

# Descartes' account of pain vs. kripkes account of pain, regarding the mind body a...

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## Part I

Kripke states first the principle of the necessity of origin; and then, second, the principle of essence; and finally gives an answer to the mind/body problem, given the nature of pain. For this essay, I will recount Kripke's original response to the mind/body problem, given his support of his claims. Kripke argues in an innovative way that one doesn't discover possible worlds, but in language, the modal realities are stipulated in such a way that how one attribute of Roger, for example, in one possible world can be compared with the attributes of another. What stays the same? Kripke's formulation is a type of arguing for a thisness that persists across all versions of Roger. I can then think of differences, for example that in one world Roger has blue eyes, or that Roger is in New York and not in Chicago. The "thisness" of Roger is an entity in one world, and the entity in another possible world -- and conclude -- over and against traditional identity theories -- that I am talking about an identical person, Roger and his doppelgangers.

When Kripke talks about identity he uses the idea of rigid designators -- that by intuition the names "Roger" might not have been in New York, but in Chicago, or was a scientist and not a college student. Names by necessity refer to all objects in all the possible worlds. By necessity there is no possible world where logically the use of a name will refer to an entity that is not that entity. It is like saying that in the class of entities that are "Roger" -- Roger being a proper name, all instances, of  $o$  in one world, and  $0$  in another world, have in essence "Roger." By necessity. It is basically a way of saying that a mind does not need a body, for modally I can think of a Roger without a body

but still designate Roger as the same Roger with a body. Another way of putting it is by thinking of how when Roger in one description of events is the same Roger as in another description of events. What essence of Roger is the same Roger across a series of counterfactual events. Kripke is not saying that I create these possible worlds -- for if I understand him correctly -- he is not thinking of conceptually a series of real Rogers -- he is using the imagination to conceive of the possibility of a Roger who is X, Y, and Z, but in all of them still remain Roger. I can compare one attribute of Roger simply by the use of logic with another attribute of Roger to test for sameness. In other words, at one point does Roger cease to be Roger, and is another, distinct entity entirely? Where can I point and think, this is no longer Roger? That is the problem. A world that has no Rogers would not matter, but only the possible worlds where the name that designates Roger would be. Of course, Kripke's argument echoes all the philosophers who tackle the mind/body problem, but trying to come up with the criteria that makes an individual an individual.

## **Part II**

Take Kripke's formulation and make it a subjective one. What is the world as I, a me, a person, perceive the world? An apple on the desk can raise serious issues about the distinction between the appearance of the apple and what the apple is in reality. But when I think of my own mental states, it as once a subjective feeling which it would seem no one else can share, which is why Kripke and Descartes resort to the phenomenon of pain. By thinking of the problem subjectively I am getting closer to cracking the problem of essence,

and not reducing the experience that can be thought as not me. Descartes was trying to argue for an ontology of the self that maintains both a mind thing and a body thing -- and that they cannot be the same thing. When I say I feel pain in my toe from hitting the door, it is certainly a feeling that is unlike the thought "there is a door." In a way, pain has no object. I say I am in pain if I feel pain. I do not have pain for something. Descartes tries to say that pain is a product of experiences of mental states that do not necessarily correspond with physical states. Kripke is trying to take away this dualism between feeling pain and the appearance of pain by arguing that both are the same "epistemic situation." Pain is isolated by Kripke, because it is different than other qualities. To have pain is to have pain, and to not have pain is to not have pain. Pain is not a physical property of something. When I stipulate "I am in pain," there is no gap between the appearance of pain and the feeling of the pain. I am the only validator that I am in pain. No one else can feel my pain for me. Someone may say this is silly and I agree.

The problem is assuming that pain is a subjective feeling. It's a mistake both Kripke and Descartes make. How we experience pain is not private. I learn pain by observing others who feel pain. I can know someone else in pain by their behavior, not by some vain hope to explore the interior recesses of their mind. While Ripley is brilliant in his implementation of modal logic to erase the unhelpful bridge between body and mind he fails in not taking into consideration that mental states are no more interior than any other phenomenon. The phenomenon of feeling pain is merely a brain state - it is not an interior feeling that is idiosyncratic to the person feeling it. Isn't it conceivable to imagine a self without mental states? In this way a materialist

theory of mind doesn't require the necessity of Kripke's notion that a name necessarily