

Reply to Hahn

Martin Hahn's paper is a fresh and illuminating discussion of differences between my views and those of Donald Davidson on issues associated with anti-individualism. I think that Hahn is right to emphasize differences, and right about where most of the fundamental differences lie. In some places I cannot answer questions he raises about Davidson's views. I will try mainly to answer for my own. First, I want to make some general points about anti-individualism.

Hahn is right to see the relevance of "Belief De Re" to my arguments for anti-individualism.¹ That article is the main conceptual forerunner in my work to "Individualism and the Mental" and "Other Bodies".² Hahn is also right that I do not argue for or even advocate anti-individualism in "Belief De Re".

There are two theses in that article that are relevant to the development of anti-individualism. One is the thesis that having de re attitudes is necessary for having any propositional attitudes at all. Hence they are necessary for having de dicto attitudes.³ This thesis hinges on the claim that for a creature to have propositional attitudes, with their attendant intentionality, it must engage in activity or enter into relations that connect those attitudes with their subject matter. This activity and these relations must not merely be relations of conceiving of the subject matter. Some must be non-conceptual, and some must even be non-intentional. Demonstrative applications of intentional types to individual objects are the

primary sort of intentional, but non-conceptual relations. Causal relations in ordinary perception are paradigmatic of relevant non-intentional relations in our actual cognitive activity. But I indicated that they are not the only relevant relations. I avoided claiming that ordinary perception of objects in the physical world is metaphysically necessary for intentionality.

The key idea of this thesis is that the intentionality of all of an individual's conceptual states depends on further relations, including non-conceptual and even non-intentional relations, between some of the individual's states, on one hand, and entities that are referential objects of the intentional states, on the other. These relations underlie and make possible de re attitudes. De re attitudes make possible de dicto attitudes.⁴ This is a completely general thesis that does not make any commitment to what the subject matter of the de re attitudes has to be. The thesis makes no special mention of the environment beyond the individual's body.⁵

Thus Hahn overstates what I argued when he writes (p. 9 in the manuscript--give the correct page in the book) that for me "De Re beliefs are irreducibly relational (acts of application of a conceptual content to an object in the environment)." I think that they are, in a certain sense, irreducibly relational. I think that perceptual relations to objects in an environment are paradigmatic in the actual circumstances in which human beings operate. But I did not maintain that de re attitudes necessarily involve relations to an

environment beyond the individual, nor therefore that having propositional attitudes necessarily requires bearing de re relations to such an environment. Thus Hahn is somewhat misleading in his remarks on p. 37 of the manuscript--get the correct pagination in the book. These remarks suggest that his explanation as to why "Belief De Re" does not involve commitment to anti-individualism is that anti-individualism is a thesis only about our de dicto attitudes. On this interpretation, a theory about de re attitudes would not even be relevant to anti-individualism. But my anti-individualism is a thesis about the individuation of both de re and de dicto attitudes. My anti-individualism even involves commitments regarding the individuation of certain de re elements in de re attitudes--certain demonstrative, applicational elements--that are applied to objects in the environment. Objects in the environment play a role in individuating such applications and such demonstrative-tokens. Hence they play a role in individuating de re attitudes with respect to those "de re" intentional aspects of the attitudes.

The element of truth in Hahn's remark is that I wanted to emphasize in "Individualism and the Mental" and "Other Bodies" op. cit. two closely related points: First, I wanted to emphasize that anti-individualism is not merely the thesis that the environmental referents of de re attitudes play a role in individuating the attitudes considered as relations to the environment. I regarded this thesis, though in a certain sense anti-individualist, as almost

trivial.

It avoids triviality inasmuch as it presupposes that de re attitudes cannot be reduced to de dicto attitudes. But taking the relevant de re attitudes to be relations is, I think (and thought), trading on a somewhat contrived conception of propositional attitude. I think that the attitudes themselves (as opposed to our attribution of them, or relations between them and the environment) are states of the individual completely fixed by their intentional content, including the non-conceptual, applicational (or token-demonstrative) elements in the content. The attitudes bear relations to an environment but are not themselves relations to an environment.⁶ These relations are not reducible to de dicto conceiving-of relations. The attitudes' being de re lies in their being in certain referential relations through the demonstrative applications. The de re attitude itself is a mental state involving a non-conceptual application token. It is not itself a relation that includes the object. It is important to take the relation seriously. It enters into various psychological explanations. The state must, however, be distinguished from the relation for other psychological purposes and for many of the purposes of epistemology and theory of rationality. The de re relation is a success relation. It is to the incompletely conceptualized, demonstrative-involving mental state as veridical perception is to the perceptual state.

Second, I wanted to emphasize that anti-individualism applies to

the conceptual elements in propositional attitudes, whether these be de re attitudes or de dicto attitudes. It was a much more substantial thesis that conceptual, standing, intentional aspects of the attitudes are non-individualistically individuated than that the token-demonstrative elements are. (The associated, but even weaker thesis that de re attitudes that are about objects in the environment involve, insofar as they are de re, relations to the environment is virtually trivial.) So I highlighted the conceptual "de dicto" elements in attitudes, whether or not the whole attitude was de re or de dicto.

Thus, the reason that "Belief De Re" does not argue for or advocate anti-individualism is not because it makes a claim about de re attitudes, whereas anti-individualism is a thesis only about de dicto attitudes. The reason is that "Belief De Re" does not claim that any propositional attitudes are essentially individuated in terms of relations to an environment beyond the individual. It does not single out de re attitudes about the environment. And it does not specifically claim that the intentional components of mental states that are in fact de re are ever individuated in terms of relations to the environment. The relations that "Belief De Re" requires de re attitudes to have are relations between the attitudes and (usually non-intentional) objects of those attitudes--where no requirements are placed on the nature of the objects.

When I wrote "Belief De Re", I did believe that mental states

that involve de re applications to objects in the environment are partly individuated in terms of non-intentional relations, paradigmatically, causal-perceptual relations, to those objects. These relations support and help individuate the intentional but non-conceptual demonstrative applications. Applications to different objects count necessarily as different applications, whereas different application events that are anaphoric or otherwise tied together can count as the same application for purposes of logical form. Although this view is strictly speaking anti-individualist, it was not asserted or argued for in the article, though certain claims in the article do presuppose or entail it. The view is at most a relatively small and non-central aspect of anti-individualism. Anti-individualism is most interesting in its claim about the individuation of conceptual elements in a wide range of propositional attitudes, both de re and de dicto attitudes. I did not make that such a claim until "Individualism and the Mental".

Whether the thesis of "Belief De Re" that all attitudes presuppose de re attitudes can be strengthened so as to require de re attitudes about the environment is an extremely difficult issue. The issue is close to issues that have exercised philosophers at least since Kant's "Refutation of Idealism".⁷ Some philosophers, following Kant, have maintained that to have propositional attitudes about sensations and about mathematics, one must have attitudes about physical objects in the environment. I find this thesis plausible. I

think that it is almost surely a deep truth about the psychology of human beings. But I am not satisfied with apriori arguments for it as a necessary truth. I find neither Kant's "Refutation of Idealism" nor private language arguments with this sort of conclusion compelling as they stand. I have so far not myself argued for the view, as an apriori, necessary truth.

The second thesis in "Belief De Re" relevant to anti-individualism is that de re attitudes are attitudes that are incompletely conceptualized. The attitudes essentially involve non-conceptual intentional elements, principally token-applications of demonstrative or indexical elements attached to concepts. They are associated with and supported by non-intentional relations between the individual and the objects referred to in de re attitudes. The thesis about incomplete conceptualization was a development of the points about reference brilliantly initiated by Kripke and Donnellan. The development consisted in associating those points with demonstrative elements in the logical form of thoughts, and in elaborating their points about linguistic reference in the context of individuating propositional attitudes.

These two theses of "Belief De Re" help explain, as Hahn notes, the anti-individualism. It is natural to see the nature of empirical beliefs about objects in the environment as depending on de re beliefs about objects, not necessarily the same objects, in the environment. This is a specialization of the first thesis of "Belief De Re". But

the arguments for it are not to be found in that article. It is also natural to see the non-conceptual and even intentional relations between the individual and their objects, which are required by the second thesis, as helping to explain the specific content of conceptual elements in propositional attitudes. But again the arguments for this view are developed only later. Finally, the idea of the second thesis that a person can think and make reference to individual objects with incomplete mastery of conceptual methods that individuate the objects suggests the further point, developed only later, that a person can think with concepts that he incompletely understands. A person incompletely understands a concept he uses, in the relevant sense, if he cannot explicate it sufficiently thoroughly and accurately to fix, through those explications, essential features of the concept's applications to kinds or properties.

Hahn several times characterizes my anti-individualistic view as the claim that for a large class of propositional attitudes, the intentional contents of the attitudes, hence the attitudes themselves, are in part individuated by the nature of their referents or extensions. I want to enter two qualifications on this characterization.

First, anti-individualism is, as Hahn is aware, a thesis not primarily about concepts but about intentional mental states. It is about the constitutive or individuating conditions of propositional attitudes, perceptual states, the having of concepts, the applications

of demonstratives, and so on. Anti-individualism is relevant to the nature of concepts themselves, but the arguments for anti-individualism all have to do with the individuation of mental states, which are typed partly in terms of concepts. The view is intended to be compatible with a variety of accounts of the nature and ontology of concepts.⁸ When one says that the view applies to lots of different kinds of empirical concepts, this should be taken as shorthand for saying that it applies to lots of different kinds of mental states typed, of course, by their intentional contents, including concepts.

Second, the remark that attitudes are individuated in part by the nature of their referents or extensions needs elaboration if it is not to be misleading. For most of the contents of attitudes I discuss, the concepts logically determine their extensions or referents, in the sense that a relevant given concept has one and only one extension or referent. Given the actual world, the concept water applies to one and only one extension, all the water (both small and large portions) that there is. Moreover, the concept water applies only to water in any possible circumstances. In my arguments I sometimes use this point by showing that under certain different circumstances, certain persons have different referents for the concepts in their attitudes, and hence have different attitudes. But the point that if referents are different for non-indexical intentional contents of propositional attitudes, the attitudes are different (and thus that referents play a role in the individuation of attitudes), is not itself an anti-

individualist point. It is purely a "logical" point about intentional contents and reference. Anti-individualism involves the further commitment that attitudes are in part individuated in terms of non-intentional relations--or relations partly individuated independently of reference--that the individual bears to objects, properties, or relations in the environment.

For individual attitudes, the account specifies particular kinds of entities in the environment. The nature of the non-indexical aspect of the attitude determines--in the sense explained above--the extension of that aspect of the attitude. So the attitude's intentional, referential relation to the extension is not more basic than the attitude itself. The two go lock-step together. Certain objects, properties, relations bear a certain complex of non-intentional relations to the individual. Partly by virtue of standing in those relations, the individual has attitudes with intentional contents that can include some of those entities in the attitudes' extensions. Anti-individualism is a view about how mental states are constitutively individuated. The individuation helps account both for what extensions the attitudes have and for what their intentional contents are. So one cannot appeal to the extension of the attitude as such in explaining how--or in citing a constraint on how--the attitude is individuated. The relations that the account appeals to are non-intentional relations between the individual and entities in the environment. These relations help establish relevant entities as

falling in the extension or being referents of the attitudes. Since relevant aspects of the attitudes determine extension and reference, the relations constrain the nature of the mental states.

I believe that the non-intentional relations that figure in the individuation of many intentional mental states cannot be specified in such a way as to produce a reductive explanation of their intentionality. Rather the presence of such relations is a metaphysically necessary constraint on intentionality and on the contents of particular sorts of attitudes--at least for reference and purported reference to objects in the environment cognized by empirical means.

Because of the enormously complex variety of ways in which intentional content and reference can be constrained by the individual's relations to an environment, I have tried to stay open and flexible in specification of the relevant relations. I do not, however, think that just any relations will do. The environment's being a certain way must somehow connect to the individual's being a certain way. An individual thinker's mere presence in an environment has little individuating relevance. I believe that most relations to future events are of little relevance.⁹ It is clear that causal relations to past and present events play a large and central role. However, the ways that causal relations play a role in individuation are extremely complex.

Even in the individuation of perceptual states, the relations can be very indirect. For example, relevant causal relations can be

between objects and ancestors of an individual's perceptual system, far back in the evolution of the system, rather than within the individual's learning experience. The relations are compatible, in some instances, with a predominance of "false positives". For example, the perceptual signal predator there may be caused, even in evolutionary history, more often by non-predators than by predators.¹⁰ Causal relations can go through other individuals in acquisition of concepts through interlocution. They can be mediated by empirical theory. They can be supported by imaginative projection from perceived instances of other kinds.

Hahn is certainly right (p. 36 of the manuscript--get correct page in the book) that I do not hold that beliefs about cows must be the normal causal products of interaction with cows. Someone could have beliefs about cows without ever having interacted with one--if, for example, he or she constructed a correct biological theory of cows and imagined what they would look like.¹¹ Such a theory would, of course, contain other notions that had more direct causal relations to their referents.

My reticence about talk of causal relations in discussions of anti-individualism has been motivated by an appreciation of the complexity of the matter and a determination to avoid reductionism. The exact details of relevant non-intentional relations interest me less than the broad categories of relations that play roles in constraining the individuation of various types of attitudes. My

reticence does not stem from any doubt that causal relations are among--even central to--the non-intentional relations that connect the individual to an environment in such a way as to help individuate the individual's attitudes.

I also want to emphasize that relations to the environment are not the whole story about the individuation of attitudes or of meaning. Internal relations among attitudes--for example, inferential and explicational relations--also play a large role. I think that that role had been over-emphasized in theories of meaning in the first two-thirds of the twentieth century.¹² That is not to say that mental content can be individuated purely in terms of relations to an environment. Having any belief requires mastering some inferential relationships involving it.

I turn now to some issues Hahn raises about relations between Davidson's views and mine. I agree with Hahn in being unaware of a clear statement of an anti-individualist thesis in Davidson's writings prior to the 1980's. It may well be that things in his early writings, properly interpreted, commit him to anti-individualism. I do not find the thesis isolated and specifically advocated, or argued for, before that time. I agree with Hahn that Davidson's later advocacy of the view derives from premises that I do not share and that have, I think, less appeal than the basis on which I (and with qualifications, Putnam) argued for the view.

In particular, Davidson's important and sound points about the

role of distal stimulants as evidence for interpretation do not nearly suffice by themselves to establish anti-individualism.¹³ Unless these points are conjoined with his interpretationism or with other strong premises, they do not yield any conclusion about the nature or constitution of propositional attitudes. The interpretationism--the idea that propositional attitudes like belief are constitutively dependent on relations to an interpreter--seems to me quite implausible. I do not find Davidson's arguments for this view compelling or even attractive.¹⁴ It is certainly a relatively special philosophical position. There are many aspects of the view and its application, some of which Hahn probes, that I do not understand. I do believe that Davidson gives the empirical world an important role in his account of interpretation; and I am not sure that Hahn gives this role sufficient weight in his discussion. I leave these matters to others, however.

Whether and in what sense Davidson sees the kinds in the empirical world as dependent on us and our practices is another matter I am not clear about. I would certainly oppose any such generalization about empirical kinds. As Hahn emphasizes, I do not believe that our activities of "carving" the world into similarity classes (cf. Hahn's note 10) play any substantial role in constituting empirical natural kinds, for example. Our language and concepts develop in ways that take account of differences and similarities we come to appreciate in the world. The idealism suggested by the

carving metaphor, or by interpretationist accounts of natural kinds, plays no role in the sort of anti-individualism that I maintain. I agree with Hahn that such a view would, at the very least, attenuate the meaning of anti-individualism (or externalism) about the role of the physical world in individuating mental states.

Let us turn to Davidson's Swampman case. The case involves many complexities and cannot be covered in a few words. I will not discuss whether Swampman could have thoughts at all. I will confine myself to the question of whether it could have thoughts about its physical environment. I stipulate that my discussion concerns Swampman at the moment that its synthesis is completed, but before it interacts with its environment. I believe that once Swampman interacts with objects in the world (through stimulation of sense organs or through operating on those objects), there begin to be the sorts of relations that support intentional content.¹⁵

Hahn is strictly speaking correct that my anti-individualism does not entail a position on the case. To claim that many mental states are individuated by relations between the individual and the environment is not by itself to say that Swampman lacks mental states, or even lacks any particular mental states.

On the other hand, as Hahn notes (Hahn's note 11), it is hard to understand how a creature like Swampman (at least before it starts interacting with its environment) could have intentional content about that environment. The "could" here is, in my view, not merely causal.

It is metaphysical. Anti-individualism suggests a range of ways that an individual can have intentional content that makes reference to an environment. It suggests that intentional content is supported and made possible by a range of supplementary non-intentional relations between the individual and the environment.¹⁶ Swampman seems to be in no relevant relations. My version of anti-individualism is open-ended about what could count as relevant relations. Still, it seems to me that Swampman almost surely lacks any relevant relation. So I think that there is reason to deny that it is metaphysically possible that Swampman could share any of its counterpart's thoughts about the environment, at least not until it starts interacting with the environment. Here I am inclined to agree with Davidson.

I believe that the range of possible things that Swampman's supposed thoughts could be about, correlative to the range of possible environments that his physical dispositions could be adaptive to, is huge. It is probably so huge and varied that there is no relevant determinate intentional content about an environment associated with those dispositions and physico-chemical structures. The mere fact that Swampman is synthesized by quantum accident in a certain environment is not sufficient to provide it with the sorts of relations to the environment that would make thoughts about that environment possible. Nor do I think that Swampman's future relations to the environment suffice--at the time of the synthesis, before there are causal interactions with an environment that might be referred

to.¹⁷ I see no other constraints that would associate Swampman's physical dispositions and chemical structures with referents in any one environment. If all this is correct, there is nothing in Swampman's physico-chemical structures and dispositions, taken in themselves, that makes them referentially relevant to the properties of the environment they are in, rather than to any number of other properties in other possible environments.¹⁸

So I believe that Hahn somewhat understates the relevance of my anti-individualism to the case. Although my central arguments do not deal with the case and do not entail a commitment on it, the natural lessons to be drawn from the arguments suggest, I think, that Swampman lacks any thoughts about its environment. Hahn is certainly right that my views stem from reflection on constraints on the having of propositional attitudes, not from reflection on the nature of interpretation.

Hahn is also right in conjecturing that learning plays no essential role in my view, although learning does play an important role in the actual determination of much of our intentional content. I think that there is no necessity that a thinker learn a language, or even have a language. There is no metaphysical impossibility in the idea that an individual's language and repertoire of beliefs could be entirely innate. An individual might have innate concepts or percepts about the environment. Some of our intentional content is innate. And I think it an empirical fact, well established since the demise of

behaviorism in psychology, that animals have propositional attitudes, but lack language.

However, even innate intentional content must be supported by relations other than referential relations to the subject matter. Swampman seems to lack any relevant supporting relations. (Cf. note 4.) So Swampman seems to lack relations that would allow any of its mental states to be about the specific environment that it happens to coalesce in. I think it certain that Swampman cannot share all of its chemical counterpart's empirical thoughts about the environment. Assuming that Swampman's chemical counterpart is not scientifically omniscient, there are some aspects of our environment that we can already, with certainty, know Swampman's physical structures are not necessarily uniquely correlated with--natural kinds, for example.

I want to caution against one line of interpretation in Hahn's discussion of the case. My anti-individualist arguments are not supposed to be applicable merely to beings "similar to us". There is no such parameter in the arguments. They are meant to provide insight into conditions for individuating certain sorts of mental states under certain conditions of limited background knowledge, full stop. Swampman is not exempt from necessary conditions on individuation by virtue of its being so unlike us. Mental states are not special to human beings. What matters are the specific ways that Swampman is unlike us in regard to relations relevant to individuating mental states.

The problem in dealing with Swampman is that the anti-

individualist arguments are example-based and are somewhat open-ended about the most general anti-individualist principles of individuation. For Swampman to have thoughts about its environment there must be non-intentional relations that help make such reference possible. I see no likely candidate relations. Still, there is no infallible guarantee that one has not overlooked some important relation that would connect Swampman to specific aspects of its environment so as to make intentional reference to those aspects comprehensible and non-magical.

I turn now to Hahn's reflections on social elements in anti-individualism. Hahn emphasizes similarities in my and Davidson's social anti-individualisms (or externalisms). It is true that in each case individuation of at least some mental states is held to be dependent on relations the individual bears to other individual thinkers. But there are fundamental differences.

Hahn formulates the point of agreement thus: "in order to have thoughts or language we need other people whose perceptual and concept-forming abilities and dispositions are innately substantially similar to ours." (p. 41 in manuscript--get pagination for the book) This formulation is potentially misleading. It is insufficiently specific in the use of "in order to" and "need". If the point is just that to learn language, we need relation to others, as a psychological necessity, then there is surely agreement. But this point is not anti-individualistic. If the point is that, as a constitutive matter, having thoughts or language is dependent on relations to other people,

then although it constitutes a strong form of social anti-individualism, there is no agreement. Davidson holds this view, but I reject it. Hahn recognizes this difference, but it is somewhat elided in his formulation of the point of agreement.

Both Davidson's and my social anti-individualisms are supported by apriori arguments. My conclusions are meant to be metaphysically necessary truths. Davidson's are supposed to be whatever approximation to metaphysical necessity he allows. The arguments and conclusions are, however, at different levels of generality. Davidson's conclusion is supposed to give constituent conditions on what it is to have language or thought. My conclusion gives constituent conditions on having certain particular types of thoughts, given that certain contingent parameters are fixed.

For example, I think that it is metaphysically contingent that an individual is dependent on others for his acquisition of words. Similarly, it is a contingent matter that an individual allows that norms governing the use of his words can be partly dependent on others' usage. It is a contingent matter that an individual lacks sufficient background knowledge to distinguish--by perceptual, explicational, or theoretical means--arthritis from other rheumatoidal diseases. The apriori argument has two conclusions. First, it is possible under these conditions to have a concept of arthritis and to think specifically about arthritis. Second, given that these contingent matters are in place, and given the particular type of

notion arthritis is--for example, that it is non-indexical and not a natural kind notion--, it is necessary in order to have a thought about arthritis that one be in certain relations to others who are in a better position to specify the disease.

I make similar arguments for a wide variety of other notions. But I do not take social relations to be constitutively necessary for having language or thought. So my apriori arguments for necessities of social anti-individualism presuppose that certain contingent parameters are fixed. The arguments are not as global as Davidson's.

Despite the fact that my arguments are more modest (and I think more concrete and solid) than Davidson's, he rejects them. One ground Davidson gives for rejection is that the incomplete understanding that they invoke--the inability to distinguish arthritis from other rheumatoidal diseases--is supposed to conflict with first-person authority.¹⁹ Since the supposed conflict is never explained, and since, as Hahn notes, my approach to understanding first-person authority's compatibility with anti-individualism is similar, in broad outline, to Davidson's, I have been puzzled by this ground. I suspect that it rests on a failure to distinguish knowing what one's thoughts are in the sense of being able to understand them well enough to think them and self-attribute them, and knowing what one's thoughts are in the sense of being able to give correct explications of them.²⁰ Davidson's indiscriminate claim that on my view the relevant agents do not know what they mean and think suggests this conflation.²¹ As I

have argued in various places, we are authoritative about the former sort of understanding and about certain self-attributions that rely on that understanding; but we are not authoritative about explications. Incomplete understanding involves inability to provide full and correct conceptual explications. That is not a distinctively first-person ability. Although I believe that it can have a special type of a priori warrant, the warrant is not that of first-person authority.

Another ground Davidson gives for his rejection is the proposal of a different interpretation of the particular cases. Where I held that a person could believe that arthritis occurs in the thigh, Davidson maintains that any such interpretation of a person's belief could not be right. He appeals to holism about belief and the uncontroversial point that such a person would associate arthritis with different background beliefs and inferences from someone who knows that arthritis can occur only in joints. He maintains that the error is a meta-linguistic one about the dictionary meaning of the word "arthritis".

I do not, as Davidson charged, insist that "we are bound to give a person's words the meaning they have in his linguistic community."²² Rather, my account is based on details particular to the case. I tried to build into the case various facts that make the meta-linguistic move unacceptable. Davidson does not discuss these.

Moreover, the generalized appeal to holism seems to me untenable. Much of the import of the work of Kripke, Donnellan, and Putnam has been that in establishing meaning and reference of a term (and by

extension, the reference of concepts in thought), inferential connections and background knowledge are not the only factors and are sometimes not decisive. Often there are person-world relations that play a large role, even when the person is ignorant or mistaken about the referent. The arthritis case is such a case.

I continue to believe that the doctor and patient can share beliefs like the belief that arthritis is a painful disease, and thus can share a concept of arthritis. They can do this even though the patient is mistaken about some fundamental features of arthritis and has vastly less background knowledge than the doctor. I believe that there is a complex network of principles, with many escape clauses, that carry a bias in favor of preservation of meaning and concepts between people in the same community who communicate with one another. I have developed this position in a series of papers about interlocution.²³ There remains a great deal to be done if we are to understand the phenomenon in depth.

The original social anti-individualist thought experiments do not, however, depend on my view that there are principles governing communication that defeasibly enforce a bias toward preservation of conceptual content and that can override differences in explication and conception associated with the concepts. Although I claimed that the doctor and the patient share a notion of arthritis, the outcome of the thought experiments does not depend on this claim. As Hahn points out, I argue in a later article that thought experiments work on the

mere assumption of shared reference.

The doctor and the patient need only have concepts that apply to arthritis. The doctor might well have a different concept of arthritis by virtue of his or her superior background knowledge. It is enough that they share a reference to arthritis. The idea that people can share a reference while differing widely in their background knowledge and assumptions about the referent is fundamental to the work of Kripke, Donnellan, and Putnam. I regard it as well-established. People allow the referents or extensions of their concepts and words to be partly dependent on chains that pass through other people.

The thought experiment can make use of this phenomenon to insure that the patient relies on others to help determine the referent of the concept expressed in the patient's idiolect by the patient's term "arthritis". I do not think the doctor and patient have to fail to share any concept of arthritis. But even if the patient's concept were to differ from any concept of arthritis that the doctor has, we can safely assume that there are cases where the referent is preserved. Then we conceive of another circumstance in which a physically similar patient is connected through another communal network to a different syndrome of diseases-- perhaps all rheumatoidal ailments. Since the relevant concepts are, or can be, non-indexical, the difference in referents in the two circumstances entails that the respective patients have different concepts about these referents. So they have different beliefs with different conceptual contents. The

differences clearly depend on differences in their respective social circumstances, external to their physical make-ups, considered individualistically. These differences in social circumstances ultimately connect the individuals with different diseases or groups of disease-instances. The different social networks connecting the patients to different syndromes of disease necessitate that the patients have different beliefs with different conceptual contents.²⁴

This argument depends on the contingent fact that the patients are ignorant of certain facts. It depends on the contingent fact that they have non-indexical concepts for the relevant diseases. It depends on the contingent fact that the patients rely, perhaps intentionally rely, on others for the fixing of the referents of their concepts. Social inter-dependence is a deep and pervasive but, I think, contingent fact about language users and thinkers. I do not see it as a metaphysical necessity for language or thought. Given that social inter-dependence is assumed to be in place, however, the argument claims *a priori* that under the circumstances it is necessary that the respective patients have different thoughts.

Thus it seems to me that Davidson's social anti-individualism is at least as different from mine as his physical anti-individualism is from mine. What we have in common is an appreciation of ways in which individuals are dependent on matters outside them for many of their thoughts. The structure of this dependence still invites exploration.

Endnotes

1. "Belief De Re" The Journal of Philosophy 74 (1977), pp. 338-362.

2. "Individualism and the Mental" Midwest Studies in Philosophy 4 (1979), pp. 71-121; "Other Bodies" in Thought and Object, Woodfield ed. ((Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1982).

3. The latter thesis is initially stated: if a creature lacks de re attitudes, we would not attribute any attitudes at all: Ibid, p. 347. Hahn is correct in pointing to the oddity of the formulation in terms of attribution. The intent is that having de re attitudes is necessary not just for attributing attitudes to a creature, but for its having propositional attitudes--as subsequent discussion (e.g. ibid, p. 348) indicates. My misleading formulation is a product of excessive focus on language and on attribution through language. I believe that this is the residue of my initial entry into these issues through a fairly compartmentalized view of the philosophy of language. There are numerous passages in the paper that constitute the beginning of my shifting my focus to the nature of the attitudes expressed or attributed by the language, rather than the language used in making the attributions. But this and a few subsequent articles still involve some awkward straddling of the distinction. As Hahn recognizes, I was not maintaining the Davidsonian interpretationist view (that is, the view that an interpreter's interpretation helps constitute the linguistic and mental content of the creature being interpreted). But the formulations indicate Quine-Davidson influence in considering matters from the standpoint of an interpreter.

4. On this view, even innate structures come to be intentional only by being triggered when the individual engages in some demonstrative-like relations to some referential objects. I am still inclined to maintain this view. But I think that a somewhat less committal position would serve most of my primary purposes. One might allow that an individual could have innate structures with intentionality even before these structures are triggered through activity of or in the individual, but maintain that the intentionality of the innate structures is possible only because it is appropriately connected to prior de re attitudes by others. For example, God's de re attitudes in fashioning the innate structures (on a traditional rationalist line) could play this role. Or the individual's evolutionary ancestors' de re relations in the evolution of the individual's innate innate perceptual and other categories could play this role. In both cases the de re relations would help give the innate structures their intentionality and help determine their specific referential characteristics by helping to give them a certain function in relation

to the relevant subject matter. Then the less committal thesis would be that in order for a creature to have any attitudes at all, the creature's attitudes must presuppose and be appropriately connected to de re attitudes--either by that individual or by individuals on whom the creature's attitude-structures depend.

5. I explicitly included sensations and mathematical objects as possible objects of de re attitudes. Cf. ibid, pp. 352-3, 361-2.

6. This is why I said above that de re attitudes are "in a certain sense" irreducibly relational. To be de re, an attitude must be in relation to an object which it is about. But on my view, the attitudes that are in fact de re, are not relations. What makes de re attitudes irreducible to de dicto attitudes, where we are considering the attitudes themselves, is not their bearing relations to the res. It is their being not completely conceptual. They involve irreducibly applicational or token-demonstrative elements. Some attitudes that are not de re, in the sense that they fail to be about an object, are irreducible to de dicto attitudes for the same reason. Although they fail to pick out an object, they are irreducibly demonstrative or applicational. So, for example, a demonstrative thought applied under an illusion, where no object is referred to, is just as irreducibly non-de-dicto, because it is not completely conceptualized, as a de re thought. The key distinction on my view is between what is standing, sayable, or conceptual content and what is involved in showing or demonstrating or applying the standing content on particular occasions.

7. Immanuel Kant, Critique of Pure Reason B274-279.

8. I think of concepts as entities. But for purposes of my arguments, it is not crucial that one think of concepts this way. The term "concept" marks a place for individuating aspects of propositional attitudes. The aspects are the formally distinguishable aspects of the abilities associated with propositional attitudes--abilities like recognition and inference. To type and explain these abilities, one must speak of such formal aspects. For example, one must link a belief that humans are mortal with a belief that Socrates is human. The concept human marks something common to these two attitudes that ties them together in inference. The thought experiments are compatible with just about any ontological (or anti-ontological) position on concepts. I do think it appropriate to quantify over concepts and take them as objects of reference. And I have views about the ontologies of various different types of concepts. These views are, in some cases, related to my anti-individualism. But these positions are not presupposed in the anti-individualist thought experiments.

9. I mean by this that the mere fact that one will interact with an object in the future is of little individuating relevance. But intentions, beliefs, desires that are involved in making objects (such as artifacts) might be partly individuated in terms of the objects made, especially with regard to de re applications in the intendings.

10. Cf. my "Our Entitlement to Self-Knowledge", Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society 96 (1996), note 11.

11. I made this sort of point with respect to beliefs about water, in "Other Bodies", op. cit., cf. note 18.

12. I believe that Davidson overrates them, as will emerge below.

13. These points, which constituted a break with Quine on stimulus meaning, are of great importance. They certainly influenced my nascent thinking about these matters. But Davidson's explanations of externalism and his arguments that it is true seem sometimes to present this point about evidence for interpreting attitudes as sufficient for the externalism. This leads him, I think, to underrate the role of counterfactuals in establishing a thesis about the nature and constitution of the attitudes. Cf. "Knowing One's Own Mind", Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association 60 (1987), p. 450.

14. This is not to say that Davidson's account of the nature of interpretation is unattractive. I think that his contributions in understanding radical interpretation are brilliant and in many fundamental respects true. It is the further view that mental states are constituted by a relation to an interpreter that I regard as mistaken.

15. I leave open how quickly such relations become "normal" and begin to make content possible. In some cases, I conjecture, relevant relations are established through a single instance of interaction. How content spreads through the cognitive system is a matter I will not try to adjudicate. Since it is not a central case and may involve fuzzy boundaries, I am not sure that it is important to have a definite view about the matter.

16. The view of "Belief De Re" also requires that to have intentional content, the individual must bear some non-intentional relations to a subject matter. Swampman appears to bear no relevant relations to its environment. Whether there are some de re relations to some other subject matter that might make possible some content would depend partly on a fuller description of the case.

17. On relations to the future, see my "Memory and Self-Knowledge" in Externalism and Self-Knowledge, Ludlow and Martin eds. (Stanford, CSLI Publications, 1998).

18. This argument from the variety of possible matches is important in my reasoning. If I were persuaded that Swampman's physical structures and dispositions were uniquely fitted to some aspects of his environment--so that no metaphysically possible substitute for those aspects would make any sense of its chemical structures and responses-- , then I would think it worth considering whether, despite the lack of historical connection to the environment, the physical structures had the function of responding to just such environmental aspects. But even this argument would be a difficult one to make. I doubt that function is ascribable to chemical as opposed to biological structures. And it is debateable whether Swampman has any biological functions, at the time of its synthesis, in relation to its environment. Moreover, the notion of function, or some related notion, would have to be motivated as applied to this product of accidental synthesis. All this aside, as noted in the text, it seems to me very doubtful that there is a metaphysically necessary unique fit between Swampman's physical structures and any aspect of the objective environment. It seems to me that any environmental property that is perceivable has possible look-alikes that are indiscernible (under sufficiently odd but metaphysically possible circumstances) given the actual dispositions of a given non-omniscient individual. These are complex matters, however. Although I am strongly inclined to think that Swampman can have no thoughts about its empirical surroundings (until it opens its "eyes" and starts interacting with those surroundings), the matter may bear further discussion.

19. Donald Davidson, "Knowing One's Own Mind", op. cit., pp. 448-9.

20. I emphasize this distinction in various places. Cf. "Individualism and Self-Knowledge" The Journal of Philosophy 85 (1988), p. 662.

21. "Knowing One's Own Mind", op. cit., p. 449.

22. Ibid, p. 449.

23. Cf. my "Content Preservation" The Philosophical Review 102 (1993), pp. 457-488; "Interlocution, Perception, and Memory" Philosophical Studies 86 (1997), pp. 21-47; "Computer Proof, Apriori Knowledge, and Other Minds" Philosophical Perspectives 12 (1998), pp. 1-37; and "Comprehension and Interpretation" forthcoming in a volume of essays on Davidson, to be published by Open Court, Hahn ed. (CHECK. Get the reference, if it is available.)

24. The argument is from "Wherein is Language Social?" in Reflections on Chomsky, A. George ed. (Oxford, Basil Blackwell, 1989).