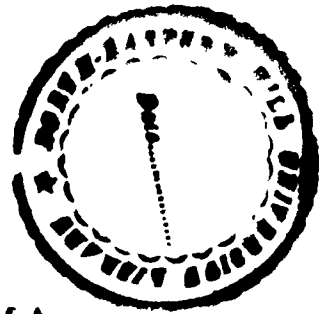


# **THE SELF AND THE PROBLEM OF PERSONAL IDENTITY**

*A thesis presented*  
*for the* **DEGREE OF DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY** *of the*  
**NORTH- EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY**



*By*  
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**NORTH-EASTERN HILL UNIVERSITY  
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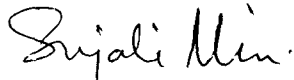
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**DECLARATION**

*I Shakuntala Bora, hereby declare that the subject matter of this thesis is the record of work done by me, that the contents of this thesis did not form basis of the award of any previous degree to me or to the best of my knowledge to anybody else, and that the thesis has not been submitted by me for any research degree in any other University/Institute.*

*This is being submitted to the North-Eastern Hill University for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Philosophy.*



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THIS IS TO ACKNOWLEDGE THE HELP OF THOSE  
PERSONS WHO CONTRIBUTED IMMENSELY TO  
MY RESEARCH WORK.'

*It has taken a while, perhaps to complete my thesis  
with my limited knowledge in this world of wisdom. But when  
I analyse my present position in terms of progressive steps  
I have taken, my ambitious cultivation of opportunities,  
and my overall dedication to my career, I realise that I  
would have been a great failure without the help of*

- i) PROF (DR.) M.M. AGRAWAL*
- ii) DR (MRS.) BINU BORAH*
- iii) DR. N.N. BORA*

*They are lifetime receipts of my personal thanks.*

SHAKUNTALA BORA

## C O N T E N T S

CHAPTER I	INTRODUCTION	1 - 14
CHAPTER II	REFERENCE AND CRITERIA OF 'THE SELF'	15 - 45
CHAPTER III	THE BODY THEORY	46 - 87
CHAPTER IV	THE MIND THEORY	88 -180
CHAPTER V	THE SUBSTANCE THEORY	181-214
CHAPTER VI	CONCLUSION	215-234
	BIBLIOGRAPHY	235-247

CHAPTER - I  
INTRODUCTION

My thesis is basically an attempt to understand the nature of the self. The question "who or what am I?" is a perennial question in philosophy. But the answer seems to have successfully eluded the philosophers in all the ages. The self is something closest to us, indeed it is identical with ourselves. And yet philosophers have found it difficult to say what sort of thing it is.

In the post Wittgensteinian era the problem of the nature of self and the connected problem of personal identity has been discussed with renewed vigour and subtlety. My thesis is limited to contemporary literature available on the subject in Analytical philosophy. In the analytical approach three sorts of questions are distinguished in this connection:

- (I) What is the concept of the self or what sort of thing the self is?
- (II) What is the criterion of the identity of the self?  
and
- (III) Does the concept of the self pick out an actual entity in reality?

Of these the third question is of factual type. As such it is not for the philosophers to answer. It may

be that the concept of the self does not, in fact, pick out anything in reality. That is, it may be like some other important concepts, for example, of 'free will' and 'pure spontaneity' which have no fulfilment in life. Nevertheless, it is a concept which we have, which we apply to ourselves, and which is supposed to signify what is essential about ourselves. It therefore, deserves serious philosophical reflection which includes answering the first two questions mentioned above.

The concept of the self signifies or stands for the subject of mental phenomena. We are familiar with mental phenomena of a diverse variety: sensation, perception, desire, emotion and volition. In case of human beings the mental states corresponding to these categories of mental phenomena seem to occur in relation to particular individuals constituting their respective minds. Thus we talk of mental states as *belonging* to an individual person. In this way the mental states display a special kind of unity, known as the unity of mind, belonging to each individual person separately. The self is thus characterised as the subject of mental phenomena, i.e. the thing which *has* the mental states unified in the mind. The self as a subject seems to own its mental states

in a way somewhat different than the way in which it owns its body. The body can be seen as 'external' to the self in the sense that we can distance ourselves from it and look at it from the outside as it were in a way almost as we look at other things in the external world. As we know Descartes in his Methodic Doubt did distance himself from his body to arrive at what he thought was his essential self. But can we distance ourselves from our mental states in the same way? It seems hard to imagine so. Apart from the fact that mental states are in constant flux and we cannot hold one and look at it in the 'now', the mental states are things which we *go through*, we suffer or enjoy and identify with. I cannot, for example, distance myself from my pain in a way in which I can distance myself from my toe which I can even cut off and throw away. The self seems to be 'mingled' with consciousness in a way in which it is not with the body. Yet we would be wrong to identify the self with the Mind (as Descartes tried to do). The self is seen as the subject of the mental state constituting the mind. We speak of ourselves as *having* mind not being the mind. Moreover, we can imagine ourselves undergoing radical change in our minds (in our beliefs and sentiments etc.) and even losing it

completely. A mindless-self is not inconceivable.

Ordinarily, we use the word 'self' and 'person' interchangeably. Each individual person is an individual self. But in case of radical change in the individual's mind, as stipulated above, a radical change in personality follows which makes us say that the person has changed. For example, we can say that Buddha was a different person after enlightenment. Or if my friend having undergone a thorough brain-washing is converted to communism displaying totally altered sentiment, I would say that he is not the same person now. But in these examples we would not say that the self has changed. This shows that in some of its uses the concept of the self and the concept of the person may not be treated equivalent. The reason is that the concept of a person is amenable to both a quantitative and a qualitative analyses. The qualitative change refers to mental characteristic responsible for a personality and therefore affects the use of the concept of 'person'. However, for the most part the self is identical with person. And that is how it is treated in my thesis.

The self as subject is best apprehended in the first-person perspective, i.e., directly and immediately

in self-consciousness. It is the referent of 'I' (and also of course of other personal pronouns). This is to avoid thinking that the self is apprehended in introspection. Self-consciousness is not an exercise in introspecting. Self-consciousness signifies a non-cognitive awareness of the self. In other words, self-consciousness is not consciousness of an 'object' called 'the self'. So the self is not 'given' in the third-person perspective, though when we use the third-person pronouns we are referring to the same sort of thing as we do when we use the word 'I'. However, to be sure we must make a distinction between two kinds of subjects of mental states, since our first-person perspective implies that selves are necessarily self-conscious. But normally we treat all kinds of animals too as subjects of mental states. There is no doubt that all living creatures manifest some or other mental states in their behaviour. This entitles them to be treated as subjects. But we will hesitate to ascribe them self-consciousness. It will be extra-ordinary to ascribe self-consciousness to such lowly creatures as flies and moths for examples. The self-conscious subjects properly called selves display a special kind of unity. The unity of self of this kind of subject can adequately be grasped only from the inside, i.e., in self-consciousness. Without this unity the mind of a creature will display only a succession of mental

states since their causal relation with their body is not sufficient to explain the unity of mind. It is in self-consciousness that one unifies the past with the present and the various aspects of the present into an integrated field of consciousness. Since this unity of self is attained only in and through self-consciousness, we can safely conclude that the self is necessarily self-conscious, i.e., there is no self prior to self-consciousness. Moreover, the unity of self does not come in grades. It is an all-or-nothing matter — you either have a self or you donot.

The concept of a self is also to be distinguished from the concept of a human being. The latter is a concept of biology but the concept of self is a mental concept. It is because of the mentality of the 'self' concept that we can ascribe self to ourselves directly in self-consciousness. Moreover, unlike empirical concepts we donot have to wait on experience or fieldwork to tell us what a self is. We can know all that is to be known about the self by philosophical reflection about the concepts. As McGinn puts it: "An indication of this feature of the concept of self is this: If a creature understands the concept of self and this concept in fact

applies to that creature, then the creature must know this - selves necessarily know that they are selves; but it is perfectly possible for a creature to grasp the biological concept of a human being and for this concept to apply to that creature, yet the creature not know that this concept applies to it - human beings do not necessarily know that they are human beings".<sup>1</sup> So what sort of thing the referent of 'I' is?

Some philosophers have noted that the problem about the self is imaginary and the enquiry does not even take off the ground. This is so because they suggest that 'I' is not a referring expression in the first place. The use of this expression is meant simply to draw the attention of other people to the speaker. It is like the expression 'it' in the sentence "It is raining". The word 'it' does not refer to something which is supposed to be raining. There is no 'it' that is doing the raining. 'It is raining' simply means that raining is going on. If this point were correct the enquiry into the nature of the self will indeed have to be conducted differently or even suspended. But (fortunately) for

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1. Colin McGinn, The Character of Mind, (Oxford : Oxford University Press, 1982), p.105.

Philosophy of Mind this point does not seem to be correct. We can show this by the following example: The truth contained in "I am a student of N.E.H.U." can also be expressed by someone else's statement, "Shakuntala is a student of NEHU" or "she is a student of NEHU". These statements are interchangeable in respect of truth. And this interchangeability seems to depend on the fact that in the three statements 'I', 'Shakuntala', and 'she' refer to the same entity. This shows that the referring role of personal pronouns is central to their use. We can therefore, bypass the objection made above and proceed the enquiry in the nature of the self with the question 'what sort of thing 'I' refers to?'

In contemporary discussion of the nature of the self we find that three types of theories emerge. In the first (I have called the Body Theory) the self is straight forwardly claimed to be the body. Thus the referent of the 'I' is a living organism endowed with mental attributes. In modern empiricist philosophy this theory hails from Thomas Hobbes. But recently it has been most vigorously defended by A.J. Ayer and later by Bernard Williams. Of course it is a materialist conception of the self and has many ancestors in philosophy.

The second type with its several variants constitutes larger part of the contemporary discussion on the subject. According to this doctrine (which I have called the Mind Theory) the self is to be understood in terms of mental relations of various kinds. In this theory the reference of 'I' is a mental construct created in certain ways from the mental states which we attribute to a given self. The earliest version of it is to be found in Locke who invokes the causal relation of mental state as exemplified by memory. Later, Hume refers to the 'inconceivable rapidity' with which 'perceptions' occur in a given mind to constitute a bundle of perception which is identified with the self. A more powerful variant on the theme is provided by Derek Parfit who invokes the relation of 'psychological connectedness' to explain construction of the self. And fourthly some philosophers have invoked the relations of 'belonging' to the same mind by the reference to sameness of brain, to explain the constitution of a given self. The third theory (The Substance Theory) maintains that the concept of the self is a primitive notion which cannot be explained in terms of anything else such as the Body Theory and the Mind Theory attempt. In this theory therefore self is treated as a simple substance which is distinct and ontologically separate

both from the body and the mind. Thus the self cannot be reduced to the mental states of which it is considered to be the subject. The notion of the self as a primitive concept has been discussed most profoundly by Strawson in his book 'Individual' as the concept of person. But unfortunately Strawson refuses to say what this concept refers to. In other words, it has not identified self with simple mental substance. Another philosopher who has upheld this theory is H.D. Lewis. More recently however, Colin McGinn has most forcefully argued for the third theory identifying the self with simple mental substance. In what follows I prepare to examine the central arguments of those theories and to judge how far they are successful in elucidating the nature of the self.

In analytical philosophy the discussion of these theories centres round the questions of 'personal identity'. As it is generally put the questions of personal identity is about the persistence of the sameness of a person over a period of time. We normally take it that we have existed over a period of time from birth to the present as the *same* self in spite of several changes both in the body and the mind. So the question is what accounts for

retaining identity and allowing the changes to take place. The idea behind the approach is that if we can determine what changes can be allowed without changing the self then it will throw light on the nature of the self. This is because the nature of the changes permissible without changing identity depends upon the nature of the thing in question, in this case for nature of the self. This means, of course, that conceptually understanding of the self is prior to the understanding of personal identity. But methodologically the understanding of what constitutes the personal identity will take us to the essential core of selfhood since we would know what changes in a person are relevant or irrelevant to the persistence of the self.

The question of personal identity is answered by raising the question of the 'criteria' of identity. The meaning of criteria is somewhat ambiguous. It has two senses, an epistemological sense and a metaphysical sense. In the epistemological sense the criteria amounts to a 'way of telling' if a thing exists or a state of affair obtains. But in metaphysical sense to give the criteria is to specify what constitutes the thing or whatever is in question. For example, the identity of

a NEHU student may be determined always and only by the identity card he is supposed to carry. The identity card is the way of knowing that so and so is a student of philosophy department in NEHU. But 'being a student of philosophy' is not constituted by the identity card. In the same way ordinarily we are able to tell that the object in front of me is a person or self, if it is a living human body. But this may not constitute being a person, unless we assume that the way of telling what something is always coincides with what constitutes that thing. It is necessary not to conflate the two senses since in the present context the search for criteria requires us to determine what constitutes the same self and not how we in fact tell when it is the same self.

The method which has generally been followed in recent philosophy to conduct the search is by applying what is known as 'survival test'. In this we imagine a person undergoing changes of various sorts, mentally and physically and intuitively judge if the same self persisted. If the answer is in the positive then irrespective of these changes the identity remains unaffected and this fact would tell us what is essential to the persistence of sameness of the self. Taking imaginary

cases has the advantage that we do not rely on the familiar ways of telling when the sameness obtains, and thus avoid conflation of the two senses mentioned above. With these explanations about the method of enquiry in mind we can now proceed to judge the three types of theories mentioned above.

But before taking up the three theories, there is a general discussion in chapter-II about what we understand by 'self' as referred to by the pronoun 'I'. This chapter also contains a discussion of the concept of criterion as to be understood in the discussion of the problem of personal identity.

The Chapters-III, IV and V of my thesis are about the three types of theories of the nature of the self also containing their evaluation. The first of the three theories, The Body Theory is discussed in chapter-III according to which identity of a person consists in the identity of his body. Chapter-IV is the Mind Theory along with its variants trying to provide a mentalistic criterion of personal identity. The last of the three theories is discussed in Chapter-V which is called the Substance Theory which tries to reveal the nature of the self without

giving us a criterion of personal identity as it believes that the concept of 'self' being primitive cannot be reduced to any other concept. In this the self is construed as a simple substance.

But we will see in the evaluation of the three theories that none of them are convincing enough to make us believe in them and have not managed to reveal the nature of self. Thus inspite of the effort of different Philosophers, the self has remained a mystery and yet whose existence we cannot deny. To borrow the words from Sartre, "the self is a mystery in broad day light".

CHAPTER - II  
REFERENCE AND CRITERIA OF 'THE SELF'



In this chapter my aim is to arrive at a general understanding of the concept of self. We will begin with some general observation concerning how the word 'self' and its cognates are actually used in day to day life. We will examine what implication it has for a general theory of the self.

It is a common fact of life that we think dualistically about human being, that we ascribe two, what appears to be radically different kinds of states, namely, mental states and physical states, to a human being. With physical states there seems to be no problem in determining the entity to which it belongs. We generally agree that physical states manifest in the body of the human being and so we can readily accept that the states of the body belong to the human being by virtue of the fact that the body itself belongs to the human being. But now we are using the term 'human being' to signify a person. A person is not just a body in the sense that we ascribe mental states to human being considered as person. But now just as the physical states were ascribed to a person by virtue of his possessing a body, we want to know what is that entity by virtue of possessing which we ascribed

mental states to a person. It may be suggested that this question is based on a misunderstanding of the function of 'I' in language. Generally we take 'I' to be a referential notion. If we can prove that 'I' actually does not refer to anything, then the search for that entity to which 'I' refers to could have been abandoned. But we will see that 'I' is a referential expression and thus the search for its referent continues. Our search for the referent of 'I' goes on because we believe that this referent is the 'self', that is, the subject of the mental states. That is the reason why we try to understand the nature of the self by trying to find out the referent of 'I'.

Now let us see whether the Philosophers who claim 'I' to be a non-referential expression succeed in proving it.

According to these philosophers it is a mistake to consider 'I' as referring to an entity. It is nothing but a necessity of language. They claim that 'I' is used as a kind of 'dummy grammatical subject' as McGinn puts it. They argue that 'I' serves the same purpose as 'it' serves in the statement, 'It is raining'. 'I' is used

by a person to draw attention to himself. But this is a wrong argument. The first-person pronoun 'I' is referential. When one says 'I am in pain' there must be an entity to which the pain belongs. We cannot simply say that 'there is pain' which should have been the case if 'I' was not a referential expression. If 'I' does not refer to anything then all that we would have understood from the utterance 'I am in pain' is that somewhere there is pain. But when somebody utters this sentence he does not mean to say that somewhere pain is available. What he wants to say is that there is a particular entity who is suffering from pain and that particular entity is no other thing or being but himself who is uttering this sentence. Moreover, the concept of pain without somebody having it is inconceivable. The concept of 'pain' can be understood only as somebody having it. We cannot have the concept of 'floating pain' without belonging to someone. Moreover, even the philosophers who claim that 'I' is non-referential have to admit that the third person pronoun 'he' etc. are referential. The sentence, 'He is an Indian citizen' does refer to an individual. Now if that individual who is referred to by 'he' utters a sentence to imply that truth will have to say 'I am an Indian citizen'. If the philosophers were to be believed

that 'I' does not refer to anything we will have to say that in the former sentence there was a referent but in the latter sentence there is no referent though they are supposed to say the same thing. The truth is that 'I' or 'he' refers to the same individual if used to indicate one particular individual. When a person makes a statement about himself he uses the pronoun 'I' and when others want to make a statement to imply the same truth, they use third-person pronoun or noun. If we admit that third-person pronouns have reference then we also have to admit that first-person pronoun 'I' also has a referent, because both refer to the same entity, when are used about the same individual. But 'I' is not merely an extension of third-person pronouns, because it is 'I' or the first-person perspective in the understanding of self that renders it its special character. The distinctive character of the self can be understood only from the first-person perspective. It is true that when we use 'he' or any third-person pronoun we refer to the same kind of thing that we refer to when we use 'I'. But our understanding of the nature of that entity to whom we ascribe these pronouns has to be always in first-person perspective first. After understanding it in the first-person perspective only we can proceed to ascribe it

to others. In other words, we first understand what is 'I' and then ascribe it to other persons through third-person pronouns. Our understanding of the nature of the referent of 'I' is necessarily in the first-person perspective but to prove that it has a referent we have to start with third-person perspective. But even if the philosophers proved that 'I' is not a referential concept it does not necessarily imply that there is no 'self'. There may not be any referent of 'I', which as we have seen is not the case, but still can we deny that there is an entity who has the mental states? We must admit that the mental states just do not float around but belong to something and that entity to which they belong is the 'self'. Now, if we have a self we must also have an expression to refer to that self. This word which is taken to refer to this self may be the first-person pronoun 'I' or any other word which may be more applicable. All that is necessary is a word which can bring about the distinctive character of the self and as we already have the word 'I' there is no need to go searching for another word.

Our aim is to understand the nature of that entity by virtue of which we possess mental states or by virtue

of which a person is called a person. This entity as we have already said is called traditionally 'the self'. This self is defined as the subject of mental states. But our ascriptions of mental states to self is different from our ascriptions of physical states to the body. That is, mental states belong to the self in the sense of being 'owned' by the self in self-consciousness. Though we could say that conscious states manifest in the self just as physical states manifest in the body and both kinds of states are ascribed to a person since a person owns a body as well as a self, there is difference in owning a body and owning a self. The difference in the sense of ownership is important since it seems that we can talk of mental states of a self primarily because a self is conscious of possessing it. In other words the self is conscious of its consciousness. This extra aspect of self-consciousness with respect to the conscious states of a self is what gives meaning to the idea of ownership of states of consciousness.

There are some philosophers (as probably Wittgenstein and earlier Hume) who have put forward, what Strawson has called the 'No Ownership Theory' of the self. If this theory were true we could imagine unowned states

of consciousness to exist. But this is hard to imagine because whenever we think of states of consciousness we always seem to think of them as someone's states of consciousness.

According to Strawson the No-ownership Theory holds that experiences need not be owned by a subject, which is identified with the self. According to the advocates of this theory the only sense in which experiences can meaningfully be assigned to an owner is that they are causally dependent upon the state of some particular body. Strawson rejects this theory on the ground that in that case the experiences of a person would not necessarily be his and only his since the experiences in question could have been caused by another body. In other words, causal dependence of experience upon the body stipulates only a contingent connection between the experiences and the body while the experiences belonging to a self are necessarily so. As Strawson puts it: "The no-ownership theorist fails to take account of all the facts. He takes account of some of them. He implies, correctly, that the unique position or role of a single body in one's experience is not a sufficient explanation of the fact that one's experiences, or states of

consciousness, are ascribed to something which *has* them, with that peculiar non transferable kind of possession which is here in question. It may be a necessary part of the explanation, but it is not, by itself, a sufficient explanation. The theorist, as we have seen, goes on to suggest that it is perhaps a sufficient explanation of something else: viz., of our confusedly and mistakenly *thinking* that states of consciousness are to be ascribed to something in this special way. And this suggestion, as we have seen, is incoherent: for it involves the denial that someone's states of consciousness are anyone's. We avoid the incoherence of this denial, while agreeing that the special role of a single body in someone's experience does not suffice to explain why that experience should be ascribed to anybody. The fact that there is this special role does not, by itself, give a sufficient reason why what we think of as a subject of experience should have any use for the conception of himself as such a subject."<sup>2</sup> Strawson's criticism of the No-ownership theory seems to be valid in so far as human selves are concerned. For human selves are just those entities which

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2. P.F. Strawson, 'Persons' in *Philosophy of Mind*, ed., V.C. Chappell (1962), p.133.

in self-consciousness claim their experiences to be intrinsic to their self-consciousness. But this is a special sense of 'ownership' which is not indicated simply by saying that certain mental states belong to an entity because they are causally related to that entity. The ownership of states of consciousness signifies a 'primitive' and irreducible relationship between the self and its mental states which is adequately grasped only in the first-person perspective. From this, however, we cannot conclude that there can be no unowned mental states. Clearly we do not believe that animals own their mental states in the same sense in which human beings do. But in the third-person perspective the case is similar with the case of attributing physical states to a body. Whenever we talk of a state or property we talk of it in relation to a subject or an entity to which it is attributed. This much is a necessity of language. In this way we can attribute mental states to animals. But it is doubtful whether the animals possess a first-person perspective, that is, the animal is not in a position to know and claim to possess whatever mental state it is in. In this sense, that is, in the first-person perspective we cannot say that the animal *owns*

the mental states which (we can legitimately say) it possesses. For this reason we hesitate to address animals as selves.

Above observation leads to the conclusion that possession of self-consciousness is not only characteristic of self but is a necessary feature of the self. A self thus is not only a subject of consciousness but is also a subject who is conscious of being so, i.e., self-conscious. This point is important since a self represents a unitary centre of awareness and it is difficult to attribute this to animals. The kind of unity of mind exhibited by human being seems to require the integrating power of self-awareness which can comprehend the past, present and future experiences belonging to one and the same individual, namely, one and the same self. This kind of unity can properly be understood only in self-consciousness. This special kind of unity thus can be found only in those entity which have selves. Any entity thus to be called a self must possess the unity of mind. It is in self-consciousness alone that a self is able to put a mere succession of mental events into a meaningful whole apprehended as mental states

or experiences of oneself. We are aware of ourselves in our self-consciousness. In other words, we know that we are selves because we are self-conscious. There is not a particular moment of realization that 'I am a self'. I know it because without this knowledge I would not have been a self. Thus our knowledge of self is necessarily a matter of first-person perspective and we use the first-person pronoun to refer to this self. Other personal pronouns that we use can meaningfully refer to selves only by virtue of their connection with the expression 'I'.

Some further observations about the concept of self can be made as follows:

Colin McGinn, in his book 'The Character of Mind' argues that the possession of a self is not a "matter of degree". This means that there are no "borderline cases" in which we cannot decide whether a self is to be ascribed to a creature or not. In McGinn's own word,:

"The existence of the self is an all-or-nothing matter - you either have one or you don't. This seems to derive from

the special kind of unity in a creature's mental life which the self confers: we feel, from the inside, that mental states either belong to a unitary thing or they donot - they could not fall between being unified and being fragmented. The unity of the self is the unity conferred by self-consciousness, and this unity cannot come in grades"<sup>3</sup>.

We have discussed earlier that self in order to be a self must be self-conscious. Thus arises the necessity to distinguish it from any biological concept. For an entity to belong to a biological class it does not have to be self-conscious. The concept 'human being', in so far as it refers to a biological entity does not include the notion of self-consciousness. Human being depends on emperical enquiry to acquire the knowledge of what constitutes him. Any biological classification must go through experiments to know that it fulfills the criterion for being so. It simply does not come to know that it is so, for it does not have knowledge that it will fulfill the criterion to be that biological class.

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3. Colin McGinn, "The Character of Mind", ( Oxford: Oxford University Press 1982), Chapter-6, p.105.

Human being as a biological entity does not necessarily know that he is so unless empirical science discloses to him that he fulfills the criteria of being a human. Self, on the other hand, carries the knowledge of itself as being so. Without it, self would not be a self. It knows that it is a self before anything can reveal the knowledge of its possession to it. Knowledge of the self is primarily in the first-person perspective while the knowledge of belonging to a biological class need not be from a first-person perspective. The criterion of belonging to a biological class is external and thus, whether one belongs to a particular class or not can be judged by others. Self necessarily involves first-person perspective while biological concept is a third-person discovery.

McGinn says that, "selves necessarily know that they are selves."<sup>4</sup> A self knows that the knowledge of its existence is true. The knowledge of being a self has certainty for without it one cannot claim to be a self. The proof of being a self is the knowledge of it being a self.

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4. Colin McGinn, Op.Cit., p.105.

Traditionally the nature of the self is tried to be understood by answering the question about personal identity. It is a problem in which we try to understand the circumstances, the situations and the conditions under which we claim a person to be the same person over time. When we claim the sameness of a person we base our assertion on certain conditions, that is, we put down certain conditions which a person has to fulfill if he is to be asserted as the same person. Thus the problem of personal identity is actually a search for the conditions or the criteria of personal identity. Our knowledge about what constitutes the sameness of a person over a period of time will throw light on the nature of the self by virtue of which we call a person 'a person'.

However, the notion of criterion as used in case of personal identity needs to be distinguished from similar notions as symptoms and evidences.

Symptom as commonly understood is that which indicates the existence of something. It is generally a physiological process. Our experience teaches us to associate certain indications with the existence of

certain things. They can be said to be effects of something. Symptoms are bound to appear if its cause is present. But criterion is not simply an indication which implies the existence of a particular thing. Criterion is rather a constituent factor of that particular thing whose criterion it is. Symptoms are not the constituent factors but simply appear when the thing of whose symptoms they are is available. They indicate the existence of something but are not a part of that thing. Criterion on the other hand, does not depend on the existence of something else but a thing would not have been that particular thing if it did not have those elements which constitute its criterion. Criterion is that by virtue of which we judge something or someone as the same thing or same person over a period of time. If a thing fulfills a certain criterion then it definitely is the thing which is associated with that criterion. A criterion is exclusively the criterion of one particular thing alone. There cannot be one criterion for two things. But a symptom does not necessarily be the symptom of one particular thing. The manifestations which count as symptoms, for example, of a particular disease may also be present in case of another quite different kind of disease. In

other words symptoms do not uniquely pick out what they are symptoms of. In more philosophical language we can say that the relationship between symptom and what it is symptom of is purely contingent while the relation between the criterion and what it is criterion of is logical. In other words x is x because it fulfills a particular criteria and by virtue of being x it exhibits certain symptoms. The satisfaction of criterion for x establishes that the thing is x with certainty. It is actually defining x in some other terms. It is true that the presence of a particular symptom also establishes the existence of x but not with certainty because, their relation is not a logical relation.

Like symptoms, evidence also is not a constituent factor of a particular thing though it also proves the existence of a thing. If, for example, we take the statement, "John is in pain", then we will regard his pain-behaviour as the evidence of his feeling pain. But this pain-behaviour certainly does not constitute 'the pain'. It is so, because firstly, we do not identify 'pain' with 'pain-behaviour' as we believe 'pain' to be something more than pain-behaviour and secondly because we do not

know for certain that the evidence we are using to assert the existence of 'pain' is exclusively the evidence for that particular feeling of pain. Evidence can be said to be used generally in epistemological context while criterion can be said to be used in metaphysical sense as well. Evidence is that which we use to know the existence of a certain thing while criterion is used to know whether a certain thing is that thing or not. Evidence is outward expression for existence of a certain thing but it need not be the distinctive feature which distinguishes that thing from others. Criterion being the constituent factor is also the distinctive feature of that thing which distinguishes it from any other thing. In other words, criterion constitutes unique feature of a thing by virtue of which a thing is what it is. The logical relation existing between a criterion and the thing of whose criterion it is makes it logically impossible for us to imagine that thing as divorced from its criterion, but we can very well accept the relation of evidence with that whose evidence it is as a contingent one. Criterion in fact, constitutes the very nature of a thing and as such must be there to make a thing what it is. But evidences do not constitute the nature of

a particular thing. Criteria and evidences are different concepts though they are used interchangeably in our day to day life. We can bring in the concept of 'evidence' under the concept of 'criteria' but then we will have to widen the concept of 'criteria'. In other words, we can call a certain evidence as the criteria but in that case we will use the concept of 'criteria' in a very loose sense.

**Wittgenstein's notion of criteria:**

Norman Malcom tries to elucidate Wittgenstein's notion of criteria by trying to bring out its connection in our learning and teaching. When two persons are using a concept in their minds, to know with certainty that they are talking about the same thing, an experience, we may have to observe the necessary physiological process that accompanies it. But the persons who are using the notion certainly did not learn about this notion by first observing that physiological process. It implies that our learning of concepts does not need to be based on our learning of associated physiological process. In other words, physiological process is not the criteria for saying a certain thing silently to oneself. To teach

to say silently certain things to oneself actually involves the effort of bringing to one's mind the meaning of that thing. If one is able to bring the meaning of a word or term to another's mind then it means that he showed the use of the word and thus taught the criterion for the use of that word. While teaching, one always points out those features which are important to understand the use of the word and these features constitute the 'criterion'. It is these features on the basis of which someone's knowledge of a thing is judged. Thus the presence of the criterion indicates the presence of the phenomenon. The satisfaction of the criterion establishes the existence of the thing whose criterion it is beyond question. If the criterion for pain is available in a person then we must assert that 'He is in pain'. Wittgenstein however, does not assert that proposition that describes the criterion of pain logically implies the proposition 'He is in pain'. A criterion is satisfied only in certain circumstances. One may, for example be exhibiting pain-behaviour while acting but that certainly does not imply that he is in pain. The expressions of pain are thus the criterion of pain only in certain 'surroundings' and not in others. But

if describing factors of the criterion, for example, the pain-behaviour does not always indicate the truth of someone being in pain, then how will we ever become certain of the existence or presence of a certain thing? But we do not doubt the presence of a certain thing in all occasions. There are situations where doubt does not arise. In certain surroundings and situations it is the doubt which will be rejected as absurd. Even in such situations one can still doubt. But "Doubting has an end"<sup>5</sup> - Perhaps we can imagine a doubt but we no more take this doubt seriously. The doubt that appears after a certain stage is not regarded as serious doubt. After seeing certain behaviour and observing certain circumstances, no further information or circumstance is regarded as relevant to decide whether something really exists or not. The doubts which are raised after this stage are considered as unimportant. It is true that these are not illogical doubts but they are abnormal. In a situation where my friend is struck down by a car and is exhibiting behaviour of extreme pain I certainly do not doubt about his pain. My behaviour or thought would be abnormal if I start doubting though this doubt

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5. L. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1953), p.180.

may not be illogical. Such abnormalities must be treated as exceptions and not as the rule. If one makes 'doubting' the rule with regard to another person's pain, then it would be senseless to suppose that he has this concept of 'another person's pain'. If he knows what this concept means then it automatically implies that he used some criterion to learn this concept and the criterion he used to learn the concept is the criterion he should use to know any further occurrence of that event or existence of that thing. Continuous 'doubt' implies that a person infact is not using any 'criterion' at all for he does not take any 'expression' to be the expression of pain. So criterion thus understood is that which indicates the presence of a thing with certainty.

The above interpretation of Wittgenstein's concept of criterion by Malcom makes the features constituting the criterion the 'necessary conditions' of a certain thing but they are not the 'sufficient conditions'. These features can imply the presence of the thing only when certain other conditions are fulfilled. But according to Rogers Albritton for something to be called a criterion of something, it not only has to be the necessary condition

but also must be sufficient by itself. This term 'necessary and sufficient conditions' is introduced specially by Albritton to explain the notion of 'criterion' as he sees it in Wittgenstein's writing. For, according to him the notion of criterion as a 'necessary and sufficient condition' is very much available in Wittgenstein's own definition of 'criterion' as in the following passage:

"Let us introduce two antithetical terms in order to avoid certain elementary confusions: To the question "How do you know that so and so is the case?", we sometimes answer by giving 'criteria' and sometimes by giving 'symptoms'. If medical science calls angina an inflammation caused by a particular bacillus, and we ask in a particular case "Why do you say this man has got angina?" then the answer "I have found the bacillus so-and-so in his blood" gives us the criterion, or what we may call the defining criterion of angina. If on the other hand the answer was, "His throat is inflamed," this might give us a symptom of angina. I call "symptom" a phenomenon of which experience has taught us that it coincided, in some way or other, with the phenomenon which is our defining criterion. Then to say "A man has angina if

this bacillus is found in him" is a tautology or it is a loose way of stating the definition of "angina". But to say, "A man has angina whenever he has an inflamed throat" is to make a hypothesis."<sup>6</sup>

The above passages is claimed to make criterion the sufficient condition for the existence of something. This is so because, to know the existence of angina the presence of a particular bacillus is sufficient. If that bacillus is present then there is no doubt that there must be angina. The presence of the bacillus is sufficient and does not require any other condition to prove the existence of angina. Thus, 'the presence of bacillus' is the sufficient condition for the presence of angina and it is the criterion of angina. But criterion is not identical with the thing of whose criterion it is. The criterion holds a special relation with a particular thing but is not that thing. Criterion is a part of the thing whose criterion it is and thus logically implies the thing's presence. In the example of angina and bacillus, the bacillus is not the angina but its presence logically implies the presence of angina. This notion

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6. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *The Blue and The Brown Books*, (Oxford: 1958), p.24.

of criterion is the notion of 'defining criterion' as distinguished from 'criterion among others':

"If a phenomenon is a criterion among others for a thing's being so, then first, certainly, it is one among other phenomena that can *show* the thing to be so, as *the* criterion for its being so might do if there were one. (Wittgenstein says, for example: "whenever these first criteria told me a person had toothache."). But it can be "used as a criterion," or "is a criterion", "only under certain circumstances: "Many different criteria distinguish, under different circumstances, cases of believing what you say from those of not believing what you say." Or suppose, as Wittgenstein does (though he may not think that this one phenomenon is ever really enough by itself), that holding one's cheek, in a certain kind of way is a criterion of (another person's) having a toothache. Still, there are circumstances under which a man's holding his cheek, no matter how, won't show that he has a toothache."<sup>7</sup>

This criterion among others is neither the necessary nor the sufficient condition for a thing being that

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7. Rogers Albritton, 'On Wittgenstein's Use of the Term "Criterion"', in *Modern Studies of Philosophy*, Wittgenstein, *The Philosophical Investigation*, Ed. George Pitcher (MacMillan, London: 1968), p.239.

thing but for Wittgenstein to be a criterion it should hold a relation of entailment with the thing whose criterion it is.

The dominant conception of Wittgenstein's criterion as found in 'Remarks on The Foundation of Mathematics', and "Philosophical Investigations" has been put down by Rogers Albritton in the following passages:

A criterion for a given thing's being so is something that can show the thing to be so and show by its absence that the thing is not so; it is something by which one may be *justified in saying* that the thing is so and by whose absence one may be justified in saying that the thing is not so. And a criterion for a thing's being so has this relation to the Thing's being so not as a matter of fact, like what Wittgenstein calls a "symptom" of its being so, but as a matter of "logical" necessity. That is, on Wittgenstein's account of such necessity, its relation to the thing's being so is "founded on a definition" or "founded on convention" or is a matter of "grammar".<sup>8</sup>

Thus it appears that to be a Wittgensteinian Criterion it must have such a relation with that whose

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8. Rogers Albritton, Op.cit., pp.243-244.

criterion it is, that its presence indicates without a doubt the presence of the thing whose criterion it is. To be a criterion is to be a part of the "use", the "grammar" of the word.

If we take Albritton's interpretation of Wittgenstein's concept of criterion as correct then we are to consider criterion as the necessary and sufficient condition for a thing being so. This concept of criterion would have been applicable in the discussion of problem of personal identity except for the fact that Wittgenstein had his own concept of relation of necessity such as the one that can be found between a criterion and the thing whose criterion it is. According to Wittgenstein the relation of necessity is founded on 'definition' or on 'convention' (I will not go into what he really meant by relation of necessity as founded on definition or convention). But the criterion that is needed for personal identity certainly needs to be the necessary and sufficient condition for a thing being so but the relation of necessity is not to be understood in Wittgenstein's sense. The criterion of personal identity should be such that it reveals those features of a person without which the person would not

have been that person and by virtue of which the person remains the same person over a period of time.

We treat the problem of Personal identity as special and therefore use only that criterion to understand that problem which is the necessary and sufficient condition. The sort of criterion that we use for ascribing identity to something largely depends upon the type of identity we are judging. By identity we generally mean the persistence of a thing over a period of time. Question about identity is a question about sameness. And our ascription of identity or sameness is dependent on certain factors. The identity judgement, 'This is the same thing which I saw yesterday', is made on the basis of presence of certain features which were there in the thing when I saw it yesterday and are also present in the thing when I am seeing it now. And features which make me assert the identity of the thing is the criterion of its identity. However, the nature of criterion for determining identity depends on the nature of the thing whose identity is in question. Thus, the nature of the criterion of personal identity depends on the nature of person or self. If by person we understand simply

a body which is like other material bodies then the criterion of personal identity would have been the same as a criterion for the identity of material objects. But, the truth is that we do not consider a person to be a body only. A person is also regarded as a subject of perceptions, sensations and experiences. If a person was only a body then the criterion of personal identity would have been spatio-temporal continuity which is the criterion of identity of material things. There is no doubt that persons do have bodies but they are not bodies alone. A person is a person not only by virtue of having a body but also by virtue of having a mind as well. A person not only has a physical history but also has a mental history and it is this mental factor which distinguishes a person from those objects which do not have mind. Therefore, the criterion of personal identity must be different from the criterion of identity of material objects.

But if a person is only a combination of body and mind then it will follow that the criterion we use to determine the identity of animals can also serve as the criterion of personal identity. But a person is not

only a combination of body and mind but is something more than their combination. We are not puzzled by identity problem of animals because we do not consider them as something more than a combination of body and mind. Persons are also necessarily selves. And we have already discussed earlier in this chapter why we cannot treat animals as selves. This absence of selves in animals makes the criterion of their identity non-applicable to persons. Every person is a self by virtue of being self-conscious which makes him aware of himself as a unitary centre of consciousness. The presence of this unique feature in a person makes him distinct from animals and also it requires that our treatment of personal identity is different from our treatment of identity problem of other living creatures.

The problem of personal identity however, gets different treatments in philosophy and in our everyday life. Our reference to 'identity' of a person in day to day life is mainly based on physical traits. It is true that this reference also involves mental traits but they are evidences rather than criteria. Our assertion of identity of a person in every day life is not actually an assertion of 'identity' as discussed in

philosophy. In philosophy when we talk about the problem of identity we are actually looking for the features by virtue of which a person remains the same over time inspite of going through certain mental and physical changes. In philosophy we are looking for the criterion of personal identity but in our everyday life our search for the criterion of identity is not actually a search for the criterion of identity but for the identification mark of that individual. If the problem of personal identity were a problem which could have been answered by evidences or identification marks then it would not have needed any special treatment. But the problem of personal identity cannot be solved by evidences or symptoms or any identification mark for a person is a unique entity, unique by virtue of having a mind and a body and by virtue of being a self.

So, in order to understand the nature of a person we will have to find out the features which make a person a person and retain his identity over time. In other words, we have to find out the criterion of personal identity. In the recent philosophy, in order to find out the criterion of personal identity the philosophers

have employed what is known as 'survival test'. All the three theories of the nature of self try to find out the criterion of personal identity by employing this 'Survival test'.

CHAPTER - III  
**THE BODY THEORY**

According to the Body Theory, the sameness of self consists in the sameness of the body. It asserts that personal identity necessarily involves the identity of the body. In our everyday life we identify and individuate persons by reference to their body. When I say to my friend about another individual, 'This person is so and so', I refer to 'this person'. My reference to 'this person' individuates one single person and my friend must regard personal identity as involving bodily identity at least long enough for a name or uniquely identifying description, to acquire a reference. But my identifying myself does not involve my saying, 'I must be so and so for I remember being called thus'. I do not individuate myself by my body in order to know who I am. But I know myself to be 'myself' and this involves individuation of myself as distinguished from others. I know myself to be a distinct individual distinguished from all other individuals. But this distinguishing oneself from others involves reference to body.

Thus it can be seen that personal identity cannot do without bodily identity and it presupposes the existence of other people. If other people did not exist then

I would be left with a situation where there would be nobody for me not to be and if they exist then there are ways to know their existence. Our knowledge of other people is based on our knowledge of their bodily existence. This fact that reference to body is necessary for our knowledge of other people is a human predicament. And this predicament makes it essential that any philosophical theory of personal identity must be based on our physical existence of space and time.

The assertion that bodily identity is necessary for personal identity rules out any possibility of disembodied state of existence. The argument for disembodied state of existence of person can be put down briefly in the following manner: We have experiences in our embodied state and we can well imagine to continue having these experiences even when we no more have a body. The only difference between these two sets of experience is that one is had while being embodied and the other while being disembodied. Now if we can imagine to continue having experiences after forsaking the body then we can also imagine having experiences always as disembodied person, that is, we can imagine ourselves as

always without a body.

But this argument, as A.J. Ayer<sup>9</sup> has pointed out, makes indivisuation impossible. Moreover such a view does not make clear the difference between the two sets of experiences. We can imagine ourselves in a disembodied state only when we think of ourselves as retaining the psychological states, in the disembodied state, of the embodied person. Body is necessary for having experiences and these experiences are rendered their special characteristic by virtue of being a distinct body's experiences. The indivisuation of mental states depends on the body. There cannot be distinct experiences without a distinct body. This inability to indivisuate persons except by a distinct body implies the necessity of body for a person's identity. Indivisuation of a particular individual at a particular time implies the necessity of body for a person and indivisuating that individual as the same individual over time by reference to the same body implies that a person retains his identity only by virtue of bodily identity. The possibility of retaining identity over time without a body has been invoked by Strawson too.

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9. A.J. Ayer, The Concept of a Person (London: Macmillan, 1953), Chap.4.

But he gives such identity a 'secondary status' which he thinks is legitimate for the disembodied person can retain his identity of his embodied state by retaining memories of the prior embodied existence. But here he forgets that memory is not a sufficient condition for personal identity for memory can be wrong and sometimes may totally be washed out in certain circumstances. Again memory is not even necessary for personal identity as we do assert personal identity in such situations. To assert personal identity we must assert bodily identity. A person is that person by virtue of possessing a distinct body. This assertion of necessity of the body has been tried to be proved wrong by putting forward certain imaginary examples. One such example is that of switching bodies. In this situation of switching bodies two persons start exhibiting the other's psychological traits. On the ground of such exhibition we are inclined to say that each has become the other. But are we really driven to such a position? It would be easier to accept if we rather say that each of the original person has remained the same but only mysteriously acquired other's mental states and character traits. A similar answer can be given to a situation where a person is said to ostensibly remember

the experiences of a dead person and this may be accompanied by an apparent continuity of character. In this situation it is more natural to say that this person who is remembering the experiences of the dead person and exhibiting characteristics similar to that of the dead man's has actually somehow picked them up rather than saying that he is the dead person in a new body. The continuity of a person inspite of spatial and temporal discontinuity is not very acceptable. However, a person who is physically identified now if is ostensibly remembering experiences and exhibiting certain characteristics which were actually of a person physically identified earlier then he can be said to be the same with the one whose experiences he is remembering and whose characters he is exhibiting. But such a criterion of identity is parasitical upon the 'primary' physical criterion. It is true that in some cases we can identify a person as the same person by using a psychological criterion but this psychological criterion could acquire the status of being a criterion only by virtue of being connected with a distinct body. In other words, the distinctive characteristic of the psychological traits which gives it the status of criterion can be given only by a distinct body.

Thus we see that personal identity involves the necessary condition of bodily identity.

In the recent times, it is Bernard Williams who has proved to be an ardent advocate of an extreme version of this theory. He has come to represent all those who support the Body Theory of the self. Now I am going to discuss Williams's version of this theory according to which a person cannot retain his identity without bodily identity.

#### **Williams's Theory of Personal Identity**

Williams rejects any view which does not regard bodily identity as necessary for personal identity. However, he admits that questions of personal identity cannot be answered simply by the identity of the body. For Williams bodily identity is necessary for personal identity but not a sufficient condition as other considerations of personal characteristics and memory must be taken into consideration.

The thesis that bodily identity is not a necessary

condition of personal identity can be interpreted in two ways: firstly, it can be interpreted as the thesis which holds that there is at least one case in which bodily identity fails consistently and other conditions thus are sufficient for the assertion of personal identity, but in some other imaginable cases where other conditions fail bodily identity is the necessary condition for asserting personal identity. The second interpretation of the thesis can be put thus, in no conceivable case of personal identity bodily identity is a necessary condition there always being some other conditions serving as necessary and sufficient condition of personal identity. The former interpretation is called by Williams as the weaker thesis and the latter is called the stronger thesis. But according to Williams neither of the above interpretation of the thesis that bodily identity is not necessary for personal identity is correct. He rejects both the theses, for according to him bodily identity is necessary for personal identity. To prove the necessity of bodily identity, Williams uses the weaker thesis and ultimately proves that both the weaker and the stronger theses are incorrect. In his discussion of personal identity, bodily identity is the criterion of personal

identity and it is spatio-temporal continuity which gives us bodily identity.

Williams starts with an imaginary situation where a person wakes up one morning and is found to have undergone violent changes of character which casts doubt regarding his identity. The question that arises in such a situation regarding the person's identity can be formulated in the following manner:

(a) Is he the same person as he used to be?

which in order to avoid ambiguity may be formulated as

(b) Is this the same person who went to sleep last night?

Now, the question is whether such an identity question can be answered without taking into consideration bodily identity. Can memory explain identity question? Let us see now whether memory can really answer this identity question. That is, let us see whether identity question can be answered or not without bodily identity. Before employing memory to explain identity we must keep the following features of memory in our mind,

- (i) To say 'A remember x' without irony or inverted commas, is to imply that x really happened; in this respect remember is parallel to know.
- (ii) It does not follow from this, nor is it true that all claims to remember, as veridical; or not everything one seems to remember is something one really remembers.

Now let us see how far memory is successful in explaining identity of the person who, as mentioned earlier, wakes up in the morning to exhibit violent changes in his personality.

A particular person, namely, Charles after waking up one morning claims to remember certain events and performing certain tasks which he so long never claimed to have witnessed or performed, and he does not remember certain events and actions which he so long claimed to have witnessed and performed. In other words, Charles has undergone changes where his memories and dispositions are not the same as before. So here memory being the supposed criterion should explain Charles's identity and the explanation should assert that the person who went to sleep last night and the one who has woken up in the

morning are not one and the same person but are two different persons. But we are not driven to accept this explanation. It is because, there is no reason to believe without proof that Charles after waking up in the morning is making true memory claims. In order to find out whether the claims are true or not we can check out whether Charles was really present in the situations which he now claims to have witnessed. If Charles was present in those situations then it would imply that he is remembering it in the ordinary manner and if he was not present there then there is nothing to confirm that his claims are true claims. In other words, memory claims cannot be verified without reference to body. It is not possible to separate the 'mental' from the 'bodily' criterion.

However, it is possible that Charles's memory claims are so detailed that they can be derived only from performing an action. But such a supposition does not help us as it does not rule out the possibility of clairvoyance. Moreover, what makes an action different from an event is the intention of the agent involved in the action. But it is something no one knows except the person whose

action it is. So the intention which now Charles claims to have had at the time of his performing that action cannot be confirmed. Thus, there is nothing and no one that can confirm the memory claim to be correct and true except Charles himself. And, criterion which cannot be verified cannot serve the purpose of explaining something, namely, in this case the identity of Charles.

In the above example, Charles's memory claims were that of an unknown person, but if his memory claims pointed to the life history of a particular person, say, Guy Fawkes. then would we have said that this changed Charles with his new memory claims is actually Guy Fawkes? Charles's memory claims may be such that they fit with Guy Fawkes's life and explain many things which so long remained unexplained as it could not have been explained by anybody else than Guy Fawkes. But this supposition also cannot rule out clairvoyance or some mysterious way of acquiring other person's memory and character. Memory cannot be sufficient for personal identity even if it is backed by similarity of character, dispositions and personality traits. We cannot rule out the possibility that what Charles is claiming to remember are *memory claims*

which are to be distinguished from the memory of Guy Fawkes.

That memory is not a sufficient condition of personal identity can be proved by another imaginary example. In this example there are two persons who are exhibiting the character of a third person and are claiming to remember this person's experiences. This is a case of reduplication. In a case of reduplication it is not only Charles who has acquired the memories and characters of Guy Fawkes but Charles's brother Roberts too has acquired them. In such a situation, if memory is the criterion of personal identity then we should be able to say that both Charles and Roberts are Guy Fawkes. We cannot say that Charles is Guy Fawkes and Roberts is not, for both of them are equally eligible to be Guy Fawkes. Now, if we admit that both of them are Guy Fawkes then we also must say that each one of them is also the other. But this is an absurd claim. The only way to avoid this situation is to say that while one of them is a case of genuine memory the other is only a case of memory claim. It is true that this would have solved our problem. But we cannot assert it as there is no ground on the

basis of which we can make this assertion. Both Charles and Roberts have the same ground to assert their identity with Guy Fawkes, and yet we cannot accept it as it leads to the absurd conclusion of both being identical with each other. This conclusion is unacceptable because identity in this case does not remain one-to-one relation. Therefore, as in this case of reduplication we cannot assert identity we will have to assert similarity. That is, both Charles and Roberts are similar to Guy Fawkes on the basis of having similar memories and character. But if we accept in this case of reduplication that on psychological ground we can assert only similarity, we can easily say in the other case also, where Charles is the only candidate for identity with Guy Fawkes that Charles is only similar and not identical with Guy Fawkes.

Williams, however, points out that what is applicable in a case of reduplication is not necessarily applicable in the case where the candidate for identity is only one. This may be taken to imply that memory can be sufficient condition of personal identity if it is one person claiming to remember another person's experiences. But this is a wrong assumption as other difficulties

arise if we base personal identity on psychological features such as memory. The distinction between same and similar does not hold good in case of memories. We can use the terms 'similar' and 'same' only with respect to material objects. In case of material objects if two things look alike we say that they are similar but they are not the same as they are occupying different space. But such a criterion cannot be applied in case of memory or any other psychological features. To say that two persons have same character is to say that they have similar character. And in case of memories the distinction between 'similar' and 'same' is still more unclear. We really cannot understand what is really meant by similar memories as distinguished from same memories without any reference to the body. When we assert the identity of one person with another on the basis of same memories we are asserting the very thing which we want to prove, because same memories cannot belong to two different persons. And we cannot assert identity on the basis of exact similarity of memories as similar memory claims can be made by different persons. In the example of Charles claiming to remember Guy Fawkes's experiences we cannot employ sameness of memory to assert identity as it asserts the very thing it went out to prove and

similar memory claims, as we have seen, cannot serve as the sufficient condition of personal identity. Moreover, Williams says that different assertions can be made on the same psychological ground if it does not involve reference to body. For example, in the reduplication case, where Charles and Roberts both are candidates for identity, we say that they are not identical with Guy Fawkes but are similar. On the other hand, we assert identity of Charles with Guy Fawkes where he was the lone candidate for identity on the same psychological ground. Thus, we see that two different conclusions follow from the same ground. And Williams argues that psychological factors thus cannot be considered as the sufficient condition of identity it being the ground of both similarity and identity.

According to Williams bodily identity must be referred to at some point or other in our understanding of personal identity. In the example where Charles woke up with different character and claiming to have different memories, even if we accept that the person who woke up is no more Charles but Guy Fawkes whose experiences he seems to remember and whose character he is exhibiting

now, we will find that we will have to refer to the physical criterion. When we are saying that this new person is actually Guy Fawkes we would like to check whether Charles claims really fit those of Guy Fawkes's or not. In order to do that we first have to check the life history of Guy Fawkes, and we do check the life history of Guy Fawkes by checking Guy Fawkes's physical body witnessing and performing certain actions. This reference to body makes it clear that without bodily identity personal identity is not possible. Even if we accept that memory is sufficient condition of personal identity, bodily identity is necessary to prove the correctness of this sufficient condition. If bodily identity is not regarded as necessary then we will not be able to answer any question of personal identity. If there is a constant change of bodies then it will be impossible to have any knowledge of the life history of an individual and if we cannot have any knowledge about the life history of an individual we will not be able to make out as to whose identity it is we are talking about. Personal identity cannot be determined without reference to body.

The above discussion proves that bodily identity is

unavoidable in any case of personal identity taken in third-person perspective. But Williams shows that it is equally unavoidable in cases of personal identity taken in first-person perspective.

Let us imagine a situation where a person has two sets of memories. Previously he had  $S$  and now he has  $S_1$ . In the present state he goes back to  $S$  and finds that he remembers  $S$  as well as  $S_1$  and knows that both the sets are his because he remembers them. Thus he comes to the conclusion that the person who had  $S$  is the same person who has  $S_1$ . But in reality  $S$  and  $S_1$  are not two different sets of memories but one continued series where  $S$  is included in  $S_1$  and as such it does not prove anything. Again let us consider another situation where a person has  $S_1$  which includes the general memory to the effect that he used to remember things which now he no longer remembers. But such a situation does not pose identity problem as every individual knows himself to be the same person inspite of it, for it is the case with almost all of us. So a situation which involves identity problem could be one in which  $S_1$  involves the general notion of memory to the effect that he used to remember certain

things which now do not seem to be compatible with  $S_1$ . And so he asks the question, "Am I the same person who had this set of memories which now seem to be incompatible with  $S_1$ , as the one who has  $S_1$ ?" If identity question such as this arises in such a situation then there is nothing much that can be done by the person who is raising the question except going to others who can tell him whether he is the same person or not. And the others will use the third-person perspective in determining his identity which necessarily involves reference to bodily identity.

A criterion, says Williams, by virtue of being a criterion can be used only by others. In response to this view of Williams philosophers who maintain that memory explains personal identity, hold that fulfilment of such a condition by memory is not essential because memory is not a criterion but the very essence of personal identity. Being the essence of personal identity it asserts to a person that he is the same person over time with certainty. Such a view, however, takes for granted that memory claim of the person concerned is correct. But Williams argues that memory claim, as we have seen,

need not be always correct. Moreover, the view that memory is the essence of personal identity ignores third-person perspective. It does not take into account what others think of such a situation. Memory needs some other criterion to judge its correctness. Such a situation can also be described as a misremembered case by the person concerned. Moreover, a person cannot remember everything that has happened in his life. So there is every chance that the person who is claiming that the body which now belongs to him is different from the one which belonged to him earlier is not remembering correctly what his body was like earlier. Taken into account such shortcomings of memory, it can neither be considered as essence nor as criterion of personal identity.

For Williams, certain conditions must be fulfilled for something to be called a criterion:

"identity is a one-one relation, and that no principle can be a criterion of identity for things of type T if it relies only on what is logically a one - many or many-many relation between things of type T. What is wrong with the supposed criterion of identity for persons which relies only on memory claims - is just that '....being disposed to make sincere

memory claims which exactly fit the life of...'  
is not a one-one, but a many-one, relation,  
and hence cannot possibly be adequate in logic  
to constitute a criterion of identity.<sup>10</sup>

The above passage makes it clear that if anything is to serve as a criterion of something then it must be a necessary condition for that thing being so. This principle does not state a sufficient condition for identity. But Williams in the very beginning pointed out that his aim is to prove that bodily identity is a necessary condition and not a sufficient condition of personal identity. In other words, his theory tries to prove that in the absence of bodily identity we cannot talk about personal identity. And according to Williams it is bodily identity alone which can serve as a satisfactory criterion of personal identity because it never admits of many-one or one-many relation. Any other principle which is likely to admit such relation cannot be regarded as the criterion of personal identity. Williams says:

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10. B.A.O. Williams, Problems of the Self, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p.21.

'no principle P will be a philosophically satisfactory criterion of identity for Ts if the only thing that saves P from admitting many-one relations among Ts is a quite arbitrary provision'<sup>11</sup>

Such a concept of criterion is formulated to guard against reduplication. Now, it is to be seen whether bodily identity based on spatio-temporal continuity comes up to meet this notion of criterion or not.

Let us take an imaginary case where a person splits into two parts like an amoeba. According to Williams the two resultant persons do not hold identity relation with the original person. Each one of them is not identical with the original and as such are not identical with each other. The question may arise here that in spite of spatio-temporal continuity why the resultant persons are not identical with the original. Williams argues that there is in fact no spatio-temporal continuity in this case of splitting. He says that application of spatio-temporal criterion involves historical enquiry of the

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11. B.A.O. Williams, Problems of the Self, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p.21.

subject concerned. In an historical enquiry we start at a particular given point of time from where we proceed course by course where one situation leads to another till we come to the present situation. In such a journey we will come across the moment of reduplication. The application of spatio-temporal continuity thus reveals to us the presence of reduplication in the continued history of a person. The continuity of the original person stops the moment reduplication occurs and two different histories start from that moment onwards. Thus we come to the conclusion that the resultant persons are not identical with the original person as there is a break in the spatio-temporal continuity. So we see that spatio-temporal continuity admits only one-one relation. Therefore, it is bodily identity alone which can satisfy the conditions required by 'criterion'.

There are philosophers who however, say that bodily identity is not necessary for personal identity in any situation, some other factors always being necessary and sufficient. But this view always does not seem to be logically conceivable. Williams says that accepting the thesis will open the way for us to accept bodily

interchange as possible. In a case of bodily interchange, a particular person acquires another person's personality and the other person acquires his personality. If we imagine that between these two persons one of them is an emperor and the other is a peasant then after the bodily interchange the emperor's body will exhibit the peasant's personality and peasant's body will exhibit the emperor's personality. But Williams says that it is difficult to comprehend how the emperor's personality can be exhibited by the peasant's body and vice-versa. It is inconceivable how the emperor's fastidious arrogance is expressed in the peasant's face and how the peasant's personality gets expressed through emperor's cultured tones. Such consideration of bodily interchange makes us reconsider our easy acceptance of bodily interchange. It may however be argued that it is not possible to tell in advance how far a certain feature may suddenly express something quite unexpected. But we cannot ignore the limitation of a feature in expressing something. And it is this limit which makes bodily interchange unacceptable. The peasant may remember the past history of emperor quite correctly and he may also be exhibiting the character traits of the emperor but he does not become the emperor unless

and until he becomes at least the same sort of person as the emperor. And given the limitation of physical features it is not possible.

The forgoing discussion shows that the concept of bodily interchange is not conceivable. But it should have been conceivable if bodily identity was not necessary for personal identity. Moreover, in any case of personal identity when we are asked to distinguish the personality from one's body we do not know what to distinguish from what.

A more detailed account of body exchange also ends with a similar conclusion, that is, memory and other psychological traits are not sufficient to prove personal identity. Williams proves this with the help of an imaginary example. In this example A and B are two persons who are going to have a process carried out on them which will result in a situation where A's psychological states are put in B's brain and B's psychological states are put in A's brain. The person with A's body and B's psychological states is called A-body person and the person with B's body and A's psychological states is called

B-body person. If both A and B are asked before the process is carried out to make a choice of pain and pleasure after the process is completed, they are most likely to choose what they regard as best for them. The choice normally in such a situation is such that A would want pleasure for B-body person and B will choose pleasure for A-body person. Such choices seem to imply that personal identity can be there without bodily continuity. But does it really? Williams gives a counter example which leads to a different conclusion altogether. If I am informed today that I will be tortured tomorrow then my natural reaction will be that of fear. This fear cannot be reduced by the information that just before being tortured I will lose the memory of the previous information. The thought that ultimately it is going to be me who is going to be tortured will not leave me. The situation does not change much if I am told that along with my memory my character and dispositions are also going to change. The information that a psychologically altered person is going to get tortured does not help me to overcome my fear. Again the further information that during the time of torture I am going to consider myself as another person also does not lessen my fear.

But if psychological states were sufficient for personal identity then my fear should not have continued after I received my information. But it continues. Again, it is an appalling thought for most of us to lead a life of a mad person even though we know that when we will become mad we will not have any realization of being mad. If bodily identity did not give me the personal identity then the thought of how another person constituted by different psychological states leads his life should not have bothered me. The truth is that I get concerned about that mad person or to be tortured person for I believe that I will continue to retain my identity in both cases by virtue of my bodily identity. Here some one might argue that reference to the person who is going to be tortured as 'you' influences my reaction. But we cannot accept it as I am perfectly capable of deducing for myself what he means and in fact I would not have been affected by the reference 'you' if I thought that the situation were different from what it is.

William consider certain cases where A is informed about different situations he is going to be in where he is going to be tortured and analyses A's reaction with

regard to the torture:

- (i) A is subjected to an operation which produces total amnesia;
- (ii) amnesia is produced in A, and other interference leads to certain changes in his character;
- (iii) changes in his character are produced, and, at the same time certain illusory 'primary' beliefs are induced in him, they are of quite fictitious type and do not fit the life of any actual person;
- (iv) the same as (iii) except that both the character traits and memory impressions are designed to be appropriate to another actual person B;
- (v) the same as (iv) except that the result is produced by putting the information into A from the brain of B, by a method which leaves B as same as he was before;
- (vi) the same happens to A as in (v), but B is not left the same, since a similar operation is conducted in the reverse direction.

In situation (i) A's fear is quite understandable. He has reason to fear torture that is going to happen to him. The possible amnesia of the information does not take away the fear of torture. The knowledge remains

with A that it is going to be him who will suffer. The position is no different in (ii) and A's fear continues inspite of the extra information that he is going to have different psychological states at the time of torture. And in situation (iii) also we can easily accept A's fear as legitimate. In situation (iv) also A's fear is understandable though he has the information that the psychological states he is going to have at the time of torture appropriate to another person B. The knowledge of another person having similar psychological states does not reduce A's fear. In situation (v) also A's fear for torture does not lessen even though A comes to know that those psychological states he is going to have will come from B's brain. In this situation A knows that after the operation there are going to be two persons, namely, B and A - body person. If psychological states were sufficient to retain a person's identity then A should not have continued to be afraid of the torture as he will not continue any more after the operation. But A's fear continues because A regards A-body person as himself. Now if body exchange is valid then A in situation (vi) should start considering himself as B-body person. But this situation (vi) is not very much different from

situation (v) except that (vi) has the extra information of what is going to happen to B who also is going to undergo a similar operation. In other words, A is getting concerned in (vi) about what is going to happen to another person. There is in fact no valid ground on which A now in situation (vi) can claim himself to be the B-body person for the ground on which A claimed in situation (v) to be A-body person is still available and as such he should continue considering himself as A-body person. An argument can be put forward against it by saying that though it was reasonable for A to be A-body person in situation (v), in situation (vi) he becomes B-body person because, in situation (v) there was no better candidate than A-body person for A to be himself. But this argument does not have any argumentative force according to Williams. He says that if A's fear in situation (v) is regarded as justified then it can also be extended to situation (vi) which is not different from (v) except having the extra information of what is going to happen to another person.

This argument shows that psychological factors without reference to body donot suffice to determine

personal identity. But the other argument of 'exchanging bodies' leads to a different conclusion altogether. Both the conclusions seem equally convincing and there is no ground for preferring one to the other. The latter argument shows that bodily identity is necessary for personal identity while in the former situation we have an inclination to say that bodily identity is not necessary for personal identity. It is difficult to decide which option is to be preferred at the cost of the other. However, according to Williams, the conclusion of 'exchanging bodies' that bodily identity is not necessary for personal identity is only an apparent one. A proper look at this situation proves otherwise. Williams says that the situation where A and B are informed of a process they are to go through resulting in each receiving the other's psychological states is a situation which 'is the product of the will' of the experimenter. It is true that in this situation A would like that pleasure should be given to B-body person and B would want that pleasure should be given to A-body person. But an opposite reaction would have emerged from A if the experimenter stopped in situation (v) or would have continued beyond situation (vi) where there are many persons with A-like

characteristics and many others with B-like characteristics. In all these situations there is no inclination to say that, if I were A, that all the cases of psychological continuity are cases of *my* continuity. The experimenter seems to have picked up, particularly that situation where we are least hesitant to assert personal identity without bodily identity. If our concept of person, says Williams, was formed in the model of some ghostly being in bodies which can move around by certain procedure, can change places without being destroyed or dispersed, then we could have admitted of the idea of personal identity without bodily identity. But neither we form our concept of person in this model nor the experimenter of 'exchanging bodies' had this concept of person. The situation which the experimenter picked up in 'exchanging bodies' is a situation where we are inclined to assert personal identity without bodily identity. But all the other situations from (i) to (v) and others which may arise after situation (vi) make it evident that we cannot talk of personal identity without reference to bodily identity. The principle that one's fear can extend to future pain no matter what psychological changes precede it, is a principle we accept and as such

in the example of 'exchanging bodies' A will want that the experimenter should pass the pain to B-body person. In other words, for Williams, A will consider himself as identical with A-body person and not with B-body person because, in this situation also personal identity continues with bodily identity.

Williams has tried hard in the above discussion to prove that without bodily identity we cannot talk about personal identity. But he has not really convinced us of this fact. He has said that in the example of 'exchanging bodies' A continues as A-body person. This however is not an easy conclusion to accept. Williams, as an argument against this example said that the critics of the thesis that bodily identity is necessary for personal identity would pick up that situation in which we are most inclined to assert that bodily identity is not necessary for personal identity. Even if we accept that the 'experimenter' was being partial or biased, still Williams should have been able to prove that we cannot talk about personal identity in this situation as there is no bodily identity. Rather than proving the necessity of bodily identity in this situation Williams

said that as bodily identity is necessary for personal identity in other situations of his counter example, it should also be considered as necessary in this situation as well. This cannot be accepted or a valid argument. The other situations where we are inclined to assert identity on the basis of bodily identity may have some likeness to this situation of 'exchanging bodies' but they are not identical situations. As such, we cannot say that what was applicable in other situations is also applicable in this situation. Williams's conclusion that in the example of 'exchanging bodies' we should say that one does not continue without bodily identity overrides our natural instinct. Our hesitation for saying that one cannot continue without bodily identity arises because the psychological series carries with it the person's point of view whose psychological series it is. Though there is no bodily identity of A with B-body person after the process is carried out on both A and B, B-body person has now acquired A's point of view of himself and the world along with the psychological states. This point of view of a person is vital to that person's identity and it is this very factor which has been ignored by Williams in his eagerness to prove the necessity of bodily

identity for personal identity. Moreover, Williams himself does not escape from his own criticism directed against the 'experimenter' of picking up that situation which suits his purpose best. The 'experimenter', according to Williams, picked up the situation where we are most inclined to assert personal identity without bodily identity. But Williams avoided this very situation where A acquires B's psychological states and B acquires A's psychological states because this endangered his theory. He picked up those situations which best support his theory of necessity of bodily identity for personal identity. Williams should have been able to show that it is not possible to talk of personal identity in this situation as there is no bodily identity. Again, his principle that important principles should be asserted and denied only on importantly different grounds is capable of being interpreted in two ways. Williams interpreted it to suit his purpose of showing that psychological ground may lead to two different conclusions and as such cannot be regarded as sufficient condition of personal identity. But this very principle can be interpreted in a totally different way as shown by Parfit,<sup>12</sup>

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12. Derek Parfit, Personal Identity in The Philosophy of Mind, ed. Jonathan Glover (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980)

(discussed in detail in chapter IV).

The Body theory as discussed by Williams is mainly concerned with proving that bodily identity is necessary for personal identity. He did not try to prove the sufficiency of bodily identity as other consideration of personal characteristics and memory must be taken into consideration. But given Williams's view of necessity of bodily identity we should also have been able to assert the sufficiency of bodily identity for personal identity. If we do not consider bodily identity as sufficient condition of personal identity, we are faced with certain situations which would not have been acceptable to Williams. If body is not sufficient for personal identity then we can imagine situations where one body is occupied by different persons at different times. Williams certainly would not have accepted such possibility. Probably, as Hamlyn<sup>13</sup> pointed out, Williams's view of bodily identity not being sufficient condition of personal identity was to guard against such situations where a person cannot be called a person in spite of having a body, namely, a dead person. In other words, a dead person cannot be

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13. D.W. Hamlyn, Metaphysics, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), Chap.9.

called the person he was before his death inspite of having the same body. Williams did not want to identify person with bodies but maintained that without body a person cannot be that person. In the words of Hamlyn:

What Williams may have in mind is that the concept of a person does not amount merely to that of a body, but to that plus the other things that he mentions.<sup>14</sup>

Given Williams's own concept of criterion of personal identity, it is true that bodily identity serves as the criterion of personal identity. But criterion of personal identity, as we have mentioned in chapter II, should not only be the necessary but also sufficient condition of personal identity. But does Williams really succeed even in proving that bodily identity is necessary for personal identity?

Williams in order to prove the necessity of bodily identity for personal identity employed a case of reduplication. It is true that he succeeded in proving in the reduplicated case that psychological ground by itself leads to the absurdity of making identity one-to-many

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14. D.W. Hamlyn, Op.cit., p.206.

relation. But, he himself said that this argument does not hold good when only one person, namely, Charles is involved in the problem of identity. Williams in order to prove the insufficiency of memory and other psychological factors in this case brought out a distinction between 'same' and 'similarity'. He argues that we cannot talk about sameness of psychological states as the determining factor of one's identity as it assumes the very thing it wants to prove because, same psychological states cannot be owned by two different persons. And similar psychological states is not sufficient to prove personal identity as similar psychological states can be owned by different individuals at the same time. Even if we consider Williams as successful in proving the insufficiency of psychological states for personal identity, he cannot assert the necessity of bodily identity on this ground alone. He should have been able to show that in the case of Charles being the lone candidate for identity with Guy Fawkes, it is not possible to talk of identity at all as there is no bodily identity. But Williams did not try to prove this very point.

Thus we have seen that Williams has not really

been successful in proving the necessity of bodily identity for personal identity. Another example of a simple brain transplantation can be shown<sup>15</sup> to supply a decisive argument against the bodily identity as a necessary condition of personal identity. When we imagine A's brain transferred to B's brainless body we are also to imagine A's personality as a whole transferred to B's body. This is so because we know from science that a person's brain is the physical basis of his personality. But then if A's personality is present in B's body in such a way as to make it one composite whole then it follows that the new composite whole will be addressed as A possessing a new body, i.e., the body formerly belonging to B. This is so because, personality by definition denotes the person whose personality we are talking about. And this in turn shows that the body is not necessary for personal identity. Of course we are still retaining a part of the body, namely, the brain, but we are treating it only as *empirically* necessary for personality and not as logically so. In any case brain is not the body whatever significance it may have for personal identity. I will

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15. Cf Colin McGinn, The Character of Mind, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), Chapter VI.

discuss the relation of brain to personal identity in the next chapter fully.

Williams's claim of bodily identity as the criterion of personal identity is based on spatio-temporal continuity. But spatio-temporal continuity does not hold very strong even in identity questions regarding material objects. In this connection Hamlyn<sup>16</sup> has brought in the example of Hobbes's 'Ship of Athens'. In this example the citizens took away the wooden parts of the original ship and replaced them with new wooden parts. Now with the timbers which have been replaced they built a new ship. In such a situation the question that arises is, 'which one of these two is the original ship?'. The answer that the spatio-temporally continuous one is the original ship does not give us a clear answer. We are faced with a similar problem where object involved is not more than one. It is possible for a manufactured article to be taken into bits and pieces and to make a new article with these pieces. Now a reverse process can be done where the new article is disintegrated and from the bits

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16. D.W. Hamlyn, Metaphysics, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1984), Chapter 9.

and pieces of this disintegrated article we make the original article. In such a circumstance we say that the original article and the new one are identical. But, if this is the case then we are admitting identity despite the fact that the article did not exist in the interval.

Another example that asserts that spatio-temporal continuity cannot assert personal identity is put forward by J.M. Shorter<sup>17</sup>. Shorter takes a fictional example which he says is meant to be taken not only as logically possible but as having implications which are even plausible in certain respect. The story as told by Shorter goes on to say that there is a planet Juno in which bodies grow into maturity which are counter-parts of bodies of people on Earth. The difference between the one on Earth and the one on Juno is that while the former is living the latter has no life. But the moment the one on Earth dies the counter-part on Juno comes to life with the same personal characteristics as those which so long were the characteristics of the one who was living on Earth. Here, Shorter appeals to morality to decide on their identity. He says that if connection

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17. J.M. Shorter, More about Bodily continuity and Personal Identity, Analysis, Vol.22, 1962, pp.79-85.

between the two planets is established the relatives of the original Earth person should consider this Junonian as their original relative. Shorter in this example emphasizes that personal identity also involves issues like personal relation, and some of these are moral.

This argument of Shorter against Spatio-temporal continuity as the criterion of personal identity is not very successful. For, though he proves that identity can be asserted without spatial continuity he has not proved temporal discontinuity. Shorter replies to this objection by saying that temporal discontinuity like spatial discontinuity will not be very hard to prove and this lack of temporal discontinuity is not sufficient to disprove his thesis. Even if we accept that Shorter was not successful in proving his thesis, he has at least managed to make us rethink about the easy acceptance of spatio-temporal continuity as the criterion of identity. We cannot reject such possibility, as Shorter has mentioned, outright. There is, however, another argument against Shorter's story. According to this argument the story makes sense only against the normal situation where identity presupposes spatio-temporal continuity. This

is a valid argument against Shorter and we cannot deny the possibility that the situation in Juno is not going to remain the same always. There may come a time when Junonians come to life even when their counterparts are still alive on Earth. But, still we cannot reject outright the suggestion that spatio-temporal continuity may not be necessary for personal identity. It is a fact that spatio-temporal continuity is the norm against which deviations may occur and it is these deviations which question the ready acceptance of the correctness of spatio-temporal continuity as the criterion of personal identity.

CHAPTER - IV  
**THE MIND THEORY**

The second theory that I am going to discuss with regard to the problem of personal identity is the Mind Theory. This theory tries to give us a mentalistic criterion of personal identity. According to this theory, A is identical with B if and only if A's mental states hold identity conferring relation to the mental states of B. In other words, a person's mental states is the determining factor of his identity. This theory however does not assert a single mental state as the determining feature of a person's identity. This is so because a single mental state lasts only for a moment and in the psychological life of a person we can hardly find two mental states which are identical with each other. Moreover, in one's lifetime one undergoes various psychological changes inspite of which a person remains the same person. The Mind Theory thus does not consider a single mental state as the retainer of identity but regards a mental series or a mental construct construed from the mental states by a connecting medium as the determining factor of a person's identity. According to this theory a person is a distinct person by virtue of possessing a distinct mental series; a person retains his identity by continuing as the same mental series.

All the advocates of this theory agree that it is a mental series whose identity confers personal identity, but they differ with regard to the connecting medium that binds the mental states together to constitute a mental series and provide it with its distinctive character.

The most preferred type of connectedness which comes to the mind is the *causal* connectedness between different mental states as the criterion of personal identity. The most popular view holds memory as the connecting factor that binds the mental states to make it a single whole. According to this view A is identical with B if A remembers witnessing all events and performing all actions that B witnessed and performed. This view holds that a particular person knows himself to be the same person now as he was before inspite of certain bodily and psychological changes because his memory connects the past person with the present person, and asserts their identity. In other words, it is memory which binds the mental states together to constitute one mental construct. Memory connects two different experiences separated by time and makes them members of the same mental series, that is, experiences of the same person. Memory as a

criterion of personal identity was first invoked by John Locke. He called this memory as 'consciousness' and said that the very concept of person makes it impossible for a person's identity to be retained by anything else than 'consciousness'. He said that a person

'..... is a thinking intelligent being that has reason and reflection and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places; which it does only by that consciousness which is inseparable from thinking . . . .'"<sup>18</sup>

According to Locke, it is 'consciousness' which makes a person a person and it is by virtue of this that a person retains his identity over time. A person when remembers witnessing an event or performing an action he realizes at that instant that the person who witnessed the event or performed that action is nobody else but the one who is doing the remembering. It is so because his remembering also involves the memory of him as the witness of or performer of those events or actions. It is memory which enables him to connect the past person

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18. John Locke, Essay concerning human understanding, Book II, Chapter XXVII, Section 9.

who performed the action with the present person who is remembering performing it and identify them as one and the same person.

According to Locke, the identity of a person is very much different from the identity of a man or identity of a soul. He says that a person's identity can neither be maintained by physical identity nor it can be maintained by being the same soul. If it was the soul-substance which determined the identity of a person then two persons separated by reincarnation would have been called the same person as their soul is the same. But they are not the same person as the reincarnated individual has lost his memory of his previous life, their 'consciousness' being distinct from each other. It is memory alone which confers identity to persons and it is by virtue of memory that a person is *himself*. As Locke puts it,

.... as far as any intelligent being can repeat the *idea* of any past action with the same consciousness it had of it at first, and with the same consciousness it has of any present action, so far it is the same *personal life*.<sup>19</sup>

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19. John Locke, Op.cit., Section 10.

It is consciousness which binds together separate experiences into a single series and thus makes them experiences of the same person. A person extends his identity till that past of which he is conscious of and extends it to that future of which he is conscious of and therefore concerned about. A person is concerned about his body because he is conscious of it. Locke says that once some part of my body is separated from me, I am no more concerned about that separated part because I am no more conscious of it. Separation of my body limbs do not affect my identity because a person is not a body but he is a person only by virtue of his consciousness. Body is neither the necessary nor the sufficient condition of person's identity. To prove this point Locke has given an example: If two persons, namely, a prince and a cobbler exchange their souls along with their consciousness, the resultant persons would be such that we will call the cobbler's body with the prince's soul and consciousness as the prince and the prince's body with the cobbler's soul and consciousness as the cobbler. This shows that body is not necessary for personal identity as even without his body the prince has managed to retain his identity. And it is not a sufficient condition because,

even though the body of the prince was there yet we cannot call the soul and the consciousness of the cobbler in that body as the prince.

A person retains his identity over time by consciousness, extends his identity to past and future by consciousness. A person gets concerned about his past and future because he is conscious of the fact that it is himself who was involved in the past action and is going to be involved in certain future activities. The pain, pleasure, reward or punishment that are going to come his way will be the result of his own actions and this realisation makes him concerned about his future. But this realisation comes because of his consciousness of the past, present and future. Locke's says,

Self is that conscious thinking thing which is sensible or conscious of pleasure and pain, capable of happiness or misery, and so is concerned for *itself*, as far as that consciousness extends.<sup>20</sup>

A person's identity extends over time by virtue of consciousness. It is the consciousness of a person of being

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20. John Locke, Op.cit., Section 17.

himself who performed an action in the past and as the one who is going to reap the fruits of his actions in the future which decides the course of his actions. A person's decision of right and wrong thus is based on consciousness. He performs right actions because he is conscious that in the future it will be *himself* and not somebody else who will enjoy the fruit of the actions performed now. As it is the consciousness of the past and the future that makes a man decide his course of action he should, says John Locke, also receive reward or punishment for those actions alone of which he is still conscious. A person is responsible for those actions alone which he remembers or is concerned about because he is himself only for that time of which he is conscious.

Thus, we can see that, for Locke, personal identity depends on 'consciousness'. But here arises the necessity to understand what Locke meant by 'consciousness'. 'Consciousness' may be understood as the consciousness of doing or experiencing something or it may be the consciousness of some material things, external things or of what someone else is doing. Locke can be assumed to have talked about the former kind of consciousness. For

a person's identity cannot be said to rest on the latter type of consciousness. If Locke by 'consciousness' meant the second type of consciousness then it would mean that a person's identity depends on something which is not a part of that person. But such a relation cannot be considered as essential for personal identity. Therefore, we must take Locke's 'consciousness' to mean the consciousness of doing or experiencing something. This consciousness involved the notion of memory as memory also involves a consciousness of doing something in the past. Memory is the faint copy of consciousness of what a person felt at the time of actually doing or experiencing something. However, J.L. Mackie<sup>21</sup> says that this is not the only sense in which Locke understood consciousness. If by 'consciousness' Locke meant only 'being conscious of' then he would not have talked about two 'incommunicable consciousness'. Such use of the term consciousness implies that there is an entity which has certain consciousness at one time, then another at another time and thus come to have many such consciousness. Of these consciousness some are from the past and some are

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21. J.L. Mackie, Problems from Locke ( Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), Chapter 6.

from the present and they are linked together to form a series by 'consciousness' or memory. This whole series makes up the history of that entity to whom the consciousness belongs.

If we make consciousness as understood by Locke, the criterion of personal identity then we are faced with many serious problems. Locke's view is also criticised by Reid in his "Essay on the Intellectual Powers of Man". Reid says that if we accept Lockes view then, "a man may be and at the same time not be, the person that did a particular thing."<sup>22</sup> Reid gave an example in connection with his comment. In the example there is a boy who was flogged in school for stealing apple and this boy later becomes an officer who takes standard from enemy. This officer again become a General. Now the General remembers taking the standard but he does not remember the flogging. But the officer who took the standard from enemy remembered being flogged. If Locke was correct then we must conclude that the General is the same person as the officer because he remembers his

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22. T. Reid, Essay on the Intellectual Powers of Man in Personal Identity. Ed. J. Perry, 1975.

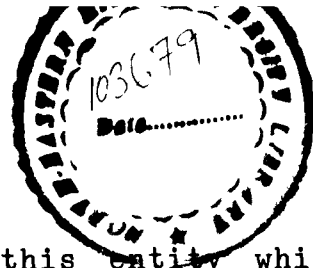
experiences as an officer but he is not the same person as the boy for he does not remember the experiences of the boy. On the other hand, the officer is the same person as the boy as the officer remembers the flogging he got as a boy. Thus, the General and the officer are the same person and the officer and the boy are the same person but, the General and the boy are not the same person. This is an absurd conclusion. This shows that memory as invoked by Locke cannot be considered as the criterion of personal identity. Locke, however, did bring in *concern* for oneself along with *memory* to constitute the criterion of personal identity but memory and concern always donot go together. It may so happen that I remember a particular phase of my life but in that phase I do not find myself to be concerned about this present me. A middle aged man may remember his past as a child but he may not find that child concerned about this present middle aged man. Again, if somebody tells me that I will be tortured tomorrow but along with this information I am also given the additional information that before the torture takes place I will get amnesia, I will not become less concerned about myself who is going to be tortured. It is because, I believe that I will remain the same person inspite of not having memory of my present state. Thus we see

that concern and memory always donot go together and even if they did, they could not have constituted the criterion of personal identity for they presuppose the very thing they are trying to prove. Memory involves the necessary truth that one remembers only one's own experiences and to be concerned about himself implies that he has assumed the fact that he is going to remain the same person.

Locke's view on personal identity also gets reflected in his theory of responsibility. According to him a person is responsible only for those actions which he can remember. This is so because a certain mental history is mine by virtue of it being constructed from mental states connected by *my* consciousness. So a certain action is mine because I am conscious of it and as only that action of which I am conscious of is my action, I should be held responsible for that action alone. Locke's this view of responsibility is not easily acceptable to us. If his view is considered as correct then we cannot hold a person responsible for the actions he performed during his drunken state for now when he is sober he cannot remember performing them. Similarly, a man will

not be responsible for those actions which he performs during his sleep-walks. Locke foresaw the reluctance of law courts to accept such a view of responsibility. Therefore, he suggested that human judicature is to punish these people as it can never be certain of these people speaking the truth of not remembering performing those actions. But if methods to learn about their truth were available then people should be punished or pardoned according to their memory of performing their actions. This improvement does not change our reaction to Locke's view on responsibility. We are ready to accept Locke's view so far as sleep-walking is concerned and we may compromise in case of a drunk person by saying that though he is not responsible for his actions during his drunken state he certainly is responsible for his action of getting drunk as he started drinking when he was sober. But Locke's view is not acceptable at all so far one's ordinary, normal actions are concerned. I might have performed certain actions, good or bad, under normal conditions which I no longer remember. If Locke is right then I cannot be held responsible for those actions. But this is very hard to accept. Cannot an artist, who painted a picture and now has forgotten about it, claim his work as his?

Though Locke insisted upon the fact that consciousness is the sole bearer of personal identity, there are times when he showed inconsistency regarding his theory. Locke said that though human judicature cannot pardon a person for his actions simply on his claim of having forgotten it, he says that on the 'final day' God will punish or pardon according to the person's consciousness of his actions as God will know for certain the truth of their claims. So far Locke did not contradict himself. But God's intervention with regard to transfer of consciousness goes against his own view. We can well imagine a situation where consciousness between two persons have been interchanged. In such a situation, if Locke's view was right, there is no doubt as to who will be responsible for which actions. Each person is responsible for those actions whose consciousness he is having now. But Locke did not accept this view which legitimately follows from his theory. Locke instead said that as God will know who is the actual bearer of the original consciousness he will punish or reward according to the original ownership of consciousness. Such divine intervention implies that there is something besides consciousness which constitutes a person's identity and which is the actual



bearer of responsibility. And it is this entity which must be protected from being punished for a consciousness which is actually not his. If consciousness was the sole bearer of personal identity then Locke should not have tried to protect the person who now is having somebody else's consciousness. If consciousness alone determined a person's identity then a person should be treated as the one whose consciousness he or she is having now without taking into consideration to whom the consciousness originally belonged. Again, Locke's example of interchange of consciousness between the prince and the cobbler shows signs that he himself was not confident that the soul has nothing to do with a person's identity. In his story of the cobbler and the prince Locke argued that if the prince's consciousness along with his soul get into cobbler's body and the cobbler's soul and consciousness were to enter the prince's body then it is natural for us to call the prince's body with cobbler's soul and consciousness as the cobbler and the cobbler's body with prince's soul and consciousness as the prince. Here we might ask the question as to why Locke included the soul transference along with transfer of consciousness to assert personal identity. Would he have called the

prince's body with the cobbler's consciousness as the cobbler if there was no transference of the soul? He did not test his argument this way. The importance of the role of soul in a person's identity remains unanswered in Locke's theory.

Locke's theory of personal identity, as pointed out by J.L. Mackie, when analysed seems to destroy its own ground,

"Since a man at  $t_2$  commonly remembers only some of his experiences and actions at  $t_1$ , whereas what constituted a person at  $t_1$  was all the experiences and actions that were then co-conscious, Locke's view fails to equate a person identified at  $t_2$  with any *person* identifiable at  $t_1$ . It is only a theory of how some items which belonged to a person identifiable at  $t_1$  are appropriated by a person who can be identified as such only at  $t_2$ . It is therefore hardly a theory of personal identity at all, but might be better described as a theory of action appropriation. Locke seems to be forgetting that 'person' is not only 'a forensic term, appropriating actions and their merit', but also the noun corresponding to all the personal pronouns'.<sup>23</sup>

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23. J.L. Mackie, Problems from Locke, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), Chapter-6, p.183.

Besides such particular criticisms against Locke there is a general criticism put forward by Butler against him. According to Butler Locke's theory confuses the evidence of personal identity, as constituting factor of personal identity. As Butler puts it:

"And one should really think it self-evident, that consciousness of personal identity presupposes, and therefore cannot constitute, personal identity; anymore than knowledge, in any other case, can constitute truth, which it presupposes."<sup>24</sup>

But J.L. Mackie questions the applicability this criticism against Locke's theory.<sup>25</sup> He says that when Locke said that consciousness constitutes personal identity he did not mean to say that consciousness of personal identity constitutes personal identity. Locke's theory does not say that when a person becomes conscious of his past actions this consciousness is the consciousness of himself as the performer of the action. It simply states that the moment a person remembers something he knows that the action he is remembering now was performed by him.

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24. J. Butler Dissertation 1, Of Personal Identity, Published with the Analogy of Religion.

24. J.L. Mackie, Problems from Locke (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976), Chapter-6, p.185.

If Locke's 'consciousness' involved the consciousness of the person himself as the performer of the past action then his theory would certainly have been involved in circularity. However, the consciousness of 'I' as the doer of the past action is so intimately connected with the consciousness of the past action that they seem inseparable. The truth is that these two consciousness are separable though the inference that it was I who did the action from the 'consciousness' of an action is so automatic that we think of them as one and the same thing. Locke's theory simply put says that, if I remember some action from inside then the person who is remembering now and the one who performed it must be one and the same person. Locke's theory if is understood this way, avoids circularity.

Though Butler's criticism may not have affected Locke's theory yet we cannot altogether deny an element of truth in what Butler says. It is true that 'consciousness' which Locke claims to constitute personal identity does not presuppose personal identity but, still it is difficult to accept such 'consciousness' as the bearer of personal identity. Our general inclination is to accept

this 'consciousness' as an evidence of personal identity and not as a constituting feature of personal identity, as Butler so rightly pointed out. Memory is the evidence of that personal identity which has already been constituted by something else. Butler may not have been successful in showing that Locke's theory is involved in circularity but he did succeed in proving that Locke's theory goes against the natural and firm belief of personal identity.

Thus, consciousness as understood by Locke does not seem to provide us with an adequate criterion of personal identity. Memory, as asserted by Hume does not singly constitute personal identity, but is one of the factor responsible for personal identity.

Hume starts his own search for the reason of the idea of personal identity with his discussion of the self. Hume says that the supposition that there must be a self besides and distinct from the body comes from the realisation that human beings have feelings, thoughts, images etc. which though can be talked about by others cannot be seen or had by them, though their resulting

movements can be observed. So we conclude that these things must belong to something and the thing to which they belong cannot be the body. It is believed that it is the self to which these things belong and it is by virtue of this self which remains unchanged in the midst of change, that a person retains his identity over time. Hume did not believe that there is really a substantial self which is enduring and unchangeable. According to Hume, there is no permanent self and as such the question of its identity does not arise. He rejected the views of those philosophers who claimed that 'we are every moment intimately conscious of what we call our SELF; that we feel its existence and its continuance in existence'.<sup>26</sup> Hume says that if this was the case then we would have got the idea of the self directly from the senses. But this is not the case. To get the idea of x directly from the senses we would have to get an impression of x. It is claimed that each one of us get the idea of self as an enduring entity which remains identical throughout our life time. If we have such an idea then we must have had also the impression of such an idea and this impression must remain constant throughout our

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26. David Hume, A Treatise of Human Nature, Book I, Part IV, Section VI.

life to give us such an idea. But there can be no such impression which remains constant for more than a moment. Even if one of these impressions was an impression of the self at a particular time and some of the others were impressions of the self at different times still the idea of the self as something that endures for a life time without interruption would not be a mere copy or correlate of any one impression. So the idea of the self is not derived directly from the senses. According to Hume there is no enduring self to which all perceptions must belong in order to constitute a single whole. He says,

'For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself*, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception.'<sup>27</sup>

All we can observe is nothing but a sequence of perception. There is nothing else going on. To think, see, love or hate, is nothing but the occurrence of certain perceptions. There is nothing constant or invariable

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27. David Hume, Op.cit., Book I, Part IV, Section VI.

or uninterrupted entity according to Hume, which is called the self or mind. According to Hume,

'The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, re-pass, glide away, and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations. There is properly no *simplicity* in it at one time, nor *identity* in different; whatever natural propension we may have to imagine that simplicity and identity. The comparison of the theatre must not mislead us. They are the successive perceptions only, that constitute the mind; nor have we the most distant notion of the place, where these scenes are represented, or of the materials, of which it is compos'd....'<sup>28</sup>

A supposition of the constant enduring self as the thing having mental states is not necessary for explaining how we come to attribute identity to persons. According to Hume, questions about personal identity are actually questions about the bonds of perceptions and ideas. We think that the different perceptions which we have are bound together in a chain, and it is this idea of a chain of perceptions which by virtue of being

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28. David Hume, Op.cit., Book I, Part IV, Section VI.

continuous gives us our idea of a constant self. If we can prove that there is no such chain of perceptions then we also prove that there is also no one continuous self or person.

For Hume, the identity that we confer upon individuals cannot unite the perceptions. The perceptions never lose their distinctive characters but we are inclined to think that they are united to constitute one continuous train of mental states and it is this concept of continuous train which is responsible for our thinking that the self remains identical over time. If we can find out what binds the perceptions together we will also be able to find out what retains our identity. But Hume says that there is no real connection among the perceptions and as such there is no mental construct which retains the identity of a person. According to Hume, the perceptions affect the mind in such a manner that it starts thinking of these perceptions as connected to constitute a whole, namely, the mind. As the mind is thought to be an entity which persists through time and as the identical entity through time possessing various perceptions, there arises the notion of identity of mind or

the self. Perceptions are bound together only in our thought but are not really connected. This 'union of imagination' is brought about by the three relations of resemblance, contiguity and causation. It is because of these three relations that we have the notion of a connected chain of perceptions which otherwise are distinct and separated. Every idea gets connected with each other because of these three relations and there arises the notion of one constructed whole of perceptions with whose identity we become concerned. Our attribution of identity is a result of mind's easy transition from one perception to another and this is made possible by the relation of resemblance and causation. So it is causation and resemblance which give us our idea of personal identity.

Hume says that memory is also partly responsible for our idea of an enduring self. Memory gives us such an idea of self with its access to our past lives. It not only gives us the notion of an enduring self but also partly constitutes it. To remember is nothing but certain kinds of perceptions occurring in the mind. These perceptions thus become member of the 'bundle of

perceptions' which then comes to facilitate the transition of the imagination along the series making up the bundle. To remember is to have some perceptions which represent and therefore resemble the past perception whose memory it is. Therefore, remembering results in a greater degree of resemblance among those perceptions that constitute our minds. The relation of resemblance leads the imagination to slide more easily from one member to another member of the series and thus leads us to think of it as 'continued view of the same object'.

But memory does not extend to all our past experiences and yet we think that we existed in those moments of experiences which we have forgotten now. This implies that there is something else besides memory which makes us think of ourselves as a continuous self in spite of the break in the memory chain. It is causality, according to Hume which makes the forgotten perceptions belong to the same self. He says,

'the true idea of the human mind, is to consider it as a system of different perceptions or different existences, which are link'd together by the relation of cause and effect, and mutually produce, destroy, influence, and

modify each other. Our impressions give rise to their correspondent ideas; and these ideas in their turn produce other impressions. One thought chases another, and draws after it a third, by which it is expell'd in its turn.'<sup>2</sup>

We bring in the causal chain into the gaps which cannot be reached by memory and with its help we get the concept of one enduring self. Causation supplements resemblance and helps in giving us the concept of ourselves as continuous through time. These relations make the mind slide easily along a series of perceptions that form one single causal chain and make us suppose that the intervening members in the chain which we no longer remember existed in the forgotten intervals. Thus we come to think of ourselves as a single, identical continuous entity.

It is true that memory is important for our notion of selves and that it is because of memory we attribute certain experiences to a person but we cannot appeal to a 'single person's' memory to explain the origin of the idea of 'single person'. Hume here brings in resemblance to explain the notion of personal identity. But

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29. David Hume, Op.cit., Book I, Part IV, Section VI.

even resemblance cannot be considered as enough for giving us the notion of a mind. This insufficiency of resemblance can be shown with the help of the following example given by Barry Stroud.<sup>30</sup> Let us say that there is a bundle of perceptions composed of all and only all those actual perceptions that are perceptions of Eiffel Tower from a particular angle. They being perceptions of the same object resemble each other. But just because the members of the bundle resemble each other they certainly cannot be thought as constituting one mind. We cannot take mind to be simply a construct of perceptions which resemble each other. Moreover, even if we take resemblance as having its effect on us, we might take perceptions as resembling one another because they all occur in one person's memory rather than taking them as constituting one mind. In that case it is memory and not resemblance which is actually doing the work. But memory cannot explain the notion of a single person without using the notion of a single person's memory.

So Hume brings in causality to explain self. According to him each member of a bundle is a cause of

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30. Barry Stroud, Hume, (London: Henley and Boston, 1977), p.124.

succeeding member and this in turn is the cause of the next. It is this reason which enables the mind to 'slide easily' along the causal chain and makes us think of it as one mind. But causality as understood in Humean account is nothing but a 'customary association of ideas' and as such it is not enough to give us the notion of a causal chain as constituting one mind. Moreover, our perceptions lack uniformity. Our perception may belong to different classes. One particular moment I may be having the perception of a tree and in the next moment I may turn my head and have the perception of a house. In such a situation I cannot consider my latter perception as the effect of former. New experiences flood into our consciousness independently of what has just been going on there. We cannot accept that each of our perception is caused by our preceding perception. Had our experiences been more regular and uniform, we could have thought that each of our perception is the effect of our previous perception. But it is not the case. If all our perceptions were exactly alike then probably resemblance would have been enough for our idea of a continuing individual self. Our perceptions are not exactly alike and as such it is difficult on our part to accept

resemblance and causality as responsible for our idea of 'the self'. As Barry Stroud puts it:

The novelty and lack of uniformity that we find in our inner life make it difficult to see how Hume's appeal to resemblance and causality could possibly be enough to explain why we come to have an idea of an individual mind or self that endures through time.<sup>31</sup>

For Hume there is no uninterrupted entity that continues as one identical thing through our course of life. The mind or imagination is said to be mistakenly led to think that there is such an enduring entity. In other words, for Hume mind is an 'illusion'. Now if mind is an illusion then how is it led to think of an enduring self? Hume has not explained what is that which ascribes identity or fails to observe a real bond among perceptions or reflects on certain ideas. Hume's theory cannot explain why there are separate bundles of perceptions each of which starts considering itself as a separate and distinct entity. According to Hume, all perceptions are distinct existences and thus could exist independently of each other and independently of everything

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31. Barry Stroud, Op.cit., p.127

else in the universe. There is nothing intrinsic to a perception that connects it with one particular series and not another. If this is so then why perceptions present themselves in separate and discrete bundles? Thus, even if we accept that the self is nothing but a 'bundle of perception', even then Hume has not managed to explain how this bundle comes into being if there is nothing real connecting the perceptions to constitute this bundle.

Hume said that the idea of personal identity is nothing but an idea that we come to have because of the way perceptions occur and get connected in our mind. Then he went on to find out what it is that actually connects the perceptions together to give us such an idea. In other words, Hume's question of personal identity is a question of unity of the mind. But can they really be considered as the same? Hume did not try to explain the concept of person and started with the assumption that questions of identity of person are questions about the bonds of perceptions. Thus Hume seems to have bypassed the question of identity, conflated it with the question of unity of consciousness. For Hume the problem of personal identity has changed its meaning and has

become the problem of unity of mind. And this problem of unity of mind means to him how distinct perceptions are united in a single mind. But for the latter as we have seen, he has no clear answer. In fact he cannot explain the unity of mind in terms of his psychology where each perception is treated as a distinct entity. In the traditional view, as we have seen, the self is introduced precisely to explain the unity of mind. It is suggested that the unity of mind is dependent upon the fact that it is one and the same entity, the self, which have all the perceptions through time. But since Hume has denied the existence of such an entity he has left himself with no other explanation for this. Hume as a true empiricist, settles the question of identity by declaring that he does not discover in introspection any entity which he can call the self. But even if such an entity, namely, the self existed, Hume would not have found it in introspection. What he would have met with in introspection would, according to his own theory, be another perception whose unity with the rest of the mind would have to be explained. Since the self is what is presupposed in the perception of the mind, it cannot be discussed as yet another perception even though it

may be the perception of the self. Moreover, the fact that we may not find any entity answering to the concept of self does not illumine the nature of the concept. We are concerned with understanding the concept self which we actually possess and whether or not the concept picks out anything in reality is a further question.

So far we have not succeeded in finding the criterion of personal identity by treating mental connectedness either in terms of memory or t in terms of some other kind of bond such as Hume was looking for. Now I wish to consider whether the general notion of mental (causal) connectedness can yield a criterion of personal identity at all.

The Mind Theorist, as we have seen, regard causal connectedness as the criterion of identity. But it can be shown that it is not causal connectedness of psychological states that asserts identity. In fact Robert Elliot in his article 'Personal Identity and the Causal Continuity Requirement',<sup>32</sup> shows that even in the absence

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32. Robert Elliot, 'Personal Identity and the Causal Continuity Requirement', The Philosophical Quarterly, Vol.41, No.162, (1991), pp.55-75.

of causal connectedness we are inclined to assert identity simply on psychological connectedness.

Elliot argues that if we assert identity on the basis of causal connectedness of mental states then we are equally entitled to accept identity even when causal connectedness is not available. One of the arguments put forward by Elliot where he asserts that identity should be accepted without causal connectedness if we accept identity on the availability of causal connectedness is as follows:

The argument consists of two members of which the first one involves causal connectedness while the second does not. But, it will seem improper not to accept identity in the case which does not involve causal connectedness if we accept identity in the case where causal connectedness is available.

Case Aa: (i) That a person X has died at  $t_1$ ; (ii) Y comes into existence at a later time  $t_2$ ; (iii) that X and Y are psychologically very similar; (iv) that some super-being has created Y because it wanted to recreate X and the creation of Y is causally guided by the being's

knowledge of X; (v) that X and Y believe (i)-(iv), and (vi) that the super-being has ensured that there is no third-person who stands in the same relation to X as does Y.

In this above case the identity of X is ensured by psychological continuity including causal continuity. Here X's anticipation of survival as Y and Y's belief that he or she is the same person as X seems to be quite reasonable. Identity assertion in this case is based on the fact that there is psychologically very little to tell X and Y apart and their similarity is explained by causal continuity. Elliot says that causal continuity is regarded as facilitating the claim that X and Y are identical because it entails that particular psychological states which constitute a particular person in the past give rise to (some of) the particular psychological states which constitute the particular future person with whom, putatively, the earlier person is identical. The psychological continuity of X is ensured by the causal connectedness.

Elliot then gives us a second case where there is no causal connectedness:

Case Ab: This is similar to Aa' except that for (iv) substitute (iv !) that there is no causal connectedness, between X's ceasing to exist and Y's coming to existence, and for (v) substitute (v !) that X and Y believe (i), (iii), (ii) and (iv !).

In this case there is no causal connectedness. But Y believes that he stands in survival relation to X. Elliot questions whether it is really unreasonable on Y's part to believe so. Does this absence of causal connectedness render X's anticipating survival as Y irrational? This absence of causal connectedness does not make one deny survival. In the former case Aa the causal chain explains why the resulting person stands in the survival relation to the original person. The presence of causal connectedness may be regarded as the evidence for the survival relation and its availability may make it easier to accumulate other evidences to assert survival of X as Y. But certainly evidence of survival relation cannot be regarded as constituting the survival relation or even that it is essential evidence for the survival relation.

In the second case, causal connectedness is not available between X and Y. In this case X knows that Y will come to existence who will be strongly psychologically connected with X, except that X's final stage do not constitute the causal basis for Y's initial states. In such a situation it is not unreasonable for X to anticipate his survival as Y simply because there is no causal connectedness. In other words, X's anticipation of surviving as Y in Ab seems to be as reasonable as it was in case Aa.

Now, if in fact what X thinks will happen does happen, then Y will be in a position to say that what X expected to happen did happen. Y will notice that it is as if Y is psychologically connected with X. And if X did anticipate surviving as Y then Y will believe that the things have turned out just the way X believed would constitute X's surviving. Here we are inclined to believe X's surviving inspite of not having a causal connectedness to fascilitate the survival of X as Y. Survival should be asserted in Ab also if we accept survival in Aa.<sup>33</sup>

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33. Robert Elliot, Op.cit., pp.55-75.

The above argument put forward by Elliot shows that it is not causal connectedness of psychological states that determines a person's survival. However, Elliot did not try to prove that psychological continuity without causal continuity should be regarded as the determining factor of identity. He rather wanted to prove that causal connectedness as advocated by supporters of the causal connectedness theory cannot be regarded as the deciding feature of a person's identity.

This fact that we are equally inclined to assert identity even when causal connectedness is not available goes to show that causal connectedness cannot be regarded as the determining factor of personal identity.

To further test the validity of mental connectedness as the criterion of personal identity we will employ the survival test. In other words, we will try to find out whether a person survives or not in the absence of a particular mental series which does not remain the same by virtue of not being causally connected.

Let us take an imaginary example where a person's

mental states have been taken away from him and they are replaced by some other mental states. After such a replacement all the memories and character traits of the person whose mental states are replaced will be extirpated and in the place of those memories and character traits some other memories and character traits come into being. In other words, the replacing mental series is not causally dependent on the replaced mental series and as such they are two different mental series. Now the question that arises is, 'Is the person after the replacement of the mental states survives inspite of discontinuity of the original series?' If mental connectedness determined the identity of a person then the answer to the above question would have been in negative. We would have said that the person after the replacement of the mental states does not remain the same person with the one who went in for the replacement. But an appeal to intuition does not let us accept that the person has not survived the replacement of the mental states. Even though the two series are not causally connected we are inclined to assert the identity of the person. This gives rise to doubt regarding the validity of mental connectedness as the criterion of personal identity.

However, such a replacement may result in two different situations and it is essential that we distinguish between them. In one situation the replacing mental states are qualitatively similar to the original mental states and in the other situation the replacing mental states are totally different in their quality from the replaced mental states. Let us take up each case separately and see whether in either of these situations mental connectedness can be considered as the necessary condition of personal identity.

In the first case as we have said, the two different sets of mental states are qualitatively similar. Here, a person is subjected to replacement of mental states and this replacement takes place in the split of a second. We know that the replacement has taken place though the quality of the pre-replacement mental states is similar to post-replacement mental states. After such a replacement we are inclined to say that the person who has emerged after the replacement is the same with the person who was subjected to replacement. But it is a fact that the post-replacement mental states are not causally dependent on the pre-replacement mental states.

This shows that a person survives inspite of not having a causally connected mental series. In other words, causal connectedness of the mental states does not determine the identity of a person. Had it been the determining factor, the person who was subjected to the replacement would not have survived after the replacement. But we do claim survival even after replacement of mental states of the above kind, as we cannot accept such a replacement as tantamount to death. And to accept survival of the person after such a replacement makes it evident that mental connectedness is not a necessary condition of personal identity.

We have seen that replacement of mental states by qualitatively similar mental states proves mental connectedness as falling short of being necessary condition for personal identity. Now, let us take another case where the replacing mental states are dissimilar to the replaced mental states and see whether a person ceases to be the same person after such a replacement. In such a situation the person goes in for the replacement with certain mental states and comes out with different mental states which are qualitatively different

from the original mental states. During the replacement the person remains conscious. After the replacement the person claims himself to be the person which his new mental states tell him. In such a situation we have an inclination to say that the original person has ceased to exist after the replacement and in his place has come into being a new person. This inclination arises because we conflate the two ways of understanding the notion of person. In our ordinary way of understanding the concept of person we take that sameness of a person depends to a certain degree on the sameness of personality of that man. A radical change in personality often makes us say that he is not the same person as he used to be. We often utter sentences like, 'He is not the same person anymore', 'I was a different person then', etc. But this way of understanding 'person' is not relevant to our discussion of personal identity. The concept of person as understood in the problem of personal identity is to be distinguished from our ordinary way of understanding the concept. In the discussion of the problem of personal identity the concept of person is to be understood as the subject of consciousness - the self. It is this concept of person which is referred to in the replacement case. Here we are not concerned with the concept of

person in the sense of person having a personality. We are concerned with the question whether the same subject of consciousness continues or not after the replacement, that is, whether after such a replacement a new self comes into being or not. As long as we understand person in the sense of being the subject of consciousness we are inclined to say that the post-replacement and the pre-replacement persons are not two but one person or one identical self. The person concerned also after the replacement may claim to be the person which the new set of mental states tells him but as he was conscious during the replacement he will also claim that he is the continuation of the original person as there was no break in the consciousness. Therefore, we can say that the person in the sense of being the subject of consciousness has retained his identity though as a person defined by his personality has changed. The person thus has not changed in the essential sense but has changed only in terms of his personality. The ordinary notion of sameness of a person thus seems to comprise of two conditions:

- (1) A is the same self or subject as B, and

(2) A is sufficiently psychologically similar to B. In the case under consideration where one mental series is replaced by a qualitatively dissimilar mental series, the first condition is fulfilled but not the second. It is because the second condition is not fulfilled that we feel inclined to say that the pre-replacement and post-replacement persons are not one and the same person. We hesitate to ascribe identity to the person after the replacement of the mental series by a qualitatively different mental series because in such a case the second condition has not been fulfilled. But this condition has little relevance to the discussion of personal identity. In fact this is not an identity question but rather a question of personality. In the discussion of the problem of personal identity it is the notion of person as a self that has actual bearing. The notion of person as a self corresponds more exactly to the subject of mental attributes but does not include the attribute themselves in the way it would have done if it was understood in the other sense. If we understand the notion of person as a self then it is very plausible for us to say that the person who is subjected to the replacement will survive the replacement. The self will survive

inspite of the changes of the psychological states. Dissimilarity of mental states brings about changes in personality but the reference of 'I' remains the same. This proves that mental connectedness is not necessary condition of personal identity.

The above discussion shows that mental connectedness cannot be considered as a necessary condition for personal identity. Now, can it be considered as the sufficient condition of personal identity? To be a sufficient condition of personal identity mental connectedness should be such that whenever a particular mentally connected series is available we say that it must be the same person. So first we must be able to distinguish one particular series from another, that is, we must be able to say which mental states are connected in a special way to constitute one whole which in its turn determines the identity of a person. In other words, mental connectedness needs to be restricted if it is to serve as a sufficient condition of personal identity. Mental connectedness in general means that mental states of a particular mental series depend on preceding mental states for their occurrence while they in their turn give rise to

the succeeding mental states. This understanding of mental connectedness involves the possibility of connecting the mental states of two numerically different persons. My mental states might have been caused by somebody else's behaviour which is an external expression of his mental states and thus my mental states can be said to be dependent on the other person's mental states. Causal dependence of mental states without restriction may well be considered to include the mental states of many numerically distinct persons. My mental states are caused not only by my preceding mental states but by 'others' as well. I have a certain mental state because I have been affected in some ways by the behaviour of someone else which is caused by his mental state. If causal connectedness without restriction is considered as the sufficient condition of personal identity then one's identity will include other numerically distinct persons. We cannot accept this absurd position and so arises the necessity of putting some restrictions on the causal connectedness of mental states if it is ever to serve as the sufficient condition for personal identity. However, difficulties arise when we try to put this restriction, resulting in circularity. One way of restricting the connectedness

is by saying that a particular mental series is distinct because it belongs to a distinct person or self. In other words, we are assuming that there is a distinct person and the mental states by virtue of being his mental states make up a distinct mental construct which in turn determines that person's identity. If we want to avoid this circularity, the other way open to us is to bring in the body and say that only those mental states can be said to be connected in the special way to constitute a series which belong to a particular body. If we do this, it no more remains a mentalistic criterion for it asserts that body is necessary for personal identity. And this is what, as we have seen in the earlier chapter, the Body Theory asserts. Thus we see that mental connectedness if ever is to become a sufficient condition of personal identity needs to be restricted which cannot be done either without involving circularity or without taking recourse to the Body Theory. In other words, mental connectedness cannot be considered as a sufficient condition either for personal identity.

Thus, the Mind Theory as discussed above failed to give us a satisfactory criterion of personal identity.

In the next two sections of this chapter I am going to discuss Parfit's theory of 'Survival Without Identity' and 'Brain Identity Theory' as specialized versions of Mind Theory and examine whether they can overcome the difficulties faced by the Mind Theory so far in giving us a mentalistic criterion of personal identity.

**Parfit's Theory of Survival Without Identity:**

Theories of self try to reveal the nature of self by giving us the criterion of personal identity. And to find out the criterion we employ survival test. But Parfit attacks our very belief in personal identity. According to him, there is no such thing as personal identity and that which matters in a person's continued existence is his survival. And this survival does not prove the existence of a permanent underlying subject, i.e., a self. For Parfit personal identity is nothing but a belief which has borrowed its importance from its association with some important philosophical matter, and as such we can do away with it.

According to Parfit, the problem of personal identity

can be divided into two beliefs:

- (1) The first belief is with regard to the nature of personal identity, and
- (2) The second belief is with regard to the importance of the concept of personal identity.

Our belief in the nature of personal identity can be expressed as: "whatever happens between now and any future time, either I shall exist or I shall not. Any future experience will either be my experience or it will not be." We will see that this belief results in certain absurdities. To show the absurdities Parfit takes up Wiggins's example of divided brain.

In this example a person undergoes a brain operation where his brain is divided into its two hemispheres. Then, each hemisphere is planted in a new body. So when the operation is completed there are two bodies each having one half of the brain of the person who went in for operation. Each one of the resultant persons exhibit the characteristic of the original person and has his apparent memories. Such a situation presents us with three possible reactions:

1. I donot survive.
2. I survive as one of the two people.
3. I survive as both.

Let us now see what happens if we accept the first position.

A person may have a brain operation where one half of his brain is damaged but the other half is working like before. In such a case we will say that he has survived. Now in Wiggins's example each of the resultant persons have half of the original brain. So in them also the original person should be said to have survived if survival is accepted in the other case where the person survived with one half of his brain damaged. If a person can be said to have survived when only one half of his brain is working, then how can we say that he is dead when both halves of his brain, that is, the whole brain is functioning fine? If we claim a single successful operation as survival, how can a double success be called death? Parfit says that this is absurd and therefore we cannot accept the first of the three alternatives.

The second position also leads to some sort of

contradiction. Parfit says that if we accept this position then it will mean that after the operation where each half of my brain is put in two different bodies, I say that, I survive as one of the resulting person. But there is no proper ground on which I can claim that I am one of them and not the other. Both the resultant individuals are equally eligible to be me and there is no reason for me to prefer one as myself and the other as not me.

Thus it seems that we are left with the third alternative - I survive as both. This position cannot be accepted if we believe that survival like identity is one-one relation. But if we are ready to give up this believe then we find that there is no absurdity in accepting this position. We have seen that we cannot talk of death after the operation takes place nor can we say that I survive as only one of them. So we must admit that I survive as both but then there is no identity either of me with both of them or identity of each with the other. This shows that survival and identity are not one and the same thing. And we certainly cannot give up our claim of survival in this case simply because there is no identity. To admit survival in this case is

not absurd and this can be shown with the following imaginary example.

Let us suppose that a person can disconnect and unite the two hemispheres of his brain at his will. In such a case a person can disconnect the two hemispheres of his brain for each hemisphere to think out its own way of solving a problem. When each half comes to a solution the person decides to unite the two hemispheres. Then after the union, the person will simply feel that he has thought out two ways of solving the problem. This is not absurd. And his divided brain does not mean that he was dead during the division nor does it mean that he is just one of the divided brain after the union. The person thus has survived the division.

Wiggins's example is similar to the above cited case with only one difference, the difference being that in Wiggins's example the two halves of a brain do not get united again. In the example where the two hemispheres got united it was not difficult to assert survival. But in Wiggins's example where the two persons continue to live in two different bodies and start growing different

habits, characteristics and start living in two different parts of the world, it is not easy to claim survival of the original person as now there are two persons instead of one. Parfit says that in such a situation we can say that I do survive the operation as both the persons. They can be different people and yet be me, in just the way in which Pope's three crowns are one crown. In this answer survival does imply identity but in that case the concept of person will have to be changed. But we are dealing here with the generally accepted concept of a person and his survival and identity. If we say that the resulting people are different and yet in a way are me then it gives rise to certain problems. Let us take a situation where the resulting people are fighting a duel. Now, are there three people fighting, one on each side and one on both? And if one of the resulting person dies by a bullet do we say it was a suicide or a murder? How many persons survive after this? One? Two? Or is it one and a half? which of course is absurd. To maintain a situation which is not absurd it would be better to suppose that there are two resulting persons after Wiggins's operation takes place and these two persons hold a special kind of relation to the original person.

Thus we accept that the original person survives as two different and distinct individuals but as this situation does not give us a one-one relationship we cannot talk of identity here. An objection may arise here that such a proposition leaves out identity and thus should be rejected as we are concerned about identity of a person. But there is no reason, according to Parfit, to hold on to the belief of identity when, as we have seen, it leads to absurdity or self contradiction. In Wiggins's example of brain division we have seen that we cannot admit identity and yet we find it almost impossible to deny survival. Certainly we should not reject survival simply because there is no identity here. In the example of divided brain the relation between the resultant persons and the original person is the sort of relation which is all that matters in survival. So we must hold on to survival without identity. All we need for this is a sense in which one person can survive as two. In other words, Parfit suggests that we give up our belief in the special nature of identity. He says that it is actually survival which matters and survival may not be always one-one relationship. We cannot simply deny survival because there is no identity. Identity

may not be available in all cases of survival but survival when one-one can be talked in terms of identity. We have started giving importance to identity relation because what actually matters in our life is one-one relation. However, this should not lead us astray to say that survival if not one-one must not be considered as survival as it does not imply identity. The fact remains that it is survival which actually matters and when is not one-one relation we should give up talking about identity.

According to Parfit the concept of personal identity is used to imply psychological continuity. In other words, when we say that there is personal identity we actually mean that there is psychological continuity. And it is this psychological continuity (including causal continuity) that determines our survival, that is, it is the criterion of survival. But that does not make psychological continuity the criterion of identity because, psychological continuity is not always one-one. Psychological continuity can serve as the criterion of identity when it is one-one but, it in all its form, that is, whether it is one-one or takes a branching form, it is the determining factor of survival for survival also need

not be one-one. We cannot reject psychological continuity as the ground for survival simply because it is not the ground for identity. It is so because it is survival, says Parfit, which really matters in the continued existence of a person.

Bernard Williams's rejection of psychological continuity as the ground of survival is based on the mistaken belief that it is identity which matters and not survival. He argued that psychological continuity may not be always one-one and thus cannot be a criterion of identity. But Parfit argues back by saying that psychological continuity may not serve as a criterion of identity but it can still be the ground for claiming survival. Parfit uses Williams's own principle that an important judgement should be asserted and denied only on importantly different grounds, to show that psychological continuity is the ground for claiming survival.

"Williams applied this principle to a case in which one man is psychologically continuous with the dead Guy Fawkes, and a case in which two men are. His argument was this. If we treat psychological continuity as a sufficient ground for speaking of identity, we shall

say that the one man is Guy Fawkes. But we could not say that the two men are, although we should have the same ground. This disobeys the principle. The remedy is to deny that the one man is Guy Fawkes, to insist that sameness of the body is necessary for identity."<sup>34</sup>

Williams's principle can yield a different answer altogether. Parfit says that this principle instead of proving psychological continuity as not being important for personal identity can be used to prove that psychological continuity is the ground on which we claim survival. Williams used the principle to prove that it is bodily identity which gives a person his identity over time. Parfit says that Williams interpreted his principle keeping in mind that bodily identity is more important than psychological continuity. But it can yield a different conclusion altogether if we regard psychological continuity as more important than sameness of the body in the continued existence of a person. If a person is really psychologically continuous with Guy Fawkes it would disobey Williams's principle if we deny that the person is Guy Fawkes because, we have the same important ground

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34. Derek Parfit, Personal Identity in The Philosophy of Mind, Ed. Jonathan Glover, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1980), p.150.

to assert the person's survival as in a normal case of identity. Therefore, we ought to assert survival if we are to obey the principle. In order to assert survival we must take the importance from the judgement of identity and attach this importance directly to the ground, that is, psychological continuity. If we accept it then in Wiggins's example of divided brain in each resultant person the original can be said to have survived as the psychological continuity is available; each limb of the branching relation is as good as survival. Accepting this position does go along with Williams's principle, that is, this obeys the principle.

The above argument goes to show that psychological continuity can give us survival irrespective of the fact that it may take a branching form. We cannot deny the validity of psychological continuity as the determining factor of survival simply because it always cannot serve as the criterion of identity. The psychological continuity becomes the criterion of identity when is one-one.

Parfit after showing that psychological continuity

cannot be discarded simply on the ground of being responsible for two different conclusion, namely, similarity and identity, as the criterion for survival discusses the second belief involved in personal identity, that is, the importance of the concept of personal identity. According to him the concept of personal identity has come to occupy a special place in philosophy because it is considered to be a presupposition of some relations which are important in philosophy. But if we can show that it is not a necessary presupposition it will no more retain its importance. One such relation which is said to presuppose personal identity is memory relation. Parfit tries to show that identity is not necessary presupposition of memory.

Memory is taken to involve the logical truth that one remembers only one's own experiences. Now for the sake of argument Parfit uses the concept of 'q-memory' which does not necessarily involve the logical truth that one remembers only one's own experiences. This q-memory may be defined as follows:

I am q-remembering an experience if

(1) I have a belief about a past-experience

which seems itself like a memory belief.

(2) Some one did have such an experience, and (3) my belief is dependent upon this experience in the same way (whatever that is) in which memory of an experience is dependent upon it.

In case of memory, when I seem to remember something, I also take it that it is I who had the experience which now I seem to remember. In other words, when I seem to remember an experience I automatically assume that it was me who had the experience. But when we think about it we do not find in our apparent memory that part which suggests that I, the one who is having the apparent memory is the same one who had the experience. We assume it without questioning because memory involves the logical truth that I remember only my own experiences. In a q-memory it is this very fact which we cannot take for granted, that is, if I q-remember having an experience then it does not follow that I must be the one who had the experience. If q-memory was the rule then in having a q-memory all that we would have assumed is that someone did have an experience which now I q-remember. Q-memory thus does not presuppose identity. The concept of q-memory is wider than memory and as such Parfit says that we

should drop the concept of memory altogether and in its place we can use the concept of q-memory.

Parfit says that just as memory can be shown as not necessarily involving the presupposition of identity there are some other concepts which also can be shown as not necessarily involving the presupposition of personal identity. The concept of intention is such a concept where identity is presupposed. This concept involves the logical truth that we can have intentions to perform our own actions alone. Parfit formulates a new concept of q-intention where it is not the logical truth. The concept of q-intention can be brought in Wiggins's case of divided brain where two persons result from one original brain. Here it is plausible to suppose that the original person may q-intend to perform certain actions as one of them. Such a supposition does not presuppose identity. Certain other concepts can also be formulated in the model of such concepts of q-memory and q-intention. A man who can q-remember can q-recognise and be a q-witness of what he has never seen; and a man who can q-intend can have q-ambitions, make q-promises and be q-responsible for.

Relations as those mentioned above come under psychological continuity and the fact that they do not presuppose identity go to suggest that a person can survive through psychological continuity without presupposing identity. This goes to show that it is survival and not personal identity which is important in the continued existence of a man. If this is so then personal identity no more occupies an important place in philosophy.

Psychological continuity thus, says Parfit, neither presupposes identity nor always implies identity but it is the ground on the basis of which we assert survival. All cases of psychological continuity are cases of survival but all cases of survival are not cases of identity. We assert survival in all cases of psychological continuity because survival is not an all-or-nothing matter, it may have degrees. Identity relation on the other hand cannot have degrees; it is an all-or-nothing relation and as such cannot be asserted when psychological continuity takes a branching form.

Parfit to show that survival is a matter of degree

uses certain imaginary examples. In one example there are two persons who merge and become one while unconscious. This is a case of fusion as opposed to Wiggins's example of divided brain which is a case of fission. In a case of fusion we have one resulting person coming out from two different persons. Now the question that arises is whether the original two persons survive or not. It may be argued that they do not survive. The new person may retain all the q-memories of the original persons but he may not retain all their desires, characteristics and psychological properties. Some of them still may be available but all cannot be there. In case where properties are compatible they will continue with each other; in cases where they are incompatible, if they are of equal strength they will cancel out or the stronger can be made weaker and so on. So on the ground that these properties get changed it can be argued that the original persons do not survive. But this is a weak ground, according to Parfit, to deny survival. Every one of us in our lifetime undergo certain psychological changes. We certainly do not consider such changes as death. If in such a case psychological changes are not considered sufficient for claiming death then in the case of fusion

also we have no right to consider certain psychological changes as death. Even though we do not consider fusion as tantamount to death we also find it hard to attribute survival in the complete sense of the term to the original individuals. Originally there were two persons and now there is only one. The question always remains as to what happened to one of the individuals. There were two distinct individuals and in their place there is only one now. In such a situation neither can we say that the original two persons have died the moment fusion took place nor can we say that they have survived in the complete sense of survival. Here we accept survival but in some degree only. This shows that survival is a matter of degree.

Parfit gives another example to show that survival has degree. Let us imagine that there are certain beings who reproduce through divisions. In such a situation one person becomes two and those two persons become four. This is not very different from Wiggins's case except that division keeps on happening to result in many limbs. Here we will not find it difficult to attribute survival to a person if the individual person is the product of

an immediate division of the original individual. But can we attribute survival with an equal easiness to a person who has come into being after many such divisions that started with an early individual? It is true that we cannot deny psychological continuity of the original person even after many divisions. But it is hard to admit survival in spite of the availability of psychological continuity. So it seems that it is not psychological continuity in all its forms which determines survival. Parfit says that psychological continuity determines survival only when individuals are related by a direct psychological relation. By a direct psychological relation Parfit means that sort of relation which holds between a q-memory and a q-remembered action. Without such a direct psychological relation survival is not possible. If X q-remembers most of Y's life and Y q-remembers most of Z's life it does not follow that X q-remembers most of Z's life. In other words, direct psychological relation which is phrased by Parfit as psychological connectedness is non-transitive. As long as this direct, a non-transitive relation holds survival is available, otherwise not. But this psychological connectedness cannot hold indefinitely. It becomes weaker gradually till it vanishes

one day. "Q-memories will weaken with passage of time, and then fade away. Q-ambitions, once fulfilled, will be replaced by others. Q-characteristics will gradually change."<sup>35</sup> And ultimately there will be no psychological states which can be said to be directly related to some individual's psychological states who is related to him by many divisions existing between them.

The relation that holds between individuals separated by an immediate division is very strong and clear. Such a relation is like the relation that holds between today's me and myself tomorrow. Phrases like 'my past self', 'my future self' can be used to imply psychological connectedness depending on the factor of whether one was earlier in time or later in time. Likewise phrases like 'my ancestral self' or 'my descendent self' can be used to imply psychological continuity.

But whatever phrases we use, on whichever factor we give importance to, be it psychological continuity or psychological connectedness to claim survival, the fact that one of these two relations, namely, psychological

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35. Derek Parfit, Op.cit., p.156.

connectedness that is involved in survival of a person is a relation of degree is sufficient to show, according to Parfit, that survival is a matter of degree.

What actually matters in the continued existence of a person is survival and it is a matter of degree. Survival need not be always an one-one relationship but when it is one-one it serves as the criterion of identity. So according to Parfit it is psychological continuity which determines a person's identity provided it is one-one relationship and not some permanent entity which remains unchanged in the midst of changes that determines our identity. There is no such thing as 'me' or 'my self' that gives a person his identity over time. These are nothing but terms that are used to indicate the continued existence of a person as determined by survival. According to Parfit we should therefore stop looking for a permanent self which in reality does not exist. What exist is a psychological continuity determining a person's survival and that is what matters in the continued existence of a man.

Thus according to Parfit what matters in the

continued existence of a man is survival and this survival is maintained by psychological continuity which serves as the criterion of survival. Now, psychological continuity as held by Parfit can be maintained by quasi states, namely, quasi memory which he says do not presuppose personal identity. But Marya Schechtman<sup>36</sup> argues that quasi states cannot be considered as the criterion of survival. Accepting quasi states as possible implies that our relation to the experiences we remember is separable from their content. If Parfit is right in holding that psychological continuity is possible through quasi states then it would imply that we can have someone else's memory and there would be nothing abnormal about it. But it is not possible to understand memory and other psychological states without presupposing identity of some sort. Without taking identity of some sort for granted we cannot talk about memory because then, they will rather become delusions which cannot be considered seriously as a criterion of survival.

In the following argument Marya Schechtman shows that it is not possible to have quasi memory. But by

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36. Marya Schechtman, 'Personhood and Personal Identity,' The Journal of Philosophy, Vol.LXXXVII, No.2(1990), pp.71-92.

proving the absurdity of quasi memory she is also trying to prove the absurdity of all quasi states.

Generally, one's memories (are memories which) involve personal details like the familiarity of the place where one lives, the objects and people whom one sees everyday, one's relationship to the people around him and his responses to their behaviours etc.. It is difficult to imagine how one can receive the quasi memory of such experiences which includes so many personal details. It may be possible to imagine to have quasi memory of an instantaneous experience like q-remembering an experience of seeing lightening and the feeling that accompanied one's seeing. But the memories that we generally have every day are not such memories but are memories which involve a good many number of personal details of one's life. Personal details of one person are foreign to another person who may be psychologically and historically a totally different person. It is difficult to imagine how a woman who is single can have memories of a man who has a wife and children and lives in a place which she has never even visited. We cannot imagine the woman experiencing the feelings along with the q-memory

that accompanied the experiences of the experiencer. The man might have been proud of his wife, embarrassed by his children's behaviour and concerned about all of them. These feelings accompanying the memory will be out of place for the woman q-remembering them. It is really not easy to imagine having quasi memories.

There may be two ways of possessing quasi memories. First, in having quasi memories we will reproduce all the visual content of the memory without interpreting it the way the experiencer does, that is, one will reproduce only the things that happened without the feelings that accompanied the experiences. The second alternative is that one will reproduce the memory exactly as it occurs in the experiencer with all the personal elements and associations. It can be shown that neither of these alternatives will allow quasi memory to serve as a criterion of survival and identity without presupposing identity.

It is not very clear that the first alternative is actually possible. Our memories may not be strictly visual as this alternative suggests. Remembering does

not mean simply to have visual images of things or places alone which one is able to recognise. We can have non-visual memories of persons who were around us, the things that occurred and the feelings we had at the time of experiencing them. If the personal details which constitute a large part of memory is missing in quasi memory then the question arises whether such a memory can really be called as the memory of the experiencer. There is good reason to question whether one's quasi memory so understood is qualitatively like a memory at all. Phenomenologically it will be drastically different from the experiencer's memory, appearing not as a coherent memory of the experiencer's experience and in fact will be unlike any memory at all. If quasi memory is different from genuine memory in such a fundamental way then we seem to have no good reason to call it a quasi memory of the experiencer's experience. This in turn makes it quite unreasonable to say that the quasi memory captures what is relevant in the connection between genuine memory and the experience remembered.

The second possible way to imagine this case is to imagine the experiencer's memory being reproduced

in another person as quasi memory with all the personal details of the genuine memory. In such a case of quasi memory the one who is having it will feel that the experiencer's relations are now his relations, the things which were familiar to the other person are also familiar to him and the original person's emotional responses will seem like his own responses. If this is what happens in a quasi memory then it is difficult to do away with the belief that an experience I remember is my experience is separable from the memory itself. If quasi memory involves the sense that they are memories of *my* experience then it is undeniable that mineness of the experience is inseparable from the content of memory. Parfit might respond to this objection by saying that though it is true to a point, the belief is separable at a later stage. He says that the apparent memory itself may carry the belief that the memory is the memory of one's own experience but on reflection one would be able to separate the belief from the content. This would involve one having a memory qualitatively just like the experiencer's but reflecting on it one will be able to say that the personal details which are included in the memory are somebody else's whose memory he is having now.

There are problems to this solution too. Such a quasi memory contains all the elements of the experiencer's memory but there is an additional element of one's confusion in remembering things which are not familiar to him. The person who is q-remembering has a feeling that these memories are foreign, anomalous, and as if cannot be right but must be some sort of delusions or fantasies. Such memories cannot be part of a coherent life history of a person who is having the quasi memories if the experiencer and the rememberer are very much different from each other psychologically, physically, and historically. A memory which has been familiar to the experiencer will be foreign to the rememberer and this will create a sense of confusion in the rememberer. It seems quite plausible to say therefore that the element of strangeness available in quasi memory makes it qualitatively different from the genuine memory of the experiencer. If, therefore, we really want to reproduce in somebody else the qualitative content of the experiencer's memory we will not only have to recreate a great many of the experiencer's psychological states in the rememberer but suppress a great many of the rememberer's as well. If this is necessary for a quasi memory then to have a quasi

memory one will have to undergo almost complete psychological change. It would almost seem that the rememberer's psychology is replaced by the experiencer's psychology. In other words, quasi states fail to serve as the criterion of survival and identity because either they leave out the vital thing which can be said to retain a person's identity (when survival is one-one) or it becomes delusional. In Marya Schechtman own words:

quasi states fail to do the work they are supposed to because they include either too little or too much of the state they reproduce. If they include too little, they donot capture what is relevant to personal identity, and if they include too much, then unless sameness of person is assumed, they are delusional.<sup>37</sup>

Thus, we have seen that quasi states as advocated by Parfit cannot be really accepted. But equally unacceptable are the fusion and fission cases on which Parfit mainly bases his argument that, it is survival which really matters in a person's continued existence, that survival of a person does not consist in his identity. Fusion and fission cases as discussed by Parfit are from

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37. Marya Schechtman, Op.cit., p.86.

the third-person perspective and considered from that perspective they seem quite valid. But they are not easily acceptable when considered from first-person perspective. J.R. Lucas has maintained in his article 'A Mind of One's Own' that we need to ask how the story is to be told from inside before attempting to say how we, on the outside would respond.

Lucas first dealt with fusion case and regarded our response to it from first-person perspective.

In the hypothetical experiment involving the fusion of two personalities there will be first the difficulty of integrating two disparate memories into one coherent and plausible history of the putative person. I can imagine that somebody else's memories are implanted in me so that I continue not only with my memory but also with another person's memory. But certainly I will find difficulty in accepting the other person's memory as real memory. Apparent memory cannot be always accepted without question. We generally accept only those memories as correct which do go along with the rest of our remembered experiences. Even if certain memories appear to

be vivid we donot accept them as correct unless and until they do not go against what I know to be true. It is true that memory generally is reliable but it is not infallible by nature and only those memories are accepted which do not run counter to what we know and understand to be true. Each man's autobiography rejects those matters which cannot be accommodated within what is already known and understood. If these putative memories are to be accepted as correct then the person who is having them must suppress certain other critical faculties which reject these memories as correct memory claims. The required suppression of the critical faculties may be so great that the person in whom the memories are implanted may become a totally irrational and barely self-conscious being. Thus fusion cases do not appear to be coherent when considered from inside, from first-person perspective. In Lucas's words -

'although I may by my own free decision share the rest of my life with another, merging my individual will in our joint choices, and coming to know all her memories as she recounts them, neither of us can know the other's early memories first-hand, and our sharing could never conceivably become a complete coalescence.'<sup>38</sup>

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38. J.R. Lucas, 'A Mind of One's Own', Philosophy, Vol.68 No.266 (1993), p.467.

Fission cases can also be shown to be incoherent from first-person perspective like fusion, though not so absolutely. A person needs to be able to make sense of his future as well as his past. As Glover emphasizes our identities are very largely what we ourselves create.<sup>39</sup> Unless and until there is a coherent view of my future, I shall not have a coherent concept of myself. It may not be very difficult to imagine oneself in future where one is bilocated but it is difficult to make sense of the prospect of one's being to *mes* different in mind from each other. In the future when I will be divided into two selves the situation should not be such that my one self is ready to slain the other self. I may decide before fission takes place that such a thing will not happen, that both my selves will stay in harmony with each other. But decision may change. And in such a case I would not know what to think - will I survive even after killing one of my selves? Let us say that such a situation will not arise as I will not change my decision. But what happens when I am unaware of a division that is going to take place? In such a case I as the original

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39. Jonathan Glover, I: The Philosophy and Psychology of Personal Identity, (Harmondworth: Penguin, 1988).

self will not make any decisions regarding my future selves. So the future selves will not know how to react when they meet each other - whether each should consider the other as an imposter to be killed or an *alter ego* to be cherished.<sup>40</sup> Such problems remain in fission cases when considered from inside. And certainly in case of personal identity first-person perspective cannot be given up as our first awareness of 'self' is in our self-awareness.

Colin McGinn also has questioned the validity of Parfit's argument as based on fission and fusion. McGinn has compared cases of personal fusion and fission with that of other entities such as plants and then he questioned the correctness of claiming survival in personal cases.

McGinn takes a case of fission of a plant where the plant is separated into two halves and are grown separately so that they result in two different plants. In such a case we do not claim identity of the original plant and yet we do not say that the original plant is not

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40. J.R. Lucas, Op.cit., pp.457-471.

available in any form at all. In other words, we are saying that the original plant is still existing in some form. Now in another case it can be imagined that two plants are being halved and then one half of each plant is joined together to produce another plant. In this case also the original plants are not identical with this new plant, but they are still 'around' in some way in this new plant. Our hesitancy to assert the absence of the original plants in the fusion case as well as in the fission case can be diagnosed as our instinctive desire to claim the survival of the original plants in both the cases. In the fission case we say that the original plant has survived as parts of the resultant plant and in the fusion case the originals survive as parts of them constitute the new plant. In other words in cases of plant fission and fusion we seem to be admitting survival without identity. Here our claims for survival are based on the relation of part and whole. We say that an object survives when whole of it survives and it survives also when part of it survives. Our claim of survival in personal fission and fusion also seem to be based on this part-whole relationship. Parfit, as we have seen, bases his argument of survival without

identity mainly on brain dissection and unification. He argues that a person survives a fission because in it each part of his brain lives on in each resultant individual. And in a fusion case the original persons survive because one half of each of their brain lives on in the resultant individual. Thus, Parfit's claim of survival without identity in fission and fusion cases is similar to survival claim of plants in their fission and fusion. McGinn here asked the question whether it is really proper to treat cases of personal identity as similar to identity questions of other entities. McGinn has argued against such treatment of personal identity. In his own words:

'In agreeing that a *person* may survive in cases of fission and fusion are we tacitly conceiving the person strictly on the model of his brain - and if we are, is this legitimate? That is, are we regarding the self as subject to the same principles, with respect to the connection between survival and the part-whole relation, as these other non-personal entities? If we are, then we are presupposing a certain conception of the constitution of the self, and the question must arise whether this conception is really acceptable. It is important, in considering this question, to appreciate that the intuition of personal

survival is not satisfactorily explained in terms of psychological similarity and causal connectedness: if this were the sort of fact upon which the claim of survival rested, then the claim would be vulnerable to the criticism ..... of such accounts of personal *identity*. Short of a convincing defence of mental connectedness theories of the self, we cannot accept this account of what survival amounts to in the fission and fusion cases; indeed such an account of survival in the personal case is even less plausible than for the analogous fission and fusion cases involving material objects. The relation of being a *part* of an earlier object is a far stronger relation than that of having states which are causally connected with states of some earlier object. It seems, then, that the claim of survival in cases of personal fission and fusion must depend upon presuppositions concerning part and whole: the resulting persons in a fission case are being conceived as literally *parts* of the original, and a fused person is being taken to have earlier persons as parts. That is to say, we must be conceiving persons in the image of their brains when we agree that there is survival in these cases: we are supposing that selves may, quite literally, be divided into parts, as brains and plants may be so divided; and this is to suppose that

selves have parts into which they can be divided.<sup>41</sup>

To believe in survival after fission and fusion like Parfit is to give up the intuitive concept of self. Parfit seems to be considering self as a composite entity capable of division on the model of divisibility of non-personal things like plants. His thesis of divisibility of self is mainly based on the divisibility of the brain. Division of self through the division of brain when considered from third-person perspective does not seem very difficult to accept. But it is hard to accept the moment we apply this concept of a divisible self to ourselves. If I accept fission case to be true then I believe that my self is divisible, that is, my consciousness can be curved into two separate halves, and each half is the original self for they both are the parts of the original. If my consciousness can be divided then my point of view can also be divided into two different points of view which are distinct and independent and still are my points of view. Such a consideration does not let us accept self as a composite entity. But we do believe that when

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41. Colin McGinn, The Character of Mind, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), Chapter 6, p.117.

brain is divided into two parts and planted in two different bodies, there are two resultant persons, and if this is so they must also have two different selves. Such considerations do not allow us to reject fission and fusion cases as meaningless and yet self can hardly be considered as divisible if considered from first-person perspective. Moreover, divisibility of self along with the brain leads to a possibility where a brain is divided into many parts and planted in different bodies and thus many selves will emerge from one single self. These new selves are independent and yet are same with the original being as they are parts of it. These selves will have their own points of view and will conceive themselves as possessing unitary and non-composite inner consciousness.

We have seen that divisibility of the self is not acceptable when considered from the first-person perspective. I cannot imagine myself to be divided into parts which will be me by virtue of being my parts. It is impossible for me to accept these selves as me for they are independent and distinct selves, different from me as well as from each other. Divisibility of self goes against our natural belief about the self. We believe it

to be simple and find it hard to accept any theory that attacks this very instinctive belief. We are more comfortable in accepting a concept that goes along with our natural belief. It is this reason which makes us accept more easily a case where only one half of the brain survives as survival than a case where both halves survive resulting in two different persons. So some philosophers who are advocates of the naive notion of the self hold that in case of fission two new selves come into being rather than the original self continuing. When two persons come to exist as a result of fission the original self should be considered as no more existing but if only one half of the brain survives then the original self should be thought as continuing. Survival is possible in case of a person only through identity because without identity if self is thought to continue then it becomes divisible like a plant and this is not acceptable. Self does not have any parts and therefore cannot survive by virtue of division - identity is the only mode of survival for a simple substance like self.

The discussion of fission and fusion fail to prove what it set out to prove, that is, there can be survival

without identity. It is because we find it unacceptable to accept self as divisible. In the word of McGinn,

'The conception of the self that has seemed to elude explanation in other terms was the naive notion we are naturally prone to operate with. It may be that this notion is not, after all, coherent; but it is the notion we have, and any philosophical account of the self has as its first duty the elucidation of that notion. The onus is then on an opponent of the naive notion to show it to be unacceptable. The ordinary conception of the self seems to credit it with the following (inter-related) properties: that it is a simple indivisible substance; that it is not ontologically reducible to other sorts of entities and their relations; that its presence is all-or-nothing; that its survival can consists in nothing other than its identity over time; that its survival is not a matter of degree (since it is simple in nature); that it is a mental concept whose essence is best revealed from the first-person perspective (it is to be seen first and foremost as the reference of 'I'); that its identity over time cannot be given non-trivial criteria. These properties are connected in various ways; but the fundamental property of the self, which underlies and explains the others, is the property of

being a simple substance apprehended as such in self-consciousness. This explains why the self is irreducible and why we cannot give informative criteria of identity for it, and also why it seems that any future person is either definitely you or definitely not - why there cannot really be partial survival of a self.<sup>42</sup>

### **Brain Identity Theory**

We have seen that, the mental correctedness (causal connectedness) cannot provide us with a satisfactory criterion of personal identity and as such not acceptable. Equally unacceptable is the no-self theory of Parfit. Both these theories are different from each other but they have one feature in common. That is, both theories consider psychological continuity playing the crucial role in the continued existence of a person. For one theory psychological continuity (including causal continuity) provided criterion for identity while for the other it provided the criterion for survival. Now a third theory emerges as a result of considering psychological continuity as important for personal identity. It is

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42. Colin McGinn, Op.cit., p.121.

called Brain Identity Theory. Parfit as we saw, claimed survival where psychological continuity was available. Brain Identity Theory claims survival not on the availability of the psychological continuity but on the availability of the same brain which carries these psychological states. This theory claims brain identity as the criterion of personal identity. We say that the same person has continued over a period of time when we find that he has the same brain.

This Brain Identity Theory has one inherent problem, the problem of circularity. It is possible to conceive a situation where there is a causal connection among the brains of different individuals. Now, in such a situation we can say that there is only one brain whose different parts are situated in different bodies. These parts can be thought to constitute only one brain as it is possible to imagine a connection among the brains of different individuals. If this is accepted, then according to the Brain Identity Theory all these numerically distinct persons would be possessing one self, as sameness of self consist in sameness of the brain. In such a situation we will not be able to talk about

individual identity or individual self as we do not know what can be called as one distinct brain. This is an unacceptable position. We cannot accept such a position because we believe that numerically distinct persons possess distinct selves. Rather we can say that there is only one brain subserving numerically distinct selves. But Brain Identity Theory will collapse on the face of such a principle as it would imply that sameness of brain does not always mean sameness of the self. So the other alternative that is open to the advocates of this theory is that we consider each brain situated in different bodies as one distinct individual brain. That is, every individual possesses an individual brain. But saying this implies that first we assert that there is a distinct person who can be distinguished from others and then say that there is also a distinct brain situated in the individual and then we claim that the identity of the person is determined by this brain. In other words, the brain is rendered its distinctive character by the distinctive character a person which in turn asserts identity of that person. This is circularity. Brain Identity Theory does not tell us how to react to a case of fission where one brain is separated into two halves and planted in two

different bodies. As a result of fission there are two persons now and as such there are two selves. Now do we say that there is only one brain subserving two individuals as the brains of the resultant individuals are functionally identical halves of the original brain? Or do we say that there are two brains as there are two distinct individuals? An affirmative answer to the first question makes Brain Identity Theory invalid as in this case sameness of the brain does not imply sameness of the self. And the second alternative cannot be accepted as it involves circularity. Here we admit that there are two distinct brains because there are two resultant people possessing distinct selves. Thus the distinctive character of the brain is determined by the distinct selves and to make that brain responsible for that person's identity is to argue in a circle.

This view of brain being the criterion of personal identity also ignores one obvious feature. It ignores the fact that our knowledge of a person and our knowledge of his brain are independent from each other. We know that a person is a person even if we may not have any idea about what the brain is like. My understanding of

the concept of person does not necessarily involve my understanding of the concept of the brain. In ancient Greece people did not know about the function of the brain but, that did not stop them from having the concept of a person. A person who has acquired mastery over the concept of person need not be a brain specialist. Our formation of the concept of person can be without any knowledge about the brain, "It therefore seems, very implausible to suppose that our judgements about the identity of selves are based upon judgements of brain identity."<sup>43</sup>

Brain and person are two independent concepts and redefining one does not necessarily indicate the necessity to redefine the other. If our concept of brain today is changed it does not mean we also will have to redefine our concept of self. Let us take a case where a person's brain is getting damaged and as such needs to be replaced by another new brain. While the replacement of the brain is going on the psychological states of the person are preserved in some other physiocological

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43. Colin McGinn, Op.cit., p.114.

process. And when the replacement is over the psychological states again are put in the new brain. Now we certainly do not redefine the self as we should have done if sameness of the brain implied the sameness of the self. If the sameness of the self consisted in the sameness of the brain then a new self should have come into being when the original brain was replaced by a new one. But this has not happened. This implies that a person survives inspite of not having the same brain.

The self is different from the brain. We take the self as the subject who has the mental states but we do not claim the brain to be the subject of our mental states in the same way. It may be argued by the advocates of Brain Identity Theory that corresponding to every mental state there is a physical change in the brain. But certainly the mental states as we have them are not the same thing as having certain physical changes in the brain as a result of these mental states. We may have a new experience which does not necessarily add a new sort of state to the brain. Moreover, having a mental state and something that corresponds to the mental state cannot be one and the same thing. One cannot say

exactly what another person is experiencing by looking at the brain process which should have been the case if the Brain Identity Theorists were correct. The states the self has and the states a brain has are different from each other as well as their way of possessing them; the brain processes cannot constitute the mental state nor the brain can constitute the self.

The self realises its existence through consciousness. Thus, if the sameness of the brain implied the sameness of the self then we should have been able to say that I realise the existence of my brain through self-consciousness. This is absurd. The ontological status of the brain is in no way connected with the persistence of the self. Moreover, continuity of the brain does not always imply continuity of the self. In death of a person we call it death because his self by virtue of which he was what he was is not available any more. But the brain is certainly there even after the death of the person. If we consider brain identity as conferring self identity then we would not know how to explain the relation between a self and a 'person' where a person is dead but his brain is still available. This

shows that brain continuity is not sufficient for the continuity of the self. Again, in modern surgery a person declared as 'brain-dead' may suddenly come alive showing that he has probably continued as the same self during the period of 'brain-death'. Such a situation implies that there is no real connection between brain continuity and continuity of the self.

The self is always understood as the referent of 'I'. And when I utter the word 'I' certainly I do not use this word to refer to my brain. When I talk about brain I say *my* brain, that is, it is one of the thing that 'I' *has* but is not the 'I'. Our first realisation of the self is in the first-person perspective and we are always aware of it. There is no particular moment of time when I become aware of my self but in case of brain this need not be the case. Understanding of the idea of brain need not be in the first-person perspective. The brain is a physical thing, a part of a person's body, but the self is the whole being of a person by virtue of which a person is what he is. The brain may be said to carry our distinctive personality and thus is naturally seen as the criterion of our identity. But other parts

of a person's physiological make-up may be considered to be distinctive in its own way and this does not let us consider these parts as our self. Similarly, my brain being the carrier of my distinct mental states does not become my self. Moreover, the psychological states which give brain its distinctive quality are necessary for the self-identity as we have already seen. Now if that is the case, brain being no more than a physical part of a person's body should not be important enough to be considered as the criterion of personal identity. Moreover, brain is a physical organ but in our effort to define 'I' we use qualities which are of 'mental in particular'.

The above discussion of the Brain Identity Theory goes to show that the theory is unacceptable as a theory of explaining the nature of self. The theory borrowed its basic idea from the causal connectedness of mental states as constituting the criterion of personal identity but brought in a physical aspect in the form of brain and made it the criterion of the personal identity. This physicalistic criterion rather than improving on the theory of causal connectedness as a criterion of personal

identity created some new problems of its own and in the end could not give us a satisfactory criterion of personal identity.

CHAPTER - V  
THE SUBSTANCE THEORY

We have discussed the two theories regarding the nature of the self - the Body Theory and The Mind Theory. Neither of them proved to be satisfactory in explaining the nature of the self. This fact makes us reconsider our effort to explain the nature of the self in terms of some other concept or entity. Perhaps self is what the primitive notion of it holds. According to this view the identity of self consists in the fact that the future person is the *same person* as you. No criterion can be brought in to judge the continuity of the self except its own identity. Identity of the self holds in the midst of all other changes, namely, bodily and mental changes. It cannot be reduced to either of them. There is something peculiarly elusive about the self. We believe the self to be there and yet cannot explain what it is except noting and recognising its presence in self-consciousness. The self is conceived as 'the subject' of our experiences. It is not external or observable and must be distinguished from experience. Experiences are passing but self is permanent. We say of the self as the subject of experiences and yet it is not some 'third thing' to which experiences are attached.

In our awareness of ourselves and our processes

we do not become aware of a specifiable content except the characteristic of that which we apprehend or feel or do. An experience derives its distinctive character from the things of which it is an experience or from the action which we perform. But it is not possible to identify the experiencing of the content or ascribing peculiar characteristic in terms of which it is identified.

The view that I become aware of myself through experiences has led philosophers to hold the view that I know myself through introspection or retrospection. But introspection in the sense of deliberate and sustained observation of my experiences and actions, my knowledge as well as others' knowledge of myself as a particular person is not applicable to my immediate awareness of myself in my experience. Moreover, it is not possible to find the self in introspection or retrospection as it is the self or the 'I' who is involved in the act of introspecting or retrospecting. It is the subject who is performing and not the object of observation.

An experience is mine because I have it and am involved in an indefinable way with all my experiences.

We cannot become aware of ourselves except in an experience and we cannot separate them. If we try to explain the self as an entity by separating it from the experience in which one becomes aware of one's self we can no longer get hold of it. Our having experience implies that we are mental creatures. But a mental state cannot describe the self. It is real but we can know it to be real only in our experience. It cannot be defined by isolating it from experience. In having an experience I know the experience to be mine but I cannot describe to others how I know that the experience belongs to me. If I have a pain I deduce that it must be *my* pain. There is no intervening stage in fact and in logic between having a pain and knowing it to be mine. My having a pain also involves my knowledge that it is my pain and not somebody else's. I know my pain to be mine because *I* have it. If we say that a pain 'belongs' to me, I cannot go looking for that to which the pain belongs. It belongs to me by virtue of my having it. The pain belongs to something but this belonging of the pain to a thing cannot be explained though we understand and know that it belongs to *me* when we have it. When we experience something there is within that very experiencing itself some kind of

belonging or being the experience of something. In having an experience we know that it belongs to something but we cannot explain what this 'something' is in terms of contents of experience nor it can be characterised. When I have an experience I simply know that it is mine or that it belongs to me. We cannot explain the sense of belonging, but every person recognises it, in the first place, in his own case.

An experience by virtue of being an experience must belong to some being. Everyone in having an experience becomes aware of the being as the subject of the experience. Everyone knows in having an experience that the experience belongs to a being in a unique manner. But the uniqueness is not a uniqueness of quality or relation, it is the uniqueness of what everyone finds himself to be, distinct and irreducible. In having an experience we become aware of ourselves but we are not aware of our selves as separated from our experience. We become aware of it in our experience as the experiencer and nothing else can be said about it in this regard. It is true that we realise this fact that we have a self to which experiences belong in a special manner only

in our sophisticated experiences but every human being has experiences and while having those experiences he knows that they belong to him and he also knows that that which has these experiences is irreducible and distinct though a person may not reflect upon this fact.

My awareness of the self in my experience implies the fact that I am related to my experience in a unique manner. However, this relation cannot be understood in the way we understand the kind of relation that we have with external objects. This relation of myself and the experience is a special relation where I am involved in a much more inclusive way. I cannot be aware of the subject that has the experience except in the experience. I cannot separate the experiencer from the experience but I know that my experience is not me. Without an experience I cannot be aware of myself and yet I know that I am not just my experience. I am *more* than my experience though we do not know how to explain this 'more'. We cannot explain the nature of that which has the experience because we cannot reduce it to any other terms. We know that it is there and that it has the experience. The self reveals its presence only in experience but

it is more than an experience. Each person knows what a self is, knows that self is that which has the experience, is more than the experience, for every person realises the truth of these claims in having an experience and every person by virtue of being a person does have experience.

My knowledge of having a pain and knowing it to be mine is not based on my observation of the pain or an inference of it from other factors. In a dark room if I hear somebody screaming I will wonder who it is suffering from pain and I may be wrong in my guess. But I cannot be mistaken in my own case. My awareness of pain proves it without a doubt that it is my pain.

My consciousness of self as irreducible is based on my awareness of it in my experiences. I extend this knowledge of the self as irreducible and inseparable from experience and yet as more than the experience to others when I come to know that they also have experiences. I know that other people also have experiences and so I conclude that they must also be having selves because experiences cannot occur without there being a self to

which they must belong. I know the self only in my experience but I cannot describe its nature apart from the experience, it eludes explanation. Self is elusive and mysterious but only in the sense that we cannot explain what it is. Everyone of us knows what a self is in our experience. It is said to be elusive because we cannot explain what it is inspite of knowing what the self is in our experience. This feature can be said to be due to the fact that no terms can be used to explain the concept of self because self is just what it is, incapable of being reduced to any other entity. The consciousness of oneself as a unique and irreducible being and the consciousness of self-identity is given to us. It is irretrievably involved in the distinctiveness of having an experience. The uniqueness and distinctiveness of person is bound up with the uniqueness and irreducibility of having an experience.

Introspection fails to bring out the true nature of self. The self cannot observe itself as the moment it tries to observe itself the self treats itself as an object. But self is essentially a subject. Alternatively, when a particular activity is tried to be observed

it no longer remains the object of observation but becomes the one activity which is trying to observe. A mental process thus can never be observed in the strict sense. We have to content ourselves with remembering what the mental activity was like the moment it is over. In our initial awareness of ourselves we do not observe ourselves but find our knowledge of essentially non-material process in having such process. And we find that our knowledge of distinctiveness and identity of the self is essentially involved in having any kind of experience. These are ultimate, irreducible features of any experience and they are recognised for what they are without needing or admitting of any further description or indication of their nature.

Personal identity understood in this sense does not get affected by split personality or amnesia. Loss of memory means that I no more know who I am in the sense of what I have been doing or where I lived and so on prior to my memory loss. I cannot remember those things about myself in the light of which other people see me. I no more have the knowledge about my past histories and situations. But I am still aware of myself as the

unique person I am. I am certain of who I am - I am myself, the being who I essentially recognise myself to be. This knowledge that I have of myself is unique in the sense that I know who I am but I cannot explain it to others and others cannot have such knowledge of my continued being.

The use of such phrases like 'I was not myself', 'this is not me' etc. in our every day life does not mean that me and my identity keep changing. 'Identity' in the sense we understand in the above two phrases represents our most dominant character or dispositions. Behaviours opposed to our dominant character traits make us use such figurative phrases. What is 'myself' in this sense is partial and relative. And it is this sense of identity that is used when there is extreme stages of character changes like mental imbalance or what is called dual personality. But underlying such changes the self remains identical. The fundamental sense of self-identity remains unchanged in the midst of such changes.

We are aware of ourselves as the same person over a period of time in the fundamental sense in having an

experience. This sense of continuing as the same person involves the awareness that one is in the fundamental sense a being who is distinct and irreducible. A person's psychological traits may change or he may come to possess a completely different physical body in future but, these changes donot deter him from thinking of himself as the same person in the post-change period. He is still conscious of himself as the same being who he was before the changes occurred. Identity in this sense can be destroyed but cannot be diversified or split. No description or criterion can be provided for this sense of identity because the unique identity that every individual is aware of possessing can only be experienced but cannot be explained to others. Each person comes to know about the unique being which makes him what he is in the experiences he has, that is, in his own case.

The basic sense of self - identity is something of which everyone is aware of and as such knows what it means. Self-identity means that I am aware of myself as a continuous identical being in the course of my experience. I know myself to be myself, I know that I am not any other person. The question of my being or

becoming some other person just could not arise as I am always aware of myself as myself no matter what my experience is like. My identity in the partial or relative sense keeps changing along with my physical and psychological changes. My experiences do not remain the same or I may become a psychologically different person but that does not change my identity in the fundamental sense, that is, the identity of which I become aware of in my experiences never changes. I am subject to constant changes and yet I do not change in the fundamental sense. The changes happen to me, I remain the same person to whom the changes are happening.

But in our day to day life we generally do not refer to self-identity in the fundamental sense when we talk about a person's identity. This day to day concept of self-identity needs to be explained for we cannot afford to conflate the two senses of self-identity. H.D. Lewis<sup>44</sup> explains what this concept of self-identity is and how we come to have it.

Though it is true that my general understanding and knowledge presupposes hereditary traits, they are

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44. H.D. Lewis, The Elusive Mind, (London: Hertford and Harlow, 1969), Chapter XI.

acquired through a certain continuous chain of experiences over a period of time. I must have had precise experiences as there are specific and precise aptitude which go to make up the life I would generally be thought to have. There is a relation of one experience to another to constitute a whole course of experiences to give the continuity of life. But there must also be something which sustains the continuous course of a person's life. This factor does not seem to explain itself nor is an ultimate fact of our experience which we recognise.

Memory is not enough in such cases which can assure us of our identity unless the past event contains within it a recognition of the fact that it involved some distinctive awareness of myself as a unique being which I have in my present experience. It is only this fact that can guarantee the presumption I have that the past experience is an experience of the same person as I know myself to be now.

All memories cannot give us the guarantee of our self identity. There may be memories of the fact that I had certain experiences which may be such that I did not

infact experience them. Only those memories that involve the recognition of past occurrence as one in which I find the consciousness of myself as the person I am now alone can give guarantee of self-identity. I remember the past experience and know that it was the same person as I am now who had the experience. Such memory rules out remotest possibility that it was anybody else. My memory is not only the memory of the past event but it also involves the awareness of myself then as well as now as the unique being who is incapable of being anybody else. This memory provides me with the link that assures the continuity of the person from the past to the present as the same person, that is, as myself. The linkage however is not extraneous but is firm and more immediately dependable.

Memory establishes the continued identity of a person. But once the identity is established it may be supplemented by other things, namely, bodily continuity. My learning of my own history is not based only on memory. There are external evidences which can provide us with the knowledge of our past history. If I want to know whether I was present in school on a particular day,

which I cannot remember, I can acquire the knowledge through some other means like the school register. In such cases my knowledge of myself in the past and now as the same person is known to me from independent evidences.

My knowledge about other people having experiences is based on similar external evidences. I base my knowledge that the people around me as well as those whom I have not seen yet have feelings, thoughts or other mental states on such evidences. But my knowledge about other people as well as my life through such evidences or some other ways is built around the central awareness of my own identity. First I know myself to be myself as the unique, irreducible self in an experience I have and then I build around this concept of 'myself' my knowledge of myself as having a particular history and so on. My awareness of myself as a unique being constitutes self-identity in the fundamental sense and my awareness of myself as having a continuous course of experience constitutes my identity in the subsidiary sense. The subsidiary sense of identity with which I am credited with requires, unlike the fundamental sense of self-identity, to be characterised and described. My identity can be

described as the identity of the person who likes this or that, who is prone to be aroused in this way or that way, who has witnessed certain scenes at certain times and so forth. It is this sort of identity we concern ourselves with in our day to day life. But identity in this sense holds good because there is the identity of myself as myself underlying it. It is possible to explain the 'self-identity' as used in our everyday life because there is the awareness of myself as the unique being in my experience.

Thus, there are two senses of self—identity but there are not two selves underlying each notion in an individual. The self of which I am aware of in my experiences can neither be explained nor described. What we try to describe is the self which can be characterised as found in the course of certain events and in the aptitude or traits of character. Certain events have happened to the person I find myself to be and there are aptitude I happen to have. These are the description of me and they are the ways in which I would be identified by other persons. I am the person who was born in a certain place, brought up and educated at various places,

who likes this or that and makes his living in a certain way and so on. Other persons can identify me only through these ways. But I could know myself to be the person I am even if all these things were different. These various things help others to identify me but they do not make me the unique individual self which I am, which I find myself to be in my experience. I know my experiences to be mine alone and I cannot conceive myself apart from my experiences. If experiences are there then there must also be something who has them but who this someone is can only be known to the person who is having the experience. My knowledge of myself as the unique irreducible self is given to me in my experience. I know without a doubt that the self as revealed to me in my experience retains its identity over time inspite of the changes that may occur to my identity in the other sense. The self is known in experience but is not the experience. The self cannot be thought as something existing apart from the experience but is more than the experience. Experience and our awareness of the self are inseparably related. We cannot conceive one without the other. Experience occurs because the self is there to experience and the self can become aware of itself only in an

experience. In other words, neither the self nor the experience can be there without each other. In our experience we become aware that there is a self, the self who is having the experiences but we cannot find this self by separating it from the experience it has. The knowledge of the experiencer is acquired by each individual in a unique manner in experience.

The self-identity in the fundamental sense does not depend on a person's characteristics or memory or any other features. Such a self-identity remains the same inspite of the changes that a person may undergo with regard to his history and character. If I lose memory of my past history, I am still aware of myself as the unique being which I was before the loss of memory. The same applies in case of different existences. If I come to exist in the future with a different history, dispositions, characters etc. still my awareness of myself in the essential sense will remain the same as now. The self-identity does not change inspite of my not having any recollection of my past awareness. However, the probability of different existences divorced from past and present existences is questionable.

The self cannot be identified without the characteristics or the experiences it has. The self cannot exist in a void without experiences or character of any sort. If there are to be different existences then there must be the self having experiences in intervening gap of two existences. It is not possible to have experiences as a human being without some relatively stable nature which sustains the continuity of myself and determines my responses.

I know in my experience that I am the same self over time though my experiences in which I become aware of myself keep changing. I know the presence of the self without a doubt but this awareness of the self cannot be analysed or defined. When we try to analyse this awareness it no more remains the awareness of the self but only the experience through which we become aware of the self. All our efforts to analyse the awareness of the self fail because the awareness which tries to analyse the awareness of the self at the moment of trying to analyse itself involves the awareness of the self. 'The self' cannot be studied but only can be known. We know what this consciousness of self is but we cannot define

or describe it. As H.D. Lewis said:

'Consciousness and our continued identity are, in a very radical sense, mysterious and elusive. They are so in the sense that there is no special way in which they can be characterised. They are evanescent in the sense that they slip through our hands the moment we try to describe them or say what they are; ..... We know what it is to be conscious *in being conscious* we know quite well what it is to have an experience, but this is so radically different from the reality we find in the external or material world that we can only recognise the difference without saying anything further.'<sup>45</sup>

The substance theory holds that self is a simple and irreducible entity. It is what it is, incapable of being described or defined in terms of any other thing. 'I' or 'myself' survive because the self remains the same over the questioned period of time. In other words, the survival of the self consists in its identity. The self as understood in the intuitive sense cannot survive without its identity. If the identity of the self is lost then we must also take it to imply that the self is also no more available.

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45. H.D. Lewis, The Elusive Mind, (London: Hertford and Harlow, 1969), Chapter XI, p.247.

However, reflection on fusion and fission cases do not allow us to consider self as a simple irreducible substance and yet the divisibility of the self is hard to accept when we apply to ourselves. As we have seen in earlier chapter in our criticism of Parfit's thesis, our commitment to the simplicity of the soul does not allow us to accept fission and fusion cases without casting doubt in that regard. Intellectually, as well as instinctively we are led to think of the self as an indivisible simple substance. Considered from psychological point of view the self appears to be indivisible and considered from the physical point of view it may appear to be divisible. Our intuition and consideration of the self from first-person perspective forces us to think of the self as one simple substance, irreducible to any other entity.

We have seen that any attempt to reduce the self to any other concept or trying to explain self in terms of other entities is futile. It always ends in dissatisfaction. The advocates of the Substance Theory hold that the concept of self is elusive. It cannot be explained, cannot be described for it cannot be reduced to any other

entity. It is what it is and nothing else. This definition of the self leaves us with the belief in the naive notion of the self according to which self is a simple irreducible entity. It is true that naive way of describing self is not sufficient but for the Substance Theorists it is the best definition of 'self' that we can ever have. Self is something of which everyone is aware of and knows it to be what it is. Everyone realises the nature of self in self-awareness but cannot explain it for no words or terms can be found to explain its distinctive character. This inability to define or explain self does not make it an empty concept. One's inability to define it should not be the ground for rejecting the concept. It exists as something simple determining our identity. The simplicity of the self makes its identity an all-or-nothing matter. It asserts that a person exists or he does not exist; there is nothing intervening between existence and non-existence of a self. According to the Substance Theory we intuitively believe that a self survives only by its identity and it is the concept of self we are left with so long some other concept of self does not come our way to prove that intuitive belief in the nature of the self is wrong. The only view that has ever

come close to refute this view of naive concept of self is the theory of brain dissection and unification. But this view, as we have already seen, is inadequate. In the absence of obvious incoherence in the naive notion of self it is tempting to hold on to this view and continue with the concept of self as a simple irreducible substance whose identity over time is primitive and irreducible.

All the same, our confidence in the substance theory of self is not founded upon any positive arguments in favour of it. We have seen that the theory's recommendation to hold on to this conception of the self is based first on the fact that the alternative theories which have been proposed by philosophers which we have discussed have proved unsatisfactory. Secondly, it is based on the fact that naive conception of the self is a natural outcome of the common human experience with regard to our selves. The naive conception of the self is said to be embedded in language and implied by the way in which we tend to describe our experience over time. Next, in Lewis's explication of the notion of the self we have seen Lewis's own admission that there is no direct and

positive approach to the knowledge of the self. His confidence is based again in the fact that we seem to be intuitively and immediately aware of the continuity of our selves through time.

Yet, with all these naturalness and the intuitive support of the naive concept of self, it is difficult to accept it whole heartedly. It is true that the naive concept of the self is apparently not incoherent. But this seems to be due to the fact that the notion of a simple mental substance itself is not very illuminative. To say that the self is a simple mental substance which is not definable in terms of any other thing is not to say much about it. It seems an elusive way of making the point that we do not know what it is. Moreover, it does not explain how a simple substance can come to 'own' a diversity of mental states and properties in a way so that, as it is admitted, it comes to apprehend these states etc. as its own. After all, as Lewis has noted the relation between the self and its experiences is not an extraneous one. If the relation between the self and its mental states is conceived to be 'internal' then they become the properties of the self and the self

loses its right to be called 'simple'. Furthermore, as a simple substance the self of one person taken independently of its experiences would be no different from the self of another person. The alleged property of 'being oneself' possessed by a self does not seem to be a property at all. It does not seem to specify anything characteristic of me, for example, which may distinguish me from other selves. Indeed it could not be like this since I do not have intuition of the selves. In other words, the intuition 'I' seem to signify only the formal aspect of my being in which mental contents can be put. The 'I' turns out to be merely a formal category of cognition. As such then, it cannot be treated as a substance. Again, Lewis's claim that we have a constant experience of continuity of the self as the same self over time does not logically imply that there is in reality <sup>a</sup> substantial self which continues in time. Since the experience of continuity is always in the present, its reference to a past could easily be illusory. In other words, my experience of self-continuity is not the experience of a *self* (namely my self) which I hold on to through time to find that it is the same self which I intuite in the present. That is, it is not like the

experience of the continuity, for example, of the table in front of me. My self is not given to me as a self - an external object which I could watch over, as it were. The intuition of a continuous self could easily be compatible with moment-to-moment intuition of 'I', without there being any sense in talking about the continuity of the 'same I'. That 'I am I and no one else' is indeed true but it could be valid only for the moment for which it is uttered. The compelling belief in the naive notion of the self could after all be only a belief without there being a self in reality to correspond to it. There is no doubt that in philosophy we distinguish between the question about the concept of self and about whether in reality anything actually falls under the concept. McGinn<sup>46</sup> dismisses the latter question as of no consequence to philosophy since it is a question of fact. He suggests that we should hold on to the naive concept as it is the concept we have and no other theory offers a better concept. But this is hardly satisfactory since the concept in question is held on to for a practical consideration. It is a concept on which we base our life, our important decisions and planning for the future. All these become meaningless if what the concept is supposed

46. Colin McGinn, The Character of Mind, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982), Chap. 6.

to signify does not actually exist in reality. To go on living under the illusion of a permanent substantial self is no virtue for a philosopher.

The theories discussed so far tried to capture the nature of self by trying to find out the criterion of self-identity or personal-identity. In other words, they all are trying to define the self in some other terms, except the Substance Theory. Probably, it is this very method of trying to explain 'self' reductively and then comparing this with our concept of self as found in self-awareness, which falls short. All these theories accept that self is to be experienced in self-awareness for it is the only thing in and through which we can ever become aware of ourselves. But none have tried to explain this self-awareness which is so vital for the concept of self. The Substance theory accepts the nature of self as is found in self-awareness without questioning and it is this attitude which is unacceptable to us. Probably the secret to the finding of self's nature lies in trying to explain what is self-awareness. And this is a suggestion put forward<sup>47</sup> by Prof. M.M. Agrawal. This method of trying to find out the nature of the self by

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47. Prof. M.M. Agrawal, Consciousness and the Integrated Being, (Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1991), Chapter IV

finding out what constitutes self-awareness may not go with the method of trying to find self's nature through its identity criterion, but it may bring us a step closer to the nature of self and certainly that is what we are concerned with.

Prof. Agrawal starts by saying that there is a certain oddity in trying to find self's nature as a continuous permanent entity. For, if we begin with such a concept of self then it means that we are starting with a concept which implies that the self is a temporally extended entity. Not to be affected by a pre-conceived notion of self we should try to capture its nature in a single instant of self-awareness. And this should not be unacceptable for even if it is a single instance of self-awareness the self will reveal its nature in that single instance.

"I can instantaneously and immediately become aware of myself on the occasion of becoming aware of the maple tree in front of me. In each act of apprehending myself I must necessarily grasp its entire essence, even though not its entirely extensionally. This must be so, since the peculiarity of the self consists in the fact that it is an 'all-or-nothing'

business and a 'now-or-never' matter. That is, the existence of the self is not a matter of degrees, nor a matter of extension either in time or in space."<sup>48</sup>

If we try to feel what actually is there in a moment of self-awareness we find that we have a feeling of the self as something which has always been there. That is, we feel that it is something which is 'timeless' since intuitively we see that it must be present in its absolute totality in every instant without any reference to a past or a future. But that is not all that we intuit about ourselves in our self-awareness. I am also aware of myself as somebody distinct and unique, somebody who is to be distinguished from others. The first is the universal pure self which does not have any property, simple and uncharacterized. The latter characterizes itself as a distinct individual separated and distinguished from others. It is this latter self that all the theories of self have discussed, but the truth is that we cannot do away with the former 'self' for that is integral to our having the concept of individual self.

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48. Prof. M.M. Agrawal, Op.cit., Chapter IV, p.38.

We become aware of our individual self in our self-awareness but why this self-awareness arises at all? Answering this question involves the 'timeless' self. Prof. Agrawal has taken the Sartrean way in explaining our awareness of ourselves in self-awareness. Self-awareness is dependent on two things - first, it can arise only when there is a consciousness of an object and the consciousness that it is the consciousness of that object. When this consciousness takes place then there is the reflection that oneself is that consciousness. It is this reflection of being a particular consciousness which is the 'I-consciousness'. That is, in the reflection one says that 'I am that consciousness'. But this arising of I-consciousness cannot come into being only from the consciousness that it is the consciousness of a particular object. So it is dependent on the other feature that there must be not only a 'self' but it must also have the consciousness of 'being' as distinguished by Sartre from passive existence. Thus, for our concept of 'I' or the individual self there must be the 'being-consciousness' which when becomes conscious of an object gives rise to the concept of 'I' as the subject of that consciousness. But this individual 'I'

does not only see itself as the subject of a consciousness but also as its owner. In other words, it sees itself not only as 'I am that consciousness' but also as 'I have that consciousness'. This arises because the 'I' of a single moment's self-awareness wants to refer to the being-consciousness as the one which is responsible for the I-consciousness. It wants to say that being-consciousness had this particular consciousness at the moment when it became characterized by the object-consciousness. It can happen only when the 'I' is aware that the being-consciousness is not exhausted by the 'I', but the 'I' was an occurrence in the being-consciousness which can be said to have this 'I' and many more such 'I's without undergoing any change. This shows that the concept of the self as a distinct individual self arises only because there is being-consciousness which when becomes conscious of an object reflects on this consciousness and then becomes aware of itself as a timeless self which has the experience and as that particular distinct 'I' which can be expressed by 'I am that consciousness'.

Being-consciousness is the ground for the I-consciousness which in itself is nothing but being-consciousness

becoming aware of itself through object-consciousness. However, being-consciousness when becomes aware of itself it no more remains being-consciousness but becomes I-consciousness. Being-consciousness is not aware of itself and can become aware of itself only in cognitive awareness of an object. It is the pre-condition of the awareness of individual self. In its cognitive consciousness it not only becomes aware of itself as the subject of that consciousness but also as the eternal consciousness which is responsible for the rise of the 'I' and yet knows that it is more than the 'I'.

Thus there is a two-way awareness in a single instant of self awareness. In the words of Prof. M.M. Agrawal:

'The complex phenomenon of self-awareness can be seen to constitute at once a two-way awareness. The self is represented by the *I*, which, on one hand, gains identity in reflection by reference to a given state of past consciousness, on the other, being nothing in itself, requires the ground of pure being-consciousness. The *I* seems to intend and enduring self which turns out to be an illusion against the ground of being-consciousness. Self-

awareness cannot be a case of identification or recognition of a particular under a concept, since all such activities presuppose actual self-awareness. The self in its aspect of an *I* is a succession of references to the being which in fact has the consciousness of being. But the *I* falls as it rises. While the self in its aspect of being-consciousness contains no *I* (empirical or transcendental) or the 'Other'. Nor is it a consciousness of a universal in contradistinction to a particular. It is simply a consciousness of being, without beginning and without end. We can call it the 'self' as long as we remember that it is not the temporal individual self, but a self in its aspect of being-consciousness - a non-egological, impersonal reality.<sup>49</sup>

The above analysis of self-awareness makes the enduring individual self an illusion. The individual self, in this analysis, is not an entity who retains its identity over time. This 'I' occurs in succession and refers to that which has the consciousness of being. The continuous occurrence of 'I' gives rise to the illusion that it is one 'I' continuing over time. What in reality is always present is the being-consciousness but then this being consciousness is not aware of itself. The

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49. Prof. M.M. Agrawal, Op.cit., Chapter IV, pp.42-43.

consciousness of being an individual self occurs only when object-consciousness is reflected upon. In every instance of object-consciousness there is a reflection upon it and 'I' emerges. The I-consciousness keeps occurring in every instant of object-consciousness which is always reflected upon. The object-consciousness keeps occurring and as such the 'I' keeps emerging. The I-consciousness is momentary, occurring from moment to moment. There is a succession of 'I's but no one 'I' whose identity can be talked about.

If the above analysis of self-awareness is accepted as correct then the self remains no more an entity who can retain its identity over time - we cannot talk about identity of the self as there is no self but only a series of different and distinct 'I's. If the self is only a series of I-consciousness, then we should really suspend our search for criterion of a person's identity. But is the individual self really nothing except being a succession of 'I's? The concept of self as nothing but a series of distinct 'I's emerges from the analysis of self-awareness where the being-consciousness is said to be the pre-condition of I-consciousness. But we do not

come across this being-consciousness in any instant of self-consciousness. We do not become aware of a being-consciousness and then on the ground of this being consciousness the emergence of I-consciousness. The self-awareness cannot be broken up into being-consciousness and I-consciousness. It is simply the awareness of 'self'. In no instance of self-awareness we experience a blend of two separate awareness. Our self-awareness is an awareness of ourselves as distinct enduring self. It is one single awareness which cannot be separated into two separate awareness. The truth is that being-consciousness cannot be experienced and as such there is no reason for us to accept that it is really there. It is simply an assumption which cannot be proved. In the face of this shortcoming of 'being-consciousness', the position held by Prof. M.M. Agrawal remains highly speculative and as such we are not driven to accept this position.

CHAPTER - VI

CONCLUSION

So far we have studied the nature of the self and our study has been in the line of Analytical philosophy. The doctrines regarding the nature of the self have been broadly divided into three theories and we have discussed these theories of the nature of the self. Now the question that arises is whether these theories have succeeded in revealing the true nature of the self or not.

From what we have already discussed about the 'unity of mind' of a person and the integrating power of self-consciousness, the Body Theory appears to be a non-starter since the unity of consciousness is not a matter of causal relatedness produced by the body. As we have said, the unity in question here is constituted by self-consciousness while the unity conferred by the body is a mere succession of mental states in relation to the body in question.

But, when we apply the survival test we get a decisive answer to the problem. Let us imagine a case of multiple brain transplantations. By surgical means the brain of A is planted in the body of B and vice versa.

Then surely they both, we would say, occupied the others's body. What we identify as A is no longer the person A and similarly in case of B. This is because we know that the brain of a person carries the 'point of view' of the person upon himself and upon the world. It is important to remember that the shift of identity in the case under consideration does not *consist in* the shift of brains. We are not saying that the self of A goes to the body of B because the brain is the self but only because as a matter of fact the brain is the carrier of the reference of 'I'. This is obvious from the fact that a heart transplant, for example, would not result in a transfer of the self in the manner of the brain transplant. It follows, therefore, that the body though it normally identifies a person does not constitute his identity. Consequently in the above case we will have to stop identifying person A by the body A, and similarly with B. (variations of this theory has been discussed in chapter III).

The Body Theory is based on the proposal that bodily identity is the criterion of personal identity. But it is obvious from the above considerations that

we cannot hold bodily identity as the required criterion in the required sense, since the body does not constitute the identity of the person in question.

We can now move on to the consideration of the second type of theories which we have called the Mind Theory discussed in chapter IV. As we have said that according to this theory reference of 'I' is a complex entity mentally constructed out of the mental states which are ascribed to a self. In this view certain kinds of relations between the mental states of the self fix the identity of the self. Our enquiry is then directed to finding out what kind of mental relation will serve as the criterion of personal identity. We can discard the idea that the relation of exact similarity is the required criterion. Exact similarity perhaps holds as the criterion between the successive states of a material object. But obviously it cannot hold in case of mental states since they are constantly in flux. Moreover, different individuals can be in a similar state in a given moment of time, but they could hardly be called the same self. Hume has noted the constant flux of mental states of a given individual and introspectively not finding

a mental entity to be identified as self, he declared the entire series of successive mental states as constituting the self. In his terminology the self is a 'bundle of perceptions'. Here he seems to be suggesting that causal succession is the relation which will serve as the criterion of the required identity. But obviously this suggestion is unsatisfactory. In Hume's own view, in the first-person perspective one does not discover a causal relation to serve as uniting medium to make the succession into a "bundle". It is not surprising that Hume's theory does not provide a criterion for personal identity since he rejects the naive notion of the self altogether. Nor it is surprising that Hume could not find the self when he looked into himself since by definition the self is the subject to whom the act of looking into oneself is ascribed.

The most promising perhaps, certainly long debated mental relation as the criterion comes from the philosophy of Locke discussed in chapter IV. This is the relation of memory. Memory is a causal relation between past experiences and present mental states. Could memory be the criterion of personal identity? The question of

criterion is dealt with successfully by asking if a proposed item is a necessary and sufficient condition of whatever it is the criterion of. Is memory a necessary condition of personal identity? The answer seems to be clearly no. In amnesia people forget even their own descriptive identity. But surely they continue to be the same person. Is memory a sufficient condition of personal identity? On the face of it the answer seems to be yes, since one can remember only one's own experiences. So claim of personal identity based in memory is *eo ipso* correct. But unfortunately as a criterion of this sufficiency is deceptive. Since as the celebrated remark of Butler says that memory presupposes personal identity and therefore does not constitute it. We have already noted that our required criterion has to prove its worth in a sense of 'constituting' personal identity. In other words, there is a circularity here. Furthermore, we can apply the survival test to settle this issue. Imagine a case where all of a person's memories and other traits of character are erased by supertechnology and a new set of 'memories' etc. is put in its place. Will the persons survive such a treatment? It seems reasonable to suppose in this case that the person in question

continues to be the same self even though he lost his original memories. According to the new set of memories he may himself claim to be a different person, but we who know the truth about how it has come about would explain to him who he really is and why he is claiming to be a different person. This idea is clearer if we imagine a case in which the person concerned remains conscious throughout the transplant. We are to imagine him conscious of his memories disappearing and acknowledging his new identity without a gap in consciousness but without realising that it is a new set of memories. In this case he will certainly claim to be the person which his memory tells but he will assert his continuity as the person who submitted himself to this operation. In other words, even though in the qualitative sense (distinguished earlier) we have a new self embodied in the new set of memories, it is clear that in the quantitative sense the same self persists. It follows therefore, that memory is not a sufficient condition either.

To explore this thing fully contemporary philosophers have considered what are known as 'fission' and 'fusion' cases. In case of fission we are to imagine

that the two hemispheres of one brain are separated and each of this is transplanted into two other brainless living bodies. From the assumption that brain is the carrier of the self's point of view upon the world and the assumption that the two halves of brain are functionally identical, it will follow that both the two newly created individuals will carry the personality of the person whose brain has been separated, and both will announce their identity with this person. Applying the survival test then we raise the question if both the newly created selves can be seen as identical to form a self. The answer seems to be clearly no, because the identity signifies one-to-one relation and in the case in view two different individuals claim their identity with the former, a third self. In a sense, i.e., qualitatively they both seem to be identical with the former self but logic does not allow us to claim this identity. However, supposing one of the two newly created ones does not gain consciousness and dies, what will be our judgement about the identity of one which is successful? It seems clear that our temptation would be to say that this one is identical with the former self, as we have seen, we would say in a case of a whole brain transplantation. Also in this case one-to-one relation obtains and

no logical hitch arises. But this is an extraordinary situation in which both halves of the brain worked well and we have said that neither of them represented the identity relation with the former. In other words we said that double success was a failure but when only one half succeeds we call it a success. How can a double success be a failure? The conclusion that can be drawn from this seems to be that the survival of not only memory but the total psychological personality cannot be considered as sufficient for the claim of identity. Is such a psychological continuity even necessary for personal identity? For the reasons discussed earlier, in case of memory we can safely conclude that it is not.

The fusion cases are discussed to the same effect. We can imagine that two half brains, as above, are united and transplanted in a third person. The third person will contain the memories of both the donors and may form a selective whole from the personality traits of the donor. In this case the resulting person is not exactly alike any of the former persons but fairly alike both of them. However, we will not be able to claim that the resulting person is identical with any of the former

person or with both of them. The reasons here are similar to what we stated in the fission cases.

Lastly however, these cases have been read differently by the most discussed philosopher Derek Parfit. In judging of such cases of fission and fusion Parfit invokes the doctrine of 'Survival Without Identity'. In a sense he claims that though identity is one-to-one relation survival is not. Thus in the fusion case discussed above, Parfit would say that both have survived and similarly in Fission case Parfit would say that in both halves of one brain the original person has survived. In other words, we can have survival of one into many and of many into one without invoking identity of any with any. The morale to be drawn from Parfit's doctrine is that the question of personal identity is somewhat a spurious question. Once we have settled the question of survival in the cases considered above, there is nothing more to be added by raising the question of personal identity. In other words, the self is not a substantial entity whose identity over time is a problem. One self can survive as many, provided there is a 'psychological continuity' between the one and the many. The

'psychological continuity' is conceived as a causal relation between a whole set of memories and personality traits and another set of memories and personality traits irrespective of how this connectedness is realized.

Parfit's theory can be criticised in the following two ways: Firstly, Parfit's morale of a self surviving as many selves is akin to the way in which we can talk of one plant surviving into many. The brain can be cut into many and imagined to retain its functional capacity as the original single brain. But can this sort of thing be imagined to happen to a self? Our ordinary notion of the self prohibits us to imagine so. Since the self is necessarily individualistic in the sense that one cannot intelligibly imagine its division, it seems that the model in question must be rejected. If a self cannot be seen as divisible in the way stipulated above, in what sense can a self be seen to survive as many? Surely for a self to survive as many it has to multiply itself in some way. But it is this very idea that seems unintelligible. The second argument derives from a certain peculiarity of our awareness of ourselves. In phenomenological reflection the continuity of self appears to

be a fact over and above the fact about the continuity of other mental and physical properties ascribed to the self. Thus it is possible that with reference to a future person when all the facts about his mental life seem to be similar and even causally continuous with my mental life at present, I may intelligibly ask "Will that person be me"? That is, the question of one's continued identity seems to be independent of the question of the continuing similarity or causal relatedness of other attributes (mental and physical) ascribed to one.

The failure of the above approach to personal identity has inclined some philosophers to look for the criterion of personal identity in identity of the brain. The suggestion here is summed up in the slogan "where goes the brain there goes the person". But now in the context of personal *identity*, what will be the criterion of the identity or the sameness of the brain. Obviously we cannot say that "where goes the brain of the same person there goes the same person." This will be circular. The other criterion of sameness of the brain is the same as of any other material object, namely, spatio-temporal continuity. But this criterion does not seem to be adequate

to yield the desired result, namely, to establish the identity of the person associated with that brain at a given time. The reason being that a given brain is only contingently related to the psychological constitution determining the identity of a given person. We can imagine that these psychological processes take place in some kind of chemical processes or some kind of electromagnetic field. And surely the identity of the chemical processes or the electromagnetic field is not dependent upon spatio-temporal continuity of the brain in question.

The fission and fusion cases discussed above are most instructive in our quest of knowledge of the self. We have seen that Parfit's claim of 'Survival without identity' works only if we think of the self in the image of the brain. That is, if we think of the self in the third-person perspective. But when we consider the self from the inside in the first-person perspective, the divisibility of brain does not correspond with the idea of self as a unique and unitary centre of consciousness. One finds it difficult or rather impossible to imagine oneself splitting into several selves each representing a separate point of view and yet all of them being one's

own point of view. On the other hand, the fact that the brain is the physical basis of the self and the carrier of one's point of view upon oneself and the world has to be reckoned with. As it is the case generally with mental concept our knowledge of the mind is received both in the first-person perspective and the third-person perspective. The theories of mind have tended to emphasize one at the expense of other. But these two perspectives seem to conflict. And for a proper understanding of a mental concept both these perspectives are relevant and need to be integrated. Can we achieve such an integration in case of our concept of the self? Well, philosophers have not succeeded in doing so, so far for the good reason that our understanding of what a thing is cannot be separated from its epistemology and the two perspectives produce two different epistemic points of view.

In the face of the above problem it might be suggested that we hold on to our naive conception of the self. In favour of this conception the strongest point is that it seems to be necessary to the conceptual framework which we do actually employ in day to day life in terms of which we think about ourselves and the world.

The naive conception is also supported by the apparent incoherence in the doctrine of 'survival without identity' This lands us into the standpoint of the third theory discussed in chapter V. This is the standpoint which McGinn advocates. As we have said this standpoint holds the concept of self to be a primitive concept. As such, since the body and self equation is ruled out, the primitive concept of the self denotes a simple mental substance (Though the self is not identical with the mind as advocated by Decartes since the self is the subject of mental attributes). This self is indivisible and not gradable in degrees. One does not at times have more of a self or less of a self. It is simply that one is a self or not a self. The important implication of this conception of the self for personal identity is that personal identity would consist simply and only in the continuity of a self through time. Or, in other words, A is the same person or self as B if and only if A is straightforwardly identical with B. This is so because the self being indivisible cannot be reduced to other attributes.

All the same, McGinn's advocacy of the naive concept seems to be somewhat a counsel of despair. There is no

doubt that in ordinary life we carry a peculiar feeling of continuity. Throughout our lives we experience changes in our physical and our mental states, sometimes radical changes. Yet we have the feeling of remaining constant throughout our changing biography. But does this peculiar feeling guarantee that we possess the self in the form of a simple substance? Given that in introspection that we do not observe such a self, we must look for logical reasons compelling us to believe in the existence of such a self. The inadequacy of the Mind & Body Theories is not sufficiently compelling to make us embrace the Substance Theory blindly as it were. What are then the compelling reasons if any?

It seems to me that the central reason given concerns our experience of our unity of mind. The self as we have seen by the integrating power of self-consciousness is supposed to explain how this unity is achieved. But does it? It seems obvious that self-consciousness does not produce a substantial unity of the past self with the present self. The unity of mind exists only in the present self-consciousness through memory which makes the past available to the present. But memory itself

is an occurrence in the present and also, as we have seen, it can be frequently incorrect and even washed away totally. The point I am making is that self-consciousness is itself an experience of unity of mind, it is not an *outside agency* to bring about unity between separate mental states. It therefore does not seem to imply the persistence of a simple self-substance. In other words, the stipulated role of self-consciousness in bringing about unity of mind seems to be doubtful. Furthermore, the notion of the self as a simple substance raises the problem of 'individuation' of selves. If each self is a simple mental substance devoid of any intrinsic property to mark its individuality, how are we to distinguish one self from the other? Since each self is unique, what accounts for its uniqueness? We have seen that the Mind Theory has failed to provide a mental criterion for the same. It might be said that the problem of individuation is to be distinguished from the problem of identity. In case of self the individuation can be achieved by reference to the body with which a self in question is supposed to be associated. But as we have seen this way of distinguishing self cannot always be successful. We have seen in applying the 'survival test' that bodies

can be exchanged by the selves and even one body may be inhabited by more than one self. Furthermore, if a self is necessarily dependent upon body for its identification then we seem to lose the right to call it a substance. This is because a substance is conceived to be independent. Finally, we might enquire what is, in the nature of things, responsible for stipulating the existence of a self at all. It seems to be the fact of self-consciousness in the form of, as noted earlier, a peculiar feeling of continuity. It is important to remember that self-consciousness does not represent a cognitive awareness of a thing called 'the self'. What then does it represent? One suggestion put forward by Prof. M.M. Agrawal is that self-consciousness is a peculiar blend of two separate consciousness: One in the form of being-consciousness and the other in the form of consciousness of 'separateness', i.e., consciousness of being a separate individual entity. The first, i.e., being-consciousness *per se* represents presence in the world without any limiting constraints while the consciousness of separateness represents the being of a particular individual as *such and such*. If this analysis of self-consciousness were correct it will weaken our

desire for the self in the form of a simple substance. But it seems to me that the two elements distinguished in our self-awareness are normally not empirically available to us separately. That is, we are not normally first aware of being-consciousness *per se* and then aware of a separate process of individuating it. In other words, our common experience does not guarantee the character of the blend in question. In face of this difficulty it remains a speculative position. But then we are not driven to take this position. Nothing in the facts of the case of self-awareness compels us to the above analysis. However, it is claimed that through meditation one is able to enter the state of being-consciousness excluding the state of I-consciousness. I personally have no access to such consciousness. But it must be acknowledged that in philosophy one cannot lose touch with the 'facts of the case', only that the facts invoked here are outside the domain of ordinary experience.

We have examined, what appears to me, to be the major contributions towards a philosophical understanding of the nature of the self. Unfortunately we have not found any of the associated doctrines compelling enough

to be accepted. Where do we go from here then? Must we have another theory? It seems to me that as our ordinary experience of selfhood is pretty constant, the theories we have discussed represent sufficiently exhaustive points of view on the self.

There is some truth in each of the above theories. In the Body Theory, for example, it is undeniably true that in ordinary life we identify others with their bodies. It is not that we see people as hidden entities in possession of their bodies. Even in our own case it is difficult, perhaps impossible to *experience* the self except in association with the body. Secondly, it is undeniable that the brain is the physical basis of consciousness and therefore of personality. By extension, it can be seen as the physical basis of self-consciousness as well, which as we have said, is necessary for human selfhood. And the brain obviously is a part of the body. Thus the physical locality of the self in the brain is an important fact to be accounted for in any theory of self. Similarly in the Mind Theory first of all, introspectively, as we have seen, we do not find a mental entity which we can call the self. And then the peculiar feeling

of identity over time seems to stretch between poles of memories. If attention is confined to the present moment exclusively we find absence of self-consciousness. Only the direct object of consciousness is present. This encourages the view that the self after all may only be a mental construct. In the Substance Theory we have seen that the fact of the unity of experience is considered very important. The unity of mind displayed in self-consciousness is of a different kind than the unity of properties displayed in physical object. It is the role of self-consciousness in bringing about the unity of mind that encourages us to go for the Substance Theory. But none of them is wholly satisfactory. Perhaps it is in the nature of things that inspite of thousands of years of enquiry into the nature of self we have not been able to grasp it adequately. Perhaps the self is the most magnificent mystery of life. Philosophy is an attempt to unravel the mysteries of life *by means of thought*. But as the sages have told us not everything can be known by thought. The self seems to be one of those things - a thing too near, yet too far. But then, life is like that.

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