

# **Knowing and understanding other minds: on the role of communication**

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## **I. Introduction**

Over the past decade or so there has been increasing interest, in both philosophy and psychology, in the claim that we should appeal to various forms of social interaction in explaining our knowledge of other minds, where this is presented as an alternative to what is referred to as the dominant approach to such knowledge, usually identified as ‘theory-theory’. Such claims are made under a variety of headings: the ‘social interaction’ approach, the ‘intersubjectivity approach’, the ‘second person approach’, the ‘collective intentionality’ approach and more. A multitude of claims are made under these various headings, both about the kind of social interaction we should be appealing to, and about how exactly this or that interaction provides an alternative to the ‘dominant approach’. Faced with this plethora of claims and characterizations one may well find oneself wondering whether there is an interesting, well formulated debate to be had in this area

I believe that there is a least one such debate, and in what follows I begin to sketch out how I think it should be formulated, and why I think it reveals fundamental issues about the nature of our knowledge of others’ minds. The debate turns on pitting two claims against each other. I will call one the ‘Observation Claim’, a claim that does, I think capture a very widely held view, over the ages, from Augustine on, about the basis and nature of our knowledge of other minds, and is rightly labeled ‘dominant’. The other I label the ‘Communication Claim’. It says we should give particular forms of interpersonal

communication a foundational role in explaining our knowledge of each others' minds. Although I think some version of the Communication Claim is right, my main aim is not so much to argue for it but to put on the table some of the central claims I believe would need to be made good if it is to an interesting and serious alternative to the Observation Claim.

## **II. The Observation Claim**

The Observation Claim I want to have before us says the following.

### The Third Person Observation Claim

Our knowledge of other minds is based on observation, in one of the following two ways: either perception reveals other minds to us, or it provides the basis for inferences about them. Knowledge and thought about others thus based are 'third personal', expressed in propositions such as: 'She (or 'this person') is in pain'.

In effect, it says that our knowledge of other minds has the same source as our knowledge of everything else in the world -- perception--and the knowledge based on it is either direct or inferential. . In recent years we find increasing appeal to the idea that perception delivers non-inferential knowledge both of the existence of others minds, and of the nature of particular mental states, it is revelatory of both. For the purposes of this talk, though, I'm going to focus on the most popular inferential version of the Observation Claim, which says that our knowledge of other minds is based on abductive inferences from observed data.. The sketch is intended to bring into view the assumptions about knowledge and understanding I

want to have in place before turning to the Communication Claim, assumptions that are either shared or not explicitly challenged by those who adopt various non-inferential perceptual models of the Third Person Observation Claim.

Suppose the question is: how do I know on a particular occasion that someone is angry? On the abductive model, we should think of it along the lines of: how do we know, on a particular occasion, that streaks on the glass surface of the Wilson cloud chamber are caused by the movement of high charged particles? This is the example Chihara and Fodor use in what I think is the first explicit appeal to inference to the best explanation to explain the structure of our knowledge of other minds, and they use the analogy with charged particles to drive home two main points.

1. 'Our mental concepts are interdependent, and get their meaning through their place in an explanatory predicative theory of behaviour.'

2. ' [O]ur success in accounting for the behavior on the basis of which mental predicates are applied might properly be thought of as supplying *evidence* for the existence of the mental processes we postulate. It does so by attesting to the adequacy of the conceptual system in terms of which the processes are understood. The behavior would be, in that sense, analogous to the cloud-chamber track on the basis of which we detect the presence and motion of charged particles. Correspondingly, the conceptual system is analogous to the physical *theory* in which the properties of these particles are formulated.' (Chihara and Fodor 1965, 290)

The primary virtue of having before us Chihara and Fodor's early formulation of the abductive model is that it brings to the fore what I take to be one of the central issues underlying accounts we give of the nature of our knowledge of other minds. This issue is obscured in many discussions, where the focus tends to be on particular pieces of propositional knowledge, knowing that someone is in pain or angry and so forth. This practice is not unique to other minds discussions. The general practice in epistemology is to focus on the question of what it is to know particular propositions. What the account just sketched shows is the implicit link between questions about our knowledge of individual propositions and questions about understanding. Though not expressed in these terms, what they are putting centre stage is something like Aristotle's notion of 'episteme'. As various writers have pointed out, whether we translate this as knowledge or understanding, the questions he was concerned with under the 'episteme' heading were what it is to understand the way the world works, where to have such understanding is to have a grasp of the dependency relations appropriate to the domain in question.<sup>1</sup> Chihara and Fodor are giving us an account of episteme in the mental domain and saying that knowledge of particular propositions should be slotted into this account. To endorse the abductive model for particular cases is at the same time to commit to a claim about the nature of our understanding of the mental domain.

Their particular suggestion is that the style of explanation is akin to particular kinds of abductive explanation we find in science. You might accept this general model but say that in the mental domain other or additional

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<sup>1</sup> See e.g. John Greco 'Episteme: Knowledge and Understanding', in *Virtues and their Vices*, eds., Kevin Timpe and Craig Boyd. Refs to Grimm.

constraints come into play, for example you might hold that inferences take a Bayesian form, say. On the level of abstraction I am interested in, though, these differences do not matter, or at least not immediately and not on their own. The claim I want to take away from Chihara and Fodor is that the background understanding into which individual pieces of propositional slot has the form of observation plus causally explanatory and predictive theory.

Now in making this the central underlying issue they also serve, at the same time, to link the epistemological question about other minds, to a problem that is much less discussed now than it was during the second half of the last century, the so called 'conceptual problem'. And it is no accident that they do, because that is in fact one of the main targets of their article. To work up to the debate with the communication Claim, it will help to have before us the following fairly standard presentation of the conceptual problem.

- i. The Background Datum. We take it that other people have mental states like our own.
- ii. The Third Person Observation Claim
- iii. The First Person Introspection Claim. Our knowledge of our own minds is based on introspection. Knowledge and thought thus based are 'first personal'.
- iv. The Unity Requirement. For us to so much as make sense of the existence of other minds like our own, it must be the case that our mental concepts have the same meaning when applied to others and ourselves.
- v. The Bridging Challenge. There is a problematic gap between first and third person conditions of application/acquisition. An explanation is needed of how the gap is bridged if the Unity Requirement is to be met.

Any response to the Bridging Challenge will seek to establish some kind

of internal link between the application of mental concepts to ourselves and others that shows how the Unity requirement is met. Chihara and Fodor's own response consists, in effect, of denying there is a difference there in the first place. They do so in two steps.

The first makes explicit the link between the account we should give of what it is to understand mental concepts and the notion of 'episteme', the kind of knowledge/understanding we have of the domain in general. An account of what it is to understand mental concepts should be linked to an account of the kind of understanding we bring to bear in this area, and thereby, internally linked to claims about the kind of knowledge we have of individual propositions using these concepts. The second says that our account of understanding in the mental domain should begin with the 'third person' case, the way we apply concepts to others. I will call this the 'third person first' approach. In so doing, the structure of the problem, as it is often stated, is reversed. It is not so much: how do we explain extensions of our mental concepts from first person to third person applications (the first person first approach), but, rather: how do we explain how this model, applied to others, is applied to the use of mental concepts to express self knowledge. The invited conclusion is that it applies to ourselves in exactly the same way -- self-knowledge is a matter of abductive inference from observation of, e.g. 'internal promptings' as Caruthers puts it (see also Gopnik, and in a less extreme version, Cassam).

I think it is right to say that resistance to the third person first approach in the case of self-knowledge has tended to turn (a) on claims to the effect that there is an eliminable constitutive link between concepts such as 'pain' and distinctive ways of applying them in the first person case; and (b) on claims

to the effect that first person propositional knowledge is both non-observational and non inferential. I think it is also right to say that most standard responses to the Bridging Challenge have sought to hang onto such claims about our concepts and knowledge in the first person case while retaining some version (perhaps non-inferential) of the Observation Claim with respect to others.

The first point I want to make is that whatever such link is proposed it does not of itself address the episteme question --additional work is needed if the scientific model is to be resisted. To take an obvious example. Suppose you say we have non-inferential perception-based knowledge of the physical world, expressed in propositions such as 'this object is cubical'. That does not rule out the claim that such knowledge involves grasp of an intuitive physics. There is no immediate entailment from non-inferentiality claims to claims about the episteme implicated in grasping the content of the proposition non-inferentially known, in either the physical or the mental domain.

The second, and for my purposes most important point is this. Many recent writings under the 'intersubjectivity heading' focus on rejection of the claim that mental states are inferred. Much of what they say could as easily be said by someone who holds they are directly perceived, there is nothing especially social in the way the claims are developed, nothing that could not be accommodated by a revelatory form of the Observation Claim, and for that reason doesn't directly address the episteme question. The third point is this: if appeal to social interaction is to provide a serious alternative to the Observation Claim, what is required, and this the challenge I want to take away from Chihara and Fodor, is an appeal to a kind of social interaction which (a)

slots our knowledge of other minds into a different kind of episteme, and (b) delivers, as integral to that episteme, a different account of how the Unity Requirement is met, of a kind that explicitly rejects the Observation Claim, inferential and on inferential versions alike. What I want to do for the rest of the talk is sketch first moves in meeting this challenge, under the heading of the Communication Claim

### **III. The Communication Claim**

Much if not most of what we learn about what others feel, believe and so forth is acquired through verbal or nonverbal communication. It is therefore prima facie surprising that communication is barely referred to in discussions of our knowledge of other minds. I suspect the main reason for this is that communication is subsumed under the Observation Claim. What we learn about others through communication can be explained by material made available under that heading, in particular inferential versions thereof.

Now there are potentially relevant debates in the literature on testimony, about whether this is the right way to think of the knowledge we gain through communication. But I'm going to abstract from these, and first sketch informally a reason for denying that the Observation Claim gets right a distinctive feature of the knowledge we gain about others' minds through communication; and, second, use this to set out the Communication Claim I want to have in place

When someone tells me she is sad, say, and I take myself to have gained knowledge about her by her telling me so, I thereby necessarily take myself to have gained an additional piece of knowledge. In treating the communication as an instance of telling, I am taking it that the speaker takes herself to have told me, in a sense that entails that I am thereby told, and in so doing I am



committing to the speaker knowing that I know how she feels. So I am committing to her knowing at least this much about me. More generally, my knowing another mind in this way comes with *being known by that other mind*, and knowing that one is. Moreover, the knowledge we both have has the familiar structure of mutual knowledge--if we both know an act of telling has occurred then I know that you know that I know how you feel, and the same holds for you, and we both know that this holds for each of us. That means, that under that description, whether or not I have that knowledge is not just up to me.

The fact that communication can yield such knowledge not only introduces a fundamental disanalogy between knowledge of other minds and our knowledge of anything else, for which there is no possibility of mutual knowledge; it also introduces a fundamental disanalogy between knowledge of other minds gained through communication and knowledge about other minds gained through perception or thorough inference. If I take myself to know you are sad because I see you crying there is no entailment from that to your knowing that I know, no link back to being known by you. Observation-based knowledge is unidirectional. This is the central difference between observation and communication that I will be drawing on in the sketch of the communication Claim that follows.

I will say that a way of acquiring knowledge about a domain is foundational if without it we could not have knowledge of its nature, and by knowledge here I mean the notion that includes understanding, episteme. It is plausible to say that a combination of perception and inference are foundational in this sense with respect to the physical world, whereas testimony, and hence

communication might be considered as secondary. Consider now the following two propositions, which, together, constitute the Communication Claim.

The Communication Claim

1. There are forms of face-to face communication, verbal and non-verbal which entail mutual knowledge. They are in this sense instances of knowledge that is essentially and irreducibly 'knowledge for two'.
2. Such forms of communication are foundational with respect to our knowledge of other minds -- without them we would not have the kind of episteme required for this domain.

Now, if the Communication Claim is to be a serious alternative to the Observation Claim, the first challenge it must meet is one of giving an account of what this alternative form of episteme is. I sketch such an account in the next section. A second is to explain what is distinctive about the contents of individual pieces of propositional knowledge gained on particular occasions of communication, and about the relation between such contents and the background understanding being appealed to. I take these in turn.

**IV. The Missing Epistemological Question**

I noted earlier that an advantage of Chihara and Fodor's way of formulating the abductive account of our knowledge of other minds is that it brings to the fore the link between claims about the nature of knowledge in a given domain and understanding, episteme. And, so far, the implicit assumption has been that if we are to explain the link, we should focus on propositional knowledge. In an unjustly, in my view, under-discussed paper on 'Person Perception and our

Understanding of Others' (in Mischel, ed., 1974, *Understanding Other Persons*), D W Hamlyn argues that a proper account of the link between knowledge and understanding in the mental domain should take as its point of departure a distinct epistemological question: what is it to know a person?

I will take it as uncontroversial both that in order to be said to know someone one must know some propositions about her, but, also, and more importantly, that knowledge of people is not reducible to knowledge of propositions (on pain of claiming, for example, that we each know all the people we read about in the newspapers, see on TV or just see in everyday life but never speak to). So this is a genuinely distinct question, a question that has so far not figured in our discussion. The particular interest of Hamlyn's treatment of the question, in this context, lies in his suggestion that there is sufficient overlap between the question of what it is to know someone and what it is to understand her that by focusing on the knowledge question we simultaneously address questions about our understanding the nature of persons. He also claims that by thus linking questions of knowledge and understanding we can begin to counter the view that our understanding of what persons are can and should be restricted to the style of explanations, and the concepts invoked by the social sciences. The point generalizes, though, to any claim to the effect that our understanding of people can be exhaustively accounted for by appeal to any 'observation plus theory' model. I will call this the Knowledge of Persons Claim.

A general claim Hamlyn argues for is that it is a 'necessary condition of being said to know X is that we should actually stand to X in relations which are appropriate to the kind of things that X is'. He also holds that the appropriateness must be registered by the knower, which in turn requires that

one grasp the concept of the kind of thing it is. So, in the case of persons, to know a person one must grasp the concept of a person. I will return to this general idea soon, but I want to begin with three specific claims he makes in developing his account of the appropriate relations that underpin knowledge of persons. Such relations, he suggests (1) must be potentially reciprocal; (2) must involve some degree of emotional involvement with the other, or, as he puts it 'personal feelings' towards the other, and (3) the relational emotions are potentially morally relevant.

Bracketing, for the moment, his reciprocity claim, the second two claims about knowledge of persons says that our knowledge of person is 'thick', inextricably bound up with emotions of potential moral significance. To say our knowledge of people is 'thick' in this way is to say that when we subtract such emotions we are left with nothing that would count as a knowing a person.

A dramatic illustration of the kind of connection between knowledge of persons and the kind of understanding I am gesturing at is to be found in Hervey Cleckley's 1941 *The Mask of Sanity*. Summarizing how, after countless hours of interviews with dozens of psychopaths, he was left with a sense of their unknowability, he writes that '...No-one who examines him can point out in scientific and objective terms why he is not real. And yet one knows, or feels that he knows. Reality, in the sense of full healthy experiencing of life, is not there. Cleckley 1941, 20). His patients felt nothing of the morally relevant emotions for him (or anyone else) and he could feel nothing in return, and with the absence of this came a sense of their unknowability and unreality.

If this is true about our knowledge of people, such knowledge takes place against a background episteme or understanding that is radically different from

that which underpins the Observation Claim. Rather, it is the kind of understanding that informs what Strawson, in 'Freedom and Resentment', calls our 'participatory attitudes'. The distinction Strawson is interested in that paper is that between 'the objective attitude' we may adopt as policy makers, say, or in the social sciences, and the attitude we take to persons in virtue of our 'interpersonal human relationships with them'. Our participatory attitudes, as he calls them, are founded on such relations, and include attitudes such as 'resentment, gratitude, forgiveness, anger, or the sort of love which two adults can sometimes be said to feel reciprocally, for each other'. What the Knowledge of Persons proposal says, in effect, is that it is to these relations and these reactive attitudes that we should look to in explaining what it is involved in understanding the concepts we employ in expressing such knowledge.

Now Hamlyn's idea, as I noted earlier, is that knowing a person requires grasp of the concept of a person, and correlatively, that our understanding of mental concepts is internally linked to our grasp of this concept. The import of this, relative to the Observation Claim, can be put in terms of a contrast, though not necessarily an opposition, between the Strawson of 'Freedom and Resentment' and the Strawson of *Individuals*. In *Individuals*, the proposal that we treat the concept 'person' as primitive is put forward as a way of linking third person observation-based ascriptions of mental properties to others with first-person non-observational self-ascriptions. Treating the concept of person as primitive on Strawson's account there is intended to block the idea that there is a problematic first/third person gap to be bridged. The claim is that it is a condition on understanding 'person predicates' that we understand that they are ascribed both to others, on the basis of observed physical behaviour, and to

ourselves, without observation.

To put the issue in this way is to endorse what I called the Observation Claim with respect to our knowledge and understanding of others. Now Strawson himself would not have endorsed the abductive account, he favoured a version of the criterial account of the link between behaviour and mental states. And there is every reason to suppose, more generally, that he would have rejected the claim that the kind of understanding we bring to bear in our thought of others, and ourselves, should be conceived of as conforming to the scientific model. What the Knowledge of Person Claim says, in effect, is that the first step in resisting it is to put centre stage the kinds of relations he appeals to in 'Freedom and Resentment'. It is not to our observation of others, but to our interpersonal relations with them that we should turn in grounding our understanding of the concept of a person.

This is obviously no more than a gesture at the alternative to the episteme into which Chihara and Fodor slot our knowledge of other minds. But I want to take it one step further by taking up the clause in Hamlyn's account that I have so far bracketed, the idea of that knowledge of person is founded on relations that are essentially potentially reciprocal.

## **V. Communication and the Second Person**

The reciprocity claim is not really developed by Hamlyn; and he doesn't say much about communication. What I want to do now is bring communication into the story, in a way that slots communication in directly to the kind of episteme I have been gesturing at. I do this by turning to the second challenge I said the Communication Claim must meet, that of accounting for the content of the propositional knowledge we gain about another person,

on a particular occasion of communication, in a way that shows how appeal to communication provides an alternative to the Observation claim.?

The proposal I want to have before us says that the difference turns, in the first instance, on the difference between the singular thought components in such knowledge. In the perceptual case, it is underwritten by perceptual relations to the person I encounter, and I am aware of her as 'this' (person), and I will say that in such cases the demonstrative is an expression of perceptual knowledge of the person, often referred to in the literature as 'acquaintance'. In the other, it is underwritten by the communicative relations between us, in which we adopt attitudes of mutual address. The proposal I want to set out is that when we stand in such relations we are aware of each other as 'you'. And I will say that 'you awareness' is an expression of second person knowledge.

The claim that there is such a thing as 'you awareness', or thought, has been the subject of lively debate in recent years. For our immediate purposes, of contrasting appeal to communication with appeal to observation in explaining our knowledge of other minds, they are best introduced by having before us Buber's famous distinction between the I-it relation and the I-you relation.

I "experience" the it. I bring back from the encounter with things "some knowledge of their condition." I experience "what there is to things." (55). But my relation to the You is different than this... "The basic word I-You establishes the world of Relation...When one says You, the I of the You is said too. Whoever says You does not have something as his object...he stands in a

relation. Relation is reciprocity. My you acts on me as I act on it.

There are (at least) three ideas here. The first can be illustrated as follows. Suppose I am at a department meeting. I may look across at a colleague in order to acquire information about her, what she is wearing, how she is taking the proceedings, and, seeing her glazed eyes and drooping mouth, say, acquire knowledge that she is bored witless. In so doing I stand in what Buber calls 'I-it' relation to her; she enters into my 'world as experienced', or the world observed. Alternatively I may look across at her in order, as we say, to catch her eye, to connect, and, perhaps, once connected, either to indicate by raised eyebrow or gesture that I want to know how she is taking it, and/or to let her know, by similar means that I am as bored as she is. In so doing I seek to establish a communicative relation with her. When that is the aim of my looking, and I succeed in fulfilling it, thereby 'establishing the world of relation', I am aware of my colleague as 'you'. Call this the *Relatedness Claim*.

The second point concerns the success conditions for 'you awareness'. Such awareness is, as Buber puts it, reciprocal, or, better, mutual. Returning to the colleague example--you may look across at her in order to catch her eye, but fail to do so, say because she is studiously avoiding your gaze, or looking through you. You are only aware of her as 'you' when she reciprocates--'you' thinking is a kind of thinking about a person you can only engage in when that person thinks about you in the same way, it exhibits a property I will call 'mutual interdependence'. Call this the *Mutual Interdependence Claim*

To adopt this claim is to say that just as I may essay in a perception-based demonstrative thought about a person, but fail, say because there is no-one there



to be perceived, so I may attempt a second person thought about a person, but fail, because she fails to think of me in the same way as I aim to be thinking of her. There is a kind of world-dependence here, but the world one is depending on is the world of the other thinking about me in the same way as I am of her. This dependence is unique to second person awareness and constitutive of it. There is, for example, no such dependence in demonstrative or third person thought about a person one perceives.

The final claim is expressed in the passage quoted in the claim that 'the word \_I-You' establishes the world of relation', in other places with the claim that 'When one says you, the I of the... I-You is said, too.' If we translate 'saying' to 'thinking', perhaps the easiest way to bring out the point being made about the link between you-awareness and the first person is by means of the following comparison.

Suppose I am aware that someone is watching me. The most immediate expression of my registration of this awareness is in the first person -- I am the object, accusative, of her awareness of me, something that will be expressed in thoughts such as: 'She (that person) is aware of me'. But it is not a requirement on successful demonstrative or third person thought of another that I think of the person thus singled out as someone who is aware of me. Contrast this with my awareness of someone when she is aware of me as 'you', on the account of Mutual Interdependence just sketched. Here too, the immediate registration of such awareness will take a first person form. The main difference is that such registration *is* a condition on my awareness of her as 'you', as is her first person registration of my awareness of her as 'you'. It is essential to awareness of the other as 'you', in contrast to demonstrative and third person awareness of

others, that one employ the first person in registering the other's awareness of oneself. I-you thinking is at least sense essentially relational. I will call this the *I-You Claim*.<sup>2</sup> So, with respect to the singular component in thoughts about others, it is neither first person nor other person first. They are, in this context, interdependent.

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Each of the three claims requires more elaboration and defence, but I hope I have said enough about them to give an initial sense of the role they might play in relation to the Knowledge of Persons Claim and, more generally, in beginning to fill in ways Communication Claim provides an alternative to the Observation Claim. I end with brief comments about the latter.

Consider again the difference between seeing that your colleague is bored and her switching mode and communicating that to you, with expectation (a) that you will thereby know how she feels and (b) of some kind of response from, you. There are interesting questions about how her expression changes, but however we describe this, the point is that the skills you need to bring to bear in picking this up are those of understanding the meaning of expressions, verbal or non verbal, rather than observational skills--they are of the same kind, on a continuum with, those you need to bring to bear when she tells you, verbally, that she's bored. Of course perception comes into it, but it does so in the same way as it does when we understand a spoken word--we perceive the vehicles of meaning.

The second point is this. To adopt the Communication Claim is to say

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<sup>2</sup> The closest current account of this kind of essentially relational self-conscious activity is to be found in Sebastian Rödl's 'Intentional Transaction', 2014.

that the questions we should be asking when we ask about the foundations of our knowledge of others' minds are questions about what makes the meaning of another's communication transparent to me. In this sense the form of the question is no different from the kind of question we might ask about understanding communications about the rest of the world, say when someone tells me the sky is blue. But the basic difference between our knowledge of other minds and our knowledge of the material world, according to the Communication Claim, is that questions about transparency of meaning are in there at ground zero, at the foundations of our knowledge and understanding of others. It is not, as in the case of the material world, that we communicate about a world about which we have independent observational knowledge and understanding and then ask: what is required for understanding communications about it, thereby gaining second hand testimonial knowledge about it... Rather, our knowledge of others' minds, according to the Communication Claim, begins with, or, rather, is founded on, understanding the meaning of what we are told by others about their mental states. It is, so to speak, understanding of meaning all the way down. Or, to put it another way, with persons, unlike with physical objects, one's knowledge of them is bound up, in its foundation, with making sense of them through making sense of their communications with oneself.

And it is here, I think that we get to the deep difference between the episteme, understanding we bring to bear in our knowledge and understanding of people and scientific episteme. Earlier I located it in what Strawson calls our participatory attitudes which are the foundation for our knowledge of persons. What the appeal to communicative relations adds to this is that the vehicles for

such relations and attitudes, what makes them possible, is understanding the meaning of what others let us know about themselves, and making the meaning of what one expresses about one's mental states understood by others.

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Note on the notion communication I have been appealing to in developing the Communication Claim. I said earlier that we stand in a communicative relation when we adopt attitudes of mutual address towards one another, and that standing in a communicative relation thus defined is necessary for being aware of the other as 'you'. So, on this account, A shouting out to B in the supermarket that he is spilling sugar doesn't put him in a communicative relation with B unless B responds to A in a way that involves his adopting an attitude of address towards A.

This requirement on communicative relations is quite strong. Much turns, for the purposes of making it good, on the notion of communication appealed to. On one, commonly used definition, communication is the transmission of information. On this notion, so long as B picks up the information transmitted by A they stand in a communicative relation, whether or not B adopts an attitude of address towards A (or, indeed, vice versa). There is, of course, nothing wrong with such a definition of communication, but it is not the one we need in play in order to explain the sense in which you-awareness is underpinned by a communicative relation.

The sense of 'communication' we need for making good the Communication Claim is the etymologically older, and more diffuse notion, on

which to communicate is to be in touch, to connect, or 'commune'. I label this notion 'communication-as-connection'. There are many ways of achieving connection -- dancing or playing music together, holding a conversation (in the course of which one might exchange information), sharing a joke and so forth; and there is much to be learned about the nature of connection by investigating these different ways of achieving it. But however it is thus filled out, the proposal I want to have before us says that we should treat 'communication-as-connection' as a basic psychological concept, which cannot be reductively analyzed -- one of the concepts, along with those of perception, belief and the like, that we should take as basic when explaining our engagement with the world, in this case the world of other persons..<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Arguments for treating it as developmentally basic are to be found in the literature on early 'proto-conversations', and in what Edward Tronick calls the 'basic urge to connect', which on his view, we need to appeal to in explaining the baby's participation in these exchanges. See Tronick 2005.