

Kripke's *Naming and Necessity*  
Lecture Eight

Mind/Body Dualism

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# Mind/Body Dualism

## Introduction

The Identity Theories of Mind

Kripke's Argument against Type-Type Identity

Reject Premise (ii)?

Reject Premise (i)?

Summary

## Re-Cap: Descriptivism about Proper Names

- Descriptivism (aka the “Frege-Russell” theory) makes two claims:
  - Every proper name is synonymous with some definite description
  - Anyone who understands a proper name knows the definite description it is synonymous with
- Kripke rejected descriptivism after presenting a number of objections to it
- Kripke thinks that in general, names are not synonymous with descriptions; names do **not** describe the things they refer to
- Instead, names are **rigid designators**, referring to the very same object in every world

## Re-Cap: Descriptivism about Natural Kind Terms

- Descriptivism is a theory about **proper names**, but there is an analogous theory about **natural kind terms**
  - Every natural kind term is synonymous with some description
  - Anyone who understands a natural kind term knows the description it is synonymous with
- Kripke rejects this version of descriptivism too, for exactly the same reasons that he rejected the version about names
- Kripke thinks that in general, natural kind terms are not synonymous with descriptions
- Instead, natural kind terms are **rigid designators**, referring to the very same natural kind in every world

## Re-Cap: The Necessity of Identity

- Kripke used his theory of names as rigid designators to argue that 'Hesperus is Phosphorus' is necessarily true, even though we can only know it a posteriori
- 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' are rigid designators, and so refer to the very same object in every possible world

## Re-Cap: The Necessity of Theoretical Identifications

- In exactly the same way, Kripke used his theory of names as rigid designators to argue that 'Water is H<sub>2</sub>O' is necessarily true, even though we can only know it a posteriori
- 'Water' and 'H<sub>2</sub>O' are rigid designators, and so refer to the very same kind in every possible world

## This Lecture: The Relation between Mind and Body

- Kripke ends *N&N* (pp.144–55) by using all of his new ideas to tackle one of the oldest and hardest problems in philosophy: the relation between the mind and the body
- Kripke is a **dualist**: he does not think that mental states are physical states
- In brief, Kripke's argument goes like this:
  - If 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is true, then it is necessarily true
  - But 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is not necessarily true
  - So 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is not true at all
- The aim of this lecture is to take a closer look at this argument, and see exactly how it is meant to work

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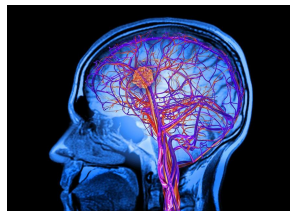
Reject Premise (i)?

Summary



## Dualism

- What is the relationship between the mind and the body?
- For a long time, the consensus amongst philosophers was that the mind and body are two completely different things
- Mental states, like pain, are **correlated** with bodily states, but still are not identical to them
  - Pain is correlated with the C-fibres firing in the brain, but pain still isn't identical to C-fibres firing
- This view is known as **dualism**, and its most famous proponent was René Descartes



## Physicalism

- Dualism has a long history, and people today are often still drawn to it, but it became a lot less popular amongst philosophers during the 20th Century
- More and more philosophers adopted **physicalism**, according to which everything, including the mind, is physical
  - That's quite a crude definition of physicalism, but don't worry about that now
- Many of these philosophers insisted that mental states are not merely correlated with physical states; mental states are **identical to** physical states
  - Pain isn't just correlated with C-fibres firing
  - Pain **is** C-fibres firing!

## Two Types of Identity Theory

- There are two versions of the theory that mental states are identical to physical states
- **Type-Type Identity Theory**
  - Each *type* of mental state is identical to a *type* of physical state
  - Pain is C-fibres firing
- **Token-Token Identity Theory**
  - Each *token* mental state is identical to some *token* physical state
  - Every pain is physical, but different pains may be different physical states: my headache right now is my C-fibres firing, but your toothache yesterday was your D-fibres firing

## Focussing on Type-Type

- Kripke (*N&N*: 144) focuses primarily on Type-Type Identity Theory, and so that is what we will focus on too
  - From now on, I will often just call it the **Identity Theory**
- However, I should mention that Kripke (146–8) briefly discusses Token-Token Identity Theory, and it is clear that he thinks that his discussion of Type-Type Identity Theory applies to Token-Token too
- But I will leave it to you to decide whether you agree with him or not!

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## Necessary or Contingent Identity?

- Type-Type Identity Theory says that every type of mental state is identical to a type of physical state; our example will continue to be:
  - (1) Pain is C-fibres firing
- **Question:** What sort of truth is (1) meant to be? Is it meant to be *necessary* or *contingent*?
- Historically, Identity Theorists wanted to say that (1) is only contingently true
- But Kripke (*N&N*: 148–9) insists that if (1) were true, it would have to be *necessarily* true

## If True, then Necessarily True...

- Why does Kripke insist that
  - (1) Pain is C-fibres firingis necessarily true, if it is true at all?
- 'Pain' and 'C-fibres firing' look like natural kind terms: they both stand for natural kinds of state
- Kripke has already argued that natural kind terms are rigid designators, and so 'pain' and 'C-fibres firing' are rigid designators
- But an identity involving rigid designators has to be necessarily true, if it is true at all
  - Hesperus is Phosphorus
  - Water is H<sub>2</sub>O

## ... But Not Necessarily True!

### (1) Pain is C-fibres firing

- (1) is necessarily true if it is true at all; but Kripke insists that it is not necessarily true!
- If (1) were necessarily true, then there **couldn't** be any pain without C-fibres firing, and there couldn't be any C-fibres firing without there being pain
- But surely there **could** have been pain without C-fibres firing, and vice versa?
- In possible world speak: there are possible worlds in which there are pains but no C-fibres firing, and possible worlds in which there are C-fibres firing but no pains



## Zombie World

- Imagine a Zombie World, which is physically just like ours, but nothing has any mental states
- In this Zombie World, there would still be C-fibres firing in various brains, but there would be no pains
- If this Zombie World is possible, then it is possible for there to be C-fibres firing without there being any pains



## Ghost World

- Imagine a Ghost World, in which there are no physical things, but lots of non-physical ghosts
- In this Ghost World, there would still be pains, but there would be no C-fibres firing
- If this Ghost World is possible, then it is possible for there to be pains without any C-fibres firing



## Kripke's Argument: The Key Idea

- Kripke's argument against Type-Type Identity is the **KEY IDEA** of this lecture
- We can summarise it like this:
  - (i) If 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is true, then it is necessarily true
  - (ii) But 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is not necessarily true
  - (iii) So 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is not true at all
- This looks like a valid argument: if (i) and (ii) are true, then (iii) has to be true too
- So we only have two choices:
  - (a) Agree with Kripke that types of mental state are not identical to types of physical state
  - (b) Reject (i) or (ii)

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Reject Premise (i)?

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## Can We Reject (ii)?

- (i) If 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is true, then it is necessarily true
  - (ii) But 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is not necessarily true
  - (iii) So 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is not true at all
- 
- If we do not want to agree with Kripke, then we need to reject (i) or (ii)
  - In this part of the lecture, I will grant Kripke (i) for the sake of argument, and then ask: Can we reject (ii)?

## Kripke's Strategy

- Kripke tries to convince us that

(1) Pain is C-fibres firing

isn't necessarily true by describing possible worlds in which there are pains but no C-fibres firing, or vice versa

- In the Zombie World, there are C-fibres firing but no pains
  - In the Ghost World, there are pains but no C-fibres firing
- But should this really convince us?

## Another Theoretical Identification

- Kripke (*N&N*: 131–2) thinks that the following is a **necessarily true** theoretical identification:
  - (2) Heat is average kinetic energy
- But can't we imagine worlds in which there is heat but no average kinetic energy as easily as we can imagine worlds in which there is pain but no C-fibres firing?
  - Imagine a world in which people sometimes feel what we describe as the “sensation of heat”, but their feeling isn't caused by the kinetic energy
  - Isn't that a world in which heat isn't average kinetic energy?

## What's The Difference?

- Kripke takes a different attitude to these two theoretical identifications:
  - (1) Pain is C-fibres firing
  - (2) Heat is average kinetic energy
- Kripke argues that these identifications are necessarily true if true at all, but then his opinion on them splits:
  - He thinks that (1) is not necessarily true, and so not true at all
  - He thinks that (2) is true, and so necessarily true
- But the question is **why** does he take these different attitudes?
- It seems just as easy to describe worlds in which (2) is false as it is to describe worlds in which (1) is false



## Modal Illusion

- In fact, Kripke gives a pretty good explanation of the difference between these two identifications
- According to Kripke (*N&N*: 150–1), when we think that we are imagining a possible world in which heat is not kinetic energy, we are the victims of a certain kind of **modal illusion**
- We are imagining a perfectly good possible world, but are accidentally misdescribing it

## Modal Illusion

- There is a perfectly good possible world in which people are caused to feel our “sensation of heat” by something other than kinetic energy
- But that isn't a possible world in which heat isn't average kinetic energy!
- It's just a world in which something other than heat (= average kinetic energy) causes people to feel the way that heat actually makes us feel

## The Absence of Illusion

- We cannot posit similar modal illusions in the case of:
  - (1) Pain is C-fibres firing
- Consider the Ghost World, which is described as a world in which non-physical ghosts feel pains, even though they do not have any C-fibres to fire
- If we wanted to dismiss this Ghost World as a modal illusion, we would have to say something like this:
  - When we try to imagine the Ghost World, we do imagine a possible world, but accidentally misdescribe it
  - The Ghost World is not a world in which there are pains but no C-fibres firing!
  - It's just a world in which something other than pain (= C-fibres firing) causes people to feel the “sensation of pain”

## The Absence of Illusion

- But that would be absurd!
- The problem is that there is no gap between pain and the “sensation of pain”
- Heat and the “sensation of heat” are two different things
  - Heat is a physical phenomenon, the “sensation of heat” is a feeling
  - The “sensation of heat” is the feeling that the presence of heat causes us to feel
- But pain and the “sensation of pain” are not two different things
- Pain *is* the “sensation of pain”

## The Difference Explained

- This is the **KEY** to the difference between
  - (1) Pain is C-fibres firing
  - (2) Heat is average kinetic energy
- It is true that we seem to be able to imagine worlds in which (2) is false, but those are **modal illusions**
  - We are really imagining worlds in which people are caused to feel the “sensation of heat” by something other than heat
- But we cannot dismiss the worlds in which (1) is false as modal illusions:
  - It doesn't make sense to say that they are worlds in which people are caused to feel the “sensation of pain” by something other than pain
  - Pain *is* the “sensation of pain”

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## Can We Reject (i)?

- (i) If 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is true, then it is necessarily true
  - (ii) But 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is not necessarily true
  - (iii) So 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is not true at all
- 
- If we do not want to agree with Kripke, then we need to reject (i) or (ii)
  - We just saw that it is very hard to reject (ii), so now I want to ask: Can we reject (i)?

## Why Does Kripke Accept (i)?

- Why does Kripke think that
  - (1) Pain is C-fibres firinghas to be **necessarily true** if it is to be true at all?
- Because Kripke thinks that 'pain' and 'C-fibres firing' are rigid designators
- As we have discussed many times now, an identity involving rigid designators has to be necessarily true if it is true at all



## Rejecting (i)

- So if we want to reject
  - (i) If 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is true, then it is necessarily truethen we must either deny that 'pain' is a rigid designator, or that 'C-fibres firing' is
- I will not pause on whether 'C-fibres firing' is rigid
  - Kripke (*N&N*: 149) actually admits that he has no idea whether 'C-fibres firing' is rigid, because he has no idea what C-fibres are. (Neither do I!)
  - But we 'C-fibres firing' is really just a placeholder, to be filled in by a rigid designator referring to the kind of physical state that the Identity Theorist thinks is identical to pain
- The question, then, is just whether or not 'pain' is really rigid

## Is 'Pain' Rigid?

- To say that 'pain' is rigid is to say that it picks out the same type of phenomenon in every world
- So to say that 'pain' **isn't** rigid is to say that it picks out **different** types of phenomena in different worlds
- Kripke (*N&N*: 148–9) thinks that that is just absurd
  - No matter what world we describe, we always pick out the same type of phenomenon with the word 'pain'
  - We always pick out that horrible sensation that we are all so unhappily familiar with

## Functionalism

- Although we cannot go into all of the details here, it is worth mentioning that there are some Identity Theorists who disagree with Kripke, and think that 'pain' is non-rigid
- These Identity Theorists are called **functionalists**
- They think that pain is a **functional** state, i.e. a state which is caused by certain inputs (being slapped in the face) and causes certain behavioural outputs (yelping)
- In different worlds, different types of physical states play this functional role, and so 'pain' refers to different things in different worlds

## Functionalism

*If the state of having neurones hooked up in a certain way and firing in a certain pattern is the state properly apt for causing and being caused, as we materialists think, then that neural state is pain. But the concept of pain is not the concept of that neural state. The concept of pain, unlike the concept of the neural state which is in fact pain, would have applied to some different state if the relevant causal relations had been different. Pain might not have been pain.*

*(David Lewis, 1980, 'Mad Pain and Martian Pain', p. 218)*

## Different Starting Points?

- Unfortunately, a discussion of functionalism really is a discussion for another module
- However, for what it is worth, I suspect that the difference between Kripke and the functionalists is a deep difference about their starting points in the philosophy of mind
  - For Kripke, pain is first and foremost a *sensation*, a sensation with which we are (sadly) all intimately familiar
  - From this internal perspective, it just seems obvious that 'pain' rigidly designates to that type of sensation
  - For the functionalists, pain is first and foremost a state which explains our behaviour
  - From this external perspective, there is no special reason to think that 'pain' is a rigid designator

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## The Key Things To Remember

- The **KEY THING** to remember is the outline of Kripke's argument against Type-Type Identity Theory
  - (i) If 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is true, then it is necessarily true
  - (ii) But 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is not necessarily true
  - (iii) So 'Pain is C-fibres firing' is not true at all
- Kripke thinks that (i) is true because he thinks that 'pain' and 'C-fibres firing' are rigid designators
- He thinks that (ii) is true because he thinks that there are possible worlds in which there are pains but no C-fibres firing (and vice versa), and that these worlds cannot be dismissed as modal illusions

## The Bigger Picture

- But now that we are ending the whole module, I also want to encourage you to think about the bigger picture of *Naming and Necessity*
- *N&N* is in many ways a paradigm work of analytic metaphysics
- It is a fascinating combination of logic, metaphysics and intuitions
- I really hope you all take the time to reflect on what you liked about the book and what you didn't like, and to think more about how **you** think metaphysics should be done



## Seminars

- The required reading for this week's seminar is *N&N*: Lecture Three
- I have also posted some questions on the VLE: you need to bring short **written** answers to those questions to the seminars
- In the seminars you will be given **module feedback forms** to fill in; please remember to include the name of your **seminar leader** on those forms