

Saul Kripke has argued that mind-body identities cannot be correct, since as true identities they would have to be necessary, yet they are intuitively contingent. This paper defends physicalism against Kripke's objection, by showing that these intuitions of contingency can be explained within a physicalist framework. The same framework can also account for the intuition that other theoretical identifications, such as the one of heat to molecular motion, are necessary. To these ends, the paper argues that Kripke's proposed explanation of the intuitive necessity of identities is incorrect. Instead, the paper describes the psychological mechanism that gives rise to intuitions of necessary identity, and shows why this mechanism will fail with respect to mind-body identities. This failure of intuition will occur regardless of whether mind-body identities are actually correct or not. Thus, the intuition that the identity of a certain (type of) state of mind to a certain (type of) neural state is contingent bears no relevance to whether the identity is true.