

Individuation and Intentional Ascriptions

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Introduction

This paper considers, but does not presuppose, the conclusion reached by John Haugeland's 1982 paper "Weak Supervenience."

My conclusion, then, is that the individuals, or 'tokens', of which our sentences are true are just as 'relative' to the level of description as are the kinds or 'types' into which those sentences sort them. The world does not come metaphysically categorized, prior to, and independent of any specific description resources — which is not to say that these individuals (and categories) aren't perfectly genuine and objective, once the language is specified . . .¹

While Haugeland is here specifically discussing the relation between physical events and mental or intentional events, this sort of conclusion has been reached on a variety of issues and is quite typical of a position which has been espoused independently in the last decade by a wide range of philosophers, from Rorty to Goodman to Hacking to Putnam to Foucault. I will call this position 'individual nominalism'. Individual nominalism is distinct from traditional nominalism in that it asserts that not merely which sorts individuals fall into but also which individuals there are is relative to the 'level of description', or the 'theory' (or whatever) that is used to cope with them. It is distinct from traditional views which assert a difference in kind between ontologically distinct categories of entities, such as bodies and minds, in that it does not ground such differences in some (in itself) metaphysical difference, but rather sees any 'ontological' differences as related to differences in our ways of talking, knowing, or coping.

¹ John Haugeland, "Weak Supervenience," *American Philosophical Quarterly* 19 (1982): 101.

This paper considers Haugeland's conclusion because it means to investigate the prospects for a viable individual nominalism in precisely that area in which Haugeland propounds it, the relation between physical and mental or intentional events. The proponents of individual nominalism, including Haugeland, have in general been interested in defending this view in philosophy of mind because they feel that it has serious negative implications for the token identity position, which is currently the most popular view in this area. Careful consideration of the arguments which have been advanced in favor of individual nominalism, and the implications which have been claimed for the position, however, shows that such proponents of the view as Haugeland and Stoutland have fallen into serious confusions concerning the content of their claims. For example, the crucial argument in "Weak Supervenience" does not imply the strong form of individual nominalism which is embodied in Haugeland's conclusion which is quoted above, and which is necessary for the cogent criticism of the token identity view which Haugeland means to mount.

In this paper I characterize the current status of debates concerning the token identity thesis, distinguish three positions which have been taken, correctly or incorrectly, to be types of individual nominalism which have serious negative consequences for token identity, criticize Haugeland's specific argument in "Weak Supervenience,"² and suggest an alternative strategy for reaching the only version of the individual nominalist conclusion which is relevant to the issue of the relation between physical and intentional events.

1. The Token Identity Thesis

The issue concerning the relation between the physical and the intentional is correctly joined at the level of events or states rather than at the level of the objects or continuants which undergo these events or possess these states, as is now generally recognized. The appropriate question to ask is not 'Is the mind identical with the body?' but 'What is the relation between person *p* believing that *r*, or desiring that *q*, or acting in way *s*, and the physical states of *p*, the physical events *p* undergoes, or the states of and events involving the physical constituents of *p*?' Since the 1964 publication of Davidson's "Actions, Reasons, and Causes" the most influential answer to this question has been the 'token identity' thesis.

² The argument in "Weak Supervenience" is quite typical of an entire class of individual nominalist arguments. For example, see Frederick Stoutland's "Davidson on Intentional Behavior" in E. Lepore and B. McLaughlin, ed., *Actions and Events* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1985), pp. 44-59.

According to this position there is no causally significant predicate which translates what it means to say that, e.g., x is a belief that r . Nevertheless, every belief that r is identical with some physical event (or state, or whatever). And, insofar as it is correct to say of an event that it is a belief (etc.), there is some physical description of it in virtue of which it falls under some genuine causal law linking it (together with physical descriptions of tokens of other intentional states) with some physically described behavior of the entity with the belief, behavior which also admits of a description as an action explained by the intentional states in question. The key aspect of this position is its commitment to the assertion that every individual which is describable in intentional terms is identical with some individual describable in physical terms. The properties we use to categorize human beings, their states, and their doings are different in the two vocabularies, but those beings, states, and doings are identical beings, states, and doings no matter how they are described.

As Davidson further develops his views in "Mental Events," the whole point of the token identity thesis is to construct a form of physicalism which will accommodate Quine's insights concerning the indeterminacy of translation and the difficulties of translating intensional idioms without banishing beliefs, desires, etc., entirely.³ One might think, following Kim, "that Fa and Gb 'describe or refer to the same event' if and only if $a = b$ and the property of being $F =$ the property of being G ."⁴ If this were the case, then Quine's conclusion that intensional idioms, such as mentalists ascriptions, $[F]$, cannot be translated into any extensional predicate $[G]$, would imply (together with some other premises) that the events which are beliefs and desires, $[Fa]$, could not be the very same events which are capable of being described physically, $[Gb]$. But this, Davidson argues cogently, would be a serious error. The fact that one cannot translate 'believing that x ' into any physical predicate would imply that some event which is an instance of believing that x could not be identical with any physically described event only if the identity of events were fixed by how they were described, which is what the Kim thesis asserts above. But it is the heart of the token identity position that this is *not* the case. "Causality and identity are relations between events no matter how described."⁵ The crucial issue between the token identity theorist and her opponents, then, is whether or not events are identified and individuated by how they are described, and on this issue the Quinean impossibility of

³ Donald Davidson, "Mental Events" in *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 222.

⁴ D. Davidson, "Mental Events," p. 213.

⁵ D. Davidson, "Mental Events," p. 215.

translation from the intensional idiom is entirely neutral. It is thus a serious mistake to argue, as some have been tempted to do, that Quinean considerations concerning the indeterminacy of translation, or the untranslatability of the intensional, could be used to criticize the token identity thesis.

As the token identity view concedes that what it is to be an intentional state of any type is different from what it is to be a physical state of any type, it is an extraordinarily difficult position to attack. To do so one must show that there is some principled reason for thinking that in each individual case the event, state, disposition, or whatever which is a token of the intentional state cannot be identical with any state which is a token of any physical state which could fulfill its prescribed causal explanatory role. The crucial importance of causality in debates concerning the token identity thesis is inherited from the token physicalist analysis of the explanatory character of belief-desire talk. As Davidson correctly asserts, we appeal to a person's beliefs and desires when we explain an action by giving the reasons for it. X did y *because* of some reason. And, the token identity theorist argues, as we lack *any* account of a *teleological* 'because' which is not causal, this suggests that the 'because' in such explanations notes a causal connection between the event which is the reason and the event which is the action. Now, since Davidson admits, following Quine, that there are no causal laws linking reasons, beliefs, or desires *described as such* and actions, and if event a causes event b events a and b must belong to *some* types which are linked by causal law, it follows that the very same events which are correctly describable as beliefs and desires must also belong to some non-intentional types which are linked by some causal law.

This factor has several important consequences for the token identity position. The most important of these is that because individual beliefs and desires are taken to be token identical with the causes of actions, and causes are always events, the token identity theorist is committed to the claim that beliefs and desires (or at least their 'onslaughts', as Davidson would have it) are *events*. This amounts to a two-edged sword. On the one hand, all the critic of token identity needs to do is to show that beliefs and desires (or their onslaughts) are not events at all. They might, for example, be dispositions, or relations, and as such they could even, in some sense, bear upon the physical course of events. But, since the token identity analysis demands that beliefs and desires must be events which cause other events, if the critic succeeds in showing that beliefs and desires (or their onslaughts) are not events at all, then she has succeeded in showing that the token identity view is false. Unfortunately for the critic, however,

there is another hand. Dispositions, etc., do not by themselves *cause* anything; events cause. So in giving up the claim that beliefs and desires are events the critic would also be giving up access to the suggestion that beliefs and desires explain actions in virtue of causing them. It then becomes incumbent on the critic to give *some* account of the 'because' in rationalizing explanations which is not causal, and to this point we entirely lack such an account.

The difficulty of the task of showing that beliefs and desires cannot be identical with tokens of any physical events which can serve as the causes of actions is complicated by the fact that there is no generally agreed upon way of characterizing the physical tokens which are candidates for causal efficacy and being proper effects, let alone a generally accepted characterization of intentional tokens. The problem involving causal physical tokens is how we are to characterize the events which can serve as causes and effects. Are they changes which are proper individuals themselves, as Davidson and Lombard think, or are they states of objects (presumably continuants) at times, as Kim seems to think? The problem concerning intentional tokens involves, among other things, both endemic problems concerning the individuation of beliefs, desires, and actions and the fall-out from the apparently ineliminatively holistic way in which such states are ascribed.

Given this state of debate, to show philosophically, as opposed to scientifically, that the token identity thesis is false, one must follow one of two strategies. One possibility is to determine that the physical events which serve as causes must, for some principled reason, be some variety of change, or, alternatively, some kind of property at a time, and then go on to show that every intentional state must be the other. And, as the class of all changes does not intersect with the class of all properties of objects or systems at a time, it would follow that no token intentional event could be identical with any physical event token. The weakness of this strategy is the extreme difficulty of demonstrating that one must view all causally efficacious physical events as states of objects at times (or changes, as the case may be) combined with the companion difficulty of showing that all intentional states must be changes (or states of objects at times, as the case may be). Alternatively, one could ignore the contested question of the proper way to view causally efficacious physical events, and merely assume that they are all either changes or states at times and go on to argue that the tokens of intentional states, whatever they might be, can be neither changes nor states at times, perhaps because they are relations or dispositions or propensities, or whatever. There are two problems with this strategy. First, there is the evident difficulty in demonstrating the second

assertion, that for example beliefs and desires cannot be either changes or states of a system or object at a time. Second, even if the critic of the token identity view should somehow succeed in doing this, she still stands under the obligation to show how alluding to, e.g., a relation which cannot cause an action can nevertheless explain it.

An individual nominalist, such as Haugeland, asserts that which individuals exist is relative to the language one speaks. Haugeland and those like him, such as Frederick Stoutland, think that this, together with the differences in the character of intentional and non-intentional discourse, implies that the token intentional individuals are not identical with any events which are token physical events. But, even granting the individual nominalist thesis, for this strategy to succeed one must show either that (A) physical discourse is such that events which exist relative to it are states of objects (or changes) and that intentional discourse is such that the events which exist relative to it are the other or (B) that intentional discourse is such that the individuals which exist relative to it can be neither changes or states of continuants at times. It is thus a mistake to think, as some token nominalists might, that general arguments showing that nominalism is the most plausible metaphysical view could reveal that the token identity thesis is unwarranted. For the token identity view in philosophy of mind is compatible with individual nominalism as long as it is not shown in particular that, because of the individuation conditions on being an individual mental event and being an individual causally efficacious physical event one and the same individual *could not* satisfy both sets of conditions. And to do that one must show either (A) or (B). And, at that point, the burden is shifted onto the nominalist to give some non-causal account of the 'because' in rational explanation. But neither Haugeland nor any of the other individual nominalist critics of token identity have even attempted to demonstrate either (A) or (B), let alone to give an alternative account of the teleological 'because'.⁶

The reason they have failed to do so is that the individual nominalists have not understood their own thesis and its implications for the token identity view. It is not enough to say that which individuals exist varies as a function of which language one speaks, one must also be clear on just

⁶ We should mention that there are two different issues lurking in this area, one in philosophy of mind and the other in philosophy of action. First, are intentional *actions* token identical with any physical events? Second, are the beliefs and desires which *explain* those actions token identical with any physical events? In this paper I only consider the second question. Given that events relative to language L can be only identical with complexes of events in language K and still be token identical with those complexes, which I discuss below, it seems to me highly implausible to think that token identity will prove false for actions.

what one is saying when one says this. And the individual nominalists have typically failed to distinguish among three separate readings of their own thesis. Once these claims are distinguished it becomes clear that only one of these is relevant to the issue of token identity in the philosophy of mind. In addition, once this is seen one can come to understand that the relevant position only implies the falsity of token identity when it is combined with either (A) or (B), which must be demonstrated independently of individual nominalism itself.

2. Being Is Said in Many Ways

The claim that which individuals there are is relative to the language used to discuss the world, or that the world does not come to us presorted into tokens independently of our languages, has been interpreted in three different ways. In fact, only one interpretation deserves to be called a genuine nominalism, and only this interpretation has potential negative consequences for the token identity theory. First, there is the sort of position which Quine develops in "Ontological Relativity." Even if the Indeterminacy of Translation is irrelevant to individual nominalism, as we have seen, perhaps the thesis of Ontological Relativity is not. As is to be expected from the formulator of semantic ascent, the point here is specifically about the ontological commitments of language, rather than about the metaphysical character of the world. To say in this sense that the individuals which there are vary as a function of the language used is to say that which individuals a language is *committed* to the existence of itself varies depending upon how that language is translated. The second interpretation of the claim that the individuals which our true sentences are about vary as a function of language directly concerns which entities can be referred to in different languages and is quite distinct from the Quinean point. On this view, because of differences in the 'resources' of different languages, different sets of entities can be 'picked out' in different languages, but the criterion for determining which entities exist is the same across vocabulary differences. Thus, it may be thought that all and only ingredients in the spatio-temporal causal order (i.e., events which are causes or effects, or, if one is of that persuasion, the objects that such events occur to) properly count as existing individuals, and that this criterion functions univocally across all languages. Nevertheless, it seems possible to hold that different languages can pick out a different group of entities in virtue of parsing the causal order at different "levels"; particle physics is suited to recognize only microscopic causes and effects, and thus can recognize only microscopic individuals, while biology or economics can recognize macroscopic causes, effects, and individuals. Finally, the claim that individuals are relative to our descriptions of the

world could be interpreted as the thesis that what the word 'being', in the sense of 'exists', *means* varies as a function of the type of vocabulary with which it is used. If we abandon the notion that 'being' is a predicate, this traditional notion that 'being' is said in many ways amounts to the claim that the criteria used to determine the population of existing entities vary as a function of language. In this section we will treat each of these possible views in turn to see which, if any, bear on the issues surrounding the token identity thesis in philosophy of mind.

The first alternative for interpreting the claim that the domain of individuals can be properly seen as varying as a function of the descriptive resources of a language is supplied by Quine. One of the ways in which translation, and beyond that, meaning is indeterminate is in regard to ontology. To use Quine's famous example, in principle there is no way any evidence can distinguish whether the ontology of Gavagese includes rabbits as opposed to time-slices of rabbits, and, given Quine's prevailing verificationism, this implies that there is no fact of the matter in regard to which individuals are included in the ontology of Gavagese. Such an ontology is fixed only relative to some translation scheme for translating Gavagese into some other language. On this Quinean model the domain of values of a bound variable varies not as a function of the language used to describe the world, but rather as a function of a translation of that language. It varies as a function of our partially underdetermined talk about the meaning of our talk about the world. 'Existence' does not change its sense in different languages — for Quine 'existence', as well as other words has no determinate sense to begin with. The interesting result is that 'exists' is seen by Quine as lacking a determinate extension in a language. 'Exists' gets such a fixed extension, the domain of the values of the bound variable becomes determinate, only when it is determined in relation to a translation.

Whatever the merits of this position, the Quinean relativity of ontology is irrelevant to the question at hand. That question is whether or not the world comes prepackaged into individuals in such a way that every logical subject of every sentence in every language which successfully refers must refer to members of the same set of such individuals, regardless of how they are categorized in that language. Now, for Quine, the ontological commitments of the language of science are as underdetermined as any other language. But there are pragmatic and methodological constraints which serve as determining grounds for supplying a preferred ontological interpretation of that language. And that interpretation is privileged in such a way that the preferred interpretation of total science does unambiguously fix the set of all the things which are. But this position leaves

entirely open which of three possibilities concerning the relation of physical and intentional individuals obtain. It may be the case that the preferred interpretation of total science simply leaves out all intentional states and events, and that from the standpoint of science intentional talk fails to successfully refer to any individuals at all. The individuals in the world are just those science, properly interpreted, says there are, and intentions are not included. This is Quine's own position. Second, on the preferred interpretation, intentional talk might be seen as successfully referring, but as referring to the very same entities as physical talk, albeit using different predicates. This is Davidson's position. Third, it might be that the privileged interpretation of total science includes beliefs as well as brain states in its ontology, and that these individuals would be interpreted as radically distinct from each other in such a way that, e.g., beliefs would not be identical with any physically described individuals or complexes of such individuals. If Haugeland were to accept Quinean ontological relativity this would be his position.

The point here is that Quinean relativity of ontology is entirely irrelevant to the issue of whether there are beliefs which are individuals which are different from those described in physical terms. Ontological relativity is a thesis concerning the ontological commitments of a theory, not about which individuals in fact exist. For Quine, the issue of which individuals exist is to be decided by determining which theory is true and by determining which interpretation of that theory is most useful for the purposes of total science. And those things are determined by science itself, not by the language we happen to be using. So, as opposed to what one might think, the thesis of ontological relativity does not assert individual nominalism and it in no way implies the falsity of token identity in philosophy of mind. In this respect Davidson is right; token identity is compatible with both the indeterminacy of translation and ontological relativity. On the other hand, neither of these positions imply token identity. One can accept the Quinean position and still coherently accept, or reject, the token identity thesis, and one can reject the Quinean thesis and still coherently accept, or reject, the token identity thesis. And whether or not one accepts or rejects ontological relativity the token identity thesis would seem to stand or fall on the same set of considerations. But, then, what are those considerations?

This question leads us to the second possible interpretation of the 'individual nominalist' position. To say that different individuals exist relative to different languages could be taken to mean that different individuals can be picked out in different languages but that the criteria in virtue of which they are picked out are identical across languages. So, for exam-

ple, one obvious criterion to suggest for determining existence of individuals is that some individual exists if and only if our best causal explanation of the phenomena of the world makes essential reference to it, where for an explanation 'to make essential reference to' some event would involve that event being cited as a cause in that explanation, and to make essential reference to some entity would involve some event which is cited as a cause being a change in or state of that entity. Which individuals comprise the domain of our bound variables would then be a function of which is our best causal account of the world, and this criterion would be applicable regardless of how we are talking about that world. But, given this view it is possible to maintain that not every language or every science is equally suited to give a causal account of every genuine phenomenon, where, once again, for such phenomena to exist would mean that they are mentioned in our best total causal account of the world. So, to use one of Haugeland's examples, there is a sense in which it is possible that the austere vocabulary of physics might not have the resources for referring to and explaining an event of the type of a wave hitting a cork. Nevertheless, such an event as a cork bobbing in the water at a time might be fully describable and explicable using the vocabulary of our ordinary language. Given this situation it would follow that wave hits would exist for our ordinary language, while they would not exist for the language of physics. To be a proper subject of predication, to be within the domain of values for our bound variables, would in both cases involve being an ingredient in the causal order, but that causal order would be determined differently in the two cases.

The reason that the ontologies of the two languages differ in this case has to do with the fact that ordinary language tends to pick out mid-size macroscopic objects and their doings as being central participants in the spatio-temporal order and physics does not. But as both accept the same standard for existence it is an empirical issue which of the 'theories' embedded in which of those languages is correct. Both could be, if wave-hits have causal efficacy which cannot be accounted for in physical terms. Or neither could be, if, appearances to the contrary, modern physics turns out to be misguided and, e.g., animism turns out to be true. Or only one could be. And, notice, the question of which events or objects strictly exist would be independent of whether or not it was convenient to speak as if entities of a given type existed. To exist an event would need to belong to at least one type which features in the laws giving our best description of the actual causal order of the world.

Although Haugeland sometimes writes as if this is the sort of position he means to defend, there are two problems with interpreting this position

as an individual nominalist reason for rejecting token identity. First, it is unclear that this position is individual nominalist at all. On this view, which individuals can properly be said to exist would be a function of both our language and the actual causal order of the world, which is seen as obtaining independently of the language we use to describe it. As such, different languages would allow us to *recognize* different sets of individuals, but whether or not any specific group of such individuals in fact existed would depend entirely on whether or not they in fact caused other events in the world, and that is seen to be determined independently of our descriptions. Physics, for example, is unable to recognize either biological or spiritual causes, and hence either biological or spiritual individuals. And we might speak at times as if there were both biological and spiritual causes and hence individuals, and in doing so these languages would both recognize a group of individuals which physics could not recognize. But the fact that we might speak as if there are biological or spiritual individuals does not mean that there are such individuals. On the position we are considering there are individuals of these types if and only if they actually cause real events in the world, and that is determined independently of the possibility of our *recognizing* that there are such individuals. Presumably, even if physics could not recognize such individuals, the language of completed total science could. And, even if such a total science were never attainable, on this position it would not strictly be the case that which individuals exist would be relative to language, but merely the much weaker thesis that which individuals are acknowledged or known to exist would be relative to language.

More importantly, whether or not this position deserves to be called nominalist, it does not really involve a serious problem for the token identity thesis. It might turn out, for example, that there is no causally significant predicate in physics answering to 'wave-hit' or 'cork bobbing', and yet that wave-hits genuinely cause cork bobbings. Even though what it is to be a wave-hit would not be identical with what it is to be any physically causally significant property, it still might turn out that everything which is a wave hit causes something which happens to be a cork bobbing. That is, there might be an 'emergent science' of wave hits. Similarly, there might be emergent sciences of biology, psychology, or economics, and thus, given our criterion for existence, biological, psychological, or economic token events. But such sciences would give us reason to reject the token identity view regarding biological, psychological, or economic individuals only if we further had reason to believe that each one of the higher level individuals were not identical with some *complex* of physical individuals. The existence of such sciences would give us a standard for distin-

guishing which complexes of physical individuals comprise genuine individuals as opposed to mere *heaps*, but it would give us no reason to reject token identity. The ontology of physics, which individuals really existed for physics, would be different from the ontology of psychology, different individuals would be included, but each psychological individual would still be identical to some heap of physical individuals. Described in psychological terms there would be one individual and in physical terms there would be many, but that one psychological individual would still be the very same as that complex of physical individuals. And this last claim is entirely independent of this difference in acknowledged ontology across languages. So to present a problem for the token identity thesis, given this interpretation of individual 'nominalism,' one must present independent evidence that higher-level individuals are not identical with some complex of physical individuals.

Now in "Weak Supervenience" Haugeland does attempt to give us just such independent reasons for believing that no individual wave-hits are identical with complexes of physical individuals and for believing that no intentional individuals are identical with any such complex. This might lead one to think that the type of individual nominalism he subscribes to is the one we are dealing with here. Unfortunately, the reasons he gives for the non-identity of wave-hits (intentions) and physical events are seriously flawed.

Haugeland presents his examples in a context which focuses upon events as the crucial individuals, and suggests that what counts as an event in physics is different from what counts as an event in ordinary language. Ordinary events, which he calls 'robust' events are characterized as "relatively abrupt change[s] in the state or course of things . . ." while physical events are characterized as "instantaneous valuation[s] of the applicable physical parameters at a point. . . ." ⁷ That is, robust events are a species of *change*, while physical events are instantaneous states of systems. Given these characterizations it is entirely unsurprising that robust events will not be complexes of physical events. No compilation or complex of instantaneous parameters will be identical with *any* change; at best a comparison of such complexes at different times might be identical with a change. To use Haugeland's example of two simultaneous wave-hits, neither wave-hit will be *identical* with the state of the system (or any part thereof) at the time of the hit, if the wave-hits themselves are seen as changes. It does not follow from this that each individual wave-hit is not identical with some determinate part of the total system, defined in solely physical terms, at three distinct times, before, during and after the simul-

⁷ J. Haugeland, "Weak Supervenience," pp. 94-95.

taneous hits. Wave-hit₁ might be identical with the difference in positions of the molecules comprising wave₁ at times t₀ and t₁ (at times t₀ and t₁), together with wave₁'s mathematically calculable contribution to the height of the wave at t₁, the moment of simultaneous impact. And Haugeland's question, 'Which molecules comprise wave-hit₁?' need not be answered, because molecules are just not the sort of thing which comprise 'wave-hit' events, even if changes in position of molecules are.

The diagnosis of the problem in Haugeland's argument here is straightforward. Haugeland's physical events are 'Kim' events, i.e., events according to the account given by Kim. Haugeland's 'robust' events are 'Lombard' or 'Davidson' events, i.e., events according to the account given by Lombard or Davidson. Now, I have no idea which, if either, of these accounts is correct. But to have any weight against the token identity view, it is incumbent on Haugeland to give us some reason to believe that robust events are 'Lombard' events and that physical events cannot be so. The first task he does set himself, but Haugeland does not touch the second. And, given such recent accounts of causality as Salmon's, I would be surprised if he could do so.⁸

I said above that the fact that Haugeland tries to argue that robust events are not complexes of physical events might lead us to suspect that his individual nominalism is the type of position we have been examining. According to this view, the criterion for asserting that some individual exists is the same in all languages, even though the kinds of predicates available in different languages determine those languages to embody different theories in regard to which population of entities exist. This, together with the proposition that the individuals in one language are no complex of individuals in a second implies that the token identity view is false for those two languages. But it looks as if, given the identity of criteria for existence across languages, we have no reason to believe this second proposition. But there is also good reason to think that Haugeland is asserting yet a third position, a position which, as opposed to the other two positions we have considered, is in fact a genuine individual nominalism. Haugeland does not, however, always carefully distinguish this position from the others.

In the passage quoted above Haugeland claims that the world does not come metaphysically categorized independent of and prior to our descriptive resources. On the type of position we have been discussing, the world *would* come metaphysically categorized prior to our description of it —

⁸ Wesley Salmon, "Why ask, 'Why?' An Inquiry Concerning Scientific Explanations," *Proceedings and Addresses of the American Philosophical Association* 51 (1978): 638-705.

the causal order just is what it is whether we recognize it or not. In addition, in an unpublished paper which is quoted by Daniel Dennett, Haugeland is more explicit. There he suggests that Heidegger would find his point 'entirely congenial', "for his point about presence-at-hand, readiness-to-hand, and existence is precisely that they are different 'ways to be'." So the point that which individuals exist varies as a function of which vocabulary is used is to be understood in conjunction with the claim that there are different ways to be, i.e., in relation to the assertion that 'existence' itself is not univocal but is said in many ways. But how are we to interpret *this* claim?

There was a time when it was common to speak about various senses of 'being', even when this word was restricted to the 'is' of existence as opposed to that of identity or predication. It is well known, as Haugeland points out, that in the existentialist tradition Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Sartre all want to distinguish between what it means to say that a person is and what it means to say that a physical object is. In Heidegger's case, this multiplicity of senses of 'being' is extended to include special meanings for 'is' when applied to, at least, tools and art works. But the existentialists are not the only philosophers who hold this position. In the *Concept of Mind*, for example, Gilbert Ryle goes so far as to claim that 'existence' said of minds and bodies does not even assert different species of the same genus.

It is perfectly proper to say, in one logical tone of voice, that there exist minds and to say, in another tone of voice, that there exist bodies. But these expressions do not indicate two different species of existence, for 'existence' is not a generic word like 'coloured' or 'sexed'. They indicate two different senses of 'exist' . . .¹⁰

And, although he of course rejects Ryle's logical behaviorism, Dennett specifically endorses this claim in his attempt to explain the status he wishes to accord to intentional states such as beliefs.¹¹ So it would seem that both Haugeland, in association with Heidegger, and Dennett, in association with Ryle, want to assert that different individuals exist when we speak of the world in an intentional idiom than when we use a non-intentional one *because* what it means to exist is different in the two idioms.

This view, that 'being' is said in several ways, even when we exclude identity and the copula, ultimately derives from Aristotle and was dominant in the tradition prior to Kant. Since Kant, however, it has been recog-

⁹ John Haugeland, "The Same Only Different," pp. 5-6. Quoted in Daniel Dennett, "Mid-Term Examination," in *The Intentional Stance* (Cambridge: M. I. T. Press, 1987), p. 349.

¹⁰ Gilbert Ryle, *The Concept of Mind* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1949), p. 23.

¹¹ D. Dennett, "Mid-Term Examination" in *The Intentional Stance*, p. 349.

nized that 'being' is not a predicate — that, as Kant suggests, 'God exists' genuinely has the logical form of 'Something existing is God'. This fact seems to have the consequence that 'being' (in the sense of 'existence') is always used univocally — that 'F is' is always an incomplete formulation of 'Some x is F', and that differences among types of beings are to be seen as differences among the characters of those beings and not as differences in what it means for those different kinds of things to be. If objects, events, sets, and persons all exist, and they are radically different from one another, this does not indicate that they exist in different senses, it merely implies that, e.g., persons are different from events, that the conditions on something being a person are different from those on something being an event.

In light of this apparently well confirmed result, and the degree to which this conclusion has been accepted in contemporary philosophy, why would philosophers such as Haugeland and Dennett want to suggest that the Aristotelean tradition was not entirely mistaken concerning the various senses of 'being'? The key to interpreting this claim is supplied by Haugeland's comment that the distinction he is driving at mirrors Heidegger's division of the different 'ways to be'. This is not the position that 'existence' is to be distinguished from 'being' as two different predicate senses applied to subjects, as if we could distinguish the being of a unicorn from its existence in such a way as to account for 'unicorn' as an idea or essence capable of being an intentional object even if unicorns do not exist. Heidegger rejects the 'idea idea' as thoroughly as Quine does, and he follows Husserl and Kant in denying that 'existence' is a predicate.¹² Rather, the claim here is that, to borrow a phrase of Dennett's, vocabularies contain different 'stances', where a stance is defined in terms of the criterion used for determining which individuals there are. So, for example, to be a hammer is not to be a spatio-temporal causal particular this which happens to have the functional properties associated with hammers. Rather, something can be a particular this, which is a hammer, that is have the specific functional properties hammers have, only if it is individuated in terms of its functional unity within some functional context.

The specific *thisness* of a piece of equipment, its *individuation*, if we take the word in a completely formal sense, is not determined primarily by space and time in the sense that it appears in a determinate space- and time-position. Instead, what determines a piece of equipment as an individual is its equipmental character and equipmental contexture.¹³

¹² Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans. Albert Hofstadter (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982), pp. 27-49.

¹³ M. Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, p. 292.

The point here is that, e.g., a factory or rail system which might be spatio-temporally discontinuous, might only count as an individual, as a proper subject of predication, in virtue of its functional unity, its capacity to be used to complete a specific defined task and reach a specific determinate goal. The Bay Area Rapid Transit system might be thought to be a proper subject of predication only in virtue of its unity of function. It might not appear as an individual at all in ordinary physical-causal terms, no matter at what 'level' they operate. Similarly, what it does and the events it undergoes might also be thought of as determined as individuals only in virtue of their functional roles, rather than in virtue of their causal antecedents and consequences. This view would claim that something could count as an individual in the ordinary causal sense and yet not count as an individual in the functional sense and *vice versa*.

Whether or not the view that there are different criteria for existence as an individual is at all plausible when applied to tools and physical objects, and whether this position in any way implies that these tools need not be token identical with spatio-temporal causal particulars or complexes of such particulars, does not concern us here. What does concern us is the companion claims for intentional systems. For this is the cash value of Haugeland's assertions that (1) which individuals there are is function of language and (2) this implies that intentional tokens are not token identical with physical tokens or complexes of them. The claim here is that the principles which individuate entities as proper subjects of predication are so different in the intentional idiom from those which individuate entities in the causal idiom that, at least, it is implausible to think that they could ever be "matched up" so that intentional individuals were identical with causal individuals or complexes of causal individuals.

But notice that in order to show this it is necessary to demonstrate two distinct propositions. First, one must show that the principles of individuation in the intentional idiom are really distinct from those in the causal idiom. But this by itself is insufficient to demonstrate that token identity fails across this vocabulary difference. As we saw in the case of Haugeland's wave-hit example, it can be the case that *x* counts as an individual in language A, and not as an individual in language B, and yet be identical with a complex of individuals of language B. This is even possible where the *criteria* for determining individual existence are distinct in two languages. Consider the functional case again. As we stressed above, it is possible for there to be an individual entity in a functional sense which is no individual in a causal sense and for this difference to be in virtue of the different criteria invoked in the two cases. Presumably spatio-temporally discontinuous institutions such as the Federal Reserve Board might be

individuals in the functional sense but not count as individuals in the causal sense, no matter which level of description we use. This would be the case if, for example, there were no genuine causal laws which mentioned the Fed. Similarly, some doing of the Fed (raising the discount rate?) might count as a single functional event, while not counting as an individual causal event. Nevertheless, this leaves it entirely open whether or not such individual objects or events might be token identical with some individual complex of causally individuated events. Presumably there are no genuine causal laws which mention sets of dishes, which are perfectly acceptable functional particulars but thus not causal particulars. But few would doubt that every individual set of dishes or its "doings" is token identical with some complex of causal individuals. So, to show that token identity in philosophy of mind fails because of differences in the principles of individuation in the mental and physical idioms, a second proposition must be demonstrated. This is just the assertion that the specific manner of individuation of intentional objects and events in particular is such that there is no plausible way such objects and events can be thought to match up and be identical with any causally individuated objects, events, or event or object complexes.

But how could this be shown? It is clear at any rate, that it has not been shown, either here or by Haugeland. In the next section we investigate this claim.

3. Beliefs, Desires, and Other Events

As we have seen, the genuinely individual nominalist thesis which is relevant to token identity positions in philosophy of mind is the claim that the population of existing individuals varies across languages in virtue of difference in the criteria used in determining those populations in the different languages. But, in order for it to follow from this nominalist premise that the token identity thesis is false it must also be the case that these criteria are so different in intentional and non-intentional vocabularies that no individual which could count as a non-intentional event or complex of such events could also count as some intentional event.

But it is pretty clear that all and only those events which feature in the causal order count as genuine physical (or perhaps better, material) events. It is at present an open issue whether these events should themselves be seen as changes or as properties of objects or systems at times. (It is a further issue whether or not either changes or properties of objects at times, that is, events, should be understood as genuine *individuals* or not. If they are not seen as individuals then appropriate modifications would need to be made in the token identity thesis. These modifications would be serious, but would not present overwhelming obstacles to the continued

acceptance of the thesis.) So one way to show that token identity in philosophy of mind is false given individual nominalism would be to demonstrate that all material events were either changes or properties at times and that all intentional events were the other. But we have already seen that it is highly unlikely that we will be able to do this. Given that the materialist criterion for the existence of events is placement in the causal order, whether material events were changes or properties at times would depend upon our analysis of causality. And it looks as if our causal talk (remember, we are granting individual nominalism here so the question of whether changes or properties at times are the candidates for being causal events is decided by the character of our causal talk) is such that we sometimes treat changes as causes and sometimes treat properties as causes. And given this, there would be no hope for this individual nominalist strategy.

In light of this, the only other apparent avenue open for an individual nominalist critique of token identity would be to argue that intentional events or states were *neither* changes nor properties of objects or systems at times. On the surface this would seem to be false. Actions, for example, are events which are both intentional and involve or are changes. Further, we ordinarily think of mental states such as beliefs and desires as (perhaps dispositional or functional) properties of persons at times. So it would seem that this possibility for an attack on token identity is also precluded.

Nevertheless, it seems to me that this last option does present some possibilities for development. In philosophy of mind we are primarily interested in beliefs and desires. It appears clear that in some way belief and desire predicates are defined in terms of the roles they play in the explanation of intentional action. All intentional actions are teleological in the sense that as intentional they occur for the sake of some end, and the belief and desire explanations which are used to define types of belief and desire states are teleological explanations. Further, it is generally accepted, even by those who accept the token identity thesis, such as Davidson, that the teleological explanations in which beliefs and desires function serve in some way to fix the intentional content of belief and desire predicates; this is what it means to say that those predicates are defined in terms of their roles in such explanations. What the defender of the token identity view insists upon, however, is that insofar as teleological explanations and their intentional species are genuine *explanations* they must account for the fact that the event they explain occurs. And if the relation between belief and desire tokens on the one hand and the actions they explain on the other is *not* a causal relation, then we are left with *no* account of what it means to say that someone did x because he has reason y (or belief r and

desire q). This challenge to the non-causalist is the core of "Actions, Reasons, and Causes." "If . . . causal explanations are 'wholly irrelevant to the understanding we seek' of human action then we are without an analysis of the 'because' in 'He did it because . . .', where we go on to name a reason."¹⁴

As we have shown, anyone who rejects the token identity position on individual nominalist grounds is committed to denying that beliefs and desires are part of the causal order at all, so she is obviously committed to the thesis that intentional, and by extension, teleological, explanations are *not* causal and that the connection between reasons and actions is not a causal one. It is thus incumbent on the individual nominalist to offer some *non-causal* account of the 'because' in intentional explanations. And, as such explanations are on all hands accepted as teleological, she must give a non-causal account of the 'because' in teleological explanations. So what is necessary if the individual nominalist is to call the token identity position into question is an alternative analysis of the teleological explanation to that offered by the causalist. Such an analysis would provide a basis for criticizing the token identity understanding of the intentional species of teleological explanation only if it provided the basis for an analysis of intentional explanation which (1) accounted for the 'because' in teleological and intentional explanations in some non-causal way, (2) defined belief and desire predicates in terms of distinctively teleological relations with actions which do not involve any causal connection and, most importantly, these relations must be such as to (3) preclude the very possibility that these beliefs and desires could even be part of the ordinary causal order at all, in the sense that they could not even count as the causes of events.

At first sight this would seem to be a daunting if not impossible task. It is made somewhat easier, however, by the fact that the individual nominalist does not really need to *supplant* the current causalist analysis of teleological and intentional explanation. She need not do this because, in fact, the defenders of the token identity view have simply failed to provide any such plausible account of either teleological explanations in general or intentional explanations in particular at all. The closest they have been able to come to such an account is provided by functionalism, and it now seems fairly clear that there are serious difficulties with this position. So the proponents of causal readings of teleological explanation are left just where they were in 1964: if not a causal connection between belief-desire and action, then what?

¹⁴ Donald Davidson, "Actions, Reasons, and Causes" in *Essays on Actions and Events* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980), p. 11.

Any individual nominalist who could answer this question with a plausible analysis of teleological explanation which met the three conditions specified above would thus present a serious challenge to all versions of token identity in philosophy of mind. In the absence of such an analysis, however, individual nominalists offer us no reason to reject token identity and its attendant causalism regarding the relation between belief and desire tokens and action tokens. In that case this position remains the only game in town.