

## **Response to Craig Skinner's Comments on 'Why am I not Someone Else?'**

**Erdinc Sayan**

**Answer: Because You are Necessarily Who You Are, although you might not know Who That Is.**

I thank Mr. Craig Skinner very much for taking the time to write comments on my paper. Below are my replies to his comments. In sum, though, I don't think he has solved my puzzle and he misunderstood parts of it.

**He focuses the discussion by postulating or referencing a number of scenarios in which he has an identical twin – a natural one, or a duplicate (clone in this world), or an indiscernible counterpart in an exact duplicate parallel universe – in each case asking why he doesn't have his twin's body while the twin has his.**

In my paper I don't talk about my counterpart in a parallel universe at all. (But I could have. I could have asked "Why was I born in this universe, and not in an alternative one?"—assuming parallel universes exist.) In my quotation of him Himma talks about a twin earth, but his twin earth is in this universe, not in a parallel universe.

**Let us turn now to the puzzle. I must say that his posing it as "Why don't I have my twin brother's body while he has mine?" suggests that Sayan thinks of "I" as separate from his body, in substance dualistic fashion. Indeed I suspect the puzzle is only coherent if we think of an "I" as some sort of entity that happens to be in *this* body but might have been in *that* body. We might go on to suggest that a solution to the puzzle is that the twins have different souls.**

A lot of people who read my paper jump to the conclusion that my title question presupposes substance dualism. (A colleague of mine said, after I read my paper in a departmental seminar, that I was a "shy dualist" who doesn't want to confess it. I had a good laugh.) It must be because I say things like "Why don't I have my twin brother's body while he has mine?" But what I am primarily, first and foremost asking is "Why did this zygote develop into me (resulting in my having this body rather than that body) rather than the other zygote?". I don't see any dualistic implication in the question "Why did this zygote develop into me rather than the other zygote?". Again, in my manufactured clones example, when I ask "Why did I turn out to be the one manufactured in chamber *A* and not in chamber *B*?" I don't see any presupposition of dualism in that question. A physicalist could perfectly ask this question and it doesn't

turn her into a dualist. See, my puzzle is deeper than can be answered in a simple dualistic fashion.

**I feel the solution is to ... regard a self as a construction by each of us as part of a normal human's development. The self is then necessarily that of the individual concerned.... Indeed, in his paper, Sayan refers to the constructed self ("physicalism requires that our selves are *causal outcomes* of our bodily functions" (his italics))....**

This statement seems to be saying that we "construct" ourselves. Skinner has another statement to that effect when he says (below) "I will have or will construct a self which is necessarily mine." I find the notion of *me constructing myself* hardly intelligible. If I am constructing myself then *I* must be there in the first place. And if I am there, there is no need to construct *me*, because I am already there.

When I say "physicalism requires that our selves are *causal outcomes* of our bodily functions" I mean nothing of the sort.

**Two identical humans are built from raw materials, both coming into existence for the first time. One of them is me, but why am I not the other one? I don't feel this helps the rejection of the constructed-self view. For we can simply say that each clone has its own self, albeit these were constructed in one fell swoop during the manufacturing process rather than piecemeal in the course of normal living.**

Skinner is saying that in this thought experiment I, who came out of chamber *A* (and not from chamber *B* for some inexplicable reason), had my self already constructed in the factory—so my self is not my own making (my own constructing) in this example. Once again the question is "Why did I turn out to be the one "constructed" in chamber *A* and not the one constructed in chamber *B*?" After all, both chambers and the material they used to build the two clones were *qualitatively identical*.

**Finally, to come to the last clause of my title, how could Sayan possibly not know who he is?**

I have to say I don't understand this question. I don't understand the relevance of it to the puzzle I am talking about.

**I will try to show, with two thought experiments, not only that he might not know who he is, but also that he might even be *that* rather than *this* Sayan which all of us, himself included, take him to be. First, Sayan is to be cloned. The procedure can be uncomfortable, explains the Cloner, and so the subject is put to sleep. The sleeping Sayan is duly cloned, the old and new Sayans awake in separate rooms. The Cloner enters one of the rooms and asks the bleary-eyed occupant who he is.**

**Of course the occupant doesn't know whether he is the old or the new Sayan. And if the Cloner had been dead drunk at work and can't recall which is which, nobody can ever know.**

Is the question here which one of the two bodies is original Sayan's? This is easy to establish *in principle*: video the whole procedure. Then you will know which one is the original and which one the clone. If I am in doubt whether I am the original one or not, I simply play the video. If no video recorder was installed then I may never know if I am the original one or not. But what does all this have to do with "Why am I not someone else?"

**Secondly, we call on the even more accomplished firm of transgalactic warpdrive hauliers, Prince and Pauper. They simultaneously (pace relativity theory) transport the sleeping Sayan to *that* Sayan's bed and vice versa. Each awakes in the other's bed, but of course sees nothing amiss, then or ever. If this be granted as a possibility, then it may have already happened, and our Sayan right now might actually *be* his counterpart.**

Again, I don't see the relevance of this to my central puzzle. Moreover, I don't understand the notion of me *being* my counterpart. I am who I am, whether I was manufactured in a factory or not. It doesn't make sense to me to say I am my counterpart.

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