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 donot 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 expe-
rience, 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 do not 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 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

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.'\(^{45}\)

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.

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 defination 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 descri-bing 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 embeded 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 a 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 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

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 by Prof. M.M. Agrawal.\footnote{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." 48

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 intuite 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.

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 Sartrian 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.\textsuperscript{49}

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

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.