

Why Are Mind-Brain Identities Peculiar?

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It is very widely agreed, by materialists as well as dualists, that there is something peculiar about materialist mind-brain identity claims, by comparison with scientific identity claims like 'water = H₂O'. But there are different views about the nature of this peculiarity. Kripke argues that the peculiarity is that the apparent contingency of these claims is inexplicable. Levine holds that the peculiarity is that these claims leave us with unanswered 'why' questions. Two-dimensional semanticists like Jackson and Chalmers say that the peculiarity is that these claims can't be derived a priori from the physical facts. I think that all these diagnoses are wrong, and shall offer a different explanation of the peculiarity, one which argues that materialist mind-brain identity claims are perfectly adequate as they stand."