

What the Identity Theorist is committed to

- The Identity Theorist:
Pain = C-fiber activation
- This is an identity statement, and so is necessarily true (if true at all).
- This entails that (i) anything (actual or possible) that does not have C-fibers, or (ii) is otherwise incapable of C-fiber activation, is incapable of being in pain.

The Mind is Plastic (i.e., Multiply Realizable)

- **Across humans:** perhaps for most humans pain is *realized by* the activation of C-fibers.
- But this isn't true for all humans: some humans who have had serious brain injuries are incapable of C-fiber activation, but nevertheless are capable of being in pain.
- So, pain \neq C-fiber activation

- **Within a single human:** a human may be able to be in pain *throughout her life* despite the fact that her being in pain is realized by C-fiber activation for a time, but then, after suffering a brain injury and becoming incapable C-fiber activation, her being in pain is realized by some other brain state.
- So, pain \neq C-fiber activation.

- **Across species:** we have good reason to think that many different species are capable of being in pain, even though their nervous systems aren't relevantly like those of humans.
- Octopi, lizards, snakes, etc. are all capable of being in pain. But none of them have nervous systems quite like humans': we have good reason to think they don't have C-fibers to activate.
- So, pain \neq C-fiber activation.

The *Possibility* of Alien Minds

- Suppose that one day we come into contact with some extraterrestrials (Xenuans) who don't have nervous systems like ours and who have, instead of a brain, a *gooey green globule*.
- Being evil, we poke and prod the Xenuans and they seem to find it unpleasant, more and more so as we increase the number and degree of our pokes and prods.
- Can we really rule out that they aren't actually in pain simply because they don't have C-fibers to activate?