

Hence, no paradox. The question is: does it block the paradox? My answer is 'No'. Consider, as per his own reasoning,

$p = \text{what } p \text{ says (Neela's identity axiom)}$

Now,  $p$  is true or  $p$  is false is grammatically a nonsensical sentence; then he should only say

$p \text{ is nonsensical} = p \text{ does not say.}$

Neelamani has to equivocate both of the above lines to prove his point, since both have the same 'grammatical' status, according to him (see esp. p.161); or he must say

$p \text{ says} = p \text{ does not say}$

This is just equivalent to the line from which he proves that there is no paradox. In effect he equivocates

$\text{nonsensical } p = p$

In other words, we can take the LHS as neuter (neither true or nor false), then

$\text{neuter } p = p$

How else should one take Neelamani's 'nonsensical'? This blocks no paradox since this is very similar to

$\sim Ta = a$

So this sentence is false must either presuppose (what it presupposes it is false) or necessitate other sentences (since it is true), if the paradox is to be blocked, (he must consult Bas van Fraassen on this) and not 'does not anticipate' as he thinks. Neelamani's 'does not anticipate' is a *faute de mieux*. I suggest that Neelamani will be benefited by well-known advances made before to block the paradox (I am not accusing Neelamani for his ignorance, but his painstaking inquiry will be amply rewarded by taking such a course). At least one of the solutions (Fraassen's) take it to be neuter. The matter continues to be controversial and not as simple as he thinks.

Obviously, Neelamani thinks that early Wittgenstein's rejection of the distinction

between language and metalanguage supports his point. Wittgenstein's point is that sentence about a sentence attempts to say what cannot be said, and hence it is nonsensical. To what extent such a rejection is applicable to liar sentences is enigmatic, for it wants us to make the very distinction, which we otherwise avoid.

#### NOTES AND REFERENCES:

1. Neelamani Sahu, 'Wittgensteinian Approach to Paradoxes' in this Journal, (April, 1997), pp. 153 - 168 (pagination within brackets refer to this article).
2. I am indebted to Hilary Putnam here; see his *Dewey Lectures* (1994) on 'Sense, Nonsense, and the Senses : An Inquiry into the Powers of the Human Mind' in *Journal of Philosophy* XCI (1994) pp.445 - 517; see his last lecture, esp. p. 512.
3. Bas van Frassen, 'Presupposition, Implication and Self-Reference' in *Journal of Philosophy* 65 (1968) pp. 136 - 152, and a large corpus thereafter by him and other.

A. KANTHAMANI

## II

### THE SYNTHESIZING ROLE OF THE CONCEPT OF A PERSON

Strawson, it is sometimes alleged, has left the concept of person in an indeterminate<sup>1</sup> state. That is, they say, it is not possible for one from the definition he offers of a person as a being that admits of both the predicates P- and M- to determine in some situations whether a given being or thing is a person or not. More specifically, their objection is that Strawson has outlined only the "necessary" conditions, and not the "sufficient" conditions, of someone's being a person. That is, the question is whether a thing or being can count as a person simply by fulfilling the requirement of applicability of the two kinds of predicates. If so, is a dog ( by virtue of being able to sleep, feel, run and much other P- or P- like capacities) or a computer (by virtue of being able to remember, calculate etc.) or

a stream (by virtue of being able to "run down hill"<sup>2</sup>) a person? Questions of this type are not answered in *Individuals*; and the object of this small paper is to show that these questions neither arise from the standpoint of Strawson. Here he is not concerned with who or what is a person, but with constructing the concept as a pre-requisite of our simultaneous ascription of P- and M-predicates.

A reader of *Individuals* is well aware how Strawson has placed the concept of a person. Here he presents the concept as the "basic particular" in relation to 'private particulars' - "comprising the perhaps overlapping groups of sensations, mental events and in one common acceptance of this term, sense data."<sup>3</sup> That is, the concept serves as the referring point of the private particulars and perceptions. We cannot speak of a perception in the abstract, it is to be referred to a person whose perception it is. In perception we become aware of two kinds of properties. We see that properties of a particular kind (material properties) apply to both material bodies and persons, but the properties of the other kind we do not find in material bodies; but it is peculiar to persons alone. We name it psychical properties. Both these properties can be ascribed to a person. But on this very point Strawson seems to be confused. Throughout the essay it is by no means the business of Strawson to define the concept of a person. Rather he is here to emphasize the logically basic nature (it is however not epistemologically basic, for Hume would rest content with perceptions alone) and the primitiveness of the concept. The primitiveness of the concept stands for the unanalysability of it. That it is not his purpose to define the concept can be seen from his way of presenting it. He goes to arrive at it through the refutations of the two theories viz. Cartesianism and no-ownershipism. These two theories deny that we ascribe both M- and P- characteristics to one and the same thing. The former theory feigns two subjects for the two characteristics, whereas for the latter there is no subject for the P-characteristics since P-characteristics themselves are illusory. Strawson takes these two theories to be two extremes, and considering the various difficulties they give rise to he goes to find a solution of the two opposing theses. The essay is to be seen not as an account of persons but as a reaction against both - dualism as well as physicalism.

They say that there is a mind and there is a body; or that there is no mind, it is only the body; but Strawson says a 'no' to both of them. There is neither a

body nor a mind in the sense that these two elements somehow came together and gave birth to a person. Neither a body nor a mind should be our starting point, rather it should be the concept of a person which is to begin with. And this person exhibits two kinds of properties, M- and P-. The person is not to be viewed as a body but as having physical or material properties; he is not to be viewed as a mind but as having psychic properties. These properties are identifiably dependent upon the concept of person. So if we try to break up the concept we are not to expect that we shall get thereby some abstract properties. Hence, it is said to be unanalysable or primitive or basic. But it is true only of the concept of person and not of the actual person X. The person X has a body, and at death he is reduced to a body we are here tempted to think that at death a person is analysed or broken up into a body - the perceptible left over of the person, and an invisible something - an ego (This phenomenon of death will probably go on inspiring people to think in the Cartesian way for ages to come). But the point of logic is that if it were an analysis of the person when he no longer remains a person, there should have been a corresponding synthesis also. In other words, if we can analyse a person to a lifeless body and an (or more?) invisible ego, then there should have been an instance of a construction or reconstruction of a person out of these two elements. Fortunately for Strawson, this has not yet been made possible. At death the person becomes a body, a non-person, it is the end of a person. But when alive he is not a body, although it is the body by virtue of which he is what he is. He thinks, feels, writes, talks, moves by virtue of his body. But why this possessive 'his'? Because the person is not the body alone. However this is not to say that he is a body plus..., for we cannot have the concept of a body (in case of a person) before we have that of a person. That is to say the concept of a personal body is secondary concept. It is a secondary existent too. So long as the person is alive we do not treat him as a body. We then deal with the person with all his peculiar characteristics and capabilities. He is a unified whole. From this point of view the concept of disembodied existence is irrelevant here. Because even if such a state is conceivable that would also be a secondary concept. A disembodied ego, for all possible reasons, is not a person, i.e. not a basic or primitive concept.

All this is to show that Strawson is not concerned with defining a person.

By pointing out to the simultaneous applicability of P- and M- predicates Strawson has not defined a person but with the concept of person he has defined the P- and M- predicates, or mind and body. Seen from this angle Strawson may be exempted from the charge of leaving the concept in an indeterminate state, although his silence about what does a person's personhood consist in may be treated as a serious gap.

SAURAVPRANA GOSWAMI

#### NOTES & REFERENCES

1. V. Chaturvedi : *"Indeterminateness of the Concept of a Person"* Indian *Philosophical Quarterly*, Vol. XIX, No. 2 April, 1992 (pp. 115-125)
2. The phrase is adopted from B. Williams *'Problems of the Self'*, Cambridge University Press, 1973 (p.65)
3. P.F. Strawson, *Individuals*, Methuen, London, 1974 rpr. (p.41)

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