

***Imagine you are Mike Harding. As you lie injured on the road, you are told that a brain scanner is going to be used to map your memories and personality and the information used to program the brain of a new body cloned from one of your own cells. The moment the new "you" gains consciousness the old "you" will be painlessly destroyed. How do you feel about this prospect? Justify your answer by reference to one of the competing philosophical accounts of the relation between mind and body.***

In the 1950's movie "Invasion of the Body Snatchers" (Dir Don Siegel), Dr Miles Bennell returns to his small town practice to find several of his patients suffering the paranoid delusion that their friends or relatives are impostors. He is initially sceptical, especially when the alleged doppelgangers are able to answer detailed questions about their victim's lives, but he is eventually persuaded that something odd has happened and determines to find out what is causing this phenomenon. He finds that exact bodily replicas are created from pods with an extra-terrestrial origin. The replicas are then given a brain and the memories of the person they are supposed to replace. The "originals" are then painlessly disposed of after falling asleep.

Quite apart from the movie being an above par science fiction classic, it raises several important questions about what constitutes a person, and whether that person survives an adventure such as being replaced by a replica with all their memories.

Although it is not mentioned in the film script, there is the usual Hollywood nod in the direction of the special place of the human animal and the dualistic theory of mind and body. In this case, the unease that the replicas cause is due to the perception that though they have the same body and memories as the original, the consciousness (if indeed there is one) is completely different. To use the well -known philosophical expression, they lack "qualia"; the knowledge of what it is like to be a unique person and to actually experience or live their memories.

In this sense, the movie is similar to the philosophy thought experiments involving zombies or mutants. Zombies are creatures who would be perfectly acceptable in the bodily area of the dualist theory, but who would be completely deficient in the mind department. By contrast, mutants have both a body and a mind, though the latter is different in some detail from the originals they replicate.

Whether the replacements in the "Body Snatchers" are zombies or mutants, they are not the same as the originals. The identities of the human victims in the movie do not survive.

Now we will move from the movie situation to the case of Mike Harding. If I were Mike Harding, what would I think as I waited for a transfer of my memories to a clone, followed by the destruction of my old body? It is clearly not a good place to be in, whatever the outcome, as I would prefer not to be exposed to such a trauma. Looking forward, would the clone with my scanned brain really be me?

I am going to assume that the true nature of the mind body problem is the one stated by the physicalists. It is useful to understand the physicalist position by restating the dualist one. This latter view is that mind and body are separate, and that whereas body is material, mind is immaterial. In such a situation, although I might agree that technology is advanced enough to produce a replica of my body, I would be very unlikely to believe that mind could be so transplanted. My feelings would be one of approaching death, as I realise that I will not survive this adventure. Whatever the created clone is, it is not "me".

However, to a physicalist, the mind and brain are identical; every mental state corresponds to a brain state. Also, it is not difficult to imagine technology becoming advanced enough to completely map the human brain. Quite apart from the huge advances in neuroscience, we also have MRI and fMRI scans which have gone some way towards linking types of bodily and mental activity with areas of the brain. I, in my role as Mike Harding might be well able to believe that, given the technology, the being that wakes up in the recovery room would be me. It has my cloned body, my transferred brain patterns, and therefore my mental consciousness. So I have nothing to worry about.

But some problems may still perturb me.

Memories are recollections of experiences in the past. Arguably, it is possible that no memory quite captures the intensity of the actual experience itself. Memories are of varying degrees of intensity and vividness. Would that difference of degree be transferred to the new me? Some memories are even the cause of problems such as post-traumatic mental illness. Perhaps a road accident is sufficient to result in this kind of affliction. How would this be represented in the new me? (As Mike Harding, I might even be grateful for losing such after effects!) The new Mike Harding might have the transferred memories of the old one, but not the

actual experiences.

I might be aware of the paper by Thomas Nagel "What is it Like to be a Bat". Nagel was a physicalist who raised doubts concerning our ability to actually feel what it is like to be someone else. Hence, as I lie waiting to be decommissioned, I would wonder whether the clone could ever know what it is like to be Mike Harding. It would have my memories but would not know what it is like to have the experiences related to those memories. If I am aware of Nagel's work, then I would probably be aware of the paper by Frank Jackson, "What Mary Didn't Know". Mary has learned all the knowledge she can in a closed room with only black and white decorations and furnishings. She has learned about colour, but does she actually know what it is like to see something which is red? These are questions relating to that special knowledge which is created by the qualia of our experiences. If my brain patterns were exactly copied using advanced neurosurgery there could therefore still be doubts as to whether the clone in another room could know what it is like to be me.

Therefore, though fully aware of the ability of science to exactly replicate both brain and body, I might doubt whether the qualia of my experiences could be transferred. Perhaps I might legitimately fear that the person who awakes after I am destroyed will be more akin to the beings in "Invasion of the Bodysnatchers". Hence I would not survive this adventure.