

ZIEMOWIT GOWIN
Institute of Philosophy
University of Warsaw
ziemowit.gowin@gmail.com

Is “Person” a Semantically Incomplete Term? Against Christian Kanzian’s Proposal

In my paper I aim to show that Christian Kanzian’s conception of the semantic character of a term “person” is false. According to Kanzian, the term “person” is an incomplete general term which needs to be combined with another general term, namely “Homo sapiens” or “human being”. Unlike the former, the latter terms give us clear criteria for identification of the entities they denote. Given that, we can comprehend how the term “person” is used for both synchronic and diachronic identification. After presenting the Kanzian’s proposal, I move on to my critique. In a nutshell, I show that his conception rules out non-human persons a priori and that the term “person” is: (i) general, (ii) semantically incomplete, (iii) non-sortal and (iv) phasic.

Keywords:

personal identity, person, ontology of personhood, complex view, simple view