

## I. Introduction

On all accounts, during episodes of joint attention a three-way, triadic relation is established between two subjects and an object both subjects are attending to. Most developmental psychologists treat the emergence of the capacity to engage in such triadic relations (at about 9/10 months) as a landmark. The relation is thought of as importantly different from the earlier dyadic relations infants enter into, either with physical objects (in perception and object-directed action) or with their caregivers (mainly through exchanges of various emotions), and is thought by many to provide an essential basis for language acquisition and for the acquisition of fundamental conceptual abilities, notably those required for grasp of the idea of an objective world, self conscious thought and thought about other minds.

But when we ask how this triadic relation should be described and explained, how exactly it should be distinguished from, say, switching between two types of dyadic relation, all hell breaks loose. There is hardly a major debate in developmental psychology, and, more recently, in philosophy of mind that does not find expression in this minefield. To narrow the field somewhat from the outset, I will assume as a constraint the so-called ‘rich interpretation’ of joint attention, according to which it is constitutive of the phenomenon that when it occurs its occurrence is mutually manifest to the co-attenders. Assuming this constraint, the specific questions I will be focusing on are the following. How should we describe and explain the relation between the two co-attenders in the joint attention triangle? (The Relation Question). And, what account should we give of the way co attenders are aware of each other when they stand in this relation? (The Awareness Question).

By way of setting the scene for the way I will approach these questions, it will help to have before us a concrete example of adult joint attention. With this in place, in the subsequent section I set out the dilemma that will frame the discussion that follows. As the title of the paper suggests, appeal to something I call ‘second person awareness’ will have a central role in responding to the dilemma.

## II. The university meeting

Consider the following case. You are sitting at a pep talk organized by senior university administrators, in which the idea of your university’s ‘entrepreneurial gene’, say, or some similar piece of nonsense, is being promoted. At some point, you raise your head from your doodling, and your eyes lock into those of a colleague sitting opposite you at the large table. This meeting of eyes may last a split second, and then you each return to whatever it is you

were doing before. Here are two of several possible scenarios of what happens as your eyes meet.

- a. A brief almost deadpan meeting of eyes suffices to establish you both feel and think the same about the proceedings.
- b. Your eyes meet. You expect an exchange of shared embarrassment/ despair, for example. Instead, you encounter eyes shining with enthusiastic endorsement. This kind of exchange probably needs more time than the first, as each one of you registers the difference, before you return to your doodles and he resumes his rapt attention to the speaker.

Unlike in many illustrations of the phenomenon, your perceptual experiences of the input are in one sensory modality, and another conveys your interpersonal exchange. I think that the possibility of distributing sensory modalities in joint attention is interesting and important in its own right. But for current purposes, its interest, in this particular example, lies in the way it serves to single out the interpersonal ingredient in joint attention, making vivid a fundamental distinction between two kinds of thing that might be shared during an episode of joint attention.

First, there is a clear sense in which minds meet in the first scenario, the quick flash of mutual agreement, and don't in the second. Crudely, your respective responses, your evaluations, emotional take and so forth are shared in one case and aren't in the other. Second, however, there is something that is shared in both cases, namely the perceptual experience. Even when you are startled or bemused by your colleague's enthusiasm for the idea of your university's gene, there is no question as to what you are both hearing. On some level of description you have a perceptual experience in common and are aware of that. In everyday language when we speak of sharing our experiences of an event or thing we often mean both the sharing of perceptual experiences and the sharing of responses. But these need distinguishing. I will label them the 'shared perceptual experience' and the 'shared response' ingredients respectively. Joint attention, strictly understood, refers to the former, and they need to be dealt with separately.

Our questions concern the sharing of perceptual experiences in joint attention (I say a few words about sharing responses at the end of the paper). They are, first: how should we describe and explain the relation between two people when they share experiences of the environment in the way required for joint attention? (The Relation Question?). Second, what account should we give of the way they are aware of each when they stand in this relation? (The Awareness Question?). In the next section I set out a crude dilemma presented to us by

two radically different answers to the Awareness Question, implicit in claims made in John Campbell and Christopher Peacocke's accounts of the mutual openness characteristic of joint attention. In the subsequent section, I introduce, by way of a first crude response to the crude dilemma, two basic claims, one a response to the Awareness Question, one to the Relation Question. The remainder of the paper will be devoted to refining these two claims and, in the course of that, refining the original crude dilemma.

### III. Two Contrasting Claims: The Crude Dilemma

The dilemma I want to have before us takes off from a solution proposed by Campbell to a distinct dilemma, which, according to him, confronts all accounts of joint attention. Campbell's dilemma, in his words, is this. 'Which of the following do we do? (1) Describe joint attention in terms of beliefs and desires, perhaps other emotions, possessed by the subject. Or, (2) Describe joint attention in terms of sub- personal information-processing states of the subject.' ('An Object-Dependent Perspective on Joint Attention', 2011, 416).

The problem, as he sees it with (1), is that 'the moment we start to give an account in these terms of what it is to have joint attention, we very quickly find ourselves ascribing states of quite implausible complexity to lay adults, or even one- year-olds. The problem with (2) is that just because we are ascribing the states to sub-personal brain-processing systems, it's hard to see what they contribute to the subject's psychological life: an understanding of other minds, a capacity for social coordination, or grasp of the object concept, grasp of the world as independent of us. Campbell, 2011, 416).

The example of the first strategy Campbell has in mind is Christopher Peacocke's iterative, finite account in 'Joint Attention: its Nature, Reflexivity and Relation to Common Knowledge (2005). On this account, full joint attention by x and y to o requires that the following conditions be met:

- (a) x and y are attending to o.
- (b) x and y are each aware that their attention in (a) has mutual open-ended perceptual availability. [I will call this the 'mutual availability claim'].
- (c) x and y are each aware that this whole complex state of awareness (a)–(c) exists. [I will call this the 'reflexivity claim'].

We have "mutual open-ended perceptual availability" when:

Each perceives that the other perceives that s obtains; and if either is occurrently aware that the other is aware that he is aware ... that s obtains, then the state of affairs of his being so occurrently aware is available to the other's occurrent awareness. (Peacocke, 2005, 302, 307-308)).

In contrast, Campbell holds that while the experience of joint attention can be the basis for the kind of reflections Peacocke is describing, they do not constitute it. He proposes extending his relational, acquaintance-based approach to our experience of objects to the experience one has when one stands in a triadic relation to an object and a co-attender. As he summarizes the position:

‘Just as you could argue that seeing Z is a relation more fundamental than propositional knowledge about Z, so too you could argue that jointly attending to Z is a relational state more fundamental than any propositional knowledge. X and Y are jointly attending to Z. This is a relation of experience between X, Y, and Z. When this holds, X has Z as the object of attention and Y is *there as co-attender*. *There is that difference between the way in which X is related to Z and the way in which X is related to Y.*’ (My emphasis)

The final sentence takes us straight to our dilemma, which concerns the account we should give, on the personal level, of the way people are aware of each other when they jointly attend to something in their environment. Campbell says that each is ‘there’ for the other, ‘as co-attender’, and that such being there is part of primitive three-way relation, for each subject, between her, an object in the environment, and the co-attender. One thing he means by ‘primitive’ is that the three way-relation between two subjects and an object cannot be analyzed by appeal to complex, iterated representations in each person’s mind. For our immediate purposes, what matters is the implications for the account we give of what it is for someone to be there as co-attender. I will take it that, as with awareness of the object and its properties, we should appeal only to perceptual acquaintance and the way it makes properties, in this case ‘co-attendance’, present to us, and that what it is for someone to be thus present cannot be analyzed (on pain of such analysis yielding complex iterations)

This appeal to a primitive unanalyzable notion of presence as co-attender contrasts starkly with Peacocke’s recently developed account of ascriptive interpersonal self-consciousness (in *The Mirror of the World*), which is meant to slot into his account of joint attention. He introduces this kind of inter-personal awareness by having us consider a soldier who suddenly becomes aware of being a target for someone he can’t see, say on hearing the click of a rifle. The soldier becomes aware of figuring in someone else’s consciousness as a self-conscious subject. On Peacocke’s account this requires of the soldier, call him A, that he ascribe to the other, B, (thought of, say, as ‘that man’) reference to the first person concept in his thought of A as a self-conscious subject. So A is ascribing to B the deployment of a concept of a concept. Since A is aware that B is doing this, we ‘are now at the third level in the

Fregean hierarchy of concepts (senses)'. (Peacocke, 2014, 239). The claim is that these three levels of embedding are the minimum needed for getting right what happens when we are aware of figuring in another mind as a self-conscious subject. And this, the suggestion is, is the fundamental way we are aware of each other in joint attention, as in many other cases of face-to-face interaction. The main difference between the soldier case and the joint attention case is that in joint attention there is, as he puts, a symmetry. That is, in cases of joint attention both subjects are ascriptively interpersonally self-conscious with respect to each other.

These two radically different responses to the Awareness Question constitute our dilemma, in its first very crude formulation. One answer invokes a primitive, unanalyzable 'being there as co-attender'; the other, a notion of 'ascriptive interpersonal self consciousness', which ascribes to each of the attenders a kind of self-consciousness which requires three level of embedding of a first person concept. It is not hard to sympathize with Peacocke's and other's response to Campbell's account of joint attention, applied here specifically to the Awareness Question, which insists that part of what we are after is an explanation of what it is, precisely, for someone to someone to be 'there as co-attender' . On the other hand, when we think of everyday examples of joint attention, such as the university meeting case, appeals to the kind of iterations Peacocke describes fail, *prima facie*, at least, to capture the ground level phenomenology of the way we are aware of each other in such situations.

#### **IV. Responding to the Dilemma: The Second Person and Communication Claims**

The crude dilemma is, indeed, crude, in several respects, but most notably the following. As stated, the opposition is between complexity on the one hand, and unanalyzability on the other. But stating it in this way can serve to mask the underlying issue between Campbell and Peacocke, which is this. How do we explain the transparency of one mind to another in cases of joint attention? This is interesting not just as an exercise in its own right, but because of what psychologists such as Jerome Bruner (to whom we owe the term 'joint attention') have thought hangs on getting it right, namely explaining what makes it the case that our experiences provide us with a world in common, a shared world.

The questions then are: (a) do either of these accounts give the right of this kind of such transparency? And (b) what are the desiderata that each is trying to get right, and why is it that they land up with such different accounts? These are the background questions to the middle course I will propose between the Campbell and Peacocke's responses to the Awareness Question. In this section I set out the two main claims I will be arguing for, and as we progress I will pick up on several of the key differences that underlie their accounts, refining the dilemma as we proceed.

In response to the Awareness Question, I will be proposing that co-attenders are aware of each other as ‘you’, where such you-awareness is a primitive form of awareness, unanalyzable into a combination of first person ways of thinking of oneself and third person ways of being aware of one’s co-attender, as in Peacocke’s account. Call this the Second Person Claim. Appeal to primitive you-awareness, on the account of it that I will be developing, should, at the same time, also be read as a partial alternative to Campbell’s appeal to ‘primitive presence as co-attender’.

The second claim concerns the relation co-attenders stand in towards each other when they attend jointly to objects and events in our environment. Neither Peacocke nor Campbell says much about this explicitly. But in both accounts, at least implicitly, the suggestion is that were they to address the Relation Question, appeal to perception would suffice (relational perceptual acquaintance in Campbell’s account, or representational ‘seeing that’ with embedded self-representations in Peacocke’s account). In contrast, under the heading of the Communication Claim, I will be making two proposals. First, in order to be aware of each as other as ‘you’ subjects must stand in a particular kind of communicative relation, in which they adopt attitudes of mutual address towards each other. Hence, given the Second Person Claim, there is an essentially communicative core to the relations between two subjects when they attend jointly to their environment. Second, the kind of sharing of experiences we find in joint attention to a third object, is essentially communicative, in a particular sense, explained in the penultimate section of the paper.

The following two sections will be devoted to the Second Person and Communication Claims, as these apply to the explanation of the way co-attenders are aware of each other when they attend jointly to a third object. Much of what I say under these headings applies to situations other than joint attention. I then turn to the implications of the claims I will be setting out for how we explain joint attention to a third object. In the final section, I make a few brief comments about the sharing or otherwise of responses on the basis of joint attention.

#### *V. The Second Person Claim: Primitive You Awareness*

To get an initial sense of the motivation for the Second Person Claim, let us return to the university meeting example. Contrast the scenarios I originally described, in both of which your eyes meet those of your colleague across the table, with the following alternative. As the university administrator sets out his stall, you become aware, out of the corner of your eye, that a colleague is watching you. As you become aware of his observation of you, you start employing something psychologists call ‘covert attention’ with respect to him. And as you

begin to do this, he, in turn, becomes aware that you are attending to him, and thus you continue for a while, each of you dividing your attention between the speaker and each other.

I take it that in this situation you are each ascriptively interpersonally self-conscious relative to the other, on Peacocke's account of what this involves. His symmetry condition is met. Intuitively, though, there is something lacking here, relative to the direct, immediate meeting of minds that takes place in our original scenario. Suppose you share this intuition. What if anything is lacking?

Very crudely, the idea I want to have before us is that what is lacking here is that you are not adopting an attitude of mutual address towards each other, where doing so is constitutive of being aware of each other as 'you'. There are numerous accounts possible of what you-awareness consists in, where these vary both with the different situations in which the second person pronoun can be used, and with what one takes to be the interesting features in these situations. Some stipulation is required, but I take it that any such stipulation needs to justify itself by showing us there is a distinct explanandum for which appeal to the proposed account of 'you' awareness provides an explanation. For the immediate purposes of contrasting appeal to 'you-awareness with both Peacocke and Campbell's responses to the Awareness Question, the claims I want to have in place are best introduced by 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>1</sup> So, with respect to the singular component in thoughts about others, it is

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<sup>1</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.



neither first person nor other person first. They are, in this context, interdependent.

Taken together, the three claims may be summarized as follows. Awareness of someone as ‘you’ is underpinned by a particular kind of relational self-conscious activity by two subjects, the primary, initial aim of which for both just is to establish a communicative relation between them.

The summary is dense, and, as it stands, may raise as many questions as it answers. A brief comparison with Peacocke and Campbell, beginning with the former, will serve as an initial further elaboration of the intended import of the claims. Perhaps the most distinctive difference between the account being sketched and appealing to Peacocke’s ascriptive interpersonal self-consciousness in response to the Awareness Question is this. One can be ascriptively interpersonally self-conscious relative to another quite independently of whether the other is in fact inter-personally self-conscious relative to oneself (as in the soldier case). Correlatively, one can get it right independently of thinking of the other as being thus aware of oneself. Intuitively, though, one substantive difference between cases of symmetrical covert attention and the kind of meeting of minds in genuine joint attention is that in the latter case I am not merely aware of the other as someone who is thinking of me as a thinker of ‘I’ thoughts. In some way, the fact that she is thinking or aware of me in the same way as I am aware of her is part of what is distinctive here, for each of us. We are ‘in it together’, and the mutuality of our thought about the other is internal to the way each is aware of the other. Within the framework provided by Peacocke, we would need to register this by saying that, in addition to being ascriptively interpersonally self-conscious relative to her, I am also aware of her as ascriptively interpersonally self-conscious relative to me. So I must, in addition to whatever is needed for expressing my own interpersonal self-consciousness, which requires three levels of embedding a first person concept, also be thinking of her as someone who is thinking of me as someone who is thinking of her, as a self-conscious subject, which would generate several additional levels of embeddings of first person concepts. And exactly the same holds for her. If we now add on the fact that she too is aware of me as someone who is interpersonally self-conscious, and that that too should be incorporated into my thought about her, we are *en route* to a familiar kind of potential for infinite iterations.

The problem is not the potential for infinite iterations -- arguably this potential is indeed integral to the kind of mutual awareness we are talking about. The problem lies, rather, in what Peacocke describes as the ground, base level, which is the same, on his account, in symmetrical covert attention and in joint attention. That is what the appeal to Mutual Interdependence, as opposed to mere symmetry, is meant to correct for. The fact that we are aware of each other in the same way is a condition for either of us being aware of the other in the distinctive way I have labeled ‘you-awareness’--we do not need *additional*

iterations to get the other's awareness of oneself into the picture.

In this respect, the account is similar in spirit to Campbell's appeal to 'presence as co-attender'. Part of the motivation for invoking such a notion is not just, as so far stated, the complexity we find in Peacocke's account, but, more importantly, the idea that the complexity does not capture the base-level openness and mutual manifestness characteristic of joint attention (on this see especially Campbell 2005). The problem, though, with appeal to 'presence as co-attender' is that, for all he says, we find such presence also in cases of symmetrical covert attention. Campbell has two options. He can agree that such cases do not exhibit the kind of awareness co-attenders have of each other, in which case more needs to be said about how such awareness is to be distinguished from the kind we find in symmetrical covert attention. The proposal so far is that second person awareness is part of what is missing in symmetrical covert attention. Alternatively, he might insist that the kind of covert attention scenario I described suffices for joint attention, as he understands it, even if there is a difference between our original scenario and what happens in covert attention cases. Much of the debate with Campbell, relative to either option, turns on the role I will be proposing for communication. With this in place, I return to further comparisons with Campbell in the penultimate section

## *VI. The Communication Claim*

As noted at the outset, the Relation Question isn't addressed directly by either Campbell or Peacocke. But were they address it, they would say that the relation between co-attenders is wholly perceptual. In contrast, the Communication Claim, as so far introduced, says the relation in which we stand towards each other when we attend jointly to an object is essentially communicative.

I take it that everyone would agree that joint attention is often initiated by communicative acts that are responded to --'declarative pointings' by babies, a nudge, a cry of 'look' and so forth. Similarly everyone would agree that once joint attention sets in, it provides the basis for the exchange of views about the jointly perceived object. But the central intuition that informs many philosophical accounts of joint attention, including Peacocke's and Campbell's, is that joint attention itself is a shared experience, sandwiched in between such communicative interactions, and not itself a communicative phenomenon.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Since completing this paper, I have become aware of the developmentalists Carpenter and Liebel's 2011 'Joint attention, communication and knowing together', which appeals to communication in response to a dilemma very close to the crude dilemma I began with. Their paper, a rich source for reflecting on the role of communication, reviews experimental data that show that various interpretations of such pointing fail to capture what the baby is after

This seems right, so long as the kind of communicative interaction being appealed to consists wholly in getting the other to look in response to one's intentions that she do so, or exchanging views about what is jointly attended to. But this is not the only way to conceive of joint attention as communicative. In treating the jointness in joint attention as essentially communicative I hark back to the pioneering work done by Jerome Bruner and his colleagues from the 1970's on, a tradition currently kept alive by Michael Tomasello, Malinda Carpenter and others<sup>3</sup>. One of the many as yet unresolved debates in this tradition turns on explaining the sense in which joint attention, when it begins to manifest itself, draws on the kind of communicative capacities manifested in earlier dyadic 'proto-conversations', on the one hand, and the sense in which the onset of joint attention to a third object heralds something new, the beginning of 'intentionality', the emergence of something that can begin to count as a thought about the world. In the next section I will say something about the way communication, and thought, come in once we introduce the third object. My interest here is in the way communication should be appealed in explaining the underpinnings of 'you awareness', between adults as much as between a baby and an adult. Very roughly, the claim I want to have before us draws on developmental accounts of dyadic proto-conversations which say that such communicative interactions are themselves experiential. The Communication Claim I want to have before us says that the sense in which they are so should be appealed to in explaining the experiential relation between two people when they are aware of each other as 'you'. More specifically, the proposal is that you-awareness is underpinned by a particular kind of communicative interaction, which is to be explained by a notion of communication I label 'communication-as-connection'.

The notion of 'connection' I am appealing to here, and, indeed, have been appealing to throughout, is best introduced by having before us Edward Tronick's use of it to explain infants' behaviour in his 'still face' experiments, which have been conducted on children as young as four months and as old as 24. (See e.g. Tronick 2005)

During the experiment, a mother is instructed to interact normally with her baby and then, on instruction from the experimenter, to turn away and then look back at the baby, but this time with a still, expressionless face, a 'looking-through' face (as in (a), when your colleague looks through you). Videos of these experiments, which are not easy to watch, show the baby producing smiles and arm-reaching gestures aimed at re-engaging the mother,

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when seeking to attend jointly to an object. They suggest that we need a better understanding of something they call a 'sharing look' and its link to communication. The appeal to 'you' awareness, and the version of the Communication Claim I spell out here and in the next section can be read as a partial response to this challenge.

<sup>3</sup> For a review of this tradition see Carpenter et al's 1998 monograph.

progressively intense, and when this fails, slumping back in despondency. After a while, the mother is instructed to re-engage, which she does by smiling, looking at the baby, producing soothing sentences and so forth, and at some point the baby begin to respond in kind, they begin to re-engage, exchanging various expressions of emotion. He describes this as a process of ‘mending the connection’.

One thing that is completely clear on watching videos of these experiments is that the baby, from early on, is deliberately using every device in her repertoire to get the mother to re-engage with her, or as Tronick puts it, to ‘connect’. The message Tronick aims to drive home is very much in keeping with Buber’s: “It is not as if a child first saw an object and then entered into some relationship with that. Rather *the longing for relation is primary*”. Buber and Tronick are talking about the foundational developmental role of the desire for relatedness. But I suggest that an attenuated version holds even in mundane adult cases. Thus, although it would no doubt be an exaggeration to say, at least in most cases, that when you raise your eyes in order to engage with your colleague there is something you’d describe as a ‘longing’ for a relation, there is some kind of affective component here too, however slight, behind your activity of establishing eye contact, a desire to connect, which must be reciprocated if the way your eyes meet, in the university meeting example, is deliver mutual ‘you awareness’.

Suppose we say that there is such a thing as a basic human urge to connect and a feeling of having achieved it, and that this plays some role in being aware of someone as ‘you’. In what sense are the exchanges that express such feelings communicative? Or, rather, which concept of communication is in play here? It will help to step back and recall the Communication Claim, as I originally introduced it, bracketing for a moment the question of whether joint attention is a communicative phenomenon. It says 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. More specifically, it is the communication-theoretic counterpart to Buber’s Relatedness Claim, and is the notion we should appeal to when characterizing the kind of communicative relation that underpins you-awareness.<sup>4</sup>

Returning now to joint attention, the specific proposal is that this is the notion we should appeal to in addressing the Relation Question. How does this help with responding to the transition from the claim that joint attention is (a) an experiential phenomenon, to the claim that it is therefore (b) a purely perceptual phenomenon. The Communicative Claim I have been sketching endorses (a) and rejects (b). The general claim is that a necessary condition for someone to be experientially present to me as a co-attender is that I feel connected to her in virtue of standing in a communicative relation to her. One ingredient in such an experience is that I experience her as adopting an attitude of address towards me. There are two points here. First, the adoption of an attitude of address, in the form of an expression or gesture, is immediately recognized, in a smile, a wave, a touch or a glance and enters as such into the experience one has of one’s co-attender. The second point is that the distinguishing feature of the capacity to experience an expression of address within the framework of a communicative exchange is that its recognition entails experiencing it as *an invitation, directed at oneself, to respond in kind*. It is this that sets it apart from purely perceptual awareness (of a kind one might have, for example, when watching others exchange smiles of greeting). Of course one might get it wrong, as in the somewhat embarrassing cases in which you respond to a smile you think is directed at you only to realize that it was directed at some just behind you. The point is not that one is invariably right, but that one when is, the experience of the invitation as such is internal to one’s experience of the other. It is a kind of experience of the other that internally links it to one’s awareness of oneself, and is essentially

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communicative.

### *VII. Joint Attention and Communication*

Let us return to the setting of the university meeting. Consider now the following two scenarios. The administrator is droning away, you catch the eye of a colleague and you exchange smiles, about nothing in particular, perhaps just a smile of greeting, as you haven't seen each other in while. Suddenly there's a loud bang outside. Your looks change, expressing a mutual registration of the noise. An alternative scenario is the following. You look up toward a colleague, catch her eye. You intend to convey your feelings about the meeting, but she merely smiles sweetly at you. You incline your head towards the speaker and somehow get it across that you intend her to attend to it. You succeed, where this registered by the looks you exchange, and an episode of jointly attending ensues.

In both cases, I suggest, it is compelling to describe what gets joint attention going as a matter of you and our colleague exchanging a 'message'. You are letting each other know, in some way, that you both see the same thing. To put it another way, joint attention is established by something being communicated between you. Moreover, with the examples just sketched in mind, it seems compelling to describe the communication that occurs as not a mere recording of something that has already happened, but, rather, as essential for the establishment of the joint attention. These are the basic intuitions the Communication Claim appeals to. One question they raise is: what account should we give of the content communicated? A second is: what is the relation between the content thus expressed and the experience you both have? I take these in turn.

Consider the first example, in which prior to the onset of joint attention you are 'aware of each other as 'you'. With this in mind, one way to express the content of you communication when you mutually register the occurrence of the bang might be 'You and I (both) hear this'. This is a bit awkward; a more natural expression would be: 'we hear this'. This is more than a matter of mere linguistic convention, though. I suggest that the use of 'we' marks the sense in which the experience is shared, the sense in which you and your colleague are undergoing the *same* experience in a way that is mutually manifest to both of you. This kind of sharing is absent in many case of I-you exchanges, and certainly not guaranteed by the exchange being one in which each of you is aware of the other as 'you. For example, it need not be there in early proto-conversations, where a child's looks of distress or frustration are more often than not met with soothing smiles. But it is also not there in the kind of telling adults engage in, which entails a kind of mutual knowledge. If A tells B 'I'm angry', in the sense that entails that B is thereby told, then in taking it that the telling is successful A knows

that B knows that she is angry, and B knows that A knows that she knows that B is angry, and so forth. The content of the telling is shared in the sense of being mutually known, but this is not a case of sharing in which both people register that they have had the same thought, or experience, as in joint attention. When it is the latter kind of sharing that is occurring, I will call the shared thought an ‘I-you’ thought. The use of ‘we’ here marks the occurrence of this kind of thought, and this kind of sharing.

Contrast this with Peacocke’s account of mutual open-ended availability in joint attention. This condition is met when: ‘Each perceives that the other perceives that s obtains; and if either is occurrently aware that the other is aware that he is aware ... that s obtains, then the state of affairs of his being so occurrently aware is available to the other’s occurrent awareness’. The central difference between the two accounts is that on Peacocke’s, A’s awareness of B’s perception of an object is something A acquires perceptually, by seeing that the other is seeing. On the account I have sketched, A’s and B’s awareness of the other’s perception is something communicated, rather than perceived. Correlatively, the mutual awareness is delivered by the kind of mutuality guaranteed by successful communication, rather than by the conditional dependences Peacocke introduces.

How does the account I sketched compare with Campbell’s? One reason for finding appeal to a concept-independent notion of acquaintance attractive is that it seems to offer an explanation of how one gets to think of objects and properties out there in the first place, and of how to justify the use of concepts that refer to them in perception-based judgements. One can appeal, for example, to instances of the presence of red to explain and justify use of the concept ‘red’ in making judgements based on the experience. I take it that Campbell’s thought is that we can also appeal to acquaintance to explain the transparency of one mind to another, by treating ‘presence as a co-attender’ in the same way as one might treat presence of red. I have already suggested that it is not clear whether it is meant to rule out situations in which two A and B are covertly attending to each other, and, at the same time aware that each is attending to the same object they are. Correlatively, appeal to presence as co-attender, as minimally described, seems to place no constraints on the way we express judgements based on such presence. Should they be expressed using ‘you and I’, or ‘we’, or along the lines suggested by Peacocke? I suggest the absence of obvious constraints is due, ultimately, to the fact that whether or not someone is your co-attender isn’t something to be encountered in experience, or revealed by it, in the way that it’s being red, say, is. The jointness of the experience, in virtue of which someone counts as a co-attender, isn’t a feature of the world with which we are presented, but something we establish, something we make happen. Part of the reason it is described as a primitive property that one can be perceptually presented with lies, perhaps, with the assumption that only perception can be appealed to in explaining how

jointness is established. On this assumption, the only alternative available is to embed in our perceptions the kinds of iterations Peacocke appeals to. But on the version of the Communication Claim I have been sketching, we establish jointness by communicatively sharing a thought, which is embedded in, and hence constitutive of, our experience of jointness. So reservations about appealing to propositional content on the grounds of the kind of complexity we find in Peacocke's account do not apply to my proposal.

However, there is a reservation that *prima facie* does. Perhaps the strongest case against treating the experience of joint attention as partly constituted by the kind of communicated content I have suggested is to be made by appealing to the developmental data. Children as young as 12 months engage in episodes of joint attention, and there is every reason to hold that they lack the conceptual sophistication to think the kinds of thought content I have suggested gets communicated in joint attention. In response I make do with the following observation. As I noted earlier, one of the many unresolved disputes in the developmental literature turns on the extent, and sense in which joint attention heralds something new, the beginning of 'intentionality', the emergence of something that can begin to count as a thought about the world. On the one hand, when we think of the adult participants, it is natural to express what is going on by appeal to the kinds of thought content I have sketching. On the other, children at this age don't have the conceptual capacities and thinking such thoughts. This is a genuine difficulty, not unique to joint attention, of trying to strip away what the child can do on her own, independently of the input from the adult she is interacting with. However this is resolved, I can't see how pushing these difficulties into an analyzed primitive three-way relation between two subjects and a third object helps, for the reasons just indicated. The difficulty remains. Perhaps the only way round it is to say that there is no description of the content of the message an adult and a young baby exchange that we can give without appealing, essentially, to the scaffolding provided by the adult. That is, it may well be that the best we can do is think of the adult supplying the full content and the baby being en route towards it, in virtue of the scaffolding.

### *VIII. On Sharing Responses*

I end with an all too brief comment about a topic that requires extended discussion in its own right--the distinction I drew, when introducing the university meeting example, between the shared experience of joint attention, and the sharing or otherwise of response to the object attended to. In one of the cases I described, there is a kind of meeting of minds in the responses that is absent in the other. How should we describe the good case? In both cases there is a sense in which what each feels is shared with the other, the sense being that once it is disclosed the content is mutually known (in the same way that when I tell you something and I



take you thereby to be told, we both know that the other knows the content of the telling). In the shared response case, we have something stronger--over and above the mutually known content. How should we describe it? To some extent this depends on what it is that is shared. Consider the earlier example of two people exchanging smiles and then mutually registering that they hear a bang. Suppose now they immediately go on to exchange looks of alarm. Here there is a recording of shared response to the object, and the sense in which we might appeal to 'we' in expressing this kind of sharing is roughly the same as the appeal to 'we' in expressing the jointness of the experience of the bang.

But in the example I described there is something else, a stronger sense, if you like, of 'we'. In the brief exchange of looks, what you and your colleague are sharing is something like an evaluative take on the proceedings. 'We' here signifies the sharing of this, with all the rich background of shared values and knowledge it presupposes (the expectation of this sharing is what explains the somewhat embarrassing/disconcerting negotiation of looks in the bad case). To use 'we' here in expressing what is going on is to mark a kind of sociality, a shared belonging to a system of socially instilled shared values. The pleasure one gets here, in the very sharing, might be described as the pleasure akin to solidarity, being in it together, not with a group but with the person one is aware of as 'you', which draws on a background group as a source of shared knowledge and values. But, there can also be something else. There is a hint, or the possibility, of the kind of 'we' Aryeh Kosman refers to in his account of Aristotle on friendship. There is a glimmer of what, in the case of friendship, Kosman describes as a sense of being part of a two-person 'collective' which is more than the sum of its individual parts--a sense of being more oneself than one is on one's own, or more than just oneself. This brings in an experience of 'us' or 'we', which goes beyond the recording of the sameness of experiences of the kind we find in joint attention, and beyond the background social sharing of values. Whether or not there is something more in a particular case may well depend on whether the kind of exchange I described is between close friends. But it is arguable that the possibility of friendship rests both on the kind of openness to the other we find in being aware of each other as 'you', which brings with it the possibility of sharing of experiences, but, also, on the sharing of evaluative takes on the world -- of a kind that in close friendship can deliver something like the experience of 'we' I have been gesturing at.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>5</sup> For subtle, illuminating further distinctions between different senses of 'we', which links phenomenological and developmental considerations, see Zahavi and Rochat, *op. cit.*

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