

**THE PROBLEM
OF
PERSONAL IDENTITY**

- **There is no single problem of personal identity, but rather a wide range of loosely connected questions.**
- **Who am I?**
- **What is it to be a person?**
- **What does it take for a person to persist from one time to another—that is, for the *same* person to exist at different times?**

- **How do we find out who is who?**
- **What determines how many of us there are now?**
- **What am I?**
- **How could I have been?**
- **What matters in identity?**

Who am I?

- **Your identity in this sense consists roughly of what makes you unique as an individual and different from others.**
- **It is also a property that you may have only temporarily: you could swap your current individual identity for a new one, or perhaps even get by without any.**

Personhood

- **What is it to be a person?**
- **What is necessary, and what suffices, for something to count as a person, as opposed to a non-person?**
- **What have people got that non-people haven't got?**

Persistence

- **What does it take for a person to persist from one time to another—that is, for the *same* person to exist at different times?**
- **What sorts of adventures could you possibly survive, in the broadest sense of the word ‘possible’, and what sort of event would necessarily bring your existence to an end?**
- **What determines which past or future being is you?**

Evidence

- **How do we find out who is who?**
- **What evidence bears on the question of whether the person here now is the one who was here yesterday?**
- **What ought we to do when different kinds of evidence support opposing verdicts?**

Population

- What determines how many of us there are now?
- If there are some seven billion people on the earth at present, what facts—biological, psychological, or what have you—make that the right number?
- The question is not what *causes* there to be a certain number of people at a given time, but what there being that number consists in.

➤ **Synchronic identity (synchronic situations involving just one moment)**

➤ **Diachronic identity (diachronic ones involving a stretch of time)**

What am I?

- **What sort of things, metaphysically speaking, are you and I and other human people?**
- **What is our basic metaphysical nature?**

For example, what are we made of?

- **Are we made up entirely of matter, as stones are, or partly or wholly of something else?**
- **If we are made of matter, what matter is it?**

How could I have been?

- **How different could I have been from the way I actually am?**
- **Which of my properties do I have essentially, and which only accidentally or contingently?**
- **Could I, for instance, have had different parents?**

What matters in identity?

- What is the practical importance of facts about our identity and persistence?
- Why should we care about it?
- Why does it *matter*?

Understanding the Persistence Question

- The question is what is necessary and sufficient for a past or future being to be you.
- The Persistence Question asks what determines the answer to such questions, or makes possible answers true or false.
- The question is about *numerical identity and qualitative identity*

- **The confusion of qualitative with numerical identity is one source of misunderstanding about the Persistence Question.**
- **The question of what it takes for someone to remain the same person is not the Persistence Question.**
- **It is not even a question about numerical identity.**

Persistence Question

- **Under what possible circumstances is a person existing at one time identical with a person existing at another time?**

➤ **Under what possible circumstances is a person who exists at one time identical with *something* that exists at another time?**

Personal Identity Through Time

- **Persistence Question fall into one of three categories.**
- **The Psychological Approaches**
- **Somatic Approaches**
- **Anticriteria Approaches**

- **The Psychological approach, according to which some psychological relation is necessary and sufficient for one to persist through time.**
- **Somatic approach advocates that physical continuity is primary for personal identity through time.**
- **Anticriteria approach denies this. This approach says that mental and physical continuity are evidence for identity, but do not always guarantee it,**

A NON-MATERIALISTIC VIEW OF PERSON

- **What is a person?**
- **What is its nature?**
- **It was Descartes who has proposed a theory of mind and person according to which a person is not just a material body, but also a thinking self. For him, a person is a self, a self-conscious mind which thinks, feels, desires and so on.**

What is a Person?

- **The English word 'person' is alleged to have been derived from the Latin 'persona', which was the mask worn by actors in dramatic performances.**
- **In common usage 'person' refers to any human being.**

Strawson defines 'person' as

“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.”

Strawson, P. F. *Individuals*, 1963

Williams claim is that bodily continuity is a necessary condition for personal identity, because according to Williams, it is body which identify the persons, but not the mind, and there is no mind at all, therefore, bodily criterion identify the persons.

- **Persons necessarily have two dimensions, a physical and a mental dimension.**
- **Persons thus have a dual nature.**
- **Now, we have to look at the relation between the knowledge a person has of himself and the knowledge that others have of him.**

- **Firstly, if the unity of a person is necessarily connected with the continuance of his body through time, then it is impossible for a person to survive the death of his body.**
- **Secondly, if bodily identity is a necessary criterion of personal identity, then it could not be shown that some non-physical characteristics of a person continues after his bodily death.**
- **Finally, if the fundamental criterion of identity were memory, it would follow that a person might be known to have survived death because he continued to have memories in his disembodied state.**

- **The most important fact about the person is the self. The self is sometimes used to mean the whole series of a person's inner mental states and sometimes the spiritual substance to which they belong.**
- **The self does not refer to the body but to the mental history of the person. This made the unity problem seem intractable, when the mental images, feelings, and the like, are contrasted with the temporal persistence.**

- **The mind or person is something non-spatial. After death, the body only remains. This concept of the body becomes gruesomely explicit when we refer to it as 'the remains'.**
- **It is this conception of the body, which comes closest to that found in the person theory. In this theory we find that the body is not a person, nor is it a part of a person. It is the person, insofar as he is thought of as the subject of bodily attributes. But it**

Person, Mind and Consciousness

- what is this consciousness which a person certainly has, but rocks and other animate beings do not have?
- G.E. Moore writes, “The moment we try to fix our attention upon consciousness and to see what distinctly it is, it seems to vanish: it seems as if we had before us as mere emptiness when we try to introspect the sensation of blue, all we can see is the blue; the other element is as if it were diaphanous.”

- **Pradhan says that Person is being minded have the capacity of doing the mental activities. Such activities include thinking, willing, feeling, understanding, speaking, communicating, and above all, remembering the past. Mental activities are such that they presupposes that there is a thinker who is capable of these activities.**
- **The thinker is here a subject or 'I' who is or has the capacity of consciousness. Wherever we will find the concept of 'I', we will find the existence of consciousness because it is person who stands for the concept of 'I', have consciousness.**

According to Strawson, there are two kinds of predicates.

Person: P-Predicates

Matter: M-Predicates

- **There is an interconnection between person, mind, and consciousness.**
- **Empirically, there is distinction among them.**
- **But transcendentally, they point in the same direction.**
- **It is right to say that a person is a mental being, and the essence of mind is consciousness.**
- **Therefore, the concept of the mind, the person, and the consciousness go together.**
- **Thus consciousness is related to mind, which also belongs to a person.**

The Dual Nature of Person

Strawson says,

“the concept of a person is to be understood as the concept of type of entity such that both predicates ascribing corporeal characteristics, a physical situation and consciousness are equally applicable to an individual entities of that type.”

Strawson, P. F. *Individuals*, 1963.

➤ **Strawson has pointed out that their co-applicability to the same person substance. The M-predicates cannot be ascribable independently because of that prohibits them from being ascribable to the conscious beings, like M-predicates, the P-predicates cannot be ascribed to the material bodies.**

➤ **The above argument shows that Strawson accepting person as non-material and non-dual without**

➤ **Persons are primary,**

➤ **Whereas mind and body are secondary.**

Persons as Individuals

Locke: The concept of person is forensic concept.

Strawson: The concept of person is primitive concept.

➤ **For Strawson, a person's body occupies an important position in the person's experience so that he could answer to the following questions satisfactorily:**

(a) Why are one's states of consciousness ascribed to anything at all?

(b) Why are they ascribed to the same thing as certain corporeal characteristics?

Strawson says,

“What I mean by the concept of a person is the concept of a type of entity such that both predicates ascribing states of consciousness and predicates ascribing corporeal characteristics, a physical situation & c. are equally applicable to a single type.”

Strawson, P. F. *Individuals*, 1963.

Strawson replies,

“... that a necessary condition of states of consciousness being ascribed at all is that they should be ascribed to the very same things as certain corporeal characteristics, a certain physical situation and c. That is to say, states of consciousness could not be ascribed at all, where as they were ascribed to persons, in the sense I have claimed for this world.”

Strawson, P. F. *Individuals*, 1963.

According to Strawson, “A person is not an embodied ego, but an ego might be a disembodied person, retaining the logical benefit of individuality from having been a person.”

Strawson, P. F. *Individuals*, 1963.

- **The first kind of predicates consist of those that are also properly applied to material bodies to which we do not ascribe states of consciousness, which Strawson calls M-predicates.**
- **The second type consists of those predicates such as ‘thinking hard’, ‘belief in God’, etc., which Strawson calls P-predicates.**

Strawson says,

“... the concept of a person is to be understood as the concept of a type of entity such that both predicates ascribing states of consciousness and predicates ascribing corporeal characteristics, a physical situation and c. are equally applicable to an individual entity of that type.”

Strawson says that “ ... though not all P-predicates are what we should call ‘predicates ascribing states of consciousness’ (e.g. ‘going for a walk’ is not), they may be said to have this in common, that they imply the possession of consciousness on the part of that to which they are ascribed.”

Strawson, P. F. *Individuals*, 1963.

- **How can one ascribe to oneself, not on the basis of observation, the very same thing that others may have, on the basis of observation, reason of a logically adequate kind for ascribing one, which might be phrased?**

- **How are P-predicates possible?**

- **How is the concept of a person possible?**

- **Strawson says that these two questions are replacing those two earlier questions, that are, why are one's states of consciousness ascribed to anything at all? And why are they ascribed to the same thing as certain corporeal characteristics?**
- **The answer to these two questions are inherited in the primitiveness of the concept of person, this is because the uniqueness character of P-predicates.**