CHAPTER VIII

MINIMAL MENTALISM: A CASE FOR DUALISM

The three philosophers - Herbert Feigl, U.T. Place, and J.J.C. Smart - responsible for the development of identity thesis showed their sympathy to physicalism but did not maintain an ontological distinction between the two realms - the mental and the physical.

The materialists supporting this view along with the above three were convinced of the fact that any talk about mind and mental must be done strictly in the light of neurophysiological researches and understanding of the functioning of the brain.

As opposed to this we find philosophers expressing doubts over the success of such research programmes and maintain that 'mind' is beyond all this - that 'mental' cannot be identified with the 'physical'. Saul Kripke, for example, proposed a thesis in semantics to show the failure of identity thesis.

Kripke, however, does not seem to be taking a clear stand, as no suggestions are made regarding mind-brain relation. As Armstrong observes that he (Kripke) "confines himself to his critique of materialism".

While criticising materialism, Kripke may be said to be arguing for non-reducibility of mental - not in the sense of Cartesian mind-substance. Dale Jacquette says that Kripke "explicitly disclaims Cartesian substance dualism in" his Naming and Necessity. Dale Jacquette thinks that, "Kripke's quasi-Cartesian refutation of materialism is not meant to provide an explication of Descartes reasoning, ... Kripke does not subscribe
to Descartes' ontic or mental-material substance dualism, but seems to accept a less controversial property-aspect dualism or non-reductive materialism. Hence, Kripke's position may be interpreted as a case for dualism.

Cartesian dualism is evidenced by the possibility of the conception that mind can exist separately from body (and vice versa). Secondly, our "better knowability of mind than body, and the divisibility of body and non-divisibility of mind or ineliminable unity of consciousness" also are taken as supporting the dualist claim that mind and body are non-identical. The above claim is supported by Kripke in his discussion of the common sense observation that when a person dies it is possible for the body to exist without the mind. As Kripke points out:

"Descartes, and others following him, argued that a person or mind is distinct from his body, since the mind could exist without the body. He might equally well have argued the same conclusion from the premise that the body could have existed without the mind. Now the one response which I regard as plainly inadmissible is the response which cheerfully accepts the Cartesian premise while denying the Cartesian conclusion. Let 'Descartes' be a name, or rigid designator, of a certain person, and let 'B' be a rigid designator of his body. Then if Descartes were indeed identical to B, the supposed identity, being an identity between two rigid designators, would be necessary, and Descartes could not exist without B and B could not exist without Descartes.

One can notice from the above that Kripke is arguing for the non-identity between mind and body which he deems as logically possible. Through the novel thesis in semantics, which involves the use of 'rigid' and 'non-rigid' designator, Kripke argues against the identification of mental-states with the brain-states. Kripke's argument can be presented systematically in five
steps:

(1) Kripke distinguishes between 'rigid designators' and 'non-rigid designators'.

A rigid designator is an expression "which designates the same object in every possible world. Proper names and general names, are, for the most part, rigid designators. For instance, 'Hesperus' (the Greek name for the Evening star), 'Phosphorus' (the Greek name for the Morning Star), and 'heat' are rigid designators'.

Further, "... a non-rigid designator can be used to fix the reference of a rigid designator. For instance, we could introduce a name 'F', and use it to designate rigidly whatever person is actually designated by the non-rigid designator 'the inventor of bifocals'.

In case of 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' example - this heavenly body, appearing at a particular time in the evening with certain features - are non-rigid designators.

(2) Pre-supposing a connection between rigid and certain non-rigid designators to establish the identity in question is the second step of the argument. 'Phosphorus' and 'Hesperus' are rigid designators whose reference is fixed by non-rigid designators (this heavenly body, appearing at a particular time in the evening with certain features).

(3) Kripke's view that a true identity thus formulated with the help of rigid designators is metaphysically necessary - may be taken as the third step in the argument. According to Kripke a
necessary statement, "first, is true, and second, that it could not have been otherwise. When we say that something is contingently true, we mean that, though it is in fact the case, it could have been the case that things would have been otherwise".

If 'Hesperus' is a rigid designator, then 'phosphorus' is also a rigid designator. And we know that the Evening star and the Morning Star is one and the same thing. It is true that 'Hesperus' is 'Phosphorus'. Since in every possible world 'Hesperus' designates the same object and in every possible world 'Phosphorus' also designates the same thing and therefore, it is a necessary truth. That is, 'Hesperus' is necessarily 'Phosphorus'.

(4) Although it is a necessary truth, that 'Hesperus' is 'Phosphorus' it is established only through an empirical observation on investigation and hence aposterioristically known.

Type-type materialism, holds a contingent identity between the 'mental' and the 'physical' in which 'pain' is taken to be identical with the firing of C-fibres. On the application of Kripke's semantic argument the identity cannot be contingent for if 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' are rigid designators, so will be 'pain' and 'firing of C-fibres'. And therefore the statement that 'pain is identical with the firing of C-fibres' becomes a necessary truth although aposterioristically known because of scientific investigation.

Kripke distinguished sharply between the
notion of an apriori truth and the ontological notion of a necessary truth. Although the knowledge that we get that 'Hesperus' is 'Phosphorus' is a posteriori, it is still a necessary truth according to Kripke. However, it inspires "in us a very strong illusion of contingency". Kripke says that, the fact that they are aposteriori is not enough to explain why they appear to be so, and concludes that it can be explained only by specifying a 'contingent associated discovery' which involves non-rigid designators.

In the 'Hesperus' example, if 'Hesperus' is not 'Phosphorus', then there should have been two distinct heavenly bodies with distinct descriptions and appearances. In that case there would have been epistemological distinction between the two. But in case of 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' the descriptions and appearances were the same, even before the establishment of an identity between the two. People designated 'Hesperus' and 'Phosphorus' with preliminary designators such as, "this heavenly body, presenting such and such an appearance, at this time, from this place; that heavenly body ..." and these preliminary designators are non-rigid ones. The truth, that the two designated bodies are identical, appears contingent. It is the contingent associated discovery which explains the illusion that it is a contingent truth that 'Hesperus' is 'Phosphorus'.

The second example illustrates the identity between 'heat' and 'motion of molecules'. Through our sensation of heat we know the presence of heat. We discover that the external phenomenon which produces this sensation in us through our sense of touch, is in fact the molecular agitation in the thing that we touch.
Kripke says, "it might be thought, to imagine a situation in which heat would not have been the motion of molecules, we need only imagine a situation in which we would have had the very same sensation and it would have been produced by something other than the motion of molecules". Thus, similarity between an 'imagined' situation and the 'actual' situation may be introduced. By introducing the non-rigid designator to refer to heat, we would say that "that property of physical objects which characteristically produces these sorts of sensations in us" refers to same thing, that is, the 'motion of molecules'. And therefore, this "contingent associated discovery" explains the contingency and establishes an identity between 'heat' and 'molecular motion'.

Kripke advances similar argument against identity theory, as mental and physical are considered as identical. The argument is against three main claims: "first, .... that each person is identical to his or her body; second, ... that each particular mental event or state is identical to some corresponding particular physical event or state; and third, that each "type" of mental state is identical to some corresponding "type" of physical state".

If 'mental' and 'physical' are identical then it must be necessary truth. That 'pain' is identical with the firing of C-fibres, is a necessary truth. In that case the materialist is required to find a 'contingent associated discovery' which can explain the 'illusion of contingency'. In that there should be the description of possible situation which is epistemically
indistinguishable from the actual situation beforehand, the identity between 'pain' and 'firing of C-fibres' is established. Then the non-rigid designator must pick out something which is epistemically indistinguishable from 'pain' and ultimately this something turns out not to be the firing of C-fibres. When the contigent fact is explained away, the 'illusion of contigency' in the necessary truth would be satisfactorily explained.

(5) Taking the example of 'pain' as seen to be identical with firing of C-fibres in the brain, Kripke maintains that it is not possible for a materialist to show a contigent associated discovery with the help of a non-rigid designator which turns out to be the firing of C-fibres. Therefore, the 'illusion of contigency' is not explained.

Kripke criticising the contention of the identity theory says that the so-claimed identity between mental experiences and brain states cannot be a contigent one. It has to be essentially a necessary identity. To say that the identity is necessary, the illusion of contigency is to be explained. Kripke says that the identity theorists cannot meet this simple requirement. The identity theorists maintain that a mental state is a brain state. They hold that the 'causal role' makes a brain state into a mental state as it tends to produce certain behaviour, for example, pain behaviour, intentions producing action etc. If we assume that the relation between brain states and its causes and effects as contigent, then 'such-and-such-a-mental state' becomes the contigent property of the brain state. If we suppose that X is a pain, then in the casual role identity theory, (1) X will be a brain state and (2) X will be analysed, in a rough sense, as
the fact that $X$ is produced by certain stimuli and produces certain behaviour. The fact mentioned in (2) if regarded as contingent, then it may be said that brain state $X$ well exists but may not produce the appropriate behaviour in the absence of other conditions. Thus one might say that a certain pain $X$ might have existed, yet not have been a pain. This, Kripke says is self-evidently absurd. Because one cannot imagine any pain that it itself could have existed, yet not have been a pain.

According to Kripke, the so-claimed identity between the mental state and the brain state, should be necessary and not contingent. Kripke explains: "If $X=Y$, then $X$ and $Y$ share all properties, including modal properties. If $X$ is a pain and $Y$ the corresponding brain state, then \textit{being a pain} is an essential property of $X$, and \textit{being a brain state} is an essential property of $Y$. If the correspondence relation is, in fact, identity, then it must be necessary of $Y$ that it corresponds to a pain, and necessary of $X$ that it correspond to a brain state, indeed to this particular brain state, $Y$. Both assertions seem false; it seems clearly possible that $X$ should have existed without the corresponding brain state; or that the brain state should have existed without being felt as pain. Identity theorists cannot, contrary to their almost universal present practice, accept these intuitions; they must deny them, and explain them away. This is none too easy a thing to do".

Kripke claims that the materialist cannot meet this challenge. For the simple reason that in the possible or imagined situation, the epistemically indistinguishable situation from
actual situation, before the identity is sought between 'pain' and the firing of C-fibres, is the one in which we are actually in pain. As Kripke argues: "In the case of molecular motion and heat there is something, namely the sensation of heat, which is an intermediary between the external phenomenon and the observer. In the mental-physical case no such intermediary is possible, since here the physical phenomenon is supposed to be identical with the internal phenomenon itself... To be in the same epistemic situation that would obtain if one had a pain is to have a pain; to be in the same epistemic situation that would obtain in the absence of pain is not to have a pain ... Pain is not picked out by one of its accidental properties, rather it is picked out by the property of being 'pain' itself, by its immediate phenomenological quality. Thus pain, unlike heat, is not only rigidly designated by 'pain' but the reference of the designator is determined by an essential property of the referent".

Although Kripke's way of attacking the identity theory is ingenious and novel, counter attacks by the supporters of identity theory, has made it doubtful whether Kripke's argument against identity theory holds in general or against a particular type of it. In general he is not successful in showing that 'pain' cannot be identical with the firing of C-fibres.

'Pain' is taken to be a rigid designator in his argument. According to functionalist doctrine it is not, as for them 'pain' will be anything that plays a functional role. A functionalist holds that it is possible for many things to play such a role and, hence, 'pain' ceases to be a rigid designator. It is argued
that what we call 'pain' might not be pain and on the other hand the firing of C-fibres can take place in the possible world but not be the 'pain'.

Michael Levin, while arguing against Kripke, insists that the reference of 'pain' can be fixed by some other way, other than the 'pain-sensation'. Levin takes the help of 'Australian descriptions', which hold contingently of pain. He adds further, that, though 'pain' as necessarily identical with 'firing of C-fibres' cannot be shown as in case of 'heat' which is equal to 'molecular motion', "but perhaps over concentration on this example has made him" (Kripke) "over look the other ways to fix reference than by causal effects on the human sense".

'Australian descriptions' of the form "what goes on when (Public event)" take place Levin claims, "are best understood as ways of identifying pains by contingent descriptions utilising only a public vocabulary". 'Public event' refers to events such as 'burning of the finger', 'damaging of the skin', etc., which are publicity observable.

Topic-neutral account is a candidate analysis of a sensation word. As is pointed out by the critics of the topic-neutral analysis that "what goes on in me when I am stuck by a pin is not synonymous with 'pain', nor even with 'pin prick pain'. The contingency of the connection between pain and laceration is patent". In case of people (possible world) whose neural set up is different from ours, will add something different, different from what we experience when our skin is damaged. Therefore, the statement of the form 'what goes on in me when my skin is
damaged' should be taken as expressing only a contingent property of pain. Kripke himself rejects the analysis of 'pain' in terms of the characteristic stimuli (e.g. pin pricks) which cause it and the characteristic behaviour it causes. Kripke in other words understands topic neutrality as a candidate method of analysis.

Understood and framed this way, according to Levin 'Australian descriptions' can provide a contingent associated discovery to explain the 'illusion of contingency' in the identity between 'pain' and the 'firing of C-fibres'. First by using a non-rigid designator 'what goes on when my skin is damaged' the reference of the rigid designator should be fixed. We can imagine then the possibility of a world which epistemically cannot be distinguished from our world, but it is not sure, that pains in this world are not hurtful sensations. In this possible world then what goes on when any human skin is damaged is not 'pain' and neither there are any brain-states. In other words, what is singled out by EEG readings when their skin is damaged, would be something different from our case, that is, what EEG readings single out when our skin is damaged. An empirical investigation thereafter should suggest 'what goes on in us when our skin is damaged', that is whether it designated 'pain' or something else.

It may be objected that, the topic-neutral description of the external 'pain behaviour' is not equivalent to 'Pain'. Damaging of the skin is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for the felt 'pain'. But, this is the only way, 'pains' can be described as that coming from a pinch or coming from the
gripping of a tennis racket for a long time. 'Australian descriptions', describe the way a 'pain state' can be communicated. Thus the topic neutral account of the form 'what goes on in me when (public event)' can be used as a non-rigid designator to fix the reference of a rigid one. Levin claims that, that it always fixes the reference of sensation words, follows from two lemmas:

(a) If rigid reference to sensations is secured by description at all, it is fixed by 'Australian description' even for the subject of the sensation, since the only facts we know about pains are circumstantial.

(b) Wittgenstein's private language argument, correctly understood, shows that rigid reference to sensations must be fixed by description.

Referring to the first Lemma, it may be said that, not only external topic-neutral account can be used as a reference for a rigid designator like 'pain' but also the subject, experiencing 'pain' is forced to use 'Australian description' for sensations experienced. In other words the descriptions that others will give of A's 'pain' - fixing the references of A's 'pain' and A's internal perspective of his being in 'pain' - the description of that pain-state, will be in terms of 'Australian descriptions'. For example, in case of a finger-burn and the resulting 'pain' in A. A's description of his own pain and other's description of A's pain - involve the use of pain-designators such that it will show that there are other minds. This is connected with the second Lemma, that, "rigid reference to sensations must be fixed by
As Wittgenstein maintains that, when somebody says 'I am in pain', he refers to his pain, with the help of description, to which he initially referred as 'pain'. And this generates a regress - as each time the person will refer to the present 'pain' based on the initial description. And this in turn will violate Kripke's condition that, "for any successful theory (of reference), the account must not be circular. The properties which are used (to determine the referent of a word) must not themselves involve the notion of reference in a way that it is ultimately impossible to eliminate".

It is not, when we try to understand 'pain' that we decide to refer to 'pain' by saying to oneself that 'this is what hence forth, I will call pain'. In other words 'pains' cannot be identified with the help of references, in turn we can do so by a description, where pains are not referred to as something. Therefore, Kripke should maintain that, 'pain' cannot be fixed by any designator at all.

William G. Lycan while analysing Kripke's argument points out, that pains are not necessarily identical with C-fiber stimulations. Such a belief is based on an argument from imaginability, deriving from Descartes and Hume. Lycan puts the argument from imaginability as follows: "If A and B are distinguishable (i.e., if it seems to us that we can easily imagine A existing in the absence of B or vice versa), then it is possible that A \neq B". According to Lycan, Kripke does not accept this argument as it stands, since he (Kripke) admits that
it is possible to imagine heat in the absence of molecular motion and vice versa, even though he maintains that heat and molecular motion are necessarily identical. The reason why Kripke is not accepting the argument as it stands, is that, he wants to account for the 'distinguishability' of heat from molecular motion in the face of their necessary identity. Then Kripke points to the contingent truth, which we know and is closely related to the identity of heat with molecular motion. It is the falsity of this contingent truth that we are really imagining when we seem, to be imagining the falsity of the identity itself. Thus, we observe that heat cannot be distinguished from molecular motion and that the contingent truth was illusory.

William Lycan mentions that the analogy of genes with DNA molecules, as suggested by D.M. Armstrong to explain the mind-brain identity, has a structure, different from other analogies. Kripke maintains that, if pain and C-fibre stimulation are necessarily identical, then one should be indistinguishable from the other. Lycan, mentioning the gene-DNA analogy, says that genes and DNA molecules can be distinguished, despite their necessary identity. They are not distinguished on the basis of some third item, mediating between the external phenomenon and the observer, for example, a sensation-of-gene. At this point one can imagine Kripke pointing out that whatever experiential phenomena one takes to be the evidence for the existence of genes could have been produced by something other than genes (= DNA molecules), and that genes could have existed without producing those experiences.

Lycan says that, these are not the possibilities what we are
really imagining, when we seem to be imagining the separability of genes from DNA molecules. He maintains that "imagining, anything about our having experiences of such-and-such a kind; we are imagining, in a specific case, simply that the role (in the mechanics of heredity) by which a certain gene (=DNA molecule) was originally picked out is being filled by something other than the relevant DNA molecule (= the gene), or that the DNA molecule is failing to play a genetic role. (These imagined situations are compatible with the necessary identity of the gene with the DNA molecule)."

Lycan points out that "Kripke's "imaginability" argument is of a notably fragile and ephemeral sort. The unimaginabilities that we associate with some thing's essence are traditionally the first to go when the relevant science advances in new directions, .... suppose, in particular, that a number of reputable psychologists, etc., have (as identity theorists tell us is the case) come to accept the theory or some relevantly similar materialist view. Suppose further that, as is inevitable, this prevailing materialism filters down to ordinary people, so that it becomes quite common to talk of one's own CFS interchangeably with talking of one's own pain. It seems to me we would immediately find it easy to imagine the possibility (however minute) of some pain's occurring but failing to present itself to the awareness of its owner. We would begin to think of pain as a physical phenomenon having its cognitive qualities only contingently" .

Kripke explicitly does not make any suggestions regarding
his position in case of mind-body problem. He argues strongly against the contention of the identity theory through a thesis in semantics. He says that a necessary identity one can observe in case of water and $H_2O$ molecules, rather water is essentially $H_2O$ molecules. And $H_2O$ is the essence of water, regardless of what superficial properties the $H_2O$ may or may not have. In case of mental events and brain states, Kripke maintains, a necessary identity, is not observed as is observed in case of water and $H_2O$ molecules. Therefore, he argues against the reduction of mind to body. Since Kripke adopts a non-reductionist approach, it may be interpreted that he accepts dualism. However, he rejects Cartesian mind as an entity, as a substance. He accepts Cartesian assertion that mind is distinct from the body and argues for it in a novel way. Therefore, Kripke may be called a neo-dualist.

NOTES


3. Ibid., p.297.

4. Ibid., p.296.


7. Ibid.

University Press, 1977, p.84.

10. Ibid.
13. The Contingent associated discovery: Kripke concedes that, the truths, Hesperus is Phosphorus and heat is motion of molecules, create in us a strong illusion of contingency. He says that, although they are necessary truths, they appear to be contingent. He assumes that, a-posteriori knowledge of such truths, is not sufficient to explain the illusion of contingency. Kripke maintains that this illusion of contingency can be explained by a 'contingent associated discovery', may be through an empirical investigation. The phrase, contingent associated discovery, is adopted by Michael Levin, in his article "Kripke's Argument Against The Identity Thesis", Journal of Philosophy, vol. LXXII, No.6, pp.149-167.
18. Ibid.
19. Ibid., p.156.
22. Ibid.


25. Ibid., p.681.

26. Ibid., p.685.