

THINKING ABOUT PAIN IN HELL: IDENTIFYING QUALIA ACROSS POSSIBLE WORLDS¹

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The purpose of this paper is to show why conceivability arguments do not pose a significant challenge to naturalistic explanations of consciousness. The kind of conceivability arguments that are prominent in recent philosophy of mind are premised on the notion that our capacity to conceive of some state of affairs supports a claim about what is or is not possible.

What do we mean by conceivability? To begin with, conceiving is understood to be different from merely imagining or saying. We can say things that are inconceivable; “Jane kicked a square circle.” And we can conceive of things that we are unable to imagine. For example, Descartes pointed to our ability to reason about thousand-sided figures without being able to imagine them, in order to mark the difference between conceiving and imagining (AT VII, 72). For the most part, philosophers have understood the difference between these two capacities along the same lines as Descartes.

Generally speaking, conceivability alone is not a reliable guide to possibility. Clearly, the fact that I can conceive of the morning star as not being identical to the evening star should not lead me to believe that Venus possibly differs from Venus. Our power to conceive of states of affairs is fallible; we might engage in reasoning about the largest prime number or a seven-sided regular polyhedron without knowing that these are objects that cannot exist (See Bricker, “[Plentitude of Possible Structures](#)”). Thus, conceivability arguments usually require more than simply the claim that we can conceive of some state of affairs. In the case we will examine here, dualists contend that the conceivability of non-embodied minds together with our epistemic access to essential properties of minds grounds the judgment that qualia are non-physical.

The central steps in virtually all versions of the qualia argument are simple: We begin with the assumption that we can conceive or imagine a separation between qualia and any (conceivable?) physical processes. The conceivability of some state of affairs is taken to be an indication of its logical possibility.² If we accept that qualia really can be imagined or conceived of as existing separately from the body, then it is logically possible that there exist qualitative states that are independent of any physical instantiation. Given the existence of non-physical qualia in some possible world we must conclude that qualia are accidentally rather than necessarily related to physical things.³ Because they are possibly not identical to their actual physically embodied instantiations, they are not identical to bodies. Since identity is thought to hold of necessity, the conclusion is that qualia are necessarily non-physical.

Many philosophers are convinced of the ontological peculiarity of phenomenal experience because of arguments like this one and because of what they take to be the impossibility of necessary a posteriori identity statements linking minds and bodies. Saul

Kripke provided the crucial components of the argument in *Naming and Necessity* (148-155).

Philosophers have expressed many reservations concerning the standard formulations of the qualia argument. However, the present paper is focused on an additional premise that is not discussed as frequently and that must be assumed in order for conceivability arguments to have any bearing on progress in the scientific understanding of consciousness. This extra step is the claim that the disembodied experiences that we can conceive are identical to the actual experiences that serve as the content of phenomenal judgments.

Let us begin, for the sake of argument, by granting to the dualist that something like a quale can be conceived as being separate from the body. This assumption is probably unsound and I am inclined to think that we need bodies of some sort in order to feel anything, but even given this assumption, the dualist cannot get very far. This is because the dualist must show more than simply the conceivability of non-physical qualia. They must also show that the conceivably separable qualia are identical to the contents of our fleshy phenomenal judgments. There are good reasons to doubt this identification in the kinds of cases that are ordinarily taken to be evidence in support of dualism. At the very least, it will take the dualist a few more steps before she can convince us that the pains suffered by tortured souls in Hell or the ecstasies enjoyed in Heaven are relevantly similar to my fleshy pains and pleasures.

In order to justify the claim that the qualia one experiences are the same as the qualia one imagines, one has two options:

One can simply stipulate that one is talking about the same thing.⁴

One can make reference to shared properties that the embodied and disembodied phenomenal experiences share in common.

For reasons I will describe below, the strategy of simply stipulating that the imagined qualia and the content of phenomenal judgment are identical fails to support the dualist conclusion. In the case of reference to common properties, the modern dualist usually points to our special epistemic relationship to qualitative experience of feelings like pain. According to Kripke, for instance, our ability to conceive of disembodied pains depends on our having incorrigible access to the essential property of pain—its painfulness. In fact, on Kripke's view our epistemic access to pain qualia is inextricably entangled with their ontological status. Our access goes hand in hand with their existence. If we are to identify our imagined disembodied qualia with our corporeal pain qualia by reference to shared properties, then either the essential painfulness must be picked out in both instances or some other means of identifying the embodied and disembodied qualia must be defended. I will argue that it is not a straightforward matter for us to pick out the painfulness of disembodied pain qualia.

So, while it is possible to imagine some mental property existing separately from the body, the advocate of separable qualia must show why these imagined disembodied things are relevantly similar to the ordinary contents of phenomenal judgments. Many of us like to think that we are imagining the pains of the damned or the ecstasies of the angels, but, I will argue, we cannot claim with confidence that such disembodied states

are similar enough to our qualia to warrant anti-naturalism with respect to human conscious experience.

The Essence of Pain

Kripke gives us the central argument for modern dualism in *Naming and Necessity*. As we shall see, his argument rests on the view that we have a special kind of epistemic access to pain qualia that makes our ability to conceive them as being distinct from the body more than idle fancy.

Why does Kripke think that when I am conceiving of my body as being separate from my mind I am not just making a mistake? Perhaps, for example, I am making the same kind of error as a person who believes that H₂O is distinct from water or that the lightning I see is distinct from massive electrical discharges between the clouds and the ground? Identity statements that are discovered a posteriori show that conceivability is unreliable insofar as our pre-scientific ancestors could have conceived impossible things about water, lightning, the morning star and the evening star, **and so forth**. For example, prior to the discovery of the identity of the morning and evening star, our ancestors may have mistakenly conceived of the two as being separate. We recognize that we cannot conceive of Venus as not being identical to Venus and since “morning star” and “evening star” both refer to Venus, it is a mistake to think of them as distinct.⁵ Is a similar surprise possible for the friends of qualia? Not according to Kripke.

In cases where we discover necessary a posteriori identities scientifically, for example, where we discover that lightning is identical to massive electrical discharge, the fact that we *discover* the truth of the identity statement depends on our prior ignorance of the relevant essential properties of lightning. Unlike heat or lightning, pain is something whose essence (he claims) has always been available to us by virtue of what pain is. Kripke asks: “Can any case of essence be more obvious than the fact that *being a pain* is a necessary property of each pain?”⁶ (46) Unlike planets and gods, we are in direct contact with what pains essentially are. This special epistemic relationship to pain is such that we know one property the qualitative experience **cannot** do without. If we assume the legitimacy of our imagined possibility of disembodied qualia, then qualia are only contingently related to some physical process or structure. After all, as we saw before, if identity holds, it does so of necessity. Kripke’s conclusion is that minds are not identical to bodies.

Many philosophers have attempted to block Kripke’s path to dualism by claiming that our view of things like pains is as amenable to a posteriori revision as anything else. **Steven** Bayne suggests that Kripke might be wrong about the facts. It might turn out that pains and C-fiber stimulations are identical, then on his view we would be forced to conclude that they are necessarily identical. (*Naming and Necessity*). This kind of response misses Kripke’s commitment to the intuitive obviousness of the claim that we have special epistemic access to pains and other qualia of a very different type than our access to neuroscientific or other claims. Kripke argues that “scientific identification of the usual sort” as in the case of heat, the morning star, or hydrogen hydroxide is not analogous to the situation in the case of pain or any other qualitative state. (150) According to Kripke, our epistemic relation to pain is such that we can exclude the

possibility that we will discover that, for instance, conscious states are identical with states of the body.

According to Kripke, pain presents its essential nature to us in such a way as to make the sincere judgment that one is in pain infallible. So, while our ancestors might imagine the morning star and evening star as separable things, they can only do so by virtue of being acquainted with the accidental properties of Venus. If visual inspection of Venus provided access to its essential properties, then **they** could never have made such a mistake. Likewise, according to Kripke, since we know precisely what pain is, in its essence, we can see that it is within God's power to have created an organism like me in every physical respect, but without the extra qualitative experience of pain. Since identity cannot hold contingently, pain and brain processes are not identical (154).

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. (152)

And,

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. (152-3)

There are a number of prominent responses to this line of argument in the literature. Michael Della Rocca ("**Kripke's Essentialist Arguments**") argues that Kripke begs the question by assuming that pains are essentially mental. While Kripke acknowledges that pain may have the accidental property of being related to some physical mechanism, the philosophically relevant aspect of our epistemological access to pain is via its immediate phenomenological quality.⁷ This phenomenological quality is, in turn, an essential property of pain. Painfulness happens to be the essential feature of pain that we use to pick it out, and this fact, along with the conceivability of disembodied qualia is enough to demonstrate that pain is essentially non-physical. Of course, Kripke allows the possibility that pain may have other essential features in addition to its phenomenological quality, but none of the necessary a posteriori identities we discover will trump the essential property that pain has, of being painful: To be in the same epistemic situation that would obtain if one had a pain *is* to have a pain.

Richard Feldmann ("**Kripke's Argument**") and Bill Lycan ("**Inverted Spectrum**") have argued against the idea that painfulness is essential to pain. While their arguments deny a particular property of pain, the present paper grants, for the sake of the argument, the painfulness of pain while challenging the identification of our pains with the imagined pains that we think might be suffered by disembodied beings in some possible world.

Access and Existence

Let **us** examine the notion that essences of qualia present themselves to us in experience. On the one hand, there is something very natural about this way of thinking about

experience. There is something intuitively obvious about the idea that the experiences in question are picked out (at least for us) by the fact that we are aware of them and form judgments about them. In the case of pain, its immediate phenomenological quality seems to compel us to judge our pains as pains.

While it is difficult to imagine having experiences that we are not aware of, we seem able to imagine experiences about which we form no judgments. Some experiences might even be intrinsically resistant to judgment, or perhaps some personal deficiency means that I might never be able to adequately capture the true nature of my experiences. I might be unable to form judgments about some or all of my experiences or I might be weirdly built and might systematically misidentify or erroneously describe my experiences. So, while there may be an ineliminable conceptual connection between awareness and qualia, it is clear that there could be a qualitative experience that escapes my capacity to form phenomenal judgments.

There may be cases where my capacity to make a judgment about some particularly subtle flavor or aroma needs to be fine-tuned, but in the case of pain, Kripke says, the qualia and the epistemic situation are inseparable. There is a great deal to be said about our access to qualia, but for now let us restrict ourselves to two lines of response to Kripke's view of the epistemic situation of the person suffering a pain. In what sense might the person be wrong about the painfulness of pain? First, she could judge an experience to have been painful before correcting her judgment. She might come to recognize that she was wrong for some reason. Michael Tye has considered cases of this kind in his recent work (*Ten Problems*). Second, as Valerie Hardcastle discusses, empirical work in neuroscience and psychology have shown that the discriminative and affective-motivational aspects of pain are separable ("When a Pain Is Not"). What this means is that I can judge that I am in pain without finding the pain distressing or even bothersome. I can "have" a "pain" that is not "painful." Let us consider both lines of response:

Tye challenges the inseparability of the qualia and the epistemic situation in the following example:

Suppose, for example, you are being tortured. A red-hot poker tip has been touched to your back nine times. You feel excruciating pain each time. On the tenth occasion you see the poker as your torturer moves from in front of you to behind you, and you expect to feel intense pain again. On this occasion, however an ice cube is pressed against your back. For a moment you believe that you are feeling pain and you cry out, but then you realize that you were wrong. You weren't really feeling pain at all; instead you were experiencing a localized feeling of coldness. (*Ten Problems* 184)

In this case we are presented with the intuitively plausible case of painfulness in the absence of pain. Let us now examine a case where subjects report pain without painfulness: Valerie Hardcastle (*The Myth of Pain*, "When a Pain Is Not") presents revealing consequences of disorders in the experience of pain and explains how at least two important subsystems (discriminative pain processing systems and affective-motivational pain processing systems) comprise the normal perception of pain. Pain is, at the very least more complicated than Kripke's view presupposes. Hardcastle writes, for instance:

Ingestion of morphine (or other opiates), lesions to the medial thalamus, and prefrontal lobotomies all result in sensations of pain without a sense of suffering and without producing characteristic pain behaviors (wincing, moaning, complaining, etc.). In these cases, patients can localize their pains but are not upset by the fact that they are in pain. We can also get reverse effects, to a degree. Fentanyl causes one to react in pain yet inhibits our discriminatory abilities for the pain. Lesion studies and studies using hemispherectomies show that even with cortex completely missing, we can still have a pain sensation; we simply lack fine localization and intensity discrimination. Patients with Parkinson's disease and Huntington's chorea often have pain sensations but are unable to indicate exactly where they feel the pains. (*The Myth of Pain*, 104)

Kripke could respond that in cases like these, where there is some confusion in the agent about whether or not she is in pain, the agent is simply not in pain. Kripke's strategy is simple; by connecting the phenomenal judgment of pain to the essence of pain, he simply insists that, if there is any confusion as to whether one is in pain, one is **not**.

Kripke must also deny that judgments that one is in pain are also subject to the problem of vagueness. As Tim Williamson has noted, there seem to be transitional moments in one's experience of pain, where it not exactly clear whether one is in pain.⁸ Even when one might think that one is in pain, perhaps there are occasions where it would be more accurate to identify the discomfort as boredom, despair, humiliation, irritation, or anxiety. The experience of pain does not seem to function like a binary switch. Unless Kripke is willing to countenance qualia as ontologically vague, the apparent vagueness in our experience of pain must be denied. Pain must operate like a binary switch. So, not only does the apparent vagueness in our experience of qualia threaten the notion that phenomenal judgments are infallible or incorrigible, if one accepts that we can form true, but vague phenomenal judgments, it is also threatening to the ontological side of the idea that pains are essentially painful.

Let **us** call the claim that being in pain requires that one knows that one is in pain the joint access-existence condition for qualia. (AE) Tye, Hardcastle and others would likely agree that AE runs counter to both the contemporary neuroscience of pain and also, as Tye's example shows, to a common sense view of pain experiences. As we have seen, AE depends on the unmediated presentation of the essence of pain to the epistemic subject.

Guantanamo, Hell, and My Ingrown Toenail

Consider the case of a relatively mild pain, like the pain of being tattooed, the pain of muscle fatigue, or the pain of a blister from exercise. Pains of this kind depend, in large part, on one's attitude towards them. Specifically, one's attention to them seems central to the experience of the sensation. Boredom, for instance, makes my experience of the tattoo needle feel more unpleasant than it might otherwise feel. When I can see the artist at work, when I can talk with him, I remain attentive to the action of the tattoo needle and I can feel what it is doing to my body without experiencing any negative affective or motivational states.

It would be phenomenologically inaccurate to say that the usual feelings one has while lifting weights or while engaged in some enjoyable but strenuous physical activity are painful. However, it is likely that if those same circumstances were inflicted by one's enemy, they would be felt *as* pains. Imagine, for instance, the phenomenological difference between lifting a weight near the limits of one's strength voluntarily and having one's muscles stressed to the same degree during detention in Guantanamo.

Notice that Kripke can accept these claims about the complex origins of pain qualia, including, for example, the role of context, **and so on**, while continuing to stick to his original formulation of AE. Marginal or context dependent cases are not a challenge to AE insofar as they are simply not cases of pain. On this view, when feelings are painful they are pains and there is no scenario in which a pain stops being painful; they simply stop being pains.

Again, for sake of argument we could allow AE to stand in the face of the empirical and common sense objections considered. The conceivability argument involves us moving from our grasp of the essential nature of pain to the idea that this pain could be felt by a non-physical subject. So, let **us** attempt to conceive of a pain being suffered by my disembodied soul in Hell. Imagining pains in Hell involves stipulating that the essential painfulness of the pains I experience here in the corporeal world can exist in a disembodied state.

For Kripke, thinking about possible worlds involves stipulation. We imagine, for example, a world in which Obama did not become president of the United States; we do this by first rigidly designating Obama (in the actual world, of course) before building up an alternative set of conditions around Obama. Stipulation involves rigid designation plus a set of consistent descriptive conditions. In effect, there is no need to worry about transworld identification in these cases; no need to worry about how we "pick out" Obama in the alternative possible world because, according to Kripke, we build the possible world under consideration up around the thing that we rigidly designate. We know who we are talking about when we start talking about what could have happened to Obama. Similarly, in the conceivability arguments that we are considering "pain" rigidly designates the kinds of things we know here in the actual world and we are right about the reference of the word "pain" according to Kripke because: "the reference of the designator is determined by an essential property of the referent" (152-3). Concerns about the necessary and sufficient conditions for transworld identification (TWI) of pain are irrelevant for the same reasons that he dismisses the demand for a developed theory of TWI (42-45). On Kripke's view, Obama is picked out via the rigid designation which must work via some connection to the Obama we know in the actual world. Similarly, pain is picked out via our actual experience of painfulness.

In order to insulate AE from the kind of contextual or relational considerations of the kind posed by Tye and Hardcastle, the argument must assume that our reference-fixing experiences of pain are not characterized by any properties that are extrinsically related to the body or other non-qualitative features of the actual world. The elimination of any reference to physical properties, context, or other relations is required in order for the argument to go through. AE's reliance on the non-relational and context-free essential property "painfulness" comes with a price. As we shall see, it imposes difficulties for the kind of conceivability arguments that we are considering here.

Let **us** consider my disembodied counterpart suffering for his sins in Hell. If the conceivability argument is successful, our ability to conceive of a disembodied mind suffering pains like ours suffices **to** support dualism. But should we be confident that the kinds of pains we are imagining disembodied John undergoing are similar to the pains we experience in our embodied lives? Yes, Kripke could say, we can simply stipulate that this is so.

Rather than remaining at the level of a type, *pain*, let **us** think about a specific token of pain. Consider *Pain #27*: let **us** say that this is the experience that I have when my three-year old stands on my ingrown toenail. Let **us** say that I had this pain a few moments ago and I regard it as being a pretty serious pain. At this point I consider how Pain #27 might feel to my disembodied self in Hell. Notice that I claim to have stipulated that Pain#27 is the same sensation that I have rigidly designated as Pain #27 in the actual world. It occurs to me that Pain #27 could be felt as a sweet relief from another pain, say the usual pains that will be inflicted on me in Hell. If the devil decides to give me a break from the usual treatment and bumps me down to Pain #27, would it be felt as pleasurable? If so, then #27 is not intrinsically painful. Common sense tells us that pains are painful relative to other experiences. Their painfulness is determined extrinsically, by for example the past history of pain, **and so forth**. But does it make sense to say that in some possible world #27 is not a pain?

Recall that in response to Tye and Hardcastle's objections the advocate of AE would insist on the privileged epistemic access that we have to the essence of pain such that if a feeling is not painful, then it is not a pain and, of course, that if it is painful, then it is a pain. The trouble for the conceivability argument arises when one tries to combine this strong version of the AE principle for pain with the stipulated existence of disembodied pains in the conceivability argument. So, for example, if one stipulates that disembodied John has Pain #27, one must combine the rigidly designated object Pain #27 with the descriptive conditions governing the imagined scenario. We could certainly stipulate that we were talking about Pain#27 in Hell and could provide a consistent description of the predicament facing disembodied John. However, notice that this does not suffice for the purpose of the qualia argument. Given the descriptive conditions (Hell, the history of far worse suffering than Pain #27, etc.), we are faced with the possibility that Pain#27 might not be a painful feeling under some circumstances. It is quite plausible to think that Pain #27 might not feel the same way as it does in the actual world, given the distinct descriptive conditions governing those worlds. So, in order to block the possibility that Pain #27 is not painful, the dualist will be forced to exclude some kinds of descriptive conditions and, therewith, some possible worlds. On Kripke's view, for Pain #27 to be what it is, it *must* be painful. However, if there were enough changes to the world around Pain #27, we can easily conceive of situations in which it could *not be felt as painful*. In such cases, if we identify Pain #27 with its painfulness, then we must acknowledge that there are some worlds in which it would not exist.

This should not be such a strange conclusion for the dualist to accept. After all, she will acknowledge that there are worlds in which there are no subjects or worlds in which subjects are not capable of experiencing Pain #27 as painful, for whatever reason.

The conceivability argument works through the stipulation of a rigidly designated object: the particular quale in a possible world that is fixed by some set of descriptive conditions. The kinds of objections that we saw exemplified by Tye and Hardcastle, involve objections to AE, but even if we accept AE, the descriptive conditions that fix the possible worlds under consideration are subject to the following:

Descriptive conditions governing possible worlds cannot be mutually inconsistent nor can they be inconsistent with the existence of the rigidly-designated object whose existence in that possible world is being stipulated.

So, for example, this rule would, most obviously, exclude conceiving of worlds in which Obama exists and there is no Obama. More substantially, it could prohibit us from considering worlds in which objects violate the laws of physics, but in which the current laws of physics hold.

Clearly care must be taken in stipulating worlds in which pain qualia exist. Even if we can hold on to AE, thereby disallowing any change in the painfulness of the pain qualia, the descriptive conditions will have to be adjusted so as to make for a coherent combination of the rigidly designated pain quale and the descriptive conditions that fix some possible world. Not all descriptive conditions for worlds will be compatible with pain qualia. Most obviously, there would be no pain qualia in worlds in which there are no pain qualia and no pain qualia in worlds in which there are no subjects to experience the painfulness of pain.

Are there disembodied subjects in Hell who are capable of experiencing pain? In order for our argument in favor of disembodied qualia to work, there had better be such beings. But how does the dualist provide principled reasons for defending the existence of such beings apart from reference to something like the possibility of qualia. The trouble for the dualist is that since disembodied qualia are themselves in need of disembodied subjects, they are in no position to help one another out.

Let us summarize the argument so far:

In the conceivability argument supporting dualism we begin by rigidly designating an experience of pain with the word “pain.” Recall that Kripke’s view here is that “reference of the designator is determined by an essential property of the referent.” (*Naming and Necessity*, 153). Presumably, all tokens of the type *pain* are such that they can be rigidly designated. If so, then we can safely assume that the designator for the token is determined by the painfulness of the referent. We could have designated some specific token of pain with a label “Harry,” “ouchashi,” or “#27.” Let us assign the label “Pain #27” to the instance of pain that I have in my toe right now. Following AE, I can say that I know the essence of Pain #27 (its painfulness).

Once I have rigidly designated the pain, I attempt to conceive of it as the object of phenomenal judgment for my disembodied counterpart in Hell. Thinking about pains in Hell is complicated by the set of descriptive conditions that I must invoke in order to fill out that possible scenario. The worry is that it might make no sense for Pain #27 to be felt as a pain in Hell given the descriptive conditions normally associated with that scenario. This leads us to think about ways of adjusting descriptive conditions such that we can coherently conceive of a subject suffering Pain #27 in the same way that I

suffered it in the actual world. Notice that by holding on to AE we **are** forced to be in the business of referring to non-essential features of Pain #27 in order to make the descriptive conditions work.

At this point, I contend that the game of holding Pain #27 constant and adjusting the descriptive conditions of the possible world to make that world safe for the rigidly-designated essence of Pain#27 forces all of the objections from Tye and Hardcastle back into consideration insofar as they must be addressed in the creation of the descriptive conditions governing the possible worlds.

The challenge facing the dualist is to explain the kinds of worlds in which qualia like mine can exist. While I am very well acquainted with Pain #27 in the actual world, I am less confident that I can conceive of descriptive conditions for worlds that are distant from the actual world where the same pain can exist. To begin with, such worlds must have subjects of the appropriate kind. As I try to determine what “appropriateness” amounts to here, I will inevitably begin to think of my own embodied circumstances.

NOTES

1. This paper is a substantially revised version of my Presidential Address to The New Mexico-West Texas Philosophical Society in 2009. Earlier versions of this paper were presented to audiences at Boston University, New Mexico State University, and The Autonomous University of Chihuahua. Special thanks to Clifford Hill for very helpful discussions.

2. The move from conceivability to logical possibility is not as clear as is generally presented. Why couldn't we, for instance, follow Graham Priest in thinking that we can understand a short story in which we refer to a box containing an impossible object? Priest's treatment of fictions concerning impossible worlds, would seem, at the very least, to complicate the simple move from conceivability to logical possibility (“*Sylvan's Box*”).

3. One prominent line of rebuttal involves arguing that to be real is to be individuated via some causal-functional role and hence that qualia, if they exist, must be subject (in principle at least) to ordinary scientific investigation. However, this line of argument has been ineffective since it takes as a weakness the very point which advocates of qualia take as their conclusion!

4. Along the lines that Kripke suggests in *Naming and Necessity* in response to Kaplan's objections to trans-world identification.

5. Of course, it is conceivable that the labels “morning star” and “evening star” were applied in different ways, but when we're talking about Venus we **are** talking about a planet, not a name.

6. There are a number of points at which this influential argument can be challenged. Contrary to what Kripke calls the *intuitive view* (155) there are reasons to believe, for instance that epistemic subjects like you and **me** do not have phenomenological or epistemic access to the essence of our pain. Timothy Williamson points out, for instance that I need not always know that I am in pain when I am in pain. For example, an overabundance of self-pity will lead me to judge my itch to be a pain and an insufficient level of self-pity will lead me to judge my pain an itch. Even given deviant cases of this kind, one might still argue that we know our own pain better than anyone else and that all we need is the occasional instance of epistemic transparency to allow us access to the essence of pain. The idea of correcting a subject with respect to her phenomenal judgments concerning her pains has a strongly counterintuitive quality to it. Nevertheless, there are reasons for doubting that the subject has special access to her phenomenal experiences.

7. In his response to Kripke, Dale Jacquette (“*Kripke and the Mind-body Problem*”) argued that Kripke fails to exclude contingent identity statements between bodies and minds. Jacquette correctly notes that minds may have contingent physical properties on Kripke's view. However, Kripke would insist that genuine identity

statements must hold necessarily. Jacquette argues that materialism can get by with contingent instantiations of minds in bodies. While this might be true, it is orthogonal to Kripke's metaphysical point.

8. See Williamson, *Identity and Discrimination*.

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