⁰⁴ Veer says that the self is not to be described as different from me or possessed by me etc., but that "the self is me and is so recognized in action"²⁰⁵. In his explanation of the concept of depression to clarify how both mental and physical characteristics can be ascribed to the very same being, Strawson does not move to the other extreme of physicalism, but he wants to have some 'logically adequate criterion' of behaviour to do the job of ascription. But here too a distinction remains between 'my feeling of depression' and its observations by others through behaviour. My feeling of depression does not belong to my behaviour in the sense in which others can observe it. Others observe my behaviour and from that infer that I am depressed. There seems to be a way from outward behaviour to inner psychological processes, but it is not always easy and clear. Certain emotionally charged states of mind may be observed, but other subtle mental processes such as thinking out a plot for a story composing a poem, doing a mathematical sum (in ones mind and not on paper) elude detection, unless

²⁰⁴ Veer, p.285.

²⁰⁵ Ibid., p.286.

one tells others about them. In Veer's opinion the evidence is in favour of a dualism of self and body and arguments from analogy, and Strawson's claim that "person is more basic than self"²⁰⁶ cannot be accepted.

Ayer has his own disagreement with Strawson. He summarizes Strawson's argument as: "...if my experiences are identified as mine only in virtue of their dependence on this body, then the proposition that all my experiences are causally dependent on the state of my body must be analytic;..."²⁰⁷ Ayer tries to reformulate it in such a way that the charge of analyticity is removed. This is done by presupposing the ownership of the body.²⁰⁸ He says: "...in referring to myself at all I am presupposing my ownership of this body; in claiming an experience as mine, I imply that it is dependent on this body and not any other... The identification of the body, which carries with it the numerical identification of the experience is a problem for other people, not for oneself..., but given that this is the body by which I am identified, it is a necessary fact that this body is mine."²⁰⁹ For him personal identity depends on the body and consciousness bears a causal relation to the body. He says; "I am, however, inclined to think that personal identity depends upon the identity of the body and that a person's ownership of states of consciousness consists in their standing in a special causal relation to the body by which he is identified."²¹⁰ As a criticism of Ayer, all that can be said is what we have said with regard to the inner-elusive self, that mind cannot be given a secondary status in the unity of a person. I have only to say this much, that in the sentence 'I have a body', I am quite different from the body, and it is 'I' who possesses or claims to possess the body and not that the body claims to possess 'I' or me.

After discussing the above theories and weighing them against each other, I think that the concept of a person can better do the job which was previously

²⁰⁶ Ibid., p.288.

²⁰⁷ Ayer, *The Concept of a Person*, p.116.

²⁰⁸ In Ayer's sense the body will be a 'logically primitive concept.'

²⁰⁹ Ibid., p.126.

²¹⁰ Ibid., p.126.

assigned to the self. The concept of a person is not as 'empty' as Veer supposes, and not as 'elusive' as Lewis wants to characterize it (though he himself talks of the self as a person who thinks, feels, etc., but does not develop it on that line). For him the self is elusive and so will be the person. I need not normally call myself a person (though there is nothing objectionable in doing so), but others call me a 'person'. If we take an individual as a bio-social unity of physical and mental characteristics i.e., as having a personality, it is better to call him a person than a self. One has a self which is known to oneself, but one as a person is known to others. When Veer asks: "What or who is the person who is the same and yet so different?"²¹¹ he seems to be looking for some kind of a 'third entity' over and above the two entities of mind and body. Though a person is not a third entity, it is said to exist as a unique and systematic unity of the two, which exists in its own right. Though it makes use of mind and body, it cannot be reduced to either of them. The fact is that if we look for any such unity and move from the physical to the mental and the social, we come across something tangible in the case of the physical, but not so tangible in the case of the mental and the social. For example H₂O is a unity which is observable, and has its own characteristics. The body is a unity of different parts. Mind is a unity of

²¹¹ Veer, BMS, p.284.

mental acts, but it is not observable like the body. 'I' is another such other unity which is present in all our acts and yet in Lewis's sense is 'elusive,' and another is person,²¹² which according to Veer is 'empty' But we can say that neither 'I' nor 'person' is elusive or empty. As 'I' always indicates me and me alone, so 'person' always refers to an individual being, what I call a bio-social unity of mind and body. In ordinary life we refer to a person, talk to him, talk about him (in his presence or absence). We talk about real persons of flesh and blood; of fictitious persons in stories and novels; of persons in history; in their different roles in social life, etc. We can talk of persons when they are alive or dead. In all such cases when we refer to a person, we refer to him as a being who has or had such and such qualities, and has or had done such and such acts. These qualities of mind and body combined with the acts characterize him as a person. When they are known, they make him good or bad, famous or notorious. It is important to note that when a person dies, his acts do not die with him (and here is a sense of immortality which refer only this world). They are left behind him and it is by reference to these that he is remembered and is considered immortal in certain respects at least. When we talk of him, we take into account his acts, talents, abilities, and whatever is directly or indirectly

²¹² Other elusive concepts are: nation, group, group- mind, etc.

known about him. Here lies an answer to Veer's objection: what or who is the person. I say it is the person who acts. His acts may be divided into mental or physical, but as a person he is always there. Acts belong to the person and not to the mind or body. He rather uses mind and body for his acts. What we earlier concluded, namely, that 'I' cannot be replaced by 'my body' or 'my mind', seems to be true. Veer's claim that the substitution of mind and body is the only alternative and in doing so I or person disappears is not correct. Let us see whether we can make substitution in the following examples:

- (a) I sit, I stand, I walk. Here we cannot substitute my body for I, because the body is used by me for a certain act.
- (b) I think, I imagine, I remember,. Similarly my mind cannot be substituted for I.
- (c) I try, I assert, I fail. No substitution of either mind or body is possible for I.

As a conclusion I can say that we can talk of a person as a bio-social unity of mental and physical characteristics which is manifested in his actions. Here a question arises: Is my bio-social unity of a person logically the same as the unity of a whole and its parts? I should say yes. It is the way in which every proper noun unifies its parts. Here we refer back to the analogy of the car. We said that the car is a unity of the bodywork and the engine. We cannot identify the car either with the bodywork or with the engine alone. As we can talk of a person, we can talk of the car and its parts. The car is rusty or its bodywork is rusty. The car broke down or its engine broke down, etc. There can be no question of the elusiveness of the car, as there can be about that of a person. We can talk of the car in its absence or presence, or even when it is no more. A smashed car is still a car. As we can talk about a man's acts, we can talk about the functioning of the car.