EUROPEAN JOURNAL
FOR PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

VOLUME 5 NUMBER 4 WINTER 2013

SPECIAL ISSUE

THE SECOND-PERSONAL IN THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION

GUEST EDITORS

ANDREW PINSENT & ELEONORE STUMP

University of Oxford *St Louis University*

ARTICLES

EDITORIAL

The second-person perspective is familiar to anyone who says 'you' to someone else, but the implications of this mode of interpersonal relatedness have received comparatively little attention until recently. One reason for this neglect may be the inherent difficulty of articulating what this perspective means. As an example, Augustine would be unlikely to think that the famous prayer from his *Confessions*, 'Late have I loved you', could be considered equivalent to, 'There is a person, "I", who has been late in loving another person, "you"'. Nevertheless, to explain precisely what is wrong with this description can be challenging if using only those tools of intellectual enquiry developed principally to describe the world in objective or third-person terms. As another example, Jerome might say, 'Late have I loved Paula', if Paula is absent, but if Paula is present he would properly say *to her*, 'Late have I loved you'. Hence 'you' as well as 'I' cannot be treated as an ordinary designator or name like 'Jerome' or 'Paula', since 'I' only address someone as 'you' in a situation of some kind of mutual personal presence. These examples show that the second-person perspective shares in common with the first-person perspective a peculiar irreducibility to third-person terms, what Thomas Nagel might call a 'view from nowhere'. Indeed, a line of thought inaugurated especially by Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas has proposed that the first and second-person perspective are symbiotic.

As these examples show, research into the second-person perspective has obvious relevance to the philosophy of language, but in recent years there has been a growing appreciation of its importance to a wide range of other fields especially connected with ethics, human development and flourishing. A motivation and means for such research has been the study of conditions under which second-person relatedness is atypical, as seems to be the case for autistic spectrum disorder (ASD) and Williams Syndrome. As a result, many disciplines such as experimental psychology and social neuroscience are now able to provide a wealth of empirical data pertinent to the second-person perspective.

These developments, together with the prevalence of second-person modes of address to God in many religious texts, such as Augustine's *Confessions* cited above, serve as preliminary indications of the potential fruitfulness of the study of the second-person perspective for the philosophy of religion. Moreover, there has been a growing body of work in recent years that has brought new insights from second-person research to bear on a range of perennial questions in this field. For

these reasons, we have welcomed the generous opportunity provided by the *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion* to dedicate this issue specifically to the second-personal in the philosophy of religion.

The papers presented in this issue are based on presentations from a conference at Oxford University, *The Second-Person Perspective in Science and the Humanities*, 17-20 July 2013, together with a paper on a similar theme presented at a conference the preceding year, *Persons and their Brains*, 11-14 July 2012. Both conferences were organised by the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion, part of the Theology and Religion Faculty at Oxford, and benefited from sponsorship from the John Templeton Foundation. From the many presentations, we invited a selection of speakers who were willing and able to offer contributions of particular relevance to the philosophy of religion, especially knowledge of persons and interpretations of special divine action in various second-person modes.

The selected papers have been grouped thematically as follows. Tim Chappell, Eleonore Stump, and Stina Bäckström examine what it is like to perceive and know persons, exploring specific differences from other kinds of perception and knowledge. The first two papers extend this theme to knowing God and the indwelling of a personal, maximally present God. Papers by Joshua Johnson and Andrew Pinsent then examine the implications of the second-person perspective for issues regarding language and the virtue of truth. A paper by Eva Buddeberg also explores how attempts to ground morality on the second-person perspective still need to be balanced with other perspectives. The next two papers present example applications of the second-person perspective to the interpretation of specific texts of scripture and tradition. Susan Eastman examines the second-person concept of sin in Paul's Letter to the Romans, and Andrea Hollingsworth re-interprets an influential text of Nicholas of Cusa. The final two papers examine questions of spirituality. Helen de Cruz and Johan de Smedt explore what is second-personal in the phenomenology of nature aesthetics, and Donald Bungum examines the so-called 'dark night of the soul' in the light of purported second-person relatedness to God. Aside from their intrinsic merits, we hope the diverse themes addressed by these papers illustrate some of fruitfulness and expanding potential of the second-personal in the philosophy of religion.

Andrew Pinsent & Eleonore Stump

KNOWLEDGE OF PERSONS

TIMOTHY CHAPPELL

The Open University

Abstract. What is knowledge of persons, and what is knowing persons like? My answer combines (a bit of) Wittgenstein's epistemology with (a bit of) Levinas's phenomenology. It says that our knowledge of persons is a hinge proposition for us (as in: 'I am not of the opinion that he has a soul', PI ii, iv). And it says that what this knowledge consists in is the experience that Levinas calls 'the face to face': direct and unmediated encounter between persons. As Levinas says, for there to be persons at all there has, first, to be a relationship, language, and this same encounter: 'the face to face' comes first, the existence of individual persons only second. I explore some consequences of this conception for how we think about personhood, and also for how we read Descartes and Augustine.

> ... all mankind is of one author, and is one volume; when one man dies, one chapter is not torn out of the book, but translated into a better language; and every chapter must be so translated; God employs several translators; some pieces are translated by age, some by sickness, some by war, some by justice; but God's hand is in every translation, and his hand shall bind up all our scattered leaves again for that library where every book shall lie open to one another ... No man is an island, entire of itself; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main. If a clod be washed away by the sea, Europe is the less, as well as if a promontory were, as well as if a manor of thy friend's or of thine own were: any man's death diminishes me, because I am involved in mankind, and therefore never send to know for whom the bell tolls; it tolls for thee. (John Donne, *Meditations* XVII)

I.

Donne says 'No man is an island'; I'll argue that no human *starts out* an island. Each of us at least begins as a piece of the continent, a part of the main. Insofar as we ever come to be anything like 'entire of ourselves',

this is a learned and socialised achievement; an achievement, moreover, which is necessarily built upon our prior status as parts of the main. In a slogan, *individuality presupposes relationality*.

A venerable and remarkably persistent tradition in philosophical anthropology, dating back at least to the seventeenth century and still going strong today, has things the other way round. It says that each human *is* an island, at least to start with, and that it is only later (if at all) that we learn to build bridges to other islands. This tradition's slogan is *relationality presupposes individuality*. It takes individuals to be prior both in the order of analysis and in the order of genesis, whereas relations are subsequent engagements entered into, or not, by these already-existing individuals. This is the view I oppose. We can call it *individualism about persons.* The view with which I want to replace it, I have just described in the first paragraph: we can call *relationalism about persons*.

What kind of theses are individualism and relationalism about persons? What kind of arguments will I be offering for the latter, and against the former? One way to go is suggested by Alva Noë: it is to treat them as psychological theses, with immediate consequences for philosophical problems like solipsism.

> No sane person can take seriously the suggestion that our knowledge of other minds is merely hypothetical. However weak our evidence that others have minds may be, it is plainly outrageous to suggest that we might, for this reason, give up our commitment to the minds of others ... Our commitment to other minds is, I would like to propose, not really a theoretical commitment at all. We don't come to learn that others think and feel as we do, in the way that we come to learn, say, that you can't trust advertising. Our commitment to the minds of others is, rather, a presupposition of our life together.
>
> In this respect the young child, in her relation to the caretaker, is really the paradigm ... the child has no theoretical distance from her closest caretaker. The child does not wonder whether Mummy is animate. Mummy's living consciousness is simply present, for the child, like her warmth or the air; it is, in part, what animates their relationship. Mummy's mind and Baby's mind come to be in the coochy-cooing directness that each sustains towards the other. If one wants to speak of a commitment to the alive consciousness of others here, one should speak not of a cognitive commitment but, rather, of a practical commitment. (Noë 2009: 32-3)

As we might say: not so much 'I think, therefore I am' as 'We talk, therefore we are'.

One classic text in this area is Kenneth Kaye's in *The Mental and Social Life of Babies: How Parents Create Persons*. Kaye writes, for example,

> It surely is a miracle that the kind of creature a man and a woman can bring into the world by purely biological processes becomes (eventually) the kind of creature that possesses a mind and a sense of self, an unsurpassed intelligence and a sense of identity in relation to society ... The evolution of the human brain alone could not have brought about mind. Symbolic representation, language, and thought could not emerge in any species, and would not develop in any individual, without a special kind of fit between adult behaviour and infant behaviour ... the argument places social processes at the very root of mental development. (Kaye 1982: 3)

And again, later,

> The human infant is born social in the sense that his development will depend from the beginning upon patterns of interaction with elders. He does not enter into that interaction as an individual partner, as both the views just mentioned hold ... infants only become individual partners gradually, as a result of those interactions. (Kaye 1982: 29)

The way of developmental psychology is a perfectly good way of arguing for relationalism about persons. Many contemporary philosophers of mind are likely to think (wrongly in my view) that the way of developmental psychology is the *only* way; or at any rate that it is the *best* way. Even if it is, developmental psychology is not what I will do here. Though perhaps what I will do can be seen as corroboration of Kaye's views from another source.

As well as being theses in psychology, it is also obvious that individualism and relationalism about persons are theses in the philosophy of mind, where, roughly speaking, individualism is the view that follows naturally if you believe that the brain is identical with or constitutive of the mind, while relationalism about persons has a lot more appeal if you deny the mind-brain identity thesis. Suppose that like me you endorse the plainly relationalist thesis that mindedness broadly depends, at least typically, on intentional or quasi-intentional interactions among groups of individual creatures, whereas brainedness depends on some one individual creature's combining the right genetic heritage with the right nutrients, the right environment, and the right stimuli. Then you should conclude that the conditions for having a mind

and for having a brain are different. (As the slogan has it, the mental is the environmental; but the *cerebral* is not the environmental.) Moreover, brains and minds are *very* different; which grounds a presumption that there can't be a constitution-relation between brain and mind either.

In another sense individualism and relationalism about persons appear to be theses in metaphysics, and that appearance is not completely misleading: individualism and relationalism are certainly views about what persons are. However, the case I want to make for relationalism and against individualism does not deploy the kinds of argument most commonly found today in what we might call 'pure' metaphysics – *a priori* deduction, inference to the best explanation and/or the simplest/most systematic overall theory, indispensability-to-causal-explanation arguments, figuring-in-laws-of-nature arguments, and the like. Rather my argument is, broadly speaking, phenomenological (hence, *a posteriori*).[1] It is about *how we experience* persons, *what it is like* to be a person or related to persons, the place in our life-world of the notion of a person. As usual in phenomenology, a description of experience will be offered, and also as usual, the key test of this description of experience will not be whether it faces logical objections – though it had better not, of course – but whether the description rings *true to experience*: true to our own actual experience, or true to experiences we can see as possible for us and aspire perhaps to actually have some day, or true to experiences that many of the greatest explorers of these dark domains have reported, or all three.

Moreover, if there turns out to be some sense in which this experiential or 'applied' metaphysics is at odds with 'pure metaphysics',

[1] A highly controversial 'hence': as Adrian Moore has reminded me, Husserl and other phenomenologists thought it crucial to insist that theirs was an *a priori* project. But I think the 'hence' is justifiable, given a now-standard distinction between what is essential and what is *a priori* (a distinction that Husserl and his contemporaries did not usually make). Investigating what is essential to our experience should be the phenomenologist's concern, since what is *not* essential to our experience would have no interest: it could not bring out any *general* or *important* or *explanatorily important* truths about our minds. However, investigating our experience's strictly *a priori* features sounds like an incoherent project, at least if we gloss *a priori* as 'knowable independently of all experience': for then it will mean 'investigating experience's non-experiential features'. It is not that experience logically cannot have such features: of course it can, it has e.g. logical features. The point is rather that investigating these features cannot be *phenomenology*, a philosophical investigation of experience (itself, and not its merely formal properties).

that doesn't bother me much.[2] I'm not interested, here, in what persons are 'in themselves'; I'm interested in what persons are in our common life. If there turns out to be some account of 'what persons are in themselves', e.g. a reductionist one, that conflicts with 'what persons are in our common life', for my purposes that doesn't matter. My concern is how the *experiential* metaphysics goes. If the pure metaphysics goes a different way, so be it.

Admittedly, I probably wouldn't say that unless I was also pretty confident that there is no such pure metaphysics of the person. To some extent this confidence rests upon my wider tendency towards Wittgensteinian scepticism quite generally about the kind of *an-sich* claims that pure metaphysics tends to go in for. I know what is to be a chess-piece in a chess-game, and I know what it is to be a carved piece of wood in carpentry, and I know what it is to be a carbon-based organic compound in chemistry. I'm not entirely sure I know what it is for anything to be anything *in itself and aside from all contexts,* which, all too often, seems to be what pure metaphysics is after. Whether or not this scepticism stands up elsewhere, it looks convincing in the case of persons. It seems that, apart from 'what persons are in our common life', there *isn't* anything that 'persons are in themselves'. Philosophers are too quick to assume that in every debate alike, whether chemical or botanical or psychological, they are looking for the same kind of kinds – usually, something like Kripke-style *natural* kinds. But there is no good reason to think that the kind *persons* is that kind of kind. And so, aside from the social (dare I say 'forensick'?) role of the notion of a person, the quest for the essence of personhood *in the abstract* seems to be an empty quest built around a meaningless question. In a sense, that is exactly my point here.

Here we come to a third important aspect of individualism and relationalism about persons, the sense in which both are, crucially, *ethical* theses: theses about how we make sense of ourselves and should make sense of ourselves, about how we relate to each other and should relate to each other. More about that later.

[2] Nor will I be much bothered if there are arguments against my or any view of personhood that depend, in the way that Derek Parfit's work has made familiar, on personality fusions or fissions, brain bisections, etc. As has often been objected to Parfit, not knowing how to apply the concept of personhood *in weird puzzle cases* is not the same thing as not knowing how to apply the concept of personhood *at all*: here as with many other sceptical scenarios, something like a disjunctivist strategy seems right.

II.

First, here's a bit from *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy.*

> Many many millions of years ago a race of hyperintelligent pan-dimensional beings (whose physical manifestation in their own pan-dimensional universe is not dissimilar to our own) got so fed up with the constant bickering about the meaning of life which used to interrupt their favourite [pastimes] that they decided to sit down and solve their problems once and for all. And to this end they built themselves a stupendous super-computer ['Deep Thought'] which was so amazingly intelligent that even before the data banks had been connected up it had started from 'I think therefore I am' and got as far as the existence of rice pudding and income tax before anyone managed to turn it off ... (Douglas Adams, *The Hitch-Hiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (London: Pan, 1979), pp. 125-6)

Deep Thought represents a power-fantasy of individualism about persons (and also of rationalism). The fantasy is that one mind all on its own, if it is clever enough, can build an understanding of the world out of nothing but its own contents, by sheer deductive horsepower – *a priori,* and in advance of access to any data. The cleverer you are, according to this fantasy, the better you will be at this kind of deductive work: the further you will get beyond your own head and out into the world around you. On this picture, this is what cleverness *is.* What the tale of Deep Thought expresses – or more likely satirises – is what I call individualism about persons, taken to the nth degree.

Satire or not, it is no accident that Douglas Adams has Deep Thought start his intellectual odyssey by performing the *cogito.* For the picture just sketched is, in an obvious way, Cartesian. According to one standard summary, Descartes' view is a paradigm of individualism about persons. On that summary his view is that if we leave aside groundless and unreliable prejudice – as he proposes to – then what reason teaches us is that each of us starts, like Deep Thought, in the solipsistic predicament. Emerging from that predicament into a (rationally-vindicated) shared world is, on this Cartesian view, an achievement of reason. Each of us is an individual, and a reasoner, before she ever reaches that shared world; and she only does reach it *because* she is an individual and a reasoner. Getting beyond our own heads is a feat of inference, deduction, interpretation: in short, it is detective work. Of course we get better at this detective work the more we practise it. But unless we had a basic capability for such detection

wired into us from the beginning – a capacity which as I say we can just call *intelligence* – we could not get started at all.

This then is the Cartesian view – which, as we shall see, need not mean quite the same thing as 'Descartes' view'. Hence it causes some surprise that, when Wittgenstein wants to attack the individualist picture of the mind in the *Philosophical Investigations*, and specifically – at least at first – the part of that picture that has to do with language, the author whom he quotes is not Descartes but *Augustine*. Here is what Wittgenstein says about the quotation that he uses (*Philosophical Investigations* I, 1):

> These words, it seems to me, give us a particular picture of the essence of language. It is this: the individual words in language name objects – sentences are combinations of such names. – In this picture of language we find the roots of the following idea: every word has a meaning. This meaning is correlated with the word. It is the object for which the word stands. Augustine does not speak of there being any difference between kinds of word. If you describe the learning of language in [his] way you are, I believe, thinking primarily of nouns like 'table', 'chair', 'loaf', and of people's names, and only secondarily of the names of certain actions and properties; and of the remaining kinds of word as something that will take care of itself.

The picture that Wittgenstein is drawing out of Augustine is simply the application to the case of language of individualism about the mind. On this picture, a baby learns its own first language by, in effect, *playing charades with its carers*: the adults say a word, the baby has to guess what the word means from the context. No doubt the cleverer the baby, the better it will be at making such guesses; presumably a baby with the intelligence of Deep Thought would be phenomenally good at this game, whereas other, more ordinary babies will be rather slower. The words in question are, as Wittgenstein stresses, primarily *nouns*, and within the class of nouns, they are primarily the names of concrete particulars, such as people and the other physical objects salient to the baby. It is, as he says, an obvious flaw of this picture that it offers no account of how other words than nouns might be learned by the baby in the guessing-game.

This then is the individualist picture of language-learning, and hence of mind more broadly, that Wittgenstein is attacking. Is it the picture that Augustine is defending? The quotation from which Wittgenstein draws the picture he wants to attack is from *Confessions* I, 8:

> When they named anything, and when at that name they moved their bodies toward that thing, I observed it and gathered thereby, that that word which they then pronounced, was the very name of the thing that they showed me. And that they meant this or that thing, was discovered to me by the motion of their bodies, even by that natural language, as it were, of all nations; which expressed by the countenance and cast of the eye, by the action of other parts, and the sound of the voice, discovers the affections of the mind, either to desire, enjoy, refuse, or to avoid anything. And thus words in diverse sentences, set in their due places, and heard often over, I by little and little collected, of what things they were the signs, and having broken my mouth to the pronunciation of them, I by them expressed mine own purposes. (*Conf* 1.8, tr. William Watts)

Certainly the first sentence of this passage says that the infant Augustine learned to correlate nouns with things by observing how adults correlated nouns with things. Does that mean that Augustine is committed here to the 'particular picture of the essence of language' that Wittgenstein wants to attack, on which meaning just is thing/noun correlation, and language-learning is the detection of such correlations; that picture being, as I've said, the one which emerges naturally from a wider and more general individualism about mind and persons?

It does not, and Wittgenstein does not say that it does. To see that, just read the rest of Wittgenstein's Augustine quotation, after its first sentence. The second sentence is about how we come to understand others' meanings (and their intentions – the same Latin word, *velle*, covers both) by seeing and understanding, not just the thing/noun correlations that they go in for, but the whole set of their bodies, the whole bodily demeanour behind these correlations which constitutes what Augustine calls a kind of 'natural language of all nations'. Or as Wittgenstein might have expressed it, 'the human body is the best picture of the human soul' (Philosophical Investigations II, iv). And the third sentence is about how habituation into any language, or indeed into any large-scale form of human life, is not granularly bit-by-bit or stepwise, but a holistically cumulative process. Or as Wittgenstein might have said, 'the light dawns gradually over the whole landscape' (*On Certainty*, 141). Overall, this Augustine quotation is strikingly *Wittgensteinian*. If Wittgenstein's purpose is an all-out attack on Cartesian individualism, this quotation does not serve.

Perhaps what Wittgenstein is doing here is not so much setting up Augustine in order to knock him down, as displaying Augustine's

account as one which is generally interesting and plausible *even though* it includes, or suggests, the commitments that Wittgenstein thinks most need questioning – the threads in Augustine's thought that he wants to tease apart from other and more promising lines. This surmise is perhaps confirmed by the witness of Norman Malcolm (1984: 59):

> He revered the writings of Augustine. He told me he decided to begin his *Investigations* with a quotation from the latter's *Confessions*, not because he could not find the conception expressed in that quotation stated as well by other philosophers, but because the conception *must* be important if so great a mind held it.

Evidently Wittgenstein's attitude to Augustine was not that of the patient and somewhat patronising correction of gross and benighted error. The more we look beyond Wittgenstein's Augustine quotation to its context in Book One of the *Confessions*, the more it is bound to strike us that on balance Augustine is far more of an ally to Wittgenstein than a target.

Fergus Kerr (1997: 41) draws our attention, for instance, to the sentence immediately before the passage that Wittgenstein quotes, where Augustine says that his elders did *not* teach him words 'in a particular order of teaching, as a little later they did with the letters'. These words show that Augustine recognises that we are drawn into the linguistic practices of our species in various ways, not just one. We may learn our letters by being drilled in the correlation of given sounds with written shapes. It doesn't follow that we learn anything *else* that way. (Perhaps we learn the numerals rather similarly: though the differences are as interesting as the commonalities.) In particular, and *pace* the lesson that Wittgenstein says he wants to draw from his quotation, Augustine expressly denies that we learn the names of things *just* by being drilled in thing/ noun correlations. Rather, Augustine's story about how we learn the names of things gives a crucial role – a role which is not apparent from Wittgenstein's quotation – to *desire*. Here is the rest of the *Confessions* I, 8 sentence immediately before Wittgenstein's quotation:

> My elders did not teach me words in a particular order of teaching, as a little later they did with the letters; rather I myself, by the mind that you gave me, my God, with cries and various noises and various motions of my limbs tried to express the feelings of my heart, so that my will might be complied with; but I was not able to express everything I wanted to, nor to express it to everyone I wanted to. So I considered in my memory ...

What most of this passage suggests – all of it except the last two words, *pensabam memoria*, which belong with the next sentence – is that for Augustine the key precondition of language-learning is not so much cognitive as conative. Unless the baby has the kinds of desires and impulses that human babies typically do have, one crucial prerequisite of its induction into typical human sociality will be missing; it just won't be the right kind of creature to cotton on to those sorts of sociality. Augustine's point is that it is because he *did* have these desires and impulses, because in this sense his relation to other humans was what Wittgenstein would call 'agreement in form of life' (PI I, 241), that it was possible for him to become a member of the linguistic community.

It is only against the backdrop of that agreement in form of life that the next step becomes possible – the step introduced by the two words *pensabam memoria* at the end of this passage. These words lead us straight on to the guessing-game described in the opening words of Wittgenstein's quotation from Augustine, as displayed above. (For some reason Wittgenstein quotes the rest of the sentence, but leaves out its first two words, *pensabam memoria*.) Wittgenstein famously remarks how easy it is to forget that 'a great deal of stage-setting in the language is already presupposed if the mere act of naming is to make sense' (PI I, 257). Augustine would agree. That is why he does not present the guessing-game part of language-learning without first putting it in the context of the kind of stage-setting that is provided by human bodies moving in characteristically human ways under the impulsion of typically human desires. Such a guessing-game cannot be the *starting-point* of language-learning; it is itself only possible against a background in which language-learning is *already* happening. This insistence on contextualisation is not a view which Augustine *rejects.* On the contrary, Augustine shows that he accepts such a view in this very passage.

If Wittgenstein were simply taking Augustine as his Aunt Sally for the failure to contextualise that would result if we took the thing/noun guessing-game all on its own to be the starting-point for language learning, he would be being obtuse. It seems particularly unlikely for him to have been guilty of obtuseness in the opening lines of his own *magnum opus.* The natural conclusion is that Wittgenstein's relation to Augustine is not so simple, and not so crassly oppositional. The guessing-game picture to which Augustine is committed is one that Wittgenstein thinks is misleading *if it is wrenched from its context*, from its place as *just one part*

of what it takes to become a language-using human. It doesn't follow that Wittgenstein thinks Augustine himself guilty of this decontextualisation.

It is a question, anyway, whether even thing/noun correlation is really, in real life, as un-Wittgensteinian a starting-point for meaning and understanding as philosophers (perhaps including Wittgenstein) often suppose. Obviously real-life guessing games of thing/noun correlation do exist. But what is striking about real cases of such games is usually their social and contextual embeddedness, not their surgical abstraction from all other contexts. Even thing/noun correlation games are evidence for the Wittgensteinian thesis that such games, while perfectly possible, could never be the starting-point for understanding.

Consider, for example, this, from Patrick Leigh Fermor's beautiful book *Roumeli*. During his travels in the remoter parts of northern Greece, Fermor, though fluent even in thoroughly demotic Greek, is gleefully challenged by a circle of friendly villagers to guess the meanings of words of a particularly obscure dialect that they all speak and he doesn't:

> ... the alien and the un-Greek ring of these wild syllables filled me with wonder: it was as though each villager, as a word was uttered and corroborated by the rest, was throwing a strange object on the table in a mysterious and insoluble Kim's game. A few were immensely familiar, the linguistic equivalent of rusty penknives, bus tickets from vanished lines, flints from a blunderbuss, glove-stretchers, a broken churchwarden, the cat's whiskers from a crystal set, a deflated million-mark note, the beer label of a brewery long bankrupt, a watchman's rattle. Others were familiar objects misapplied ... (Patrick Leigh Fermor, *Roumeli* (London: Murray, 1966), p.193)

Fermor and his villagers are dealing almost exclusively in nouns. (There's no deep ideological reason for that, any more, I suspect, than there is with Augustine; it's just that the meanings of nouns are particularly easy to use as examples when we're talking about ostension.) So their guessing game is, precisely, a game of thing/noun correlations. But the point of my quotation is that *a whole way of living* comes with these correlations, one that Fermor does not know and the villagers do. Even to understand even this supposedly most basic and simple part of their dialect we need also to understand an entire world, the world of the dialect-speakers. A language presupposes a form of life at every point, even in its most straightforwardly referential parts; even in its thing/noun correlations.

Broadly speaking, Wittgenstein and Augustine are not opponents on our issue of relationalism vs. individualism about persons, but allies. A wider and more general reading of Book One, and indeed of the whole, of the *Confessions* reinforces this conclusion. Especially in the earlier parts of his story, Augustine goes out of his way to illustrate from his own case how all human understanding and individuality are dependent – in a variety of ways, some of which Fermor's villagers exemplify – on a pre-existing *tradition*: a context which is essentially structured by second-personal relations, and is, as they say, 'always already' there whenever any individual begins to understand. The relationalist thesis that each of us, for the shaping of his or her very nature, is not just incidentally dependent on others, but constitutively so, is not an afterthought or a sideline in the *Confessions*. It is the heart of the book.

The point in Bk. I Ch. 8 is that this constitutive dependence holds in the case where those others are other human beings; Augustine spells the point out by focusing particularly upon language. More often elsewhere in the *Confessions,* the point is that it also holds – and holds pre-eminently – in the case where the other in question is God. So in one of the most famous passages of all in the *Confessions* (X. 8):

> Late have I loved you, you beauty so ancient and so novel – late have I loved you! And yet behold you were within me – and I was outside of myself; and I sought for you outside myself, and hurled myself, all misshapen, upon the shapely things that you have made. You were with me, and I was not with you; and the things that held me far away from you were things that would not exist at all, unless they existed in you.

In what sense has Augustine loved God 'late'? In comparison with when God has loved him – which is, all along: from before the beginning of his being. God in loving Augustine has been *present* in him, and to him, even when Augustine was not present in or to himself. As he puts it elsewhere in the *Confessions*, God has been 'closer to him than the closest part of himself, and further above him than the highest he can know' (*Conf* 3.6).

Augustine's claim is phenomenological: that when he reflects clearly, what he sees in his own consciousness is the categorical and unquestionable presence of God, and at the same time and in contrast to that, the conditional and questionable presence of himself (*Conf* 10.33): 'But you, O lord my God, hear me and look down on me and see and pity and heal me, you in whose eyes I have become a question to myself'. There is something riddling and uncertain about his own being which is

brought to light by God's presence, perhaps by the contrast between the categoricality of God's being and the non-categoricality of Augustine's.

> There is something in a man which even the man's own spirit which is in him does not know. But you, O Lord, who made him, you know everything of him. Therefore I will confess to you what I know of myself; I will confess to you to what I do not know of myself, since even what I do know of myself, I know because you shine your light on me ... (*Conf* 10.5)

Speaking of riddles, the opening two chapters of *Confessions* Book I set two riddles in turn. The riddle in Chapter 1 is: How can Augustine call on God, unless he already knows him? Or as we might also express it: How can Augustine start out in the individualist way from his own being, and deduce from that the existence of God? Yet unless he can do this, it is pointless for him to call on a God who for all he knows may not be there at all. The answer to this riddle is that Augustine does not start out in the individualist way from his own being; he starts out in the relationalist way, from the fact that God is always already present there in and to him, and from God's gift to him of faith.

And the riddle in Chapter 2 is: If God is to 'come into' Augustine, what place is there within Augustine for God to come into: *quis locus est in me quo veniat in me deus meus, quo deus veniat in me, deus qui fecit caelum et terram*? Or as we might also express it: How can Augustine start out in the individualist way from his own being, and welcome God into that being? If Augustine's personhood is really what individualism says – a sealed and self-subsistent system of self-awareness – then how can God break into this system from the outside? The answer is that God does not need to start from the inside. He is there within Augustine's personhood already, and has been all along, as a constitutive condition of that personhood: *non ergo essem, deus meus, non omnino essem, nisi esses in me.* Indeed Augustine could not avoid having God within him, unless Augustine was outside the whole of the created order: *quo enim recedam extra caelum et terram, ut inde in me veniat deus meus, qui dixit, `caelum et terram ego impleo'?* On Augustine's conception, God is not 'out there' in the way that individualism about persons supposes, as a reality that we can encounter, if at all, only by working our way, like Deep Thought, from within our own consciousness to the outside. He is already present in the foundations of that consciousness. For Augustine to be an *I* to himself already presupposes that God is a *you* to him, and indeed that Augustine is a *you* to God. In short, Augustine's status as an individual

person, once he emerges as such by way of the processes described in the opening chapters of the *Confessions*, is preconditioned by his prior and more basic status as a person-in-relation; in relation to God.

I started this section by saying, in qualification of what is often read as Wittgenstein's outright assault on *Confessions* I, 8 at the beginning of Part One of the *Philosophical Investigations*, that we need to see his Augustine quotation in its context. Well, this is its context.

III.

Maybe a false individualist picture of language-learning can be extrapolated from *Confessions* Bk. I, or at least from some selections – perhaps selective selections – therefrom. But the picture that we get when we look at Augustine's narrative as a whole is that he is a relationalist about persons and language, like Wittgenstein; not an individualist about persons and language, like the Cartesians. What is primitive, for Augustine, is never my awareness of myself. What is primitive is the relationship of awareness between me and others, and above all, between me and God. I start off as a piece of the continent, a part of the main; it is only by *first* being a part of that main that I *later* learn to be 'an island entire of myself', a separate individual, as well.

This is a striking enough result in itself. It is all the more striking when we reflect on one of the few beliefs that almost everyone in philosophy shares about Augustine: that it was he, not Descartes, who invented the *cogito*. But the cogito is the stock in trade par excellence of the individualist: think of Deep Thought again. So isn't this strong evidence that Augustine was an individualist after all?

No. Augustine presents his form of the *cogito*, the *si fallor sum* argument, in at least three places: *de Libero Arbitrio* (*dLA*) 2.3, *Enchiridion* 7.20, *de Civitate Dei* (*dCD*) 11.26.[3] In each of these discussions the argument is explicitly presented as a refutation of academic scepticism. The *dCD* exposition is the fullest; and it sets the argument in the context in which, I believe, Augustine really always wants to propose his version of the *cogito.* That context is set by one of Augustine's key ideas, the idea that the human mind is structurally parallel to the divine mind.

[3] In the 'Fourth Set of Objections' to Descartes' *Meditations* it is the *de Libero Arbitrio* passage that Fr. Antoine Arnauld quotes as evidence that Descartes is not as original as he makes out.

> And indeed we recognise within ourselves the image of God – even if it is not at an equal level, indeed very far from being equal, since it is not coeternal or of the very same substance as God. Still, nothing in all God's creation is closer to that image than this nature of ours. The image of God I mean is an image of the highest Trinity, which till this time needs to be made perfect by reshaping, so that it may be as close as possible in likeness to Him. It is an image of the Trinity because we *exist*, and we *know* that we exist, and we *love* this existence and this knowledge ... (My own translation)

What Augustine is offering here is a doctrine which makes mentality *essentially social.* For Augustine, there *is* no lonely, solitary mind; to be a mind is already to have relations of some sort within, whether those relations are relations of knowledge or of love or of both. For Augustine, indeed, the more internal-relatedness there is within a mind, the truer a unity it is, precisely by *being* in this way internally related to itself. (Here it is obvious how well Augustine's philosophy of mind equips him for defending the Christian doctrine of the Trinity.)

Crucially, it is not until he has established this point that Augustine moves the argument against the sceptics. Here is how he continues:

> Then in these three things that I have mentioned – existence, knowledge, love – there is no falsehood resembling the truth to disturb us. For these things are not like external realities; we do not grasp them by any of the bodily senses ... without any image-making within the mind, it is most certain to me that I exist, that I know that I exist, and that I love my existence and my knowledge. For these truths there is no threat from the Academic arguments that ask us 'But what if you are mistaken?' For if I *am* mistaken, I *exist.*

Here it is obvious that for Augustine, the *si fallor, sum* argument arises against a background which is precisely not the Cartesian background of a 'solitary' thinker, deducing his way out of his solitude like the computer Deep Thought. This is so for at least two reasons. First because, as just said, mentality is for Augustine essentially social. For him, to be a unitary individual thinker is to be a thing the essence of which is self-consciousness: something that can think and be aware of (and indeed love) itself, that can for example talk to itself. Thus even an isolated single mind is already, in a sense, a kind of community of thought if it exists at all.

Secondly, as before, this essential sociality of mind is for Augustine something that arises in each of us only because she starts off in relation with others. Each of us becomes a mind, and a person, only by being 'always already' in relation with other persons, both human and divine, as a precondition of her own mindedness. Personhood, in short, is not something I achieve on my own; it is a gift, the gift to me of others. To enact the *si fallor sum* is not to announce my own solitariness. On the contrary, it is to express what only that gift could have made me capable of expressing.

IV.

This being the case for Augustine's *cogito*, the natural next question is whether it is also the case for Descartes'. Some readers must be wondering if I am cueing myself up to argue that Descartes isn't an individualist either, that the standard account of his views is all a mistake, and that he too is a relationalist about persons just like Augustine.

That isn't *quite* what I think we should say about Descartes; but some of it is right. For all the utter familiarity of the *Meditations*, it is still possible to be surprised by a rereading. Thanks to a host of culture-shaping readers and teachers, we expect to find the *Meditations* narrating the individualistic Deep-Thought-like odyssey that I have already described: the heroic journey of a single lonely mind, equipped with nothing except its own brilliantly ingenious powers of reasoning, out of its locked-in isolation into inferred and deduced relations with God, other people, and a world. And this certainly *can* be what we find in the *Meditations* – especially if it is what we are expecting to find.

But what did Descartes expect his readers to expect to find? His own culture – especially the Jansenist, counter-reformation-pietist part of it that he himself was one of the most famous sons of, alongside Blaise Pascal and Pierre Corneille – was far more aware of Augustine as a cultural presence than we are today. It was not just Antoine Arnauld who could see the influence of Augustine all over Descartes' text: that influence on Descartes is patent, for example, when we consider Augustine's distinction in the last-quoted passage between what is known by reason and what is known by sense, and his remarks about the place of *phantasiae* and *phantasmata* in this story. Before ever they reached the *cogito*, with its obvious reminiscence of Augustine's *si fallor, sum*

argument, Descartes' intended readership would have found it entirely obvious to see the *Meditations* as (among other things) an extended essay on knowledge quite studiedly written in the Augustinian manner – to be sure, with updates to bring Augustinianism into line with the best renaissance science. The fact that, today, we cannot even see Descartes' Augustinian framework of allusion is no evidence that it isn't there. His contemporaries saw and understood at once how Descartes' frame of reference deliberately and studiedly subverts his text's ironical pretension to be presuppositionless.

I don't mean these comments to add up to a *rejection* of one standard modern reading of the *Meditations*. I do mean them to suggest that that reading needs to be kept in balance with other possible readings, if we are to see this paradigm of philosophy in anything like the way that Descartes meant us to see it. In our philosophical culture, the usual way to read the *Meditations* is as asking simply 'What can I know?' I am not suggesting that this reading is entirely wrong; but I am suggesting that it is not uniquely right. Another and equally good way is to read the *Meditations* as an inquiry, as it were, into the epistemic 'problem of evil'. God is good, and a good God cannot be a deceiver. Yet there it is: there is deception in the world. How does that happen? And how can we avoid being deceived? We are naturally inclined to trust God; given that there is deception in the world, how trusting should we be, and about what?

If we do read the *Meditations* this second way, does that turn Descartes from an individualist into a relationalist, in my senses of these terms? In historical context, and for his contemporaries, I suspect the answer to that is Yes. They would, to put it briefly, have known what he was talking about; from what he explicitly said they would have inferred the Augustinian and relationalist context for his thoughts that he was implicitly evoking. First and foremost, they would have understood the *Meditations* in the way I suggest above, as an inquiry into the epistemic problem of evil. And they would have seen as absolutely central to Descartes' inquiry, the relatedness of Descartes' inquirer to God – who is after all, as modern students often complain, an active and indeed a busy presence in Descartes' epistemology.

For even the most proficient modern readers, by contrast, the answer is likely to be No. They are likely to miss the entire background of Augustinian allusion that frames Descartes' inquiry in the *Meditations* as inescapably as a modern composer's decision to write in the style of Bach would frame his whole enterprise: inescapably, even if that

composer never actually *said* that this was his chosen framework. Hence they are likely to take Descartes to be doing – give or take a few quaint theological curlicues – almost exactly the same as modern inquirers into 'our knowledge of the external world'. The point is not that this is an *impossible* reading of the text. The point is that, all on its own, it is a historically blind reading of the text; and that by focusing on only one part of what Descartes is doing in the *Meditations*, it seriously falsifies our overall picture of that text.

In typical contemporary practice, things do not even go this well. It is not merely that most readings of the *Meditations* now focus on what Descartes himself would have thought of as just one way of reading his text. It is not merely that most readings fail to make sense of Augustine's implicit presence in the background of the *Meditations,* and thus miss an important possible understanding of the text. It is, rather, that most readings fail to make sense of God's explicit presence in the foreground of the *Meditations,* and thus end up with a completely impossible understanding of the text. To most philosophical readers of the *Meditations* now, all 'Descartes' God stuff' (as students often put it) is no more than an embarrassment. People do not know what to make of it. They abstract away from it. They try – with real heroism – to make sense of Descartes' argument *entirely without God*, or with some substitute, e.g. 'the functional provisions of natural selection', holding God's place in Descartes' structure. And this *is* an impossible way to read Descartes.

Augustine is well understood as a relationalist because, for him, it is only within the framework of a pre-existing relatedness to God that any truths at all can be discovered by the individual person. At first sight Descartes does not seem to share this outlook: certainly, his inquiries start with the individual mind. But to borrow a distinction from Aristotle, I suggest this is more a difference in order of discovery than in order of existence. Descartes' thesis is that, beginning from the individual mind and what 'clearly and distinctly' appears to it, we can think our way not only to God as one of the objects that so appear to the mind, but also to God as (the source of) the clarity and distinctness with which any genuine object so appears. Hence Descartes' *lumen naturale* really is no more and no less than Augustine's *illuminatio*: as its name suggests, it is the same thing approached differently, as it were by ascent from below rather than by inspiration from above. Augustine stresses the primordiality of God in our consciousness, Descartes stresses the idea that God is reached by exploring the structure of our consciousness.

For both, God is the precondition of our knowing any truth at all; the main difference between them is that Augustine insists on this at once, whereas Descartes insists on it only eventually.

In sum, Augustine and Descartes are very alike in their approaches to truth and understanding. Certainly they are more like each other than either is like modern 'Cartesians', for whom all Descartes' talk about the place of God in truth, understanding, and consciousness is no more than dispensable traditional ornamentation. We might sum the contrasts up by saying that for Augustine, the presence of God to me is a luminous precondition of my finding any knowledge; for Descartes, the presence of God to me is something that emerges in the course of my discovering what it is to find any knowledge – and turns out to be a precondition, albeit an implicit rather than a luminous one; whereas for modern 'Cartesians', there is just me all on my own in the world, trying like Deep Thought to find some knowledge; Descartes' God is treated either as an insubstantial stylistic ornament (by those who want to appropriate his views), or as a substantive embarrassment (by those who want to reject them). The extent to which this modern Cartesian picture is in any sense *genuinely* or *historically* Cartesian is surely overestimated. Perhaps it is more to the point to call it genuinely Hobbesian.

But is God actually a presence *to* Descartes, in the way that he clearly is to Augustine, or again to Descartes' much younger contemporary Blaise Pascal? I have said a lot about the similarities between Descartes and Augustine, but here, surely, is a big difference between them. Augustine's work, especially the *Confessions,* is full of direct address to God; there is nothing like that in Descartes. In the *Meditations* Descartes does not talk *to* God, as a person; he talks *of* God, as a notion. He talks *to* other humans; never directly to God.

This contrast is real. Perhaps it arises because Descartes' project in the *Meditations* is to objectify, for other humans, an essentially subjective process of 'meditation' – of phenomenology – that he believes any human can go through, whereas Augustine's project in the *Confessions* is simply to engage in, and speak expressively straight out of, that subjectivity. In which case the contrast will be this, that Augustine's primary addressee is God, and other humans are implicitly invited by the *Confessions* to address him too; whereas Descartes' primary addressee is other humans, for whom Descartes describes in objective and third-personal terms a process that, implicitly, has the very same subjectivity and second-personality as Augustine is describing.

Some critics of Descartes – notably Bernard Williams – have wondered whether the *Meditations*' project of being objective about subjectivity is even coherent, and perhaps Augustine would have made something like the same point against Descartes. Perhaps he would have said that there can be no third-personal, detached describing of what is either lived as engaged second-personal experience or not known at all. A more recent philosopher who seems to have something like the same thought is Roger Scruton (2012: 166):

> Explanation by cause and effect involves the discovery of lawlike connections between events. Subjects have no place in those laws, not because they are mysterious or supernatural, but because they only exist *for* each other, through the web of interpersonal accountability. Look for them in the world of objects and you will not find them. This is true of you and me; it is true too of God. Physics gives a *complete* explanation of the world of objects, for that is what 'physics' means. God is not a hypothesis to be set beside the fundamental constants and the laws of quantum dynamics. Look for him in the world of objects and you will not find him.

V.

My next point is that, contrary to many readings including Williams', the subjectivity that concerns Descartes can be understood as not solely first-personal, but as second-personal too. This point is central to the reading of the *Meditations* that has been offered in the twentieth century by another great French philosopher – one who is also perhaps the greatest philosopher of second-personality since Augustine: Emmanuel Levinas.

Levinas is a pretty well perfect example of what I mean in this paper by a 'relationalist'. 'It is by this living in the Other – and not logically, by opposition to the Other – that the soul comes by its identity.' (*Totalité et Infini* French edition, p. 219; my translation)

One motto we might apply to him – if such a Christian phrase may be allowed for a self-consciously Jewish philosopher – is *in the beginning was the word.* Like the later Wittgenstein, Levinas takes language to be primordial, and for a similar reason: because he takes *sociality* to be primordial, and language to be the primary expression of sociality. (Also as with the later Wittgenstein, this equation should be read right to left: Levinas has a generous conception of what language is, not a parsimonious conception of sociality.) As Levinas characteristically

puts it, 'meaning is the face of the Other' (*Totalité et infini,* p. 206/227 (in Lingis translation)); 'the face to face founds language' (pp. 207/228). This does not just mean that previously isolated individuals are sparked into life, and into communication, when they come into contact; it means that it is the possibility of communication that underwrites the possibility of there being individual minds, reasoners, or persons at all.

> Language institutes a relation irreducible to the subject-object relation: the *revelation* of the other. In this revelation only can language as a system of signs be constituted. The other called upon is not something represented, is not a given, is not a particular, through one side already open to generalisation. Language, far from presupposing universality and generality, first makes them possible. Language presupposes interlocutors, a plurality. (Lingis, p. 73)

This may begin to clarify why the subtitle of *Totalité et infini* is *Essai sur l'exteriorité*. It is because Levinas believes that real understanding necessarily comes to us only from outside, from our encounters with the real world beyond us, and in particular with the other people in that world: 'the absolutely foreign alone can instruct us' (Lingis, p.73; *enseignement*, teaching or instruction, literally in-sign-ment, as it were the writing of semantic meanings *into* someone, is emphatically one of Levinas's words). Not that everything *ipso facto* comes right, simply because one is in contact with some exteriority. On the contrary, we are always free to relate to exteriority either by trying to subjugate it to ourselves as part of our own system (what Levinas calls our 'ontology'), or by entering into the endless task of actually trying to understand what always outruns our complete understanding (Levinas's name for this task is 'metaphysics'). We are free to choose whether to see philosophy as a war of conquest, or as an unending pilgrimage: we can aim at totality, or we can accept infinity.

Early on in *Totalité et infini* one passage of extraordinary bitter lucidity presses the charge that Heidegger's philosophy is a paradigm of what Levinas means by ontology (French edition, pp. 36-7, my translation; Lingis, pp. 45-46):

> The relation with Being that is enacted as ontology consists in neutralising the existent in order to comprehend or grasp it. It is hence not a relation with the other as such but the reduction of the other to the same. Such is the definition of freedom: to maintain oneself against the other, despite every relation with the other to ensure the autarky of an I ... 'I think'

> comes down to 'I can' – to an appropriation of what is, to an exploitation of reality. Ontology as first philosophy is a philosophy of power. It issues in the State and in the non-violence of the totality, without securing itself against the violence from which this totality lives, and which appears in the tyranny of the State. Truth, which should reconcile persons, here exists anonymously. Universality presents itself as impersonal; and this is another inhumanity.

It is not hard to hear these as the words of a Jewish philosopher who suffered as a prisoner of war in Nazi Germany, about another philosopher who flourished as a bulwark of the regime in Nazi Germany. (Consider, for a start, the characteristically Nazi word 'autarky'.)

If Heidegger comes under attack from Levinas because he's a systematiser, why doesn't Descartes? The answer is: because Levinas does not think that Descartes is a systematiser. For Levinas, Descartes is on the side of *infini* and not of *totalité* – an adherent of the view of knowledge as pilgrimage, not as conquest. For Levinas the key to the *Meditations* is a relatively rarely-discussed passage from the end of *Meditation* 3:

> ... the Cartesian *cogito* is discovered, at the end of the Third Meditation, to be supported on the certitude of the divine existence qua infinite, by relation to which the finitude of the *cogito*, or the doubt, is posited and conceivable. This finitude could not be determined without recourse to the infinite, as is the case with the moderns ... The Cartesian subject is given a point of view exterior to itself from which it can apprehend itself. If in a first movement Descartes takes consciousness to be indubitable of itself by itself, in a second movement – the reflection on reflection – he recognises conditions for this certitude. This certitude is due to the clarity and distinctness of the *cogito*, but certitude itself is sought because of the presence of infinity in this finite thought, which without this presence would be ignorant of its own finitude ... (TI, Lingis, p. 210)

As we might paraphrase this for analytic philosophers: it is only because we have the capacity for thought that we can think the *cogito*; but the capacity for thought is an instance of the capacity for language and meaning, and there can be no language or meaning without others (p. 206: 'meaning is the face of the Other'); hence, the existence in me of a capacity for thought itself already presupposes the existence of others. Moreover, conceiving myself involves conceiving myself as finite; but the thought of my finitude as possible brings with it the thought of the

other's infinity as possible. And the paradigm case of the other as infinite is the case of God. On Levinas' reading, it is just as true in the case of Descartes as it is in the case of Augustine that reflection on the structure of our own consciousness will reveal the presence of God in the depths of that consciousness.

As I myself noted above, Descartes is more usually understood as talking *about* God than *to* God. I suspect Levinas would concede that that is what is *normally* going on. But one reason why the ending of *Meditation* 3 is so important to his reading is because it is here, in particular, that he sees Descartes' God as actually 'face to face' with Descartes:

> The last paragraph of the Third Meditation brings us to a relation with infinity in thought which overflows thought and becomes a personal relation. Contemplation turns into adoration, admiration, and joy. It is a question no longer of an 'infinite object' still known and thematised, but of a majesty ... To us this paragraph appears to be not a stylistic ornament or a prudent hommage to religion, but the expression of this transformation of the idea of infinity conveyed by knowledge into a Majesty approached as a face. (TI, Lingis, pp. 211-12)

VI.

The point is not to argue that Levinas's reading of Descartes is uniquely, unchallengeably correct; even the best readings of texts of any interest and complexity are most unlikely to be *uniquely* correct even if correct. Rather, the point of my discussion is threefold. First, it is meant to suggest the conclusion that even Descartes, paradigm individualist about persons as he is generally taken to be, can be read as a relationalist insofar as he can be read as an Augustinian (or indeed a Levinasian). On this reading it turns out that Descartes' theism is no side-issue in the *Meditations*. We cannot take Descartes to be the kind of modern Cartesian for whom all the God-stuff in the *Meditations* is at best picturesque. We have to understand him, as Levinas suggests and as an Augustinian reading of the *Meditations* also suggests, as having a concern with God that is absolutely central to the whole of his thought.

Secondly, I hope my exposition of Levinas on Descartes has brought it to light what rich resources Levinas has to offer anyone who, like me, wants to defend relationalism about persons. Central to Levinas' thought is the idea of the 'face to face': the idea that it is through personal

encounter that personhood begins. And the relation, the encounter, so to speak antedates the relata: it is because we are in relationship with others that it becomes possible for us to come to be persons, not vice versa. 'This relation with the Other ... precedes all ontology; it is the ultimate relation in Being' (French edition, p. 48, my translation).

Thirdly, I hope my discussion makes it clear by this point how these reflections connect with an argument about personhood in applied ethics that I have made elsewhere. If persons depend for their very being upon a pre-existing relationship, then there is something deeply wrong with the usual approach to persons in applied ethics. This begins from the claim that personhood is a status which we attain by satisfying criteria of various sorts: rationality, the ability to speak, emotionality, and so on. Such an approach to personhood makes sense if individualism about persons is true: on an individualist approach, there can't be anything wrong with just subjecting individuals to a tick-list of properties they might have, and seeing whether in fact they do have them. But if relationalism about persons is true, how *can* it make sense? If persons – and so *a fortiori* personal qualities like rationality and emotionality – are only constituted in the first place by the antecedent relationships in which persons are to be found, then to approach the question whether someone 'counts as a person' by seeing whether they pass this or that test is to step away from the relationship that we already have with them. On an individualist approach to persons, criterialism – as I have elsewhere suggested we call it (Chappell 2011) – looks like straightforward 'scientific objectivity'. On a relationalist approach, it looks like a denial of our commitments to others; it looks, in fact, like a kind of moral offence. Acceptance of others, for the relationalist, cannot be a conclusion that we infer from a test procedure; acceptance of others means precisely refusing to submit them to such tests. Here – to engage in a little ring-composition – is Noë again:

> I cannot both trust and love you and also wonder whether, in fact, you are alive with thought and feeling, just as I cannot dance well if I am counting steps and trying to remember what comes next. A certain theoretical detachment is incompatible with our joint mutual commitment ... the point is not that our commitment to each other's consciousness is beyond rational criticism ... The point ... is that for a person's mind to be thrown into doubt for us does not mean that we have lost the evidence we once possessed that assured us from a standpoint of theoretical detachment that the other was mentally present ... that is a standpoint that we never

> occupy in relation to other minds (or that we occupy only rarely, in special circumstances) ... what is thrown into question ... is what our relationship to the other *should* be ... the question of whether a person is in fact a conscious person is always a moral question before it is a question about our justification to believe ... even to raise the question of whether a person or a thing has a mind is to call one's relation to that person into question. And this is the point. For most of us, most of the time, our relations to others simply rule out the possibility of asking the question. For the question can only be asked from a detached perspective that is incompatible with the more intimate, engaged perspective that we actually take up to each other. (Noë 2009: 33-4)

'Acceptance of others', I said: what others? The others with whom we typically find ourselves in relationship with the human form of life. That typically means other human beings, because it is typically other humans who confront us in the kind of way that Levinas describes, with the ethical authority of the other. (Other) animals can do it too, sometimes, and that fact suggests that there is something important for us to make moral sense of in the case of the (other) animals. But it also suggests that the individualist approach to these issues, i.e. the criterialist approach, is wrong-headed from the start. The question to ask is not 'What properties do these creatures have, and to what degree, so that we can assess their moral status?'; for that is not how we do in fact 'assess moral status' (insofar as we do this at all, as opposed to acting on the basis of an understanding that we already have). We 'assess the moral status' of any individual creature on the basis of the place in our form of life of *creatures like that*: what kind of good treatment do we direct at this kind of animal, and why, and what is there to be said for or against such treatment? (As this last clause shows, the test is not merely a conservative one.) It follows that to conclude that some human, perhaps disabled or very young, 'is not a person' on the basis that s/he *individually* lacks emotionality or rationality or the ability to speak or whatever, is to make a serious moral mistake. These properties are not properties that we *determine* personhood by. They are properties that we look for, hope to see, and seek to nurture in those to whom we have already granted the status of persons, on quite other grounds such as – and this is the usual ground – their membership of the human species.

If relationalism about persons is true, then criterialism about persons looks not just false but incoherent: it takes as a criterion of personhood

what it only makes sense to treat as an ideal for personhood. By contrast, relationalism has on its side an emerging consensus: it is what fits the realistically world-centred and embedded thinking of which Levinas is a prime example in the phenomenological tradition, and Wittgenstein a prime example in the anglophone tradition; it is also what fits an increasingly large body of data from developmental psychology, and from the philosophy of mind and action. Meanwhile mainstream applied ethics continues to be firmly wedded to individualism about persons – and a strikingly shallow and implausible form of individualism about persons. If this emerging consensus is right, mainstream applied ethics has a lot of catching up to do.[4]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Augustine. 1912. *The Confessions*. With a translation by William Watts (Cambridge, MA: Loeb Classical Library)

Chappell, Timothy. 2011. 'On the Very Idea of Criteria for Personhood', *Southern Journal of Philosophy*, 49:1 (March 2011), 1-27

Donne, John. *Meditations.* Many editions

Kaye, Kenneth. 1982. *The Mental and Social Life of Babies: How Parents Create Persons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press)

Kerr, Fergus. 1997. *Theology after Wittgenstein*, 2nd edition (Oxford: Blackwell)

Levinas, Emmanuel. 1961/1969. *Totalité et Infini*. I quote both the French edition (The Hague: Martin Nijhoff, 1961), in my own translation, and also Alphonso Lingis' translation (The Hague: Martin Nijhoff, 1969).

Malcolm, Norman. 1984. *Wittgenstein: A Memoir* (New York: OUP)

Noë, Alva. 2009. *Out of Our Heads* (New York: Hill and Wang)

Scruton, Roger. 2012. *The Face of God: The Gifford Lectures* (London: Continuum)

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1951. *Philosophical Investigations* (Oxford: Blackwell)

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1969. *On Certainty* (Oxford: Blackwell)

[4] Thanks for help, comments, and encouragement to Simon Blackburn, Claudia Chappell, Peter Hacker, Andrew Mullins, Adrian Moore, David Papineau, Andrew Pinsent, Raymond Tallis, and the audience at the Ian Ramsey Centre Conference 'Persons and their Brains', St Anne's College, Oxford, July 2012.

OMNIPRESENCE, INDWELLING, AND THE SECOND-PERSONAL

ELEONORE STUMP

St Louis University

Abstract. The claim that God is maximally present is characteristic of all three major monotheisms. In this paper, I explore this claim with regard to Christianity. First, God's omnipresence is a matter of God's relations to all space at all times at once, because omnipresence is an attribute of an eternal God. In addition, God is also present with and to a person. The assumption of a human nature ensures that God is never without the ability to be present with human persons in the way mind-reading enables; and, in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God is present in love.

INTRODUCTION

The claim that God is maximally present is characteristic of all three major monotheisms.[1] In this paper, I want to explore this claim with regard to Christianity, which is the monotheism I know best. It is clear that there are various kinds of presence, for human beings as well as for God. For human beings, for example, being present can be a matter of being *here now*. Analogously, even for immaterial God, there is a kind of presence that involves relations to both space and time. The relations involved in presence with regard to space and time are typically characterized as presence *in* or presence *at*.

[1] God's omnipresence is the subject of an increasing literature in contemporary philosophy. For a representative excellent example, see Hud Hudson, 'Omnipresence', *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology*, Thomas P. Flint and Michael C. Rea, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 199-216. My focus in this paper is on a side of omnipresence not often investigated in the standard treatments of it.

In addition, however, there is also the kind of second-personal presence that one human person can have to another. This is the kind of presence we have in mind when we say, for example,

> 'She read the paper all through dinner and was never present to any of the rest of us'
>
> or
>
> 'He sat with me at the defendant's table, but he was never really present with me during the trial.'

In these examples, there is presence at a time and in a place; but some kind of presence, characterized by one or another kind of second-personal psychological connection, is missing. Typically, this kind of presence is characterized as presence *with* or presence *to* another person. I will call this kind of presence 'personal presence'.

Personal presence itself comes in different kinds. In mindreading and empathy, for example, there is a kind of personal presence that has something of the character that telepathy would have if telepathy were real, as it is not. In empathy, for example, one can feel within oneself another person's pain, for example; in mind-reading more generally, one can somehow sense as internal to one's own psychology another person's intentions or emotions. When one person Paula mind-reads another person Jerome, Paula is in some sense there, present with Jerome.

This is a kind of unilateral personal presence, but mutual personal presence is also possible. It is mediated by a certain kind of mutual awareness, of the kind that arises, for example, when two people lock eyes. Mutual personal presence manifestly comes in degrees. There is the minimal kind that can arise when one catches the eye of a total stranger on a bus. At the other end of the scale, there is the kind of intense personal presence possible between those united through mutual love. In mind-reading, one person somehow has within himself something of the mind of another. In mutual love between persons, there can be something stronger than such an asymmetrical relation; there can be a mutual 'in-ness' between the persons united in love, in a way that yields powerful personal presence. We might call this 'second-personal presence'.[2]

[2] I have discussed the nature of the second-personal at length in my *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), chapters 4 and 6. For an excellent contemporary attempt to explain the nature of

Since there is one mind and will in God, in our sense of 'person', God is a person too.[3] And so it is in principle possible for God to have personal presence to or with human persons as well; and Christian theology emphasizes God's desire for union in love with human persons. In what follows, I will argue that, on Christian doctrine, even the personal presence generated by mind-reading and empathy are possible for God. In addition, something analogous to mutual 'in-ness' is possible for God with respect to those who love him. But, for God, this 'in-ness' has an ontological reality that is not available in the case of mutually loving human beings. For lack of a better term, I will use an old theological term and refer to this most intimate and powerful kind of second-personal presence between God and a human person as God's 'indwelling' a human person.

In this paper, I will say something briefly about God's presence with regard to time and space, and then I will focus on God's personal presence *to* and *with* human persons through mind-reading and through God's second-personal indwelling in those who love God.

PRESENCE WITH REGARD TO TIME

God's presence with respect to time is formulated in the doctrine of eternity. Contrary to the way it is sometimes thought of, eternity is not just timelessness. Rather it is a mode of existence characterized both by the absence of succession and also by limitless duration. Because an eternal God cannot have succession in his life, neither of the series (the so-called 'A series' or 'B series') characteristic of time can apply to God's life or to God's relations with other things. That is, nothing in God's life can be past or future with respect to anything else, either in God's life or in time; and, similarly, nothing in God's life can be earlier or later than anything else either.

On the other hand, because eternity is also limitless duration, God's life consists in the duration of a present that is not limited by either future

---

the second-personal in connection with child development, see Vasudevi Reddy, *How Infants Know Minds* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[3] For a discussion of the ways in which a simple God can be considered a person, see my 'Simplicity and Aquinas's Quantum Metaphysics', ed. Gerhard Krieger, 2014; see also a shortened and revised version, 'The Nature of a Simple God', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly,* forthcoming.

or past.[4] Since the mode of existence of an eternal God is characterized by this kind of presentness, the relation between an eternal God and anything in time has to be one of simultaneity. Of course, the simultaneity associated with an eternal God cannot be temporal simultaneity. Taking the concept of eternity seriously involves recognizing that it introduces technical senses for several familiar words and phrases, including 'now' and 'simultaneous with', as well as for the present-tense forms of many verbs. The relations between eternity and time therefore require a special sense of 'simultaneity'. In earlier work, Norman Kretzmann and I called this special sort of simultaneity 'ET-simultaneity', for 'simultaneity between what is eternal and what is temporal'.[5]

The logic of the doctrine of eternity has the result that every moment of time, as that moment is *now* in time, is ET-simultaneous with the whole eternal life of God. Or, to put the same point the other way around, the whole of eternity is ET-simultaneous with each temporal event as that event is actually occurring in the temporal *now*.

It helps in this connection to consider the question: 'Does an eternal God know what time it is now?' For the sake of discussion, suppose that, for things in time, there is an absolute temporal *now*, as distinct from a *now* that is merely relative to some particular temporal entity. Could an eternal God know what time the absolute temporal *now* is?

On the supposition that in time there is an absolute *now*, then in time there is a fact of the matter about how far history has unrolled. With regard to the inhabitants in time, at any given moment in time as that moment becomes the absolute *now*, history has unrolled that far. And this is something an eternal God can know. Furthermore, because the whole of eternity is ET-simultaneous with each temporal event as it is actually occurring in the absolute temporal *now*, for every time an eternal God can know all the events actually occurring at that time as well as the temporal location of that time and its being experienced as the absolute *now* by temporal entities at that time.

---

[4] For detailed discussion of this doctrine, see Chapter 4 of my *Aquinas* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003) and my 'The Openness of God: Eternity and Free Will', ed. Ben Arbour, (forthcoming).

[5] A relationship that can be recognized as a kind of simultaneity will of course be symmetric. But, since its relata have relevantly distinct modes of existence, ET-simultaneity will be neither reflexive nor transitive. In particular, each of two temporal events can be ET-simultaneous with one and the same eternal event without being ET-simultaneous with each other.

But after these things, there is nothing further for God to know about what time it is now. There is no time in the eternal *now*; and, in the eternal *now*, God is present to every temporal event, as it is part of the absolute temporal *now*. In the life of an eternal God, no *temporal* moment has any more claim than any other to be *for God* the absolute *now*.

One crude but helpful heuristic device for depicting the relation of eternity to time is to think of the time line as having an illuminated, yellow element indicating the absolute temporal *now*. Then for things in time, only one point on the line is ever yellow, although what point is yellow is always changing. For God in the eternal *now*, however, the entire time line is yellow.

An analogy may help here. If there were such a thing as Flatland, as described in Erwin Abbott's famous story of that name, then there would be more than one mode of spatial existence for sentient beings. There would be both the two-dimensional Flatland mode of spatial existence, for the story's sentient squares, and the three-dimensional mode of spatial existence, for more familiar sentient creatures. And if Flatland were linearly ordered with an absolute middle, there would be an absolute Flatland *here*, which in the Flatland world could be occupied by only one Flatlander at a time. Nonetheless, if Flatland were small enough, then, with respect to a human observer in the three-dimensional world, all of Flatland could be *here* at once (where the *here* of Flatland and the *here* of the three-dimensional world are only analogous to one another, not identical). And yet it would not follow and it would not be true that all of Flatland would be *here* with respect to any sentient occupant of Flatland. So it could be true both that only one sentient square in Flatland could be *here* at once (with respect to the *here* of Flatland) and also that all of Flatland could be *here* at once (with respect to the *here* of the three-dimensional world). The reason for this apparently paradoxical claim is that all of Flatland can be encompassed within the metaphysically bigger *here* of the three-dimensional world.

An analogous point holds with regard to *now*, on the doctrine of eternity. With respect to God in the eternal *now*, all of time is encompassed within the eternal *now*, in the sense that all of time is ET-simultaneous with the eternal *now*.[6] Just as the whole Flatland world can be *here* for someone in three-dimensional space, so all of time can be

[6] But it does not follow and is not true that all of time is present with respect to anything temporal at any particulartemporal location.

now for God in the eternal *now*. Abbott's *Flatland* was written in order to illuminate the difficulties of thinking oneself up the ladder of being. In his story, a sentient square in Flatland makes contact with a sentient three-dimensional sphere and struggles to understand what life in the three dimensional world could possibly be. The doctrine of eternity has the implication that, with respect to time, sentient temporal beings are in the position of Flatland's sentient square as they try to understand a metaphysically greater God, whose *now* is eternal – limitless duration without succession – rather than the more limited and more familiar temporal *now*.

The result of God's eternity is that in respect of time God can be more present with regard to a human person Paula than any other contemporary human person Jerome can be. As regards Paula, her contemporary Jerome can be present only one time slice after another. When Paula is thirty years old, for example, neither her three-year old self nor her sixty-year old self are available to Jerome. But eternal God is present at once to every time of Paula's life; none of Paula's life is ever absent or unavailable for God.

PRESENCE WITH REGARD TO SPACE

As for space, mutatis mutandis, analogous things can be said, because God is not material, any more than God is temporal.

Aristotle says that a place contains a material body only if the outermost edge of what is contained and the outermost edge of the place coincide.[7] If this is right, then since God is not a body and so has no outermost edges at all, God cannot be *in* a place, in the sense that the place contains him. (For similar reasons, nothing can be in God in this sense; in the Aristotelian sense of 'place', God cannot be a place for material things.) But although God cannot be present *in* a place as in a container, God can be present *at* a place.

Presence at a place is a complicated notion. In earlier work,[8] Norman Kretzmann and I tried to capture this relation in terms of God's having direct and unmediated causal contact with and cognitive access to things

[7] Aristotle, *Physics* 211 b.

[8] Eleonore Stump and Norman Kretzmann, 'Eternity, Awareness, and Action', *Faith and Philosophy*, 9 (1992), 463–82.

at a place.[9] I now think, however, that the attempt to capture presence at a place in terms of direct and unmediated cognitive and causal connection misses something.

Consider, for example, Homer's depiction of Zeus. Wherever in physical reality he is, Homer's Zeus has direct and unmediated causal contact with the Trojans at the place of the Trojan war and also direct and unmediated cognitive access to them. That is, Zeus knows directly and immediately what is happening to the Trojans in the fighting with the Greeks, say, and he can affect the way the fighting goes just by willing it. But Zeus can continue to have such cognitive and causal contact with the Trojans at the place of the Trojan war even when he is (as Homer sometimes says) having dinner with the Ethiopians. While Zeus is among the Ethiopians, however, he is absent from the place of the Trojan War, not present at it.

Elsewhere I have argued that what is missing for Zeus in this Homeric story can be explained in terms of shared or joint attention.[10] It is hard to give a good philosophical analysis of joint attention, but easy to give examples of it. An infant engages in joint attention when the infant looks into the eyes of the mother, who is looking back into the infant's eyes. In adults, joint attention is at least partly a matter of mutual awareness, of the sort that prompts philosophical worry about the possibility of an unstoppable infinite regress: Paula is aware of Jerome's being aware of Paula's being of Jerome's being aware, and so on.[11] In shared attention, the object of awareness for Paula is simultaneously Jerome and Jerome's awareness of her awareness of his awareness and so on – and the object of awareness for Jerome is simultaneously Paula and their mutual awareness.

---

[9] By 'direct and unmediated' in this context, I mean only that the cognitive access or the causal connection does not have as an intermediate step the agency of another person; I do not mean that there is no intermediary of any sort.

[10] See, 'Eternity, Awareness, and Action' (with Norman Kretzmann), *Faith and Philosophy,* 9 (1992), 463-482.

[11] Because philosophers take knowledge to be a matter of knowledge *that*, a more common philosophical formulation of mutual knowledge would be in terms of knowing *that*: Paula knows that Jerome knows that Paula knows that Jerome knows, and so on. In the case of infants, of course, shared attention cannot be a matter of knowing *that* in this way. For an interesting study of mutual knowledge in connection with joint attention, see Christopher Peacocke, 'Joint Attention: Its Nature, Reflexivity, and Relation to Common Knowledge', in Naomi Eilan, Christoph Hoerl, Teresa McCormack, and Johannes Roessler, eds., *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 298–324.

These attempts at philosophical characterization of joint attention are inadequate, and I offer them only to help prompt intuition about the nature of joint attention. Roughly put, one can say that joint attention is a kind of second-person experience between two persons who are mutually aware of each other.[12] Joint attention is most often mediated by vision; but it can be mediated by other senses as well. A congenitally blind child can share attention with its mother by sound or by touch, for example. In the case of an immaterial God, joint attention can occur without any mediation by the senses, provided that there is iterated mutual awareness. The senses are typically the vehicle for establishing joint attention, but they are not essential to it.

Between human persons, presence at a place includes not joint attention, but the mere *availability* for joint attention; and something similar can be said about Homer's human-like Greek gods. In the case of Zeus in the story, Zeus is not present at the place of the Trojan war when he is having dinner with the Ethiopians, because, even though he has direct and unmediated cognitive and causal contact with that place and the things in it, he is not available to share attention with the Trojans at that place. Zeus's power extends to the place of the Trojan war; but, one might say, his face does not. A Trojan might address a prayer to Zeus while Zeus is among the Ethiopians, in the assurance that Zeus would hear it and could immediately answer it by altering the course of the war. But it is possible for Greek gods to engage in face-to-face interaction; and Zeus is not available for that kind of interaction with anyone at the place of the Trojan war while he is away among the Ethiopians. For this reason, Zeus is not then present at the place of the Trojan war either.

So one ingredient in a person's presence at a place is that person's availability for sharing attention with other persons also present at that place. *Mutatis mutandis*, this point about the connection between shared attention and presence at a place applies also to God. God's having direct and unmediated cognitive and causal contact with everything at any place is still insufficient for God's being present at every place. In order for God to be present at every place, as Christianity claims God is, it also needs to be the case that, for any person at any place who is able and willing to share attention with God, God is available to share attention with that person.

[12] For more discussion of the second-personal and of joint attention, see Chapters 4 and 6 of my *Wandering in Darkness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

On Christian doctrine, then, the relation of an omnipresent God to a human person located in space is analogous to the relation between the sentient three-dimensional sphere and the sentient two-dimensional square in Abbott's *Flatland*. The space that is *here* for the square is much more limited than the space that is *here* with regard to the sphere, which is metaphysically greater than the square. Analogously, although only a limited region of space is *here* with regard to a human person in a place, for God the entirety of space is *here,* even in the sense that God is available at once to share attention with any human person at any location in space.

In this respect, there is parity between God's relation to space and God's relation to time. In one and the same eternal present, omnipresent God is available to share attention with any person at any place in any time. Because of the way God is present at a place and in a time, for all persons, in whatever place and time they are, God is at once present, in power and knowledge and also in person.

PRESENCE BETWEEN HUMAN PERSONS: EMPATHY, MIND-READING, AND UNION IN LOVE

In addition to these kinds of presence at a place or in a time, as between human persons yet another kind of presence is possible.

This kind of presence can be understood in relation to mind-reading and empathy. We now know much more about empathy than we did only a few decades ago, and we understand that one kind of cognition afforded by the recently discovered neurological capacities that subserve empathy includes mind-reading more generally.

In human beings, mind-reading is the knowledge of persons and their mental states.[13] Because of recent work in neuroscience and developmental psychology, especially work on the impairments of development among autistic children, we have learned a great deal about the neurological systems that make empathy and mind-reading possible and the kind of cognition these systems produce. Whatever ties together the different clinical signs of all the degrees of autism spectrum disorder,

[13] Mind-reading or some analogue of it can be found in species other than human beings and also between members of different species, including between human beings and other animals; and so the qualification 'in human beings' is necessary here.

the most salient feature of the disorder is an impairment in the cognitive capacities necessary for mindreading.[14]

The knowledge which is impaired for an autistic child, however, cannot be taken as knowledge *that* something or other is the case. A non-autistic pre-linguistic infant is capable of mind-reading; she can know her mother, and to one extent or another she can also know some of her mother's mental states. But she is not capable of knowledge *that* a particular person is her mother. Conversely, an autistic child can know *that* his mother is sad – say, because she has told him so and she is a reliable authority on such matters for the child. But the impairment

[14] Among philosophers, there is not one universally accepted understanding of the notion of mind-reading. It seems to me to be taken ambiguously, in a way analogous to the ambiguity in the notion of perception. The notion of perception can be taken as (i) perception, (ii) perception as, and (iii) perceptual belief. To say that Max has a perception of a cup can be understood to mean:

(i) the cup is an object of perception for Max,

(ii) Max perceives the cup as a cup,

(iii) Max perceives that that is a cup.

The notion of mind-reading seems to me ambiguous in the same way. The reason for the ambiguity is that, in ordinary cases in which a cognitive capacity is operating normally, it operates as part of a whole system to give information available to consciousness, connected with other information stored in the system, and formulable in beliefs. For reasons I have given elsewhere, it seems to me better to take perception in sense (ii) than in sense (i) or sense (iii). (See Stump 2003, Chapter 8, especially the section on perception.) In this paper, I will understand mind-reading analogously, in sense (ii), rather than sense (i) or sense (iii).

In this respect, I dissent from Alvin Goldman's use of the term 'mind-reading'. His use of the term is a variant on (iii). He says: 'By "mindreading" I mean the attribution of a mental state to self or other. In other words, to mind-read is to form a judgment, belief, or representation that a designate person occupies or undergoes (in the past, present, or future) a specified mental state or experience.' (Alvin Goldman, 'Mirroring, Mindreading, and Simulation', in Jamie Pineda (ed.), *Mirror Neuron Systems: The Role of Mirroring Processes in Social Cognition* (New York: Springer, 2009), p. 312) On Goldman's usage, it would not be true to say that autistic children are impaired with respect to mind-reading, since it is possible for them to form judgments about the mental states of others.

But in order to explain what is impaired in autism, we need a term like 'mind-reading' in sense (ii). Since 'mind-reading' is the term already employed for this purpose by many philosophers and researchers on autism, it seems to me better to continue to use the term in that way rather than in Goldman's way. Goldman's goal is to interpret mind-reading in such a way as to make the new results in neurobiology compatible with his own attempts to understand mind-reading in terms of simulation theory. For arguments against Goldman's position on this score, see Shaun Gallagher's article in the same volume, 'Neural Simulation and Social Cognition', pp. 355–71.

characteristic of autism can leave the child without the knowledge of the sadness of his mother. What is impaired for the autistic child is a non-propositional knowledge of persons and their mental states.

Recent research in neuroscience has shown that the capacity for this kind of knowledge of persons is subserved at least in part by what is now called 'the mirror neuron system'. The mirror neuron system makes it possible for one person to have knowledge of the mental states of another person when that knowledge shares something of the phenomenology of perception. Like the perception of colour, for example, the knowledge of persons in mind-reading is direct, intuitive, and hard to translate without remainder into knowledge *that* (but very useful as a basis for knowledge *that* of one sort or another).

Neurons in the mirror neuron system contribute to making the knowledge of mind-reading possible because they fire both when one does some action oneself or has some emotion oneself *and also* when one sees that same action or emotion in someone else. The point is easier to appreciate if we focus on empathy with another person's pain, which is currently also thought to be a result of the cognitive capacities subserved by the mirror neuron system.[15] When Paula sees Jerome cut himself with a knife, *she* feels *his* pain, because Paula's mirror neuron system produces in Paula an affective state that has at least some of the characteristics of the pain Jerome is experiencing. Paula does not actually suffer physical pain resulting from a laceration in her tissues; but, in her empathy with Jerome, she has some kind of feeling of pain. Only, in Paula, that feeling is taken off-line, as it were, because in her it is not connected to tissue

[15] There is a considerable literature on empathy. For a good introduction to some of the issues involved, see Alvin Goldman, 'Two Routes to Empathy: Insights from Cognitive Neuroscience', in *Empathy. Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives,* ed. Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 31-44. It is clear that there are at least two different kinds of empathy or levels of empathy. One is more nearly involuntary and also more coarse-grained. The other is under more voluntary control, more fine-grained, and more dependent on past experience and training. The first is in play when a person winces as he sees someone else get hurt. The second is engaged when someone is deeply involved in reading a novel. It seems clear that there is no sharp demarcation between these kinds, but rather a kind of continuum. The first kind of empathy, and any kind of empathy closer to that end of the continuum, is what is at issue in this paper. But, in my view, it would be possible to preserve the general point of this paper even if it turned out that the cognitive processes at issue required empathy of the second kind.

damage, as it is in Jerome.[16] Furthermore, even though in empathy Paula feels pain that is her pain, in the sense that the pain is in her and she herself feels it, she nonetheless recognizes this pain as Jerome's pain, not hers. The final result of the neural interactions begun by the mirror neuron system is that Paula knows that Jerome is in pain; but she knows this because, in consequence of the mirror neuron system, she first knows Jerome's pain.[17]

In general, in mind-reading Jerome, to one extent or another Paula will know the action Jerome is doing, the intention which Jerome has in doing it, and the emotion Jerome has while doing it. And Paula will know these things in Jerome through having herself some simulacrum of the mental state in Jerome. Something of Jerome's mental state will be in Paula, but in a different way.

One researcher on mind-reading, Vittorio Gallese, tries to explain the relevant neural mechanisms involved in the knowledge of persons this way:

> [mirror neurons] map ... multimodal representation across different spaces inhabited by different actors. These spaces are blended within a unified common intersubjective space, which paradoxically does not segregate any subject. This space is '*we*centric ... The shared intentional space underpinned by the mirror matching mechanism is not meant to distinguish the agent from the observer.[18]

And he goes on to explain empathy in this way:

---

[16] It is not easy to say precisely what it is for a system to run off-line, but the general idea is this. In the case of dreamed motion, the brain's motor programs for actual physical running are off-line in that while these motor programs are firing, they are disconnected from the muscles in the legs and so do not produce running in the legs. In the case of mind-reading, the brain's mirror neuron system runs the programs it would run if one person were apprehending what the other, observed person is doing; but it runs these programs disconnected from those states of will and intellect the observer would have if she herself were doing those acts. In this way, she shares in the observed person's mental states but without having them as he has them, in virtue of having her own states of intellect and will, not his, even while she feels what she would feel if she were doing what he is doing.

[17] And, of course, on this basis she also knows *that* Jerome is in pain. Empathic feeling of his pain is a reliable ground for knowledge that he is in pain.

[18] Vittorio Gallese, '"Being Like Me": Self-Other Identity, Mirror Neurons, and Empathy', in *Perspectives on Imitation: From Neuroscience to Social Science*, ed. Susan Hurley and Nick Chater (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), p. 111.

> Self-other identity goes beyond the domain of action. It incorporates sensations, affect, and emotions. ... The shared intersubjective space in which we live from birth continues long afterward to constitute a substantial part of our semantic space. When we observe other individuals acting, facing their full range of expressive power (the way they act, the emotions and feelings they display), a meaningful embodied link among individuals is automatically established. ... [S]ensation and emotions displayed by others can also be empathized with, and therefore implicitly understood, through a mirror matching mechanism.[19]

In human mind-reading, there is a sense in which something of the thought, affect, or intention in the mind of one person is in the mind of another. In the intermingling of minds made possible by the mirror neuron system, one person is present to another in virtue of being in that other, in a way that the neurobiology of the brain makes possible. This is intersubjectivity, or presence *with*. In mind-reading, one human person can be present *with* another in a way more powerful than mere presence at a place or in a time.

The kind of presence *to* a person manifested in joint attention is broadened by the mind-reading cognitive system. When Paula mind-reads Jerome, the relevant neural systems give Paula a direct, quasi-perceptual awareness of Jerome's actions, emotions, and intentions. And this awareness arises in Paula because in mind-reading Jerome she is sharing something of Jerome's mental states. In this sharing and awareness, she is also present with Jerome, with personal presence.

There is a minimal degree of personal presence when Paula winces as she sees Jerome slice his finger with his steak knife, even if Jerome is unaware that Paula is observing him. This is a kind of presence of one person with another that is possible even if the two people involved are strangers to each other or know and heartily dislike each other. For example, Paula can wince at Jerome's pain even while she thinks that his suffering that pain serves him right.

But there is a much greater degree of personal presence when two people, who are mutually close to each other in a loving relationship, are mutually mind-reading each other in intense shared attention. When this kind of second-personal presence occurs, one way to describe the connection between the two people in question is to say that they are united in love.

---

[19] Gallese, 'Being Like Me', p. 111 and p. 114.

This kind of experience is a staple of romantic literature and poetry. In his famous poem 'The Extasie', John Donne describes such an experience between lovers:

> Our eye-beames twisted, and did thred
> Our eyes, upon one double string
> ...
> Our soules, (which to advance their state
> Were gone out) hung twixt her, and me.

But this kind of being united is also possible between human beings in non-romantic or non-erotic relationship as well, as, for example, between a mother and her child or between a sick person and her loving care-taker.

In what follows, I will argue that both the mind-reading kind of presence with a person and the presence between persons united in love is possible for God and human persons.

GOD'S PRESENCE WITH HUMAN PERSONS: EMPATHY AND MIND-READING

Since, on orthodox Christian doctrine, God is omniscient, God knows all truths; and so God has propositional knowledge (or the divine equivalent of propositional knowledge)[20] as regards all the mental states of all human beings. God knows *that* Paula is sad or *that* Jerome is disgusted. But it seems that with respect to human persons, God cannot have empathy or the mind-reading kind of knowledge. And so it seems that one kind of intimate presence between persons, prized by human beings, is not possible for God to have with respect to human persons.

When Paula has empathy with Jerome, she feels within herself what Jerome feels. But in virtue of having no body, God has no feelings either. This is the point of the scholastic doctrine that God is impassible. Strictly speaking, a *passio,* which is the thing an *impassible* God does not have, is a feeling; and a feeling at least includes bodily sensations. Nothing immaterial can have bodily sensations, and so immaterial God has no feelings either, in this sense of 'feeling'. (This claim is very different from

[20] The doctrine of simplicity complicates any attribution to God, so that God's knowledge of truths may need to be explained in a way only analogical to human propositional knowledge.

the claim with which it is often confused, namely, the theologically unacceptable claim that God has no emotions.)

Mind-reading extends to more than knowledge of the feelings of another person, but all mind-reading is like empathy in having a shared character and a qualitative feel. When Paula mind-reads Jerome, she shares something of Jerome's mental state in virtue of somehow feeling that mental state in herself. A mental state that is Jerome's is somehow also Paula's and felt by Paula, except that Paula experiences it as Jerome's, rather than as her own. Paula knows Jerome's intention to hit her, say, because her mirror neuron system forms the neural pattern it would form if *Paula* were going to move her arm to hit someone; and so, by feeling it within herself, she knows Jerome's intention to hit. An immaterial God cannot form an intention to move his arm to hit, however, because he has no arm to move. And so although God can know *that* Jerome intends to hit Paula, it seems that he cannot mind-read Jerome's intention in the direct and intuitive way Paula can.

And the point generalizes. A human psyche is too small and God's mind is too great, one might say, for God to contain human mental states within himself in the shared way the mirror neuron system enables as between human beings. And so, it seems, the sharing and the presence that is the hallmark of the knowledge of persons is ruled out for God.

But appearances are misleading here. In this respect, Christianity has special resources because of the doctrine that God became incarnate in Christ. The Chalcedonian formula for the incarnate Christ stipulates that Christ is one person with two natures. The one person is the second person of the Trinity and is thus God, and the two natures are the divine and the human. It is one of the consequences of the Chalcedonian formula that there are in Christ two minds, one human and one divine, but only one person – a divine person – who is the possessor of these two minds.[21] The far-ranging and significant implications of the Chalcedonian formula can be seen by thinking about suffering and death. When Christ suffers and dies, he does so in the human nature of Jesus; but the person suffering and dying is God. So, while it is theologically correct to say that God

[21] Some people might suppose that this description of Christ is incoherent and that philosophical reason can demonstrate that there could be nothing meeting this description. In Stump 2003, Chapter 14, I have examined the doctrine of the incarnation and attempted to defend it against at least some of the major arguments meant to show its incoherence.

cannot suffer or die in his divine nature, it is not theologically correct to say that God cannot suffer or die. On the Chalcedonian formula, and validated by later theology, it is theologically correct to say that God suffers and that God dies. God can do both, in the human nature he assumed.

Furthermore, on the doctrine of eternity, God's having an assumed human nature is not something true of God at some times but not at others. It is something characteristic of God always in the limitless eternal *now*. So, on the doctrine of eternity, God is never in the state of not having an assumed human nature.[22] For this reason, the human capacity for suffering is something that is never not characteristic of God, in the human nature whose assumption is never absent from God.

For these reasons, God can have empathy with human persons and can also mind-read them, since he can use the human mind of the assumed human nature to know human persons in the knowledge of persons way. He can therefore also be present with human persons in this way.

Furthermore, although it is part of orthodox doctrine that in Christ the two natures do not mingle, nonetheless, in virtue of the fact that only one person has these natures, and that one person is divine, Christ can act in such a way as to use elements of both natures in his actions. Even while acting in his human nature, Christ can use powers that are beyond the merely human and that are available to him only through his divine nature. For example, acting in his capacity as a human being, Christ does miracles; but he is able to do them because in his human actions he can harness the divine power over nature.

In the same sort of way, in his human nature, Christ can mind-read in ways not possible for mere human persons. When he does, it is the human nature doing the mind-reading; but the person doing the mind-reading is divine and has access to divine power. So Christ has the ability to mind-read human beings deeply, or even miraculously, in a way that human persons otherwise could not do.[23]

In fact, since God is present to every time and space, Christ can use his human mind and the power of his divine nature to mind-read at

[22] To say this is, of course, not the same as saying that God's becoming incarnate is necessary to him. For Aquinas, for example, God's eternity and immutability are compatible with God's ability to do otherwise than God does.

[23] For one example, see the episode of the woman at the well (John 4:5-29).

once the entire minds of all human beings at every time and space. To do so, Christ has to be willing to open himself up simultaneously to every human psyche. When he does so, then at that time all the mental states of all human beings will flood his mind, through the extended powers provided by his divine nature. In that opening to all human psyches, every evil emotion and intention ever had by any human being will then be in the human mind of Christ, too, through the divinely empowered extended human capacity for mind-reading.

The idea that Christ opens himself at once to this kind of spectacular and no doubt harrowing mind-reading is one way of understanding the traditional, scripturally based claim that on the cross Christ bore the sins of all humankind. On this way of interpreting that scriptural claim, the power of God gives the human mind of Christ the more than human power of feeling within himself at one and the same time the minds of all human persons, with all their sins.[24]

So, the Chalcedonian formula for the incarnate Christ gives a way of explaining and defending God's knowledge of persons through mind-reading and the presence with persons mind-reading enables. Through the human mind of Christ, God can mind-read other human beings. And if the mind-reading of Christ can occur in miraculous ways, employing the power of God to extend greatly the ordinary human capacity for mind-reading, then God can have at once the unilateral personal presence brought about in empathy and mind-reading with respect to all human persons.

SECOND-PERSONAL PRESENCE: UNION IN LOVE AND INDWELLING

The kind of presence God can have with all human persons in consequence of the incarnation falls short of the second-personal presence obtaining between persons united in love, however. When Christ mind-reads miraculously, he does so because of the power of his divinely enhanced human capacity for mind-reading. But this kind of mind-reading is unilateral, not mutual. And so there is an asymmetry that limits personal presence.

[24] I have described in detail what such an experience would be, and I have argued that it could give rise to the cry of dereliction from the cross in 'Atonement and the Cry of Dereliction from the Cross', *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 4.1 (Spring 2012), 1-17.

It is part of Christian doctrine, however, that when a person Paula comes to faith, she opens herself up to God in love. In an act of free will that is part of faith, Paula accepts God's grace and begins a relation of mutual love with God. In entering into this relationship, Paula accepts not only God's grace but also God himself.

When Paula comes to faith in this way, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in her. However exactly it is to be understood, on the theological claims involving the Holy Spirit, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit puts the mind of God within Paula's psyche, in some sense. Because of this strong bond, the mutual relationship of love yields maximal second-personal presence of God to Paula.

The indwelling Holy Spirit is a common topic of Christian theology,[25] but it is actually not easy to specify what this indwelling comes to. We can start by saying what it is not. God's indwelling in Paula is not merely a matter of God's having direct and immediate causal and cognitive access to Paula's mind. God has this kind of access to the mind of every human being, both with regard to propositional knowledge and also with regard to mind-reading. For every person, it is possible for God to know the mind of that person with direct and unmediated cognition; it is also possible for God to communicate in a direct and unmediated way with the mind of that person. And if the interpretation given above of Christ's mind-reading is accepted, then God also has the knowledge of persons with regard to all human beings, too. So these kinds of relation between God and human beings hold for every human person. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, however, is found only in those people who have faith and love of God.

God's indwelling unites God and a human person in love, and so we might try understanding indwelling as an analogue to the psychic relation between human persons who are united in love. The psychic relation between mutually loving human beings is a particularly intimate kind of mind-reading accompanied by shared attention between persons when those persons are mutually close to each other.[26] But this approach to explaining the indwelling of the Holy Spirit is not quite right either. The indwelling of the Holy Spirit is meant to be something ontologically more powerful than mutual closeness accompanied by shared attention.

[25] For a helpful discussion seeking to explain the effects of the indwelling Holy Spirit, see Aquinas's *SCG* IV. 21-22.

[26] For discussion and defence of this claim, see Stump 2010, Chapter 6.

In the Holy Spirit's indwelling, God himself is somehow within each person of faith. Although, as I explained above, immaterial God cannot be contained within a material container, God's omnipresence does include his being somehow within the psyches of those who have faith.

In this connection, it helps to return to Gallese's attempt to describe the kind of cognition that mind-reading is. When Paula mind-reads Jerome's intention to hit her, for example, her mind goes into the configuration it would have if she were Jerome and preparing to hit. But this configuration is in Paula off-line, that is, not actually connected in an active way to her muscles. She has the motor configuration for hitting, but on her part no hitting occurs. So, the configuration of Jerome's intention is in Paula; and because it is, it is Paula's; but it is in Paula as Jerome's intention, and not as hers. This complicated state is what Gallese is trying to describe when he says that there is a 'we-centric' part of the human brain that enables a real sharing of mental states.

Gallese is talking about brain systems in order to make a point about mental states. Aquinas makes a very roughly analogous point about the mechanisms of cognition. For Aquinas, when a person Paula sees an object, such as a coffee cup, the configuration or form inhering in the cup which makes the matter of the cup be a cup is transferred to Paula's mind. The form that is in the cup is then also in Paula's mind, only in an encoded state. Or, as we might say, the configuration of the cup is transferred through a certain pattern of firing by Paula's retinal cells to Paula's visual cortex. In theory, it would be possible for a competent neuroscientist, who understands the neural coding involved, to look at the configuration in Paula's visual cortex and infer correctly that what is impacting her visual cortex is a cup. So, in some sense, the configuration of the cup is in both the cup and Paula, only in differing ways. Analogously, when Paula mind-reads Jerome's intention, there is a form or configuration in Jerome's brain that is found also in Paula's. She mind-reads him because she shares this form or configuration with him. The same configuration is in each of them, only differently insofar as it is off-line in Paula.[27]

Furthermore, although the configuration of the cup is really in Paula's mind when she sees the cup, that configuration is processed in Paula in such a way that, without ceasing to be the form of the cup, the

[27] I am grateful to John Foley, who suggested to me this way of explaining the point and its usefulness for understanding the nature of God's indwelling in a person of faith.

configuration of the cup is encoded in Paula in such a way as to enable Paula to have cognition of the cup. Analogously, when the configuration of Jerome's intention is in Paula's mind, that configuration is in her mind in such a way as to enable Paula to have cognition of Jerome's intention, not hers. So, the configuration of Jerome's mind is in Jerome's mind and in Paula's at once, but Jerome feels it as his and Paula feels it as belonging to Jerome. It is possible, then, for a person Paula to have within herself, biologically and psychologically, something that is her own and yet also part of another person Jerome.

Furthermore, it is also possible for Paula to feel this dichotomy in a way that is subjectively accessible to her. Paula can consciously identify a mental state as within her own mind and yet somehow not hers but Jerome's. It is easiest to see this point in connection with empathy. If Paula sees Jerome impale his bare foot on a nail in the garden, she will wince with pain. So, something of Jerome's pain is in Paula; she winces because she feels it within herself. But even while she feels this pain in herself, she also is conscious that what she feels with pain is Jerome's pain and not her own. She is sharing with Jerome what is Jerome's.

Neurological research suggests that the brain has multiple systems for identifying parts of oneself as one's own – body parts, thoughts, and the self in general.[28] If there are brain systems enabling social cognition and intersubjectivity, by means of 'we-centric' space that enable shared mental states, there are also brain systems enabling the distinction between self and other. When something goes wrong with these latter brain systems, dysfunctional mental conditions can result. For example, in consequence of an injury, a patient can suffer the delusion that some part of his body is not his own.[29] In the view of some researchers, the psychological delusion of thought intrusion is yet another result of the malfunctioning of these brain systems.[30]

---

[28] As recent work in metaphysics highlights, there are also criteria for determining that a person's mind is his own, that it belongs to him, in ways hard to specify with precision, but crucial for issues of moral responsibility and freedom of will. For a discussion of some of the issues, see, for example, my 'Persons: Identification and Freedom', *Philosophical Topics*, 24 (1996), 183-214.

[29] For a vivid and popular description of such a case, see Oliver Sacks, *A Leg to Stand On* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984).

[30] In Fregoli's syndrome, a patient has the intractable delusion that he knows familiar people when he looks at the faces of strangers. In Capgras syndrome, a patient has the intractable delusion that he does not know the people he is looking at when he looks at the faces of persons who are in fact familiar to him. For discussion of such syndromes,

Because of the systems of the human brain for recognizing some mental states as one's own, it is also possible for a person Jerome to have a sense of the mind operative in him as not his own but someone else's.[31] In a case of this sort, the intersubjectivity of mental states enabled by the mirror neuron system and evident in mind-reading transforms from a mere psychological sharing to something that is ontological. What is in Jerome's mind is not just another person's thought or affect, but in fact that other person's mind. 'Indwelling' is not a bad word for this kind of relationship between minds. It does seem appropriate to say that in such a case the other person's mind indwells Jerome's mind.

Science fiction is replete with stories in which malevolent non-human beings indwell a human mind;[32] and folklore has sometimes tended to explain certain kinds of mental illness along the same lines.[33] Stories about such cases are frightening and revulsive because the indwelling mind invades the mind of the human person, against his will or at least without his consent. Typically, in such cases, the invader has only hatred and contempt for its human victim.

---

see, for example, Sandra Blakeslee and Vilayandur Ramachandran, *Phantoms in the Brain* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005), chapter 8. Both Fregoli's syndrome and Capgras syndrome are a kind of loss, after neurological damage, of the capacity to know something *as* the thing it is. Although these syndromes have been described largely as they affect the knowledge of persons, there are also reported cases in which the lost capacity extends to the knowledge of familiar things other than persons. So, for example, some researchers describe 'a patient who claimed his actual home was not his "real" home, although he recognized that the facsimile home has the same ornaments and bedside items as the original' (Todd Feinberg, John Deluca, Joseph T. Giacino, David M. Roane, and Mark Solms, 'Right-Hemisphere Pathology and the Self: Delusional Misidentification and Reduplication', in Todd Feinberg and Julian Paul Keenan (eds.), *The Lost Self: Pathologies of the Brain and Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 103; see also pp. 105-106 and pp. 114-125).

[31] Because this is so, it is a common conceit of science fiction that the mind of one sentient creature can be within the mind of another one. The two minds can interact within the mind of one person, without either mind losing its identity. In the science fiction literature depicting a human being in such a condition, the indwelling mind is typically that of an alien. The alien is generally portrayed as smarter and more powerful than the human being his mind indwells. But in addition the alien mind is depicted as invading the human mind, entering it without the consent of the human being in question; and the alien's purpose is typically either indifferent to the welfare of the human being or actively malevolent towards him.

[32] Robert Heinlein's *The Puppetmasters* is an example.

[33] If one googles 'schizophrenia and demon possession', one will find that this sort of belief is still prevalent in some communities today.

On the other hand, when two people Paula and Jerome are psychically united to one another in love, the interweaving of their psyches occurs only with the willingness of each to each. Paula's psyche is open to Jerome's because Paula wants it to be, and the same is true of Jerome's psyche with respect to Paula. The resulting mutual openness is wanted by each of them; and when they have it, it yields gladness and peace. Furthermore, insofar as they love each other, each of them wishes for the good of the other. And so the vulnerability of the openness of love is acceptable to each of them, because of the trust each is rightly willing to place in the other.[34] Stories of two people united to each other in mutual love in this way are a staple of romantic stories, though, of course, mutual love of this compelling human kind is found across a broad range of human relationships. Depictions of human persons united in love in a variety of relationships is a perennial theme in great literature, and hardly anyone is completely immune to its attractions.

In the fullest expression of such uniting in love between Paula and Jerome, each of them is as second-personally present to the other as is possible between two human beings. But an even more powerful second-personal presence to a person is possible for God in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit requires welcome on the part of the human person in the relationship. When a person comes to faith and accepts God's grace in love, then and only then the Holy Spirit comes to indwell in the human mind of that person. The Holy Spirit is freely accepted by that person, and the union between them is characterized by mutual love, freely given and freely accepted.

In this union, what is within the psyche of a human person Jerome is not just the thoughts and intentions of God, but God himself. Nonetheless, nothing of Jerome's own individual personhood is lost in the process. Jerome's mind remains his own, and his awareness of his mind as his own also remains. Nonetheless, when the Holy Spirit indwells in his mind, Jerome will be aware of the Spirit's mind within his own.

[34] It might need to be said that it is possible for two people to love each other but not to be united in that love. They might instead love each other in ways that are conflicted or mutually self-destructive. But in those cases they are not united to each other, not least because each of them, in being conflicted, is divided against himself. For a discussion of such cases, see Stump 2010, Chapter 6.

In consequence, Jerome will have as present as possible, within himself, the God who is his beloved. That is why the list of the fruits of this union begins with love, joy, and peace – love, because his beloved, who loves him, is present to him; joy, because of the dynamic interaction with his beloved, who is present to him in second-personal ways; and peace, because his heart already has what it most desires, his beloved, present to him.[35]

And so in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God is present to a person of faith with maximal second-personal presence, surpassing even the presence possible between two human persons united in mutual love. It is a union that makes the two of them one without merging one into the other or in any other way depriving the human person of his own mind and self.

CONCLUSION

So if we think about the notion of presence in all its richness, we can see that a simple consideration of God's relation to space alone is insufficient to elucidate God's omnipresence. God's omnipresence is a matter of God's relations to space all right, but to all space at all times at once, because omnipresence is an attribute of an eternal God. More importantly, because God has a mind and a will, it is possible for God to be not just present at a space but also present with and to a person. The assumption of a human nature ensures that an eternal God is never without the ability to empathize with human persons and to be present with them in the way mind-reading enables. And, in the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, God can be more powerfully present in love to a human person who loves him than any human person could be.

What it is to be omnipresent, then, is to be present in every way to everything as much as eternal divine power permits and love allows.[36]

---

[35] For an excellent discussion of this subject in connection with Aquinas's ethics, see Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas's Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012), especially chapter 4, in which Pinsent likens the fruition of second-person relatedness, an 'abiding in' the other, to a state of resonance.

[36] I am grateful to Andrew Pinsent for helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Blakeslee, Sandra, and Vilayandur Ramachandran, *Phantoms in the Brain* (London: Harper Perennial, 2005)

Feinberg, Todd, John Deluca, Joseph T. Giacino, David M. Roane, and Mark Solms, 'Right-Hemisphere Pathology and the Self: Delusional Misidentification and Reduplication', in Todd Feinberg and Julian Paul Keenan, eds., *The Lost Self: Pathologies of the Brain and Identity* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 100-130

Gallagher, Shaun, 'Neural Simulation and Social Cognition', in Jamie Pineda, ed., *Mirror Neuron Systems: The Role of Mirroring Processes in Social Cognition* (New York: Springer, 2009), pp. 355-372

Gallese, Vittorio, '"Being Like Me": Self-Other Identity, Mirror Neurons, and Empathy', in Susan Hurley and Nick Chater, eds., *Perspectives on Imitation: From Neuroscience to Social Science* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 2005), pp. 101-118

Goldman Alvin, 'Mirroring, Mindreading, and Simulation', in Jamie Pineda, ed., *Mirror Neuron Systems: The Role of Mirroring Processes in Social Cognition* (New York: Springer, 2009), pp. 311-330

Goldman Alvin, 'Two Routes to Empathy: Insights from Cognitive Neuroscience', in Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie, eds., *Empathy: Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 31-44

Hudson, Hud, 'Omnipresence', in Thomas P. Flint and Michael C. Rea, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Philosophical Theology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009), pp. 199-216

Peacocke, Christopher, 'Joint Attention: Its Nature, Reflexivity, and Relation to Common Knowledge', in Naomi Eilan, Christoph Hoerl, Teresa McCormack, and Johannes Roessler, eds., *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 298-324

Pinsent, Andrew, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas's Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (London and New York: Routledge, 2012)

Reddy, Vasudevi, *How Infants Know Minds* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2008)

Sacks, Oliver, *A Leg to Stand On* (New York: Harper and Row, 1984)

Stump, Eleonore, 'Atonement and the Cry of Dereliction from the Cross', *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 4.1 (Spring 2012), 1-17

Stump, Eleonore, *Aquinas* (London and New York: Routledge, 2003)

Stump, Eleonore, 'The Nature of a Simple God', *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly,* forthcoming

Stump, Eleonore, 'The Openness of God: Eternity and Free Will', in Ben Arbour, ed., (Routledge, forthcoming)

Stump, Eleonore, 'Persons: Identification and Freedom', *Philosophical Topics* 24 (1996), 183-214

Stump, Eleonore, 'Simplicity and Aquinas's Quantum Metaphysics', in Gerhard Krieger, ed., *Die Metaphysik des Aristoteles im Mittelalter – Rezeption und Transformation* (Stuttgart: Steiner, forthcoming)

Stump, Eleonore, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Stump, Eleonore, and Norman Kretzmann, 'Eternity, Awareness, and Action', *Faith and Philosophy*, 9 (1992), 463–82

SEEING PEOPLE AND KNOWING YOU: PERCEPTION, SHARED KNOWLEDGE, AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

STINA BÄCKSTRÖM

Åbo Akademi University

Abstract. This article takes up the proposal that action and expression enable perceptual knowledge of other minds, a proposal that runs counter to a tradition of thinking that other minds are special in that they are essentially unobservable. I argue that even if we accept this proposal regarding perceptual knowledge, there is still a difference between knowing another person and knowing other things. I articulate this difference by pointing out that I can know another person by sharing knowledge with her. Such sharing is expressed in the use of the second-person pronoun. Thus, I argue, other minds are indeed special as objects of knowledge, but not in the way the tradition has supposed.

I. INTRODUCTION

Consider a non-verbal, facial expression of emotion, such as Peter's joyful smile as he plays with his newborn baby. Such an expression enables *knowledge* of Peter's state of mind; by seeing the smile on Peter's face, a suitably equipped person can come to know that Peter is enjoying playing with his baby. In the epistemological tradition (in particular in its empiricist strand), knowledge of another person's thoughts or feelings has been taken to constitute a problem separate from knowledge of the external world: one that remains to be solved even if we manage to properly account for and vindicate our knowledge of the external world generally. In according the so-called 'problem of other minds' such a special status, the thought that we don't literally *experience, see, or observe* another person's state of mind has been an important assumption. On this

assumption, whatever kind of knowledge an expression such as Peter's smile can yield, it cannot be perceptual or observational knowledge.[1]

This assumption also has a long history of being questioned. Recently, we find people who oppose this tradition of thinking about the epistemology of other minds and directly challenge its supporting assumption by claiming that *actions* and *expressions* of mental states precisely enable perceptual knowledge of the minds of others. Now, I will argue that the claim that actions and expressions can afford perceptual knowledge of other minds needs to be coupled with an acknowledgment of a difference between perceptual knowledge gained from seeing a person's action or facial expression, and perceptual knowledge of other kinds of object. I want to resist the assimilation of knowledge of other minds to knowledge of the external world generally.

The tradition has it that other minds present their own epistemological conundrum. I want to articulate what I take to be an insight in this tradition, while not preserving the central thesis of the tradition. I join recent authors in rejecting the assumption that we cannot see, observe, or experience the mental states of others, but I shall argue that this is not the end of the story. There is nevertheless something special about knowing another person's state of mind by seeing him perform intentional actions or express his states of mind, such as seeing Peter's delight in his face.

What is special, I will suggest, is that perceiving another person's action or expression opens a person up to a form of knowledge which is not simply one-sided, but mutual or shared. Such knowledge is manifested by utterances in the second-person form, such as 'You're really enjoying this, aren't you?' When I know what someone is thinking or feeling on the basis of his expressions – such as when I know that Peter is enjoying playing with his baby from seeing his happy smile – this judgment contains the basis for me to address Peter (as 'you') and thereby shift my knowledge of him into a new register. This new register is what I'm interested in outlining in this paper. My suggestion will be that knowledge from action or expression is a first step towards a *meeting of minds*; it is not *merely* one mind's encounter with an object of knowledge.

[1] In this paper I will not make a distinction between perceptual and observational knowledge. I will, rather, treat these notions as equivalent.

II. WE CAN OBSERVE OTHER MINDS: ACTION AND EXPRESSION

The thought that the minds of others are essentially unobservable is a recurring theme in the epistemological tradition, especially within empiricist epistemology. Other minds are not observed but rather inferred, is the slogan. We see this notion in Russell's *Human Knowledge – Its Scope and Limits*, where he, embracing the classical argument from analogy, says that,

> The behaviour of other people is in many ways analogous to our own, and we suppose that it must have analogous causes. What people say is what we should say if we had certain thoughts, and so we infer that they probably have these thoughts. (Russell 1948: 501-502)

A similar and more recent formulation can be found in Paul Churchland's *Matter and Consciousness*, where he says,

> It is of course by observing a creature's behavior, including its verbal behavior, that we judge it to be a conscious, thinking creature – to be 'another mind'. From bodily damage and moaning, we infer pain. From smiles and laughter, we infer joy. From the dodging of a snowball, we infer perception. (Churchland 1988: 67)

We also find this theme as a theoretical assumption in empirical psychology – it figures as a prominent motivation in J.B. Watson's (1925) seminal case for behaviourism as the only viable method for a scientific psychology; and it reverberates in the prominent contemporary idea that thoughts about the minds of others form a theory, a so called 'theory of mind'. At the core of this concept is the thought that mental states figure as theoretical postulates in an evolving theory for explaining overt behaviour.[2]

The idea that other minds are essentially unobservable is, however, far from universally accepted. G.E.M. Anscombe famously claimed that we can see people's actions. Very early on in her *Intention*, Anscombe says,

> I am sitting in a chair writing, and anyone grown to the age of reason in the same world would know this as soon as he saw me, and in general it would be his first account of what I was doing; if this were something he arrived at with difficulty, and what he knew straight off was how I was affecting the acoustic properties of the room (to me a very recondite piece of information), then communication between us would be rather severely impaired. (Anscombe 1957: 8)

[2] See Davies and Martin 1995 for an introduction to this concept.

Anscombe's thought in this passage is that when asked to describe what another person is doing, the first description that will come to mind is (at least in many cases) in terms of what the person is *intentionally* doing. There is an open-ended number of things Anscombe could truly have been described as doing at that moment; 'affecting the acoustic properties of the room' is one such description. This would not be a description under which what she's doing is intentional, to use Anscombe's own phrase. 'Sitting in a chair writing', however, is such a description; and it is, on her view, also what most people would say that she was doing just from seeing her. Anscombe, then, claims that people's actions are a part of the observable world.

Now, when we describe what people are intentionally doing, are we describing aspects of their minds? Jennifer Hornsby, a philosopher building on Anscombe, argues that the answer is yes. She says that 'one is not in a position to take a view of which things are intentionally done by people unless one has some view of their mental states' (Hornsby 1997: 127). The idea here is that a description of a person's intentional action (a description under which the action is intentional), such as 'Peter is doing the dishes' or 'Sara is practicing her guitar skills', is not a description that is neutral with respect to how the person conceives of her situation and what her goals are in the situation. Making a judgment to the effect that 'Sara is practicing her guitar skills' is to be committed to Sara's having certain psychological properties: primarily the psychological property of taking herself to be practicing the guitar.

The quote from Hornsby does not present a complete argument for the observability of mental states. It just states a conditional: If we see what people are intentionally doing, then we see aspects of their minds. A traditionally minded epistemologist could just use the conditional to deny that we see intentional actions. That is, she could say that given that we don't see psychological properties, we cannot see actions either. She could advance the suggestion that a judgment such as 'Sara is practicing her guitar skills' ought to be thought of as having two components corresponding to two different sources: one is the direct perception of Sara's bodily movements – perceived as it were *purely*, not under any psychological aspects or presupposing psychological concepts – the other is a thought about the origin of those bodily movements based on an inference from those bodily movements to the representations and aims that might have produced them.

This two-component picture of our thoughts about the actions of other people is powerful, and I do not aim to provide a convincing argument against it here. My aim here is not to argue for the perceptibility of other minds. But one thing to note is that the epistemological assumption – under the pressure of Anscombe and Hornsby's supposition that we do see people doing things and thus see how they represent the world – has now taken on the shape of a substantive philosophical thesis about what it is that we *really* see, and what we then can make of what we see. It is no longer a self-evident starting point. This thesis can then be contested both by questioning whether pure bodily movements are actually within the range of things people can see, and if they are, whether such perceptions would give us any basis for supposing that the movements have the specific mental origins that we take them to have.[3]

Another area where the traditional assumption has been questioned recently is with respect to *expressions,* in particular emotional expressions.[4] Expressions of emotions make, according to some contemporary authors, the mental states they are expressions of perceptible. Such a view is put forward by Mitchell S. Green in the monograph *Self-Expression* from 2007. There he points out that,

> [We] often suppose not just that we can determine *that* a person is in a particular state of feeling; we also take ourselves to be capable of observing those feelings with one or more of our senses. We *see* the elation spread over one person's face as they comprehend the excellent news; we *hear* the impatience in another person's voice as they try to correct our misunderstanding; we *feel* the exuberance in a friend's robust handshake. (Green 2007: 24)

Similarly to the claims I quoted from Anscombe and Hornsby, these observations are not yet complete arguments against the traditional epistemological assumption. They merely point out that we seem, at least in some situations, not to care much for this assumption in the way

[3] See the same essay from Hornsby (1997: 93-111) for a critical discussion of the appeal to bodily movements in the epistemology of other minds.

[4] Not all expressions, it is plausible to think, are intentional actions. Think about a spontaneous outburst of laughter or a sudden grimace in response to a revolting smell; such things don't seem to be done on purpose. Hence it is another area, rather than a subset of the first. One could in fact argue that expression should be thought of as the broader category that encompasses intentional actions. For a suggestion in this direction, see Finkelstein 1999: 92.

we ordinarily describe our cognitive grasp on other people's thoughts and feelings.

Green offers a framework for fleshing out these observations (and thereby, as I understand him, to begin to vindicate them). He thinks that we can observe another person's emotion in its expression by that expression being a part of the emotion it expresses. Just as the facing side of an apple – being a part of the apple – enables a person to perceive (not just the facing side of the apple, but) the apple, a smile, being a part of an emotion of happiness, enables a perceiver to see that someone is happy. Green says,

> Someone who presents to me an apple from one angle has thereby shown me an apple even if I do not inspect its interior or its other side. The reason is that a sufficiently large portion of a side of an apple is, for normal human observers, not only itself perceptible but also a characteristic component of the apple. (Green 2007: 86)

If we're in the spirit of worrying about our access to other minds, we will find this analogy troublesome. An apple is a thing, and we can take a look at its other side or 'inspect its interior' should we please. But if we think of an emotion as a thing, and its expression as a part of this thing, we appear to be barred in principle from seeing its other parts (the parts that might seem to be the most essential). And we might then be inclined to re-iterate the traditional worry: don't we somehow have to base our knowledge on an inference from the part that we do see, to the other parts that we can't in principle see?[5]

But perhaps we don't need Green's particular version of the thought that we see emotions, if we find the analogy at its base unpalatable. An alternative image is provided by Rowland Stout, in an article where he invokes the idea of an Aristotelian process in order to articulate how an expression can make an emotion visible. His thought is that an expression is an actualization of a power, a process which realizes the emotion. He says,

[5] Green is not moved by this worry. He concedes that we cannot see all parts of an emotion, but that this is in fact not peculiar to the case of emotions. We can see galaxies, Green argues, even when we cannot in principle perceive the black hole in their middle. (Green 2007: 89) But a galaxy is a quite special 'perceptible object' and it is difficult to feel that it can provide the assurance we need. If people are like galaxies and their minds the unobservable black holes at their centres, knowing them appears to be a quite sophisticated and theoretically laden matter.

> The mental state is the disposition, potentiality, mechanism or power. It is realised, actualised or manifested in a process of facial expression or other behaviour. What is perceived is not just the upshot of the process, but the process itself; you see the emotion playing out in someone's face. This is like perceiving someone's strength in their handshake. Their strength causes the firmness of grip but it is not some prior event or state that has to be inferred from it. The strength is present in the handshake. The cause is manifest in its effect. (Stout 2011: 137)

Stout argues that thinking of the expression of an emotion in terms a process of realization of a power can make proper sense of the thought that we can perceive emotions in their expressions. For the expression is now not conceived of as a thing or event, separable from the event of the emotion. Neither is it thought of as a part of a composite thing or event. Rather, the expression is thought of as a stage in a process which *is* the emotion, being realized.[6] This strikes me as a prima facie more appealing picture than Green's of how it is that we can see another person's emotion in its expression. But it requires that we accept that an emotion is a disposition and an expression its actualization; a thought we might find it difficult to swallow.

It is, however, also possible to reject the question that both Green and Stout appear to feel the need to answer: what is the metaphysics of mental states and behaviour such that we can see the former in the latter? We can argue that the thought that we can sometimes see what another person is, say, intending or feeling, can get traction without any general view of the nature of mental states and behaviour. All we need, from the perspective I'm now considering, is the thought that mental concepts are bound up with circumstances in our shared world. And in learning to use those concepts, facts about people's intentions and feelings come within the reach of our conceptually informed experience. No metaphysical account of the relation between mental states and behaviour – of the sort articulated in Green's idea that expressions are parts of emotions or Stout's idea that emotions are dispositions realized in behaviour – is then required. This would be to think of expressions and actions as conceptually related to states of mind, but not necessarily in the simple

[6] To fully make sense of the thought that expressions make emotions perceivable, Stout thinks we need to couple the thesis that the expression of an emotion is a process with the idea that acts of perceiving likewise are processes.

or uniform manner suitable for a general account. Arguably this is, in outline, the view of the later Wittgenstein.[7]

The traditional epistemological assumption that other minds cannot be observed has, then, alternatives.[8] The question is whether accepting such an alternative also means that we have to give up the traditional idea that knowledge of other minds is special. If we embrace the idea that other minds are indeed a part of our common, shared, and observable world, does this mean that knowledge of another person is just like knowledge of the movements of the clouds in the sky, the process of a tree falling to the ground, or the currents of rivers? I think the answer is no, and I will spend the rest of the paper explaining why. I will argue that seeing people's actions and expressions, and thereby coming to know something about their minds, contains within itself the possibility of a form of knowledge that is different from perceptual knowledge of falling trees. This form of knowledge is radically peculiar to knowing another person.

III. ACTION AND EXPRESSION AS ENABLING A COGNITIVE RELATION TO THE PERSON

Imagine the following reaction to the preceding discussion about whether or not we can see other minds:

> It is quite beside the point whether or not we can see other minds. The knowledge we gain from observing people and collecting facts about them is anyway not exemplary of what it means to know another person. To have 'access to another mind' does not mean to know something about a person, such as, 'This person is happy' or 'That person intends to move a heavy table'. It means, rather, to have access to *the person,* of the sort we have when we're speaking to the person and understanding what they are saying. If we are interested in what it means to know another

[7] I do not intend this list of options for thinking about the perceptibility of other minds to be exhaustive. There is also, for instance, the entire phenomenological tradition and its ways of articulating this thought.

[8] We should be careful not to confuse the claim that it is possible to see what others are intentionally doing or what emotion they are expressing, with the thought that it is always easy to do so. It is often a quite difficult matter. The point is, rather, that when it is difficult to figure out another person's intention or feeling, say, what we have to go on in trying to interpret them is not psychologically neutral information about their bodily movements.

> mind, we should focus on describing what it is for two people to have access to each other in this sense. The debate about seeing or not seeing other minds is a red herring.

The aim of this section and the next is to elaborate this reaction (inchoate as it stands), and argue that, properly understood, we should take its suggestion to heart. I will do so first with the aid of a recent essay by Michael Thompson, and in the next section by turning to Stanley Cavell's notion of acknowledgment.

I start by quoting Thompson:

> One human being comes upon another and perceives her doing something, or observes her at it – he is setting up a camera, she is crossing a road, he is moving a pump handle. The enquirer knows by perception, by an intuition or *Anschauung* of the other as other, by observation of her, that the agent is setting up a camera or is crossing a road.
>
> [...] In the first instance this empirical knowledge is demonstrative and third person in character. But the difference between the observer's observational thought in the case at hand, and his thought in other cases of observed things happening, like trees falling down, comes next. The observer moves into what we might call a cognitive relation with the agent herself and asks her why she's doing it. He does not do this with falling trees. The mark of this cognitive relation is the use of the second-person, 'Why are *you* doing A?' That he addresses himself to the observed individual substance is already a clue that something is different. (Thompson 2011: 206)

The topic of this passage from Thompson is knowledge of another person's intentional actions. I want to highlight three claims he makes in it.

(1) Intentional actions can be known observationally.
(2) There's still a difference between an observational thought about someone's action and an observational thought about, say, a falling tree.
(3) The difference is that an observational thought about someone's intentional action contains the possibility of entering into a cognitive relation with the agent herself, a cognitive relation the mark of which is the use of the second-person 'you'. In asking the person 'Why are you moving the pump handle up and down?' we show that have entered into a cognitive relation to the person.

The first claim is simply an endorsement of the Anscombe/Hornsby view described above: we can perceive people's actions. The second claim is that this is not all there is to our knowledge of another person's actions. The third claim describes the difference, and it is on that claim I want to focus. For understanding the third claim, the key phrase is 'enter into a cognitive relation with the person'. This cannot simply mean to come to *know something about* the person. We have *that* kind of cognitive relation to the falling tree as well. And this kind of cognitive relation was supposed to be different. So what could it mean?

Thompson doesn't directly state in this paper what he means by this phrase. But what he does say gives us a clue: The mark of this relation is a second-person address: 'Why are *you* doing A?' What is special about a second-person address? One feature of this form of speech is that it is directed at a specific person, and it invites this person to communicate. It does so with the presupposition that the person is in a position to recognize this invitation and respond to it appropriately. We might, then, conjecture that the cognitive relation with the agent Thompson has in mind here is one where, in the first instance, knowledge is somehow mutual or shared. In using 'you' in a question about what someone is doing, I both reveal to the person addressed what I already know about what that person is doing, and I invite the person to share with me something I do not yet know.

To have shared knowledge, on the way I want to use the phrase, is for two people mutually to recognize a piece of knowledge, and recognize it precisely as a mutual piece of knowledge. If you and I share a piece of knowledge, I know that you know, you know that I know, we both know that we both know that we know, etc. Using 'you' in an interrogative is to invite shared knowledge that has precisely this structure. But there's something else that pertains to the cognitive relation to the agent Thompson is concerned with. The question 'Why are *you* moving the pump handle up and down?' is addressed to the person as an *agent*, not as another *observer*.

What does this mean then? It has to do with the fact that we expect the person to answer not by gathering observational information, or by submitting observational information already gathered. The expectation is that the person already knows the answer to this question, and does so *not* by observation. Hence the shared knowledge prompted by the question 'Why are you moving the pump handle up and down' is different from the shared knowledge enabled by the question 'Hey you, why is that

tree falling down?' (Unless, perhaps, the tree is a part of the scenography for a play, the addressee is the scenographer, and is thus in charge of making sure the trees are positioned correctly.) Another way of putting this thought (that the expectation is that the addressee can answer the question without observation) is that the question is an invitation for the person to articulate her *self-conscious* knowledge.

Thompson's third claim was that the difference between an observational thought about a falling tree and an observational thought about a person's intentional action is that the latter contains the possibility of entering into a cognitive relation with the agent. This claim can, then, be glossed as the idea that the difference is that the observational thought in the case of the falling tree is not a first step towards shared knowledge where one person is articulating her self-conscious knowledge. I cannot share a piece of knowledge about the falling tree with the tree, and if I do share it with another person, I share it with the other person as another *observer.*[9]

Having arrived at this gloss on the claims from Thompson I'm interested in, I will suggest that the three claims he makes can be transposed from the case of seeing another person's intentional actions to the case of seeing another person's expressions. Think about the case of Peter's happy smile. If we go along with Green's and Stout's views, I can know that Peter is happy just from seeing his happy smile. And I might also see *why* he's happy, such as when he is joyfully smiling when he's playing with his newborn baby. But I might also *not* see why Peter is happy, such as when he is thinking to himself and suddenly smiles. And in such a case, I do well to ask Peter, 'Why are you so happy' or 'What are you smiling about?' In asking these questions I don't address Peter as a fellow observer, rather, I expect to be able to expand my knowledge of the situation just from receiving Peter's self-conscious articulation of what he's happy about. The second-person address is an invitation to Peter to articulate his state of mind, and *in this way* to share with me a piece of knowledge.

It is, of course, not the case that *all* expressions elicit a second-person address, and thus move to the stage of shared knowledge, rather than

[9] The point in stressing the linguistic address and response is not, as I understand it, to claim that shared knowledge needs to be actually verbally articulated in each case. A mutual look might in a situation suffice to establish shared knowledge. The point, rather, is to claim that the knowledge is articul*able*. Therefore the cases where it is actually articulated are exemplary.

mere knowledge of a fact about the person. We usually don't address strangers in this way. But the reason why we don't is social and conventional. It would be unexpected and perhaps intrusive to ask a stranger laughing about something as you pass him in the street: 'What are you laughing about?', but it would be a *comprehensible* question. It would not be a comprehensible question, at least not if someone claimed to intend it as a real address, to ask a tree why it is falling. The fact that people's expressions can confront us with the question of whether our relation to the person is such as to warrant a second-person address is itself a significant datum. Faced with someone's expression we can ask ourselves: is this someone it is socially acceptable for me to address, is it someone I'm *expected to* address, or is it even someone I'm *obliged to* address (because not addressing the person would be insensitive or cold)? Falling trees are not eligible to be placed on the scale that ranges from the strangers to the intimates. (I will come back to this thought in the next section on Cavell.)

The thought, then, we get from transposing Thompson's claims to the realm of expressions is that when we come to know that someone is happy from seeing her happy smile, the thought: 'She's happy' is the first step to entering into a cognitive relation with the person. This is not the relation of a knower to an object known but of a knower to another knower, a person who has the capacity to self-consciously articulate her own states of mind. When we come to know that a tree is falling from seeing the falling tree, we are not in the first stage towards a cognitive relation of this kind with the tree. This, I think, tells us something significant both about expressions and about knowledge of other minds.

If expressions can yield perceptual knowledge of another mind, this piece of knowledge, by contrast with perceptual knowledge of other things, contains within itself the possibility of a second-person address – a question using the second-person pronoun 'you'. A rash on one's arm makes one exposed as someone whose allergic reaction is there to be known. And a sneeze makes one exposed as someone whose cold is there to be known. But a joyous smile or a puzzled frown makes a person exposed as someone with knowledge to share.

IV. CAVELL AND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

According to the picture I've sketched, action and expression enable a cognitive relation to a person, and this is a type of knowledge crucially

different from merely knowing something about a thing (such as knowing that the tree is falling from seeing it fall). In describing this relation, with Thompson, as a *cognitive* relation, we should not be misled into thinking that this relation is devoid of emotional and practical significance. A puzzled frown makes someone exposed as someone who can be addressed with the question: 'What are you puzzled about?' but this question is, in the paradigmatic case, a *concerned* question. It is one that, say, signals recognition of a frustration and a preparedness to, if possible, provide an explanation of an unclear remark. (This is only an example; what people might want or need from another person in a situation where they are expressing their emotions is of course quite situation and person specific.) Stanley Cavell offers a concept for a cognitive relation to a person of the sort outlined in the previous section, namely *acknowledgment*, and he highlights its emotional and practical dimensions.

In his essay 'Knowing and Acknowledging', Cavell offers a reinterpretation of the problem of other minds in the form it takes within the analytic philosophical tradition. One result of his re-working of the problem is the thought that other minds are special not in that they are particularly difficult to know (because, say, their properties are perpetually hidden from view), but in that the knowledge we're primarily interested in when it comes to other minds is of a peculiar sort. Cavell calls this form of knowledge *acknowledgment*.[10]

Cavell's starting-point in this essay is slightly different from mine. I started by examining the assertion and denial of the claim that psychological features of people are a part of the public observable world. The issue he, on his part, spends most time on is the sceptical dialectic starting from the idea that we cannot have (or feel) another person's pain.[11] But his diagnosis of this dialectic can be of use for our

[10] This thought was, of course, not a 'new' thought in the history of philosophy. Arguably (by people more historically versed than I am), versions of it can be found in for instance Hegel and Fichte, and perhaps also in Levinas. But Cavell's aim in this essay is to diagnose a certain dialectic within the then current analytic philosophical discussion about other minds. New incarnations of this dialectic keep cropping up, and the discussion about whether or not we see other minds is one example. Given my interest in this discussion, I find that Cavell's framework for articulating that thought is particularly useful.

[11] 'The sceptic' is in Cavell's thought not a particular philosopher or a representative of a doctrine. The sceptic is, rather, a conversation partner, someone whose position Cavell tries to occupy in order to give voice adequately to a progression of thought.

problem. What he argues is that even if we try our best to give the sceptic what he says that he wants, namely to imagine a situation where two people can have each other's pain, it would be a disappointment to the sceptic. It would not be exemplary of knowing another person's mind. One way of putting what such a situation would lack is the possibility of a mutual address using the second-person 'you'. Two people who had each other's pains would not be separate in the sense required for being able to respond in this way to the pain of the other. They could not say, for instance, 'Is there anything I can do to help you?' and mean any of the things we might mean by saying such a thing.[12]

What does it mean to give the sceptic what he says he wants, one might wonder? The way Cavell proceeds is by considering a thought experiment, adapted from Alexandre Dumas' novella *The Corsican Brothers*. In Cavell's version of the story, the two brothers, First and Second, have a peculiar bond. Whenever First feels pain, Second feels it too. Even when miles apart, Second feels pain in exactly the same place and with the same intensity as First does. Moreover, Second never feels pain *unless* First does. Second doesn't scream or grimace when he cuts himself; he hurts only when something has happened to First. Second's pain is also a direct effect of First's, there's no damage on Second's body in connection with the episodes of pain.

Cavell suggests that what we have here comes close to imagining a situation where two people feel the same pain. (There are, of course, a number of question-marks regarding what we are asked to imagine and whether we can form a coherent image on the basis of these premises. But if we dig in our heels too early, we'll miss an important lesson.) Not only do Second and First have *qualitatively* the same pain – like two people who suffer from the same kind of headache – they have *numerically* the same pain. The sceptic ought, then, to be satisfied with the epistemic positions of the Corsican Brothers; they should be a good illustration of why our ordinary position with respect to each other is so frightfully inadequate. But, Cavell argues, they are not. Turning to the epistemic positions of First and Second respectively, Cavell wonders whether First's knowledge of Second's pain is of the kind that the sceptic appears to be asking for. The answer, Cavell thinks, is that First's position with

[12] Cavell's essay is critical of the way in which some of his contemporaries – exemplified by Norman Malcolm and John W. Cook – invoke ordinary language to refute the sceptic, while it tries to exemplify a different version of ordinary language criticism.

respect to Second's pain doesn't look much better on inspection than our ordinary position with respect to others; it might even look worse.

It might look worse because the primary fact for First when he is in pain is that *he* is in pain. The thought might strike him that Second is in pain too, but it also might not. He might forget this in the midst of his own suffering. And even if he does remember, First is not in a particularly good position to *respond to* Second's pain, since he is preoccupied with his own precisely during and to the same extent as First is, and hence is not the best person to respond to Second's pain. Cavell writes: 'Every pain First feels is *his*. (This now means something in contrast to Second, none of whose feelings are his.) First knows *what* Second feels (and when and where he is feeling it) – but so can we know those things.' (Cavell 1969: 252)

But what about Second's epistemic position? The problem here is that Second is not relevantly *other* to qualify for the description 'knowing another person's pain'. Since Second has no pain of his own, he can as well express pain by saying 'I feel pain' as by saying 'He feels pain'. And, most importantly, we're not quite sure what it would mean for Second to say to First: 'You are in pain.' It would hover between an expression of his own pain (Second's), and a response to First's. The distinction between the two individuals is, in this respect, blurred, and hence the possibilities for expression and response undercut. Hence Second's knowledge isn't quite knowledge that another person is in pain. Cavell says,

> [*H*]*is* pain no longer contrasts with *my* pain, his has no further content, so to speak; 'his pain' no longer differentiates what he feels from what I feel, him from me; he is not *other* in the relevant sense. (Cavell 1969: 253)

If First's position is not any better – or even worse – than ours with respect to Second's pain, Second is not quite in a position to even know, or respond to, First's pain *as another person's pain*. So even though the sceptic thought that feeling another person's pain was the requirement needed to *really* know another person's pain, it turns out that even this wouldn't satisfy him.

An intrinsic part of why this thought experiment is disappointing for the sceptic is because it removes the conditions for a genuine second-person address. The Corsican Brothers are not exemplary cases of knowing another person's pain partly because they are not in particularly good positions to judge '*You* are in pain' as a response to the other person's pain. For First, this is because 'I'm in pain' is the primary fact for

him, for Second this is because he is not relevantly separate from First. Cavell articulates two questions on the basis of the thought experiment:

> But how shall we understand this wish for a *response* to my expressions (of pain, of any region of the mind)? Does it suggest that our concept of my knowledge of another is bound up with the concept of my freedom, an independence from the others, from all others – which I may or may not act upon? (Cavell 1969: 253)

Cavell's response to the first question is to propose the concept of acknowledgment. And the answer to the second question his essay implies is yes. What leads Cavell to say that the concept of knowledge when we are considering other minds is different from the concept we use when we are talking about knowledge of mere objects, is that an exemplary expression of knowledge of another person is a concerned response *to the person*.

We can note, first, that the Corsican Brothers do not have what I have above called shared knowledge. Shared knowledge, as I characterized it, was knowledge that required two people's mutual recognition of each other. It is marked by the use of the second-person, such as in saying, 'Is there anything I can do for you?' Just by their situation, the Corsican Brothers do not have shared knowledge. It is, moreover, not clear even that they *can* have shared knowledge in precisely this sense, since 'You are in pain' in Second's mouth, as we said, can't exactly mean what it means for us. If we return to the theme of the very first section of this paper, there is no such inherent tension between the idea of *seeing* another person in pain, and having shared knowledge. But seeing is not *sufficient for* shared knowledge. I might see that 'This person is in pain' but unless I've responded to the person this knowledge is not shared. And shared knowledge, as I understand Cavell's point, is one way of describing the different concept of knowledge we have when other minds are concerned. If we remain at the level of the judgment 'I see that this person is in pain' we will not have captured in full what knowing another person means. We need to see that such a judgment contains the possibility of the response 'You're in pain, can I do something for you?' to get the concept fully in view.

Expressions, Cavell says in the quote above, come with a wish for a response. The response it wishes for is at once an expression of knowledge, and an act of concern towards the person.

> It is not enough that I *know* (am certain) that you suffer – I must do or reveal something (whatever can be done). In a word, I must acknowledge it, otherwise I do not know what '(your or his) being in pain' means. Is. (Cavell 1969: 263)

Acknowledging someone's suffering, Cavell claims in this passage, is to do or reveal something. Expressing compassion by saying 'I know you are in pain' is one example of an acknowledgment. But we ought not to be under the impression that acknowledgment is the tag for a specific mode of response to another person, namely being empathetic or compassionate. And it would be odd to claim that we *must* be compassionate with suffering people, even if we hear the 'must' as an ethical ought. Clearly we are in fact not always compassionate, nor is it clear that we always ought to be. Cavell's point is, rather, that knowledge of another person takes, paradigmatically, the form of knowledge that *you* are, say, suffering – and this means that the question *how do I respond to you* is always relevant. It is always on the table. When the knowledge is shared, in the sense outlined above, there is no escaping the relevance of what we do, say, and feel, in response to the person. Cavell explains,

> So when I say that 'We must acknowledge another's suffering, and we do that by responding to a claim upon our sympathy', I do not mean that we always in fact have sympathy, nor that we always ought to have it. The claim of sympathy may go unanswered. We may feel lots of things – sympathy, Schadenfreude, nothing. [...] [Acknowledgment] is not a description of a given response, but a category in terms of which a given response is evaluated. (Cavell 1969: 263)

We can understand Cavell as saying, then, that an expression (of pain, say) calls for a response in the form of an acknowledgment, and this makes it the case that whatever one does in response, even if nothing, can be described and evaluated with respect to this call for an acknowledgment. And issuing an acknowledgment is, as I understand the concept, precisely what one does when one enters into a cognitive relation to a person in the way I've described here. An acknowledgment takes the form of a second-person address, and it addresses the person not as a fellow observer but as a person who can self-consciously articulate her own states of mind. But it also addresses the person as someone who is possibly in need. What an expression potentially shares is not *merely* knowledge, but also circumstance, or plight.

Does this mean that I (and Cavell) think that knowing another mind is intrinsically an ethical matter? It does, if what this means is simply that shared knowledge makes two people vulnerable to the needs, wants, and requests of each other, and so subject to the specific forms of evaluation that attaches to such vulnerability. Given that expressions open oneself to a cognitive relation with another person, an ethical claim might always present itself, say in the form of a recognition of a need.

Now, as the argument of this paper is structured it might be thought that I think of the cognitive and the practical/emotional response as two stages in a process. This is not the image I wish to convey. The idea is not that shared knowledge comes first, and then comes a practical and emotional response. Rather, I would argue that a central characteristic of coming to a shared knowledge is that it is at once cognitive, emotional, and practical. It is expressed in a *concerned* question: 'What's that smile?' or 'How are you doing?'

One important consequence of thinking that knowledge of other persons can take the form of acknowledgment – shared knowledge that makes two people exposed and vulnerable to each other – is that we also note that this form of knowledge has its own anxieties and difficulties. (Considering the different aspects of this consequence is a persistent theme in Cavell's writings, in particular in Part IV of *The Claim of Reason* (1979).) There is no guarantee that a person will open up to me and share his knowledge with me by articulating what he is thinking or feeling, and there is no guarantee that if I open up I will get the response that I wished for. In this region of the concept of knowledge, we run up against the independence, frailty, and even potential cruelty of the other. In the face of these specific difficulties, it is no consolation whatsoever to point out that I can *see* what the person is thinking or feeling. Mere observational knowledge, if divorced from the possibility of acknowledgment, doesn't give me what I want; it doesn't correspond to my real interest. This is, we might think, a way of expressing an insight in the tradition of denying that other minds can be observed. What we can see is not by itself enough; we want the kind of knowledge that only comes with a mutual cognitive relation to the person. If we're interested in giving an account of the way action and expression afford knowledge of other minds, this line of reasoning should make us qualify the idea that they enable perceptual knowledge of another mind. They do so, but they also and more importantly enable a cognitive relation between two people of the kind marked by an acknowledgment. The insight in the

epistemological tradition of thinking that other minds are special can, then, be formulated as follows: Happy people and falling trees can both be seen but only the former can be acknowledged.[13]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Cavell, Stanley. 1969. 'Knowing and Acknowledging', in *Must We Mean What We Say: A Book of Essays* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, repr. 2002), pp. 238–266

Cavell, Stanley. 1979. *The Claim of Reason: Wittgenstein, Skepticism, Morality, and Tragedy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Churchland, Paul. 1988. *Matter and Consciousness: A Contemporary Introduction to the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press)

Davies, Martin and Tony Stone, eds. 1995. *Folk Psychology: The Theory of Mind Debate* (Oxford: Blackwell)

Finkelstein, David. 1999. 'On the Distinction Between Conscious and Unconscious States of Mind', *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 36: 79–100

Green, Mitchell S. 2007. *Self-Expression* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Hornsby, Jennifer. 1997. *Simple Mindedness: In Defense of Naïve Naturalism in the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press)

Russell, Bertrand. 1948. *Human Knowledge – Its Scope and Limits* (London: George Allen and Unwin)

Stout, Rowland. 2012. 'What Someone's Behaviour Must Be Like in Order to Perceive Their Emotions In It', *Phenomenology and the Cognitive Sciences*, 11 (2): 135–148

Thompson, Michael. 2011. 'Anscombe's *Intention* and Practical Knowledge', in *Essays on Anscombe's Intention*, eds Anton Ford, Jennifer Hornsby, and Frederick Stoutland (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press), pp. 198–241

Watson, John B. 1925. *Behaviorism* (London: Kegan Paul)

[13] I presented a short version of this paper at the conference The Second-Person Perspective in Science and the Humanities, Oxford 2013. I'm grateful to the participants of this conference for valuable comments and discussion. In particular I want to mention Monika Dullstein. Her presentation had affinities with mine and I've benefited greatly from conversations with her. The paper was also much improved by comments on a previous draft from Ulrika Björk, Martin Gustafsson, and the editors of this volume. My work on this essay has been supported by the Kone Foundation and the Academy of Finland.

THE PRIVATE LANGUAGE ARGUMENT AND A SECOND-PERSON APPROACH TO MINDREADING

JOSHUA JOHNSON

St Louis University

Abstract. I argue that if Wittgenstein's Private Language Argument is correct, then both Theory-Theory and Simulation Theory are inadequate accounts of how we come to know other minds since both theories assume the reality of a private language. Further, following the work of a number of philosophers and psychologists, I defend a 'Second-Person Approach' to mindreading according to which it is possible for us to be directly aware of at least some of the mental states of others. Because it is not necessary to assume a private language within the Second-Person Approach, I argue that this account of social cognition is superior to Theory-Theory and Simulation Theory since it avoids the objections of the PLA.

INTRODUCTION

Until recently, the debate over how we are able to know the mental states of others has largely been restricted to Theory-Theory (hereafter TT) and Simulation Theory (hereafter ST). Both TT and ST, however, share common assumptions about the nature of how we come to understand mental terms, assumptions that render both theories implausible in light of Wittgenstein's Private Language Argument (hereafter PLA). In this paper I defend the claim that, if the PLA is correct, both TT and ST fail as adequate theories of mindreading.[1] Further, I argue for a 'Second-Person

[1] The term 'mindreading' as used in the title and throughout this paper is commonly used within the theory of mind literature to denote the process of how one comes to know the mental states of others.

Approach' to mindreading that both avoids the objections of the PLA and provides a much more intuitive account of how we come to know other minds.

THE PRIVATE LANGUAGE ARGUMENT, THEORY-THEORY, AND SIMULATION THEORY

According to Wittgenstein, language is essentially public and a private language is impossible. By a 'private language' Wittgenstein does not mean a language known to only one person (such as the last speaker of an otherwise dead language), nor does he mean a language that one may invent only for oneself (like a cipher for a private journal). Rather, he is describing a language that could, in principle, *only* be known by a single person; particularly, a language whose words refer exclusively to the private mental states of an individual (states such as pain, joy, etc.). The words of such a language would 'refer to what can only be known to the person speaking; to his immediate private sensations. So another person cannot understand the language' (1986: 88e-89e). Of course, in rejecting the possibility of a private language, Wittgenstein is not denying that such internal sensations exist; rather, he is saying that one cannot come to know the meaning of a term such as 'pain' by an act of internal ostension that fixes the meaning of the term by mentally 'pointing' to it.

In Wittgenstein's view, language is similar to a game in that is it rule-governed. In order for one's behaviour to be meaningful within the context of a particular game, one must be open to correction by following certain rules that are publicly accepted.[2] For example, an individual's behaviour in a chess game is meaningful insofar as it conforms to the rules of chess. If the first move of the game was for a player to throw her knight at the board in order to bowl over her opponent's pieces, then such an action would be meaningless – within the context of chess – to those playing (or observing) the game. Similarly, if a person attempts to use a word, say 'cup', without recourse to the rules for how this term functions within a particular language, then such a usage would be meaningless. Language requires rules to justify the proper use of words,

[2] 'To obey a rule, to make a report, to give an order, to play a game of chess, are customs (uses, institutions). To understand a sentence means to understand a language. To understand a language means to be master of a technique.' (1986:81)

and the rules themselves are public in nature. Thus, a person cannot come to understand the meaning of a word like 'pain' by merely labelling an internal sensation with a particular sign. If such were the case, then there would be no real sense in which one could correctly follow the rules for using this sign – since following the rule would simply amount to *appearing* to oneself to be following a rule (1986: 81). That is, a term used in such a way would not be a candidate for public correction, and hence, would not be in accordance with the rule-governed nature of language.

Wittgenstein provides an interesting thought experiment involving beetles and boxes to help further illuminate his concerns with a private language:

> Now someone tells me that he knows what pain is only from his own case! – Suppose everyone had a box with something in it: we call it a 'beetle'. No one can look into anyone else's box, and everyone says he knows what a beetle is only by looking at his beetle. – Here it would be quite possible for everyone to have something different in his box. One might even imagine such a thing constantly changing. – But suppose the word 'beetle' had a use in these people's language? – If so it would not be used as the name of a thing. The thing in the box has no place in the language-game at all; not even as a something: for the box might even be empty. – No, one can 'divide through' by the thing in the box; it cancels out, whatever it is.
>
> That is to say: if we construe the grammar of the expression of sensation on the model of 'object and designation' the object drops out of consideration as irrelevant. (1986: 100e)

The analogy between the words 'beetle' and 'pain' should be clear: if our word 'pain' refers to something that is *essentially* private, then there would be no way for one individual to truly understand what another individual means by the term 'pain'. To quote Wittgenstein again,

> If one has to imagine someone else's pain on the model of one's own, this is none too easy a thing to do: for I have to imagine pain which I do not feel on the model of the pain which I do feel. (1986: 101*)

Of course, Wittgenstein is not saying that internal experiences do not exist, nor is he necessarily stating that such sensations play no part in our mental language; rather he is claiming that if the meaning of certain

words is completely derived from an essentially *private* experience, then the use of those words would be absurd within a public context.[3]

A number of psychologists and philosophers have argued that the PLA presents a significant problem for both TT and ST (e.g. Montgomery 1997, Carpendale and Lewis 2004, Hobson 2009, Racine 2004, and Reddy 2008), and I shall follow their interpretation of the PLA with respect to these theories. In short, both TT and ST make the common assumption that the mental states of others are private, unobservable entities that must be accessed either through theoretical inference or personal introspection (Carpendale and Lewis 2004: 83), and it is this assumption that requires that both theories assume the reality of a private language.

A common formulation of TT portrays the mindreader as a scientist who, based upon her observations of human behaviour and accumulation of evidence, postulates a set of psychological laws by which she infers the mental states of other organisms based upon their behaviour (e.g. Gopnik and Meltzoff 1997). Another version of TT – the 'modular' approach – says that humans come naturally equipped with various cognitive mechanisms that, when fully developed, enable them to appeal to an internalized folk psychology in order to ascribe mental states to others (e.g. Baron-Cohen 1995). Importantly, in both variations of TT, the person is making *inferences* about the mental states of other organisms by recourse to a theory of mind. Given that TT operates under the assumption that an individual's mental experiences are private unobservable entities, TT must also assume that the mindreader's *own* mental experiences are private (Carpendale and Lewis 2004: 83). Hence, her inferences about the states of others must be at least partially built upon terms whose meanings are derived from a private language referencing her own internal experiences.

[3] Soren Overgaard offers an interesting interpretation of Wittgenstein's 'beetle in the box' scenario: 'The last portion strongly suggests that Wittgenstein's argument is really a *reductio*; he is trying to show that a particular assumption has absurd consequences, and the point is, on the basis of its absurd consequences, to reject that assumption. The conclusion, then, is not that pain-sensations are irrelevant to our attributions of pain to each other. Rather, since Wittgenstein takes the latter to be an absurd consequence, he can reject the assumption from which it follows. Wittgenstein is saying something like the following: If we construe sensation talk in a certain way, then the absurd consequence follows that the sensations themselves are completely irrelevant. Since they cannot be irrelevant – indeed what could be more relevant to our attributions of pain to each other than the actual pains of actual people? – we should avoid construing sensation talk in that way.' (2005: 253)

According to ST, people engage in mindreading by using their own cognitive equipment to run internal simulations – thus enabling the individual to place herself in the perspective of another person via pretence (Goldman 2006). The experiences in question are 'offline' in that they are mere simulations rather than the actual experiences of the individual performing the simulation. Further, while running her simulation, the individual must quarantine her own mental states that are not simultaneously held by the target of mindreading. Upon completion of the simulation, the individual generalizes her own simulated experience to another. Note that the individual comes to know the mental states of others by *introspection* of her own mental states. Given the structure of ST, a person comes to understand the meaning of mental terms by recourse to her own subjective experiences (Montgomery 1997: 296) – hence, ST must assume the reality of a private language.[4] Peter Hobson reaches a similar conclusion when he says that

> [It] is commonplace for contemporary developmental psychologists to espouse the view that we need to infer the nature of other people's minds, in some cases on the basis of our first-person experience of our own minds. [...] Wittgenstein's attack on the very concept of a private language undermines the assumption that all by oneself and without the possibility of correction by others (already experienced as others), one would be able to identify a given mental state as the same when this recurs within one's own experience, and then go on to ascribe it to other people. (2009: 84)

While there is considerable difference in how TT and ST explain the phenomenon of mindreading, it appears that *both* theories require the existence of a private language. However, if the conclusion of the PLA is correct, then neither theory as described here can provide us with a plausible account. Given the problems associated with the possibility of a private language, it appears that both TT and ST are in trouble.[5]

[4] This objection primarily applies to 'explicit' forms of ST (e.g. Goldman 1998) which hold that introspection is done consciously and for the purpose of mindreading. 'Implicit' forms of ST (e.g. Gallese and Goldman, 1998; Goldman, 2006), in which introspection and ascription occur at a subconscious level may not be as vulnerable to the PLA. However, there is good reason to think that implicit ST is not a version of ST at all (Gallagher 2007). I address this issue in greater detail below.

[5] This is not to say that we *never* engage in the practice of theorizing or simulation with respect to others. Indeed, there are, no doubt, many occasions when we must employ theory attribution or pretence in order to understand the behaviour of another. However,

A radically different account of mindreading is needed to provide an alternative approach that avoids the objections of the PLA. One such account which I shall refer to as the 'Second-Person Approach' (hereafter SPA) says that we have direct awareness of at least some of the mental states of others.

II. A SECOND-PERSON APPROACH TO MINDREADING

SPA takes its name from its unique approach to mindreading. Whereas TT endorses the importance of a third-person perspective in mindreading in theory attribution, and ST emphasizes the first-person perspective in introspection, SPA holds that what matters most in knowing the minds of others is the second-person experience of another person. Vasudevi Reddy has summed up the distinction nicely:

> In the first- and third-person approaches to knowing other minds, both retaining the premises of the [privacy] gap, other persons are 'known' either by extension of the experiences of the self or from the outside through observation, inference, and theory. [The second-person] approach suggests that others are experienced as *others* in direct emotional engagement, and that this fundamentally undermines the 'problem' in the 'problem of other minds'. (2008: 26)

It will help to begin by examining the *kind* of knowledge with which SPA is concerned. Eleonore Stump argues that the knowledge one gains from second-person experiences is not propositional or 'knowledge that'. Instead, Stump holds that knowledge of persons (and their mental states) is a form of 'knowledge by acquaintance' (2010: 51-53). While both TT and ST agree that an individual gains propositional knowledge about another person – that is, one knows *that* it is the case that the target

---

if the PLA is correct, these could not be the *fundamental* way that we mindread others both developmentally and in our normal daily experience. Shaun Gallagher expresses similar sentiments when he claims that before 'we are in a position to form a theory about or to simulate what the other person believes or desires, we already have specific pre-theoretical knowledge about how people behave in particular contexts. We are able to get this kind of knowledge precisely through the various capabilities that characterize primary intersubjectivity [similar to the Second Person Approach that I am defending] including, imitation, intentionality detection, eye-tracking, the perception of intentional or goal-related movements, and the perception of meaning and emotion in movement and posture.' (2001: 90)

is angry, happy, or worried, SPA says that we have non-propositional knowledge directly *of* another person's mental states – that is to say, one may simply *know* another's anger, happiness, or worry.

Stump provides a clever variation of Frank Jackson's famous 'Mary' thought experiment (Jackson 1986: 291-295) in order to reinforce her position.[6] The story is altered slightly so that that Mary is a super-psychologist who has come to know all the propositional knowledge that there is to know about the mental states of others, although she has been raised in isolation from any second-person experiences.[7] Upon being released from her solitary existence, Mary is introduced to her mother and, for the first time, experiences her mother from a second-person perspective. According to Stump, there appears to be no doubt that Mary will come to have new, non-propositional knowledge and that she

> will know things she did not know before, even if she knew everything about her mother that could be made available to her in non-narrative propositional form, including her mother's psychological states. Although Mary knew that her mother loved her before she met her, Mary will learn what it is like to be loved. (2010: 52).

Stump's conclusion appears to be in agreement with much of what Wittgenstein has to say about how we know other minds. For example,

> 'We *see* emotion.' – As opposed to what? – We do not see facial contortions and *make the inference* that he is feeling joy, grief, boredom. We describe a face immediately as sad, radiant, bored, even when we are unable to give any other description of the features. – Grief, one would like to say, is personified in the face. This is essential to what we call 'emotion'. (1980b: 100e)

---

[6] For the original thought experiment see 'What Mary Didn't Know', *The Journal of Philosophy* , Vol. 83, No. 5 (1986), 291-95. Those familiar with the thought experiment will recall that Jackson used it to argue that there are facts that can be known that are non-physical. Mary, a super-scientist raised in a grayscale room, comes to know all there is to know about the science of colour vision and, thus, knows all physical facts concerning the topic. One day she is released from her drab domicile into the world of colour. Upon observing a ripe tomato, Mary learns something new; namely, what *it is like* to see red. Hence, there are facts that can be known that are non-physical as well as non-propositional (the qualitative 'what-it-is-like' knowledge of phenomenal experience).

[7] Of course, Stump acknowledges that this scenario is merely a thought-experiment and that it could not occur in the actual world since there would be severely debilitating psychological consequences for an individual raised in such extreme isolation from personal contact with other humans.

Here, Wittgenstein appears to make the distinction between a third-person, propositional description *that* a person is grieved (based upon the inference from how her face is construed), and what appears to be a second-person, non-propositional experience of simply *seeing* a person's grief. Elsewhere Wittgenstein writes:

> 'I see that the child wants to touch the dog, but doesn't dare.' How can I see that? – Is this description of what is seen on the same level as a description of moving shapes and colours? Is an interpretation in question? Well, remember that you may also mimic a human being who would like to touch something, but doesn't dare. (1080a 186e)

Again, Wittgenstein appears to be distinguishing between a propositional description of a person's affective state based upon inference and an immediate awareness of this state. Another point of interest in the above passage is that Wittgenstein appeals to the importance of *mimicry* as a means of communicating the affective state of another. Why is this significant? In reference to the above passage, Hobson has pointed out that if one simply tried to provide a physical description of the child's affective state *without* mimicry, 'then one would fail to understand something important about what is expressed'. That is, when attempting to describe the affective states of an individual to a third person, we often use mimicry because there is non-propositional information communicated by doing so that could not be communicated by a mere propositional description (2009: 248).[8]

Recent work in neuroscience on the mirror neurons of both monkeys and humans appears to support the above notion with respect to mimicry. Speaking of the mirror neuron system, Marco Iacaboni states that the 'functional properties of these neurons suggest that they may implement a *simple, noninferential mechanism* of action recognition based on neural identity. This mechanism may be a building block for imitative behaviour' (2005). Iacaboni's description of the knowledge provided by the mirror neuron system sounds very much like non-propositional knowledge. As research into the mirror neuron system has progressed, the notion that our knowledge of at least some of the mental states of others is non-propositional and direct appears to be increasingly verified. With this

[8] The notion of mimicry employed here should not be confused with the sort of 'offline' simulation described by ST. The latter is used in order to understand the mental state of a target of mindreading, while the former is used to express to a third person the mental state of another.

point in mind, I shall now proceed to show why, unlike both TT and ST, the second-person approach to mindreading is not rendered implausible by the PLA.

III. THE SECOND-PERSON APPROACH AND THE DIRECT AWARENESS OF MENTAL STATES

Recall that Stump's thought experiment is designed to show that the knowledge gained through second-person experience is non-propositional. Another important aspect of this thought experiment is that Mary appears to be *directly aware* of her mother's emotional state. That is, Mary apparently perceives her mother's affective state without recourse to inference or introspection. The fact that humans have the capacity to directly perceive the emotions of others appears to be supported by a test, constructed by Hobson, Moore, and Lee, that is designed to examine the proficiency of autistic children at detecting emotion in the behaviour of others (2004: 52-58). Since a common distinguishing characteristic of autistic individuals is the inability to mindread others, the test is designed to determine if autistic children are able to detect emotion from stimuli that present no facial expressions (or recognizable human bodies for that matter). The team attached reflective lights to the torso and limbs of a person and then filmed the individual in a darkened room so that all that could be seen were the reflective patches of light as they matched the movements of the person's body. Hobson observes that when watching the moving light display,

> What you see *through* the moving dots is a person. There is no doubt about it – you are watching a person doing things. [...] It is as if the displays home in on a brain mechanism that detects people. No need to think, no need to go through a conscious process of judgment – one simply sees a person. (2004: 53-54)

But the test shows that this is not *all* that one sees in such displays. The team instructed the individual modelling the reflective dots to engage in various emotional behaviours (surprise, sadness, fear, anger, and happiness). After questioning the children as to what was happening in the light display, it turns out that non-autistic children overwhelmingly tend to report emotion in the movement of the lights; while those impaired by autism typically fail to report emotion in the displays (2004: 56). For our purposes, what is so interesting about this case is

that the non-autistic children involved in the test appear to simply *'see'* the emotions expressed through the behaviour of the moving lights. This constitutes a strong *phenomenological* argument for SPA. In most cases, when we apprehend the emotions or intentional actions of others, we are not conscious of appealing to a theory of mind or running an internal simulation. Like the non-autistic children involved in the point-light test, and as Wittgenstein emphasizes, we appear simply to *perceive* the affective and intentional states of others.

Here I should point out that an advocate of ST who endorses the notion of 'low level' or 'implicit' simulation may object that recognition of emotions in facial expressions and behaviour involves simulation at a non-conscious and sub-personal level (e.g. Gallese and Goldman 1998; Goldman 2006); hence, one cannot appeal to one's own phenomenal experience in order to deny that simulation has occurred. However, I am inclined to agree with Shaun Gallagher who makes a strong case for the idea that implicit ST should not properly be thought of as a version of ST at all since it does not involve actual simulation (2007). According to Gallagher, simulation requires both instrumentality and pretence so that the mindreader makes 'use of a first-person model to form third-person "as if" or "pretend" mental states' (2007: 360). Implicit simulation is said to occur at a pre-conscious level, but neither instrumentality nor pretence are present at this level since the person has no 'instrumental access to neuronal activation' and the sub-personal brain does not use its neurons to initiate 'pretend states'. Indeed, Gallagher claims that what is referred to as 'implicit ST' is actually something very much like *perception* of another person's mental states:

> The perception of the other person's action automatically activates in our brain the same areas that are activated when we engage in similar action. The other *person has an effect on us*. The other *elicits* this activation. This is not a simulation, but a perceptual elicitation. It is not us (or our brain) *doing* it, but the other who does this to us. (2007: 360-61)

Recall that TT and ST are both vulnerable to the criticism contained in the PLA because they assume a private language and treat the mental experiences of others as hidden things that the individual knows through inference or personal introspection. However, this is precisely what SPA denies. There is no need for the assumption of a private language within SPA since the knowledge that we gain about the mental states of others through second-person experiences is both non-propositional and

direct; one need not come to understand the meaning of mental terms exclusively by recourse to one's own experiences. SPA, therefore, rather than being a target of the PLA, actually *supports* the underlying notion behind it: the mental states of others are not hidden but are directly accessible to us within the second-person experience.

CONCLUSION

I have argued that if one considers the PLA to be a persuasive line of reasoning, then one must agree that TT and ST are flawed accounts of mindreading. Since SPA holds that knowledge of persons and their mental states is non-propositional and direct, it avoids the objections contained within the PLA. SPA is also superior to TT and ST because it provides what appears to be a much more intuitive account of how we come to know persons and what they are thinking. In my second-person experience of you, I do not simply know about you, or claim to know by inference or introspection what it is like to be you. Instead, much like Augustine's declaration to God recounted in his famous *Confessions*, I know *you*.[9]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Carpendale, Jeremy, and Charlie Lewis. 2004. 'Constructing an Understanding of the Mind: The Development of Children's Social Understanding Within Social Interaction', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences,* 27:1: 79-96

Gallagher, Shaun. 2001. 'The Practice of Mind', *Journal of Consciousness Studies*, 8, No. 5-7: 83-108

Gallagher, Shaun. 2007. 'Simulation Trouble', *Social Neuroscience*, 2 (3-4): 353-365

Gallese, Victor & Alvin Goldman. 1998. 'Mirror Neurons and the Simulation Theory of Mind-Reading', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 2, 493-501

Gallese, Victor & Alvin Goldman. 1998. 'Interpretation Psychologized', *Mind and Language*, 4: 161-185

[9] Earlier versions of this paper were presented at the meeting of the Southern Society for Philosophy and Psychology in Austin (2013), the Pacific Division meeting of the American Philosophical Association in San Francisco (2013), and the Ian Ramsey Centre Conference on 'The Second-Person Perspective in Science and the Humanities' in Oxford (2013). I wish to thank the audience members from each of these events for their helpful feedback and criticism. Special thanks are also due to comments received from Eleonore Stump, Bernard Molyneux, and Gideon Jeffrey.

Gallese, Victor & Alvin Goldman. 2006. *Simulating Minds* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Hobson, Peter. 2004. *The Cradle of Thought* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Hobson, Peter. 2009. 'Wittgenstein and the Developmental Psychopathology of Autism', *New Ideas in Psychology*, 27: 243-257

Iacaboni, Marco. 2005. 'Understanding Others: Imitation, Language, and Empathy', in *Perspectives on Imitation, from Neuroscience to Social Science*, ed. by Susan Hurley and Nick Chater (Cambridge: MIT Press)

Jackson, Frank. 1986. 'What Mary Didn't Know', *The Journal of Philosophy*, 83, No. 5: 291-95

Krueger, Joel, and Soren Overgaard. 2012. 'Seeing Subjectivity: Defending a Perceptual Account of Other Minds', *ProtoSociology: Consciousness and Subjectivity*, 47: 239-262

Overgaard, Soren. 2005. 'Rethinking Other Minds: Wittgenstein and Levinas on Expression', *Inquiry*, 48:3: 249-274

Stump, Eleonore. 2010. *Wandering in Darkness* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Racine, Timothy. 2004. 'Wittgenstein's Internalistic Logic and Children's Theories of Mind', in *Social Interaction and the Development of Knowledge*, ed. by Jeremy Carpendale and Ulrich Muller (Mahwah: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates), pp. 257-277

Reddy, Vasudevi. 2008. *How Infants Know Minds* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press)

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1986. *Philosophical Investigations*, trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Blackwell)

Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1980. *Remarks on the Philosophy of Psychology, Vol. I,* trans. by G. E. M. Anscombe (Oxford: Basil Blackwell)

THE NON-ARISTOTELIAN VIRTUE OF TRUTH FROM THE SECOND-PERSON PERSPECTIVE

ANDREW PINSENT

University of Oxford

Abstract. The claim has been made that when Aquinas speaks about the virtue of truth and its opposing vices in the *Summa theologiae* (*ST*) 2-2.109-113, he regards himself as speaking of the same virtue of truth as found in the *Nicomachean Ethics* 4.7. In this paper, I dispute this claim, showing how Aquinas's account cannot be Aristotelian and, in particular, that the possibility of forfeiting the virtue of truth by one serious lie cannot be explained by habituation. I argue instead that Aquinas's account can be better understood by reference to the kind of embodied experience most commonly encountered in joint attention or second-person relatedness, an approach that may offer new ways to address broader moral questions regarding truth.

I. INTRODUCTION

In *Aquinas and the Nicomachean Ethics*, a recent book dedicated to the question of how Aquinas deals with and depends on Aristotle's ethics, Kevin Flannery S. J. writes,

> In *ST* 2-2.109, Aquinas introduces what he speaks of as the virtue of truth (*virtus veritatis*), which he also calls veracity or truthfulness (*veracitas*). Although his account of this virtue goes beyond what Aristotle says in [*Nicomachean Ethics*] *EN* 4.7, there can be little doubt that he regards himself as speaking throughout this general section of the *Summa* of the virtue discussed in that chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.[1]

In other words, Flannery claims that there is little doubt that when Aquinas speaks about the virtue of truth and its opposing vices in the

[1] Kevin Flannery, 'Being truthful with (or lying to) others about oneself', in *Aquinas and the Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. by Tobias Hoffmann, Jörn Müller and Matthias Perkams (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 129–145 (p. 142).

Summa theologiae (*ST*) 2-2.109-113, he regards himself as speaking of the same virtue of truth as found in *EN* 4.7 of the *Nicomachean Ethics*.

In subsequent paragraphs, Flannery elaborates on why we should have little doubt about this fact, the main points of which I summarise as follows. First, in *ST* 2-2.109.1, dedicated to the question of whether truth is a virtue, Aquinas immediately cites Aristotle in the *sed contra*, in particular the fact that Aristotle places truth among the other virtues in the second and fourth book of the *Ethics*. On this basis, Flannery claims, 'That he [Aquinas] is discussing the *EN* 4.7 virtue remains his presupposition in all the relevant passages in *ST* 2-2.109-113'. Second, in *ST* 2-2.109.1 resp., the object of what Aquinas describes as the virtue of truth, namely truth, matches the core principle that specifies not only the act but also the corresponding virtue in Aristotle's account in *EN* 4.7, namely that, in itself, 'falsehood is foul and blameworthy, and truth is noble and praiseworthy'.[2] Third, that Aquinas takes care to relate an expanded sense of truth-telling, such as the 'truth of doctrine', back into the more narrow sense defined explicitly by the scope of the Aristotelian virtue, which is truth in terms of the way one manifests oneself to others (cf. *ST* 2-2.109.3 ad 3). Hence, Flannery claims, 'Aquinas understands himself to be speaking in *ST* 2-2.109.2-3 – and, by implication, throughout *ST* 2-2.109-113 – about the virtue (and the corresponding act) at the core of *EN* 4.7'. Further to this point, Flannery draws attention to corroborating evidence from *ST* 2-2.111.3 ad 2, in particular the notion that simplicity and truth-telling are the same thing, understood from different perspectives.[3] Finally, when considering Augustine's eight-fold division of types of lying in *de Mendacio* 14.25, Aquinas connects the fourth type 'tucked between the augmenting group and the diminishing group' directly to Aristotle's words in *EN* 4.7.[4] The implication seems to be that what Aquinas means by lying 'out of the sheer lust for lying, which proceeds from habit', or what one might described as lying in its 'pure form', is precisely what Aristotle means. Hence, although Flannery concedes that Aquinas says many things in *ST* 2-2.109-113 that are not found in *EN* 4.7, 'nor even easily derivable from things that are found there', nevertheless, Aquinas's expanded account 'grows out of the same virtue presented in *EN* 4.7'.

[2] Flannery, p. 143.; cf. *EN* 1127a28-30.
[3] Flannery, p. 144.
[4] Flannery, p. 145.

In this paper, I argue that this conclusion is mistaken. In making this claim, I do not disagree with any of the excellent, finely-honed points of detail to which Flannery draws attention, or indeed any of the steps he makes in his arguments, except the final ones. Moreover, like Flannery, I am impressed with the evident respect that Aquinas has for Aristotle, not least in the way he takes trouble to 'retrofit', one might say, his own expanded notion of truth-telling back into the Aristotelian approach to the matter of the virtue, that is, pertaining to how one presents oneself. I take this fact as indicative of the way in which Aquinas will go to considerable length to agree with Aristotle – if he can do so. Nevertheless, I hold the overall conclusion, that Aquinas regards himself as speaking of the same virtue of truth, or one that at least 'grows out of' the virtue discussed in that chapter of the *Nicomachean Ethics*, to be mistaken, and for the following reason alone if for no other: what Aquinas normally means by a virtue throughout *ST* 2-2.1-170 is different in kind from what Aristotle means by a virtue in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In other words, Aquinas's account of the virtue of truth cannot be divorced from what he says about virtue in general, an understanding closely related to contemporary work on the second-person perspective and with broader implications for other moral questions about truth and lying.

II. AQUINAS AND TRUE VIRTUE

The notion that Aquinas's account of virtue ethics in the *Summa theologiae* goes beyond what Aristotle says in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, as indeed Flannery claims about the virtue of truth, is incontrovertible and has long been accepted by scholars. Nevertheless, even to the present day, the extent of their differences has been surprisingly underappreciated. Although I have recently argued this point in detail elsewhere, I present a brief summary here of issues that are pertinent to the present topic.[5]

An initial indication of the distinctiveness of Aquinas's account is that when he introduces the genus of virtue, in *ST* 1-2.55, he does so in a strikingly non-Aristotelian way,

> Virtue is a good quality of the mind, by which we live righteously, of which no one can make bad use, which God works in us, without us.[6]

[5] See especially chapter one of Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas's Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (New York; Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2012).

[6] *ST* 1-2.55.4, 'Virtus est bona qualitas mentis, qua recte vivitur, qua nullus male utitur, quam Deus in nobis sine nobis operator'. This definition is taken from Lombard,

Aquinas further clarifies that God working virtue 'without us' in this passage does not mean that God infuses virtue in us without our consent.[7] Nevertheless, as Eleonore Stump has remarked, 'This is manifestly an un-Aristotelian definition, not least because it is impossible to acquire for oneself by practice a disposition that God works in a person without that person'.[8]

Nevertheless, in response to this manifestly non-Aristotelian definition, one might claim that God, in Aquinas's moral universe, merely provides a short cut to the virtue that is so arduously acquired by habituation according to the *Nicomachean Ethics*. In other words, Aquinas describes the same virtue that Aristotle describes but acquired by different means. Even setting aside the broader problems, however, Aquinas does not permit this interpretation. He agrees that there are indeed some dispositions that are also called virtues and are acquired in the Aristotelian manner by habituation.[9] What Aquinas means by a perfect virtue, however, is infused by God.[10] Although these infused virtues may sometimes have the same names as their acquired counterparts, such as 'justice' or 'temperance', they are specifically different in ways that cannot be reduced to diverse origins.[11] To cite some important examples,

Sent., 2.27.1 no. 1 and draws principally from Augustine, *de Libero Arbitrio* 2.19. Here and elsewhere in this paper, I use the translation with minor alterations of the Fathers of the English Dominican Province, Thomas Aquinas, *The 'Summa Theologica' of St. Thomas Aquinas, Literally Translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province* (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1911-1935). The distinctiveness of Aquinas's approach to the definition of virtue has been pointed out, for example, by Mark Jordan, 'Theology and Philosophy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. by Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 232–251 (pp. 237–241). As Jordan also points out, this definition is the only one that Aquinas sets out explicitly to defend.

[7] *ST* 1-2.55.4 ad 6, 'Infused virtue is caused in us by God without any action on our part, but not without our consent (virtus infusa causatur in nobis a Deo sine nobis agentibus, non tamen sine nobis consentientibus)'.

[8] Eleonore Stump, 'The Non-Aristotelian Character of Aquinas's Ethics: Aquinas on the Passions', *Faith and Philosophy*, 28 (2011), 29 – 43 (p. 32).

[9] See, for example, *ST* 1-2.63.2.

[10] ST 1-2.65.2 resp., 'Only the infused virtues are perfect and are to be called virtues without qualification since they order a human being well toward the ultimate end without qualification (Solae virtutes infusae sunt perfectae, et simpliciter dicendae virtutes, quia bene ordinant hominem ad finem ultimum simpliciter)'.

[11] Aquinas differentiates acquired and infused justice in *ST* 1-2.100.12, claiming that only the latter is true justice. In *ST* 1-2.47.14, he distinguishes acquired and infused prudence. In *ST* 1-2.63.4, he describes acquired and infused temperance as distinct

these infused dispositions can be possessed by anyone, including young children, are unified by the virtue of love (*caritas*) rather than prudence alone and can exist with previously acquired contrary dispositions.[12] Moreover, many of these infused virtues have no Aristotelian counterparts at all, notable examples including faith, hope, love and humility.[13]

Besides these points, a further distinction deserves a special mention, since it throws starkly into relief the non-Aristotelian characteristics and mystery of Aquinas's account of the infused virtues. Aquinas claims that infused virtues are infused *all at once*, not by a gradual process of repeated good actions. Conversely, the infused virtues can also be lost immediately, not by a gradual process of habituating vice, but through a single seriously evil action or omission termed a 'mortal sin':

> For every mortal sin is contrary to love, which is the root of all the infused virtues, as virtues; and consequently, love being banished by one act of mortal sin, it follows that all the infused virtues are expelled (*excluduntur*) 'as virtues' ... As to the acquired virtues, they are not destroyed by one act of any kind of sin. Accordingly, mortal sin is incompatible with the infused virtues, but is consistent with acquired virtue: while venial [i.e. non-mortal] sin is compatible with virtues, whether infused or acquired.[14]

---

species of temperance. He also argues explicitly that a difference of efficient cause alone cannot establish a difference of species, cf. *ST* 1-2.63.4 ad 3, which makes this point by equating the species of sight being given miraculously with sight acquired naturally.

[12] Citing especially *ST* 2-2.47.14, Jean Porter draws attention to Aquinas's claim that anyone, including young children, can have infused virtues. Since these infused virtues include prudence, normally understood as requiring considerable experience and intellectual maturity, this claim further undermines attempts to provide an Aristotelian interpretation of Aquinas's infused virtues. See Jean Porter, 'The Subversion of Virtue: Acquired and Infused Virtues in the "Summa Theologiae"', *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1992), pp. 19–41 (p. 32). Porter and Bonnie Kent also point out the peculiarity that the infused virtues can co-exist with previously acquired contrary disposition, cf. ibid. p. 30 and Bonnie Kent, 'Does Virtue Make It Easy to Be Good? The Problematic Case of St. Paul', in *Les Philosophies Morales et Politiques au Moyen Âge: Actes du IXe Congrès International de Philosophie Médiévale, Ottawa, 17-22 Août 1992*, ed. by Bernardo C Bazán, Eduardo Andújar and Leonard G Sbrocchi (Ottawa: Legas, 1995), pp. 723–732 (p. 728).

[13] Cf. *ST* 2-2.1-46; 161-165.

[14] *ST* 1a2ae q.71 a.4, 'Quodlibet enim peccatum mortale contrariatur caritati, quae est radix omnium virtutum infusarum, inquantum sunt virtutes, et ideo per unum actum peccati mortalis, exclusa caritate, excluduntur per consequens omnes virtutes infusae, quantum ad hoc quod sunt virtutes ... Virtutes vero acquisitae non tolluntur per unum

This passage underlines a vital distinction, namely that, according to Aquinas, the infused virtues are 'excluded' or 'cut off' (*excluduntur*) – in as much as they are virtues – when love is lost by a single serious sin. Hence the word used for such sins is 'mortal', precisely because they kill or extinguish divine love in the soul. Conversely, no acquired virtue can be lost or eradicated by any one action. When stated so plainly, an Aristotelian interpretation of infused virtues is plainly indefensible. Indeed, as Jean Porter has pointed out, even calling infused dispositions 'virtues' is, on this basis, only possible in a carefully qualified sense.[15] Yet even though such virtues are properly speaking the *true* virtues, insofar as they are necessary and sufficient for what Aquinas regards as true human flourishing, their importance and characteristics still do not, to my mind, attract sufficient scholarly attention.[16]

Given that the genus of perfect, proper or true virtue is infused, according to Aquinas, the issue that is most pertinent to the correct interpretation of the virtue of truth in *ST* 2-2.109-113 can be summarised as follows. If the virtue of truth is not an infused virtue or is at least ambiguous, then an Aristotelian interpretation may still be possible. If, however, it is clear that the virtue described in these questions does belong to the infused virtues, that the Aristotelian interpretation is clearly excluded.

III. AQUINAS AND THE VIRTUE OF TRUTH

The virtue of truth, as described in *ST* 2-2.109-113, is a part of a much larger structure of perfective attributes covering the first 170 questions of *ST* 2-2. Assuming that Aquinas regards himself as presenting a coherent account of human flourishing (and regardless of whether or not he succeeds), an examination of this superstructure can and should provide important clues as to the kinds of perfective dispositions he intends to describe within the specific questions on truth.

---

actum cuiuscumque peccati. Sic igitur peccatum mortale non potest simul esse cum virtutibus infusis, potest tamen simul esse cum virtutibus acquisitis. Peccatum vero veniale potest simul esse et cum virtutibus infusis, et cum acquisitis.'

[15] Porter, p. 20. See also Rebecca Konyndyk DeYoung, 'Power Made Perfect in Weakness: Aquinas's Transformation of the Virtue of Courage', *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, 11 (2003), 147–180 (p. 150).

[16] See, for example, *ST* 2-2.22.7, in which Aquinas claims that no strictly true virtue is possible without the (infused) theological virtue of love, indicating that he considers that acquired dispositions, in the absence of the infused virtues, are not strictly true virtues.

The virtue of truth is the sixth of nine virtues that Aquinas connects to justice as 'quasi-potential parts' of justice (*ST* 2-2.80-120), one of three blocks of questions that consider the various parts of justice (*ST* 2-2.61-79), following on from the treatment of the virtue itself (*ST* 2-2.57-60). Justice itself is the fifth of seven major virtues that form the largest scale divisions of Aquinas's account of the particular virtues in *ST* 2-2.1-170. As noted previously, three of these seven major virtues, faith, hope and love (*ST* 2-2.1-46), have absolutely no Aristotelian counterparts, lending credence from the outset to the view that Aquinas's account of virtues in *ST* 2-2 as a whole is non-Aristotelian.

The details of Aquinas's account of justice raise still more problems for the Aristotelian interpretation, as can be seen from many of the topics that Aquinas chooses to address under this heading. He examines, for instance, the vices of reviling, detraction, tale-bearing, cursing, simony, as well as the virtues of religion and its acts of devotion, adoration, service, and prayer, including questions about the petitions of the Lord's Prayer and whether God should be praised in song.[17] These manifestly non-Aristotelian topics make an Aristotelian interpretation awkward at best. Yet the structure of Aquinas's questions on justice exemplifies another peculiarity of his approach, namely that human perfection involves more than simply the acquisition of virtues. After the treatment of the virtue of justice itself, Aquinas appends another disposition, the gift of piety, which is an infused disposition (*habitus*), but is not an infused virtue. Moreover, after the gift, he mentions two other kinds of perfective attributes: two actualisations of virtue and gifts in the form of promissory sentences called 'beatitudes', and three actualisations called 'fruits' that are described elsewhere as a kind of joyful completion of Aquinas's account of true human perfection.[18] So Aquinas's account of justice follows the same fourfold pattern that Aquinas first introduces in the *ST* when he introduces the topic of virtue and its three connected matters: gifts, beatitudes, and fruits. Hence according to Aquinas, his account of the genus of virtue, and the virtue of justice specifically, form only a part of a larger, 'organic' network of virtues, gifts, beatitudes,

[17] *ST* 2-2.72-76, 81-100.

[18] The gift of piety and its corresponding beatitudes and fruits are covered in *ST* 2-2.121. Note that the gift of piety is different from the virtue of piety, which is covered in *ST* 2-2.101, underlining how the homonymous virtue and gift are distinct *habitus*. For an interpretation of the role of the gifts, beatitudes and fruits, see chap. 2 and 4 of Pinsent.

and fruits (VGBF).[19] In whatever way this network is interpreted, the structure of justice seems to be based on a plan that cannot remotely be described as Aristotelian.

What about the virtue of truth specifically? Can the virtue described in *ST* 2-2.109-113 be considered the same as that of *EN* 4.7, despite the many non-Aristotelian characteristics of the broader structure within which these questions are embedded? Certainly there are points of similarity, as Flannery describes, but the differences are also substantial. For example, when Aristotle raises the issue of the dispositions or states of character that are opposed to the virtue of truth, he is referring to vices. By contrast, six of the ten articles of *ST* 2-2.100-113 are explicitly about whether, and to what extent, the actions of those vices opposed to truth are 'sins'. Moreover, if this difference is explained away simply as the disposition compared to its associated action, it should be added that three of the six articles examine the question of whether the acts associated with these vices are *mortal* sins.[20] As noted previously, a characteristic of a single mortal sin, according to Aquinas, is that it expels or cuts off infused virtues (and associated dispositions, including the gifts). The central concern about mortal sins in *ST* 2-2.100-113 therefore strongly implies that these questions describe the infused virtue of truth, not its Aristotelian counterpart, even if they share certain similar characteristics. In addition, the fact that Aquinas argues explicitly that these mortal sins are opposed to the virtue of truth *insofar as they are opposed to the virtue of love* (*caritas*), further underlines that his account of truth is consistent with the principles of his broader account of justice and of virtue generally.[21] These principles are those of the infused virtues, which are unified by love (*caritas*) and cut off by mortal sins.

[19] The VGBF structure of Aquinas's approach to human flourishing is first introduced in the preamble of *ST* 1-2.55, 'We must speak in the first place of the good dispositions, which are virtues, and of other matters connected with them, namely the gifts, beatitudes and fruits (Primo dicendum est de habitibus bonis, qui sunt virtutes et alia eis adiuncta, scilicet dona, beatitudines et fructus).' The VGBF structure sets the standard pattern of nearly all the principal virtues of the *ST*, and is described as constituting an 'organic unity' in Servais Pinckaers, *Morality: The Catholic View*, trans. by Michael Sherwin (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2001), p. 87.

[20] The articles on whether the vices that are opposed to truth are sins are *ST* 2-2.110.3, 111.1, 113.1; the articles on whether they are (or can also be) mortal sins are *ST* 2-2.110.4, 111.4, 112.2.

[21] The sins against truth are described as mortal insofar as they are against love (*caritas*) throughout *ST* 2-2.109-113. See, for example, *ST* 2-2.110.4 resp.

Finally, the dispositions opposed to truth provide another important clue as to the true nature of the virtue being presented. When Aristotle considers the vices opposed to the virtue of truth, he considers only two, boastfulness and mock-modesty, which broadly correspond to the vices that Aquinas describes in *ST* 2-2.112-113. Nevertheless, Aquinas adds two more vices: 'lying' (110) and dissimulation or hypocrisy (111). These additional vices are not without some importance references to Aristotle on points of detail. But the fact is that the structure as a whole, with four vices instead of two, is different in kind and not merely in degree from Aristotle's account of the virtue of truth and its opposed dispositions. In particular, Aquinas's account of hypocrisy has only a tenuous connection to the issues raised in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. The principal sources cited in these articles are scripture and patristic texts, notably those of Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Gregory, and Isidore. Taken as a whole, these characteristics strongly suggest that the virtue of truth in *ST* 2-2.109-113 is not acquired in the Aristotelian manner, but belongs to the genus of the infused virtues and their associated perfective attributes, with much of the inspiration drawn from scripture shaped by patristic tradition.

IV. A SECOND-PERSON ACCOUNT OF THE VIRTUE OF TRUTH

If the virtue of truth is *ST* 2-2.109-113 draws certain characteristics from Aristotle, as Flannery shows, while still being specifically different, what alternative way do we have to interpret what Aquinas means by this virtue? This question is difficult to answer at least in part because the *Nicomachean Ethics* has been the 'canonical text' of virtue ethics for most of the last twenty-three centuries, and because Aristotle has provided a commonly accepted and often fairly convincing narrative of how we acquire virtue and vice, namely by a kind of habituation that is similar to the practice of sports, music, and many other activities.[22] Indeed, this metaphoric understanding is so influential that it is easy to overlook its deficiencies even within the terms of reference of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. For example, it is not easy to explain how genuine courage can be acquired by habituation. In the case of Aquinas's account of true or

[22] The phrase 'canonical text' is from Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory, Third Edition*, 3rd Edition (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007), p. 147.

perfect virtue, however, even habituation does not assist understanding, as noted previously, since these virtues can be lost or infused immediately. The problem is the lack of an alternative 'root metaphor', denoting an embodied experience according to which the peculiar, apparently *ad hoc* details of Aquinas's account make sense.[23] The measure of success for such a metaphor is the number and range of facts that it unifies and makes credible. Without such a metaphor, no matter how many details are stated or inferred, there will be a lack of understanding of what Aquinas means and his account risks remaining incredible.

As I have argued in detail elsewhere, there is, I believe, an alternative embodied experience that makes sense of Aquinas's account, and it is found in surprisingly commonplace situations. Consider, for instance, the virtue of temperance. The Aristotelian account, according to which a mean is selected according to practical wisdom and then practised until it is easy, seems plausible until the question is asked as to how children actually learn to eat and drink in an ordered way. As someone who has many nieces and one nephew, I have observed that as infants they were not good Aristotelians when learning to eat and drink. On the contrary, they first learnt to eat and drink properly in the context of social interaction, such as a contrived game. Indeed these and other children are often far less interested in the food and drink than in the interaction, which the parents obviously use to develop virtue. More specifically, this kind of interaction is one that contemporary experimental psychologists have termed 'joint attention', a working definition of which is 'to share awareness of the sharing of the focus', which is often combined with a sharing of the stance of the other person towards the object of attention.[24] Joint attention is also closely correlated with (and may be equivalent to) a mode of relatedness first investigated by Martin Buber and Emmanuel Levinas, and which is today called *second-personal*.[25]

---

[23] On the importance of metaphor and embodied experience, see Iain McGilchrist, *The Master and his Emissary: the Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2009), p. 116. The term 'root metaphor' is from Michael Ruse, *Science and Spirituality: Making Room for Faith in the Age of Science*, 1st edn. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010).

[24] This working definition is taken from Peter Hobson, 'What Puts Jointness into Joint Attention?', in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. by Naomi Eilan and others (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 185–204 (p. 185).

[25] Martin Buber, *Ich und Du*, 1 aufl. (Leipzig: Insel-Verlang, 1923); Emmanuel Lévinas, *Totalité Et Infini: Essai Sur L'Extériorité* (London: M. Nijhoff, 1961).

The relation of parent and child in these virtue-infusing games provides a clue as to what Aquinas is doing in his account of the virtues, except that in Aquinas's case the second-personal agent is God. The key to his account is that the virtues are associated with the gifts, and gifts (when analysed in detail) could be described as 'second-person dispositions'. A gift can be understood metaphorically as enabling a joint attention relation with God, by which a human person participates in God's stance toward various matters. So, for example, the gift of piety appended to justice generates filial affection, according to which a person 'pays worship and duty not only to God, but also to all people on account of their relationship to God'. In other words, by means of the gift of piety, we take on God's stance towards other people as potential or actual sons and daughters, and hence also our potential or actual brothers and sisters. For this reason, I suggest, the infused virtue of justice, to which piety is appended, has a different form to its Aristotelian counterpart. For example, as noted previously, reviling, detraction, tale-bearing and cursing, are not to be found in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, but are all potential mortal sins in Aquinas's account of justice. These claims makes sense, in the light of this metaphor, because such sins attack those whom God loves as children and so are incompatible with continuing to participate in God's stance and hence God's love. Similarly, the nineteen novel questions on the virtue of religion that Aquinas considers under justice are understandable if the means of growing in virtue to which Aquinas refers is second-person relatedness to God, flourishing in divine friendship. Assuming then that the root metaphor for understanding the virtues and gifts generally is joint attention, how successful is this metaphor for understanding Aquinas's claims about the virtue of truth specifically?

As in the other cases, a successful metaphor will be one that unifies and makes sense of what might otherwise seem to be *ad hoc* claims. As noted previously, in comparison to the *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aquinas multiplies the number of vices opposed to truth from two to four. Can this be understood in the light of the root metaphor of joint attention? I think so, for the following reason. In everyday instances of joint attention that also involve use of language, there are several distinct modes of communication with the second person. One can talk about some concrete or abstract object, an object that is also, for the duration of the conversation and at least implicitly, an object of joint attention. One can also talk about oneself from a first-person perspective. One

can also talk to the second person about the second person, although the latter case arguably reduces to some concrete or abstract object of implicit joint attention, such as 'You looking well', or to some first-person perspective on the other, such as 'I think you are looking well'. Hence the third mode reduces to the first and second modes. Finally, there is non-verbal communication, including, for example, glances, prosody, 'motherese' (in the case of speaking to infants), 'mirroring' and so on.[26] A good deal of this communication may be subliminal but nevertheless has considerable impact on the sense of union of the persons.

These distinct modes of communication therefore also make distinct kinds of actions possible that are opposed to truthful second-person relatedness oriented towards friendship. With language, one can lie about a concrete or abstract object that is, at least implicitly, an object of joint attention. One can also lie in communicating a first-person account of oneself and one's thoughts. Finally, one can deliberately communicate false impressions to the second person by non-verbal means. These distinctions can, I think, be mapped to the non-Aristotelian complex of vices that Aquinas opposes to the virtue of truth. There is boastfulness and mock-modesty (*ST* 2-2.112-113), which cover falsehood about oneself, and which are most closely paralleled in Aristotle's account. Nevertheless, Aquinas adds lying, which can be interpreted as falsehood about objects of implicit or explicit joint attention (*ST* 2-2.110), and hence distinguished from boastfulness and mock-modesty. Finally, there is an important vice that is wholly omitted from Aristotle's account, but which is extremely important to Aquinas and his tradition, namely dissimulation or hypocrisy (*ST* 2-2.111). According to Aquinas, dissimulation covers actions that are not words but which signify something different to what is in one's mind, in other words non-verbal

[26] There is a vast and rapidly growing literature on non-verbal communication, but a key point to note here is that such communication cannot easily be abstracted from the context of a specific 'I' communicating with a specific 'you', re-emphasising the need to think about language not simply in terms of objective symbol use and organization, but as a communicative interaction between persons. See John T. Nusbaum, 'Language and Communication', in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Jean Decety and John T. Cacioppo, 1st edn. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 668–679. The irreducibility and importance of prosody and other non-verbal communication has been shown by many methods, for example, by the effects of damage to the right hemisphere's perisylvian region correlated with an impaired ability to use prosody to express emotion (Kenneth M Heilman, Susan A Leon and John C Rosenbek, 'Affective aprosodia from a medial frontal stroke', *Brain and language*, 89 (2004), 411–416).

communication. The example he selects from Isidore (*Etym*. x), also confirms the kind of falsehood Aquinas has in mind, when he says that 'the word hypocrite is derived from the appearance of those who come on to the stage with a disguised face ... so as to deceive the people in their acting'.[27] Hence, rather than an *ad hoc* list, an account of truth in reference to the metaphor of second-person relatedness can provide an understanding that unifies and makes sense of these multiple vices.

What about the single lie that destroys the virtue of truth? As noted previously, this is perhaps the single most counterintuitive claim from the Aristotelian perspective, since habituation cannot accommodate the instantaneous gain or loss of a disposition. By contrast, even though Aquinas presents an extremely nuanced account of the modes and degrees by which it is possible to sin by falsehood, at least some of these sins can be 'mortal' and hence it is possible to lose the virtue of truth by a single act. But what does this mean? How are we supposed to imagine this is possible?

In general terms and to the best of my knowledge, an account of human flourishing organised round the principle of second-person relatedness, oriented towards friendship, is the *only* way of making sense of the claim that a virtue can be lost or gained instantly. Acts of betrayal or of reconciliation, unlike habituation, can be singular actions. To give an example, a person can betray his spouse without suddenly losing the habitual dispositions of good living, but such dispositions cease to be effective, as virtues organised towards the flourishing of the relationship, so long as the relationship has not been reconciled. This account makes sense of Aquinas's claim that the infused virtues, but not the acquired dispositions, are 'cut off' (*excluduntur*) by singular, gravely evil actions.[28]

Within this promising picture overall, the virtue of truth presents a slightly more challenging scenario, however, since betrayal and reconciliation appear to fall more directly under the scope of justice. As Flannery affirms, however, Aquinas follows Aristotle in identifying the virtue of truth simply as that by which a person says what is true. Sins against truth therefore have to be distinguished, at least in principle if not often in practice, from sins against justice. Indeed, on the basis of a commonly accepted definition of lying, 'to make a believed-false statement to another person with the intention that that other person

[27] *ST* 2-2.111.2 resp.
[28] Cf. Pinsent, p. 75.

believe that statement to be true',[29] it is possible for the liar to speak the truth accidentally, doing no apparent injustice to anyone else, and yet still be guilty of lying, perhaps even mortally. How can the second-person perspective shed light on a way to understand these cases?

Recalling that what is 'mortal' about mortal sin is that it cuts off the possibility of second-person relatedness, culminating in friendship, then if there is no external damage, the logical place to look next is internally. In particular, one way of addressing this question, also drawn from the study of the second-person perspective, has been explored by Stump in *Wandering in Darkness*. In particular, she argues that,

> All moral wrongdoing contributes to psychic fragmentation ... This lack of internal integration undermines or obviates closeness between persons. Even God cannot be close to a human being who is internally fragmented and alienated from himself.[30]

On this analysis, wrongdoing in general causes a psychic fragmentation that inhibits friendship, insofar as a person both wills and rejects second-person union with the other person. *Prima facie*, it is plausible that lying has an especially destructive effect on psychic union, since what is said (or otherwise communicated to the other) and what is believed are at variance with one another. Hence even if what is said turns out to be true, doing no harm to the other personal agent at all, and therefore doing nothing to erode trust, the liar still plausibly damages himself in a way that damages friendship. To put this issue another way, in a situation of psychic fragmentation, there is no longer a person with a wholly unified psyche with whom one can be friends. As rather disturbing corroboration, it is worth adding that liars can apparently get into a state in which they cannot recognise their own lies. This phenomenon suggests the onset of an internal fragmentation and the loss of a coherent grasp of reality. Moreover, habitual lying is often also associated with narcissism, which is also toxic to friendship.[31]

---

[29] James Edwin Mahon, 'The Definition of Lying and Deception', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2008: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/lying-definition/> [accessed 27 November 2013].

[30] Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010), p. 395.

[31] Salman Akhtar and Henri Parens, *Lying, Cheating, and Carrying on: Developmental, Clinical, and Sociocultural Aspects of Dishonesty and Deceit* (Lanham, Maryland: Jason Aronson, 2009).

This analysis suggests that internal fragmentation can destroy the possibility of friendship with a second person, but what about the boundary case of a single lie that remains secret and does no harm? As is well known, singular, external actions can have dramatic moral consequences for relationships, but there may also be a parallel in regard to internal actions. As is commonly experienced and has been verified experimentally many times, 'the act of breaking one's resolve can lead to a general dys-regulation of appetitive behaviour'.[32] In other words, one action can generate a moral transformation. As one way of understanding this, I suggest the following. If a capacity for second-person relatedness is 'hard-wired' into our being, and perhaps even into what it means to be a person, the internal psychic integration of particular persons may work along similar and perhaps derivative lines.[33] Hence, just as it is possible to break an external relationship by a single act of betrayal, it may be possible to break an internal psychic unity by a single serious lie that is accidentally true and does no external harm. On this basis, even one serious lie could render a person internally disordered, unable fully and honestly to relate in a second-personal way, conducive to friendship, until there has been some kind of reconciliation that enables internal reintegration. This is a topic that would need to be explored in more detail, especially as further research is carried out in experimental psychology and social neuroscience. Nevertheless, an interpretation of Aquinas's

[32] Dylan D. Wagner, Kathryn E. Demos and Todd F. Heatherton, 'Staying in Control: The Neural Basis of Self-regulation and Its Failure', in Decety and Cacioppo eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Social Neuroscience*, pp. 360–377 (p. 367). Cf. C. P. Herman and D. Mack, 'Restrained and Unrestrained Eating', *Journal of personality*, 43 (1975), 647–660.

[33] As examples of how second-person relatedness may precede and ground the development of a first-person consciousness, it has been argued that infants are moved to engage in joint attention with others, and even to acquire rudimentary moral perception, even before they have properly formed first-person awareness, some time in their second year. On these and related issues see, for example, M. D. Ferrari and Robert J Sternberg, *Self-Awareness: Its Nature and Development* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998); Julian Paul Keenan, Gordon G. Gallup and Dean Falk, *The Face in the Mirror: The Search for the Origins of Consciousness* (New York: Ecco, 2003); Bruce M. Hood, J. Douglas Willen and Jon Driver, 'Adult's Eyes Trigger Shifts of Visual Attention in Human Infants', *Psychological Science*, 9 (1998), 131–134; Michael L. Kirwan, Lauren K. White and Nathan A. Fox, 'The Emotion-Attention Interface: Neural, Developmental, and Clinical Considerations', in Decety and Cacioppo eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Social Neuroscience*, pp. 227–242. For recent work on the moral awareness of infants, see Paul Bloom, *Just Babies: The Origins of Good and Evil* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2013).

account of the virtue of truth in terms of second-person relatedness seems to be far more promising than Aristotelian habituation.

V. CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The indications that the virtue of truth in *ST* 2-2.109-113 belongs to the category of perfect or infused virtues, as well the doubling of its opposing vices, imply that this virtue is not Aristotelian, despite certain similarities to the corresponding disposition of the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Moreover, singular actions that exclude virtues, a possibility considered under the category of 'mortal sins' in *ST* 2-2.110-113 are incompatible with the 'root metaphor' of Aristotelian virtue ethics, namely habituation.

By contrast, an understanding of the virtue of truth in terms of joint attention or second-person relatedness can accommodate and unify these claims. In particular, the diverse kinds of interpersonal communication involved in second-person relatedness give rise to diverse possibilities for falsehood that can be mapped to the vices that Aquinas lists in these questions. Moreover, the notion that a relationship can be betrayed or reconciled, possibly even when the relationship is between parts of one's own psyche, may also provide a way to understand Aquinas's single most puzzling claim, namely that it is possible for perfect virtues, including truth, to be 'cut off' or restored as virtues by singular actions. In these questions, as elsewhere in *ST* 2-2.1-170, the metaphor that gives insight into Aquinas's claims is joint attention with a second person, not habituation as in the Aristotelian case.

For Aquinas, the principal second-person agent is God, but the general idea of forms of virtue being infused by second-person relatedness has implications beyond this specific theological context. For example, if lying is always wrong, as both Aristotle and Aquinas claim, this has proved a hard position to defend today, ultimately because in many ethical frameworks, the good of truth-telling is only related by a fairly long causal chain to some ultimate good, a connection that is apparently broken in hard cases. By contrast, the virtue ethics of Aquinas may be one example of a way in which truth-telling and human flourishing are more inherently linked, since second-person relatedness properly requires a personal integration that is damaged or destroyed by falsehood. As research into second-person relatedness continues, this approach to truth will warrant further investigation.

Acknowledgments. I am grateful to Eleonore Stump for the opportunity to discuss some of the ideas presented in this paper at an earlier stage of their development. The final stages of this work were also made possible through the generous support of a grant from the John Templeton Foundation.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akhtar, Salman, and Henri Parens, *Lying, Cheating, and Carrying on: Developmental, Clinical, and Sociocultural Aspects of Dishonesty and Deceit* (Lanham, Maryland: Jason Aronson, 2009)

Aquinas, Thomas, *The 'Summa Theologica' of St. Thomas Aquinas*, Literally Translated by the Fathers of the English Dominican Province (London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne Ltd., 1911-1935)

Bloom, Paul, *Just Babies: The Origins of Good and Evil* (New York: Crown Publishing Group, 2013)

Buber, Martin, *Ich und Du*, 1st edn. (Leipzig: Insel-Verlang, 1923)

DeYoung, Rebecca Konyndyk, 'Power Made Perfect in Weakness: Aquinas's Transformation of the Virtue of Courage', *Medieval Philosophy and Theology*, 11 (2003), 147–180

Ferrari, M. D, and Robert J Sternberg, *Self-Awareness: Its Nature and Development* (New York: Guilford Press, 1998)

Flannery, Kevin, 'Being Truthful With (or Lying to) Others About Oneself', in *Aquinas and the Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. by Tobias Hoffmann, Jörn Müller and Matthias Perkams (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2013), pp. 129–145

Heilman, Kenneth M, Susan A Leon, and John C Rosenbek, 'Affective Aprosodia from a Medial Frontal Stroke', *Brain and Language*, 89 (2004), 411–416.

Herman, C P, and D Mack, 'Restrained and Unrestrained Eating', *Journal of Personality*, 43 (1975), 647–660

Hobson, Peter, 'What Puts Jointness into Joint Attention?', in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. by Naomi Eilan, Christoph Hoerl, Teresa McCormack and Johannes Roessler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 185–204

Hood, Bruce M., J. Douglas Willen, and Jon Driver, 'Adult's Eyes Trigger Shifts of Visual Attention in Human Infants', *Psychological Science*, 9 (1998), 131–134

Jordan, Mark, 'Theology and Philosophy', in *The Cambridge Companion to Aquinas*, ed. by Norman Kretzmann and Eleonore Stump (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 232–251

Keenan, Julian Paul, Gordon G Gallup, and Dean Falk, *The Face in the Mirror: The Search for the Origins of Consciousness* (New York: Ecco, 2003)

Kent, Bonnie, 'Does Virtue Make It Easy to Be Good? The Problematic Case of St. Paul', in *Les Philosophies Morales et Politiques au Moyen Âge: Actes du IXe Congrès International de Philosophie Médiévale*, Ottawa, 17-22 Août 1992, ed. by Bernardo C Bazán, Eduardo Andújar and Leonard G Sbrocchi (Ottawa: Legas, 1995), pp. 723–732

Kirwan, Michael L., Lauren K. White, and Nathan A. Fox, 'The Emotion-Attention Interface: Neural, Developmental, and Clinical Considerations', in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Jean Decety and John T. Cacioppo, 1st edn. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 227–242

Decety, Jean, and John T. Cacioppo, eds., *The Oxford Handbook of Social Neuroscience*, 1st edn. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011)

Lévinas, Emmanuel, *Totalité Et Infini: Essai Sur L'Extériorité* (London: M. Nijhoff, 1961)

MacIntyre, Alasdair, *After Virtue: A Study in Moral Theory*, 3rd Edition (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007)

Mahon, James Edwin, 'The Definition of Lying and Deception', in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. by Edward N. Zalta, Fall 2008: <http://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2008/entries/lying-definition/> [accessed 27 November 2013]

McGilchrist, Iain, *The Master and his Emissary: The Divided Brain and the Making of the Western World* (New Haven; London: Yale University Press, 2009)

Nusbaum, John T., 'Language and Communication', in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Jean Decety and John T. Cacioppo, 1st edn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 668–679

Pinckaers, Servais, *Morality: The Catholic View*, trans. by Michael Sherwin (South Bend, Ind.: St. Augustine's Press, 2001)

Pinsent, Andrew, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas's Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (New York; Abingdon, UK: Routledge, 2012)

Porter, Jean, 'The Subversion of Virtue: Acquired and Infused Virtues in the "Summa Theologiae"', *Annual of the Society of Christian Ethics* (1992), pp. 19–41

Ruse, Michael, *Science and Spirituality: Making Room for Faith in the Age of Science*, 1st edn. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

Stump, Eleonore, 'The Non-Aristotelian Character of Aquinas's Ethics: Aquinas on the Passions', *Faith and Philosophy*, 28 (2011), 29 – 43

Stump, Eleonore, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2010)

Wagner, Dylan D., Kathryn E. Demos, and Todd F. Heatherton, 'Staying in Control: The Neural Basis of Self-Regulation and Its Failure', in *The Oxford Handbook of Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Jean Decety and John T. Cacioppo, 1st edn (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), pp. 360–377

MORALITY, THE OTHER, AND THIRD PERSONS

EVA BUDDEBERG

Goethe University Frankfurt am Main

Abstract. This paper seeks to defend the thesis that a justification of morality has to underline the role of the second person in addition to a perpetual and on-going change of perspective that likewise includes the third and first person. To support this argument, the paper conceptualises responsibility as a moral relationship whose core constitutes the encounter with the other whom we recognise as a second-person authority. It then sketches how this pre-cognitive dimension must be supplemented by a cognitive insight which implies a dissociation from the second person and a consideration of third persons. On this basis, it finally provides an outline of how a possible tension between these different but all-together necessary perspectives could best be resolved.

In Anglo-American philosophy, the orientation towards the second-person perspective is most prominently associated with Stephen Darwall and his book *The Second-Person Standpoint*,[1] which is directed against the still dominant trend in this philosophical tradition of understanding morality either from a first-person perspective or from a third-person perspective.[2] By contrast, associating morality essentially with the second person has a longer tradition in continental philosophy due to

[1] Stephen Darwall, *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2006).

[2] See, for example, Christine Korsgaard's book on *Self-Constitution* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009) in which she develops the argument that morality is an essential element of the subject's self-constitution. As a consequence, morality is associated with the *first person*. In contrast, utilitarians, for example, could be said to adopt a *third-person*-perspective, since what counts as morally right can neither be settled by just looking at an *ego* nor an *alter*.

the influence of the phenomenological tradition and especially the face-to-face encounter that is central to the work of Emmanuel Levinas.[3]

I agree with Darwall's general strategy of seeking for the first principles of morality in the kind of a relationship that pertains between myself and an other person who stands in a second-person relationship to me, that is, from the second-person standpoint or perspective; but I think that this approach does not suffice to ground a full account of morality because what we need in order to be able to act in a morally responsible way is, I will argue, a perpetual and on-going change of perspective that also encompasses third persons and thereby the third and first-person perspectives. This perspectival extension is, on the one hand, necessary for developing an understanding of ourselves as thinking beings and for developing our capacity to act. On the other hand, we can only *act* in a morally responsible way if in our acting we not only consider the claims and interests of one single other, to whom we relate second-personally but also, at least potentially and at the background of our thinking, those of every other person who could be affected by our way of acting. Thus, it is not only essential for moral philosophy to emphasise the importance of the second-person perspective but also to deal with the very difficult question of how we can reconcile those additional perspectives that are all necessary for acting morally, that is, in a way that avoids regarding one perspective as absolute to the exclusion of the others.

In order to develop these thoughts in the following, I want to outline in a first step our moral relationship as one of responsibility to others whose core constitutes the encounter with the other whom we recognise in a pre-cognitive way. In a second step, I will describe very briefly how this pre-cognitive dimension must be complemented by a cognitive insight which already implies a dissociation from the second person and a consideration of third persons. In a final step, I will then provide a sketch of how I think a possible tension between these different but all-together necessary perspectives could best be resolved.[4]

---

[3] See above all, his two most important works, Emanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969), and *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence* (The Hague, Boston; London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981).

[4] In this article I am drawing on arguments I develop in *Verantwortung im Diskurs,* (Berlin, New York: Walter De Gruyter 2011). I would like to thank Mahmoud Bassiouni, Manfred Buddeberg, Erin Cooper, Jörg Schaub and the reviewer of the *European Journal of the Philosophy of Religion* for helpful comments, as well as audiences at Prague and Oxford where I was given the opportunity to present earlier drafts of this paper. I would

PRECOGNITIVE RECOGNITION AS THE BASIS OF MORAL RESPONSIBILITY

I would like to start by elucidating briefly where, in my view, the ground of morality is to be found, namely, in a relationship with others that can be conceived of as a relationship of responsibility. Responsibility, in the sense I have in mind here, is a constitutive part of intersubjective relations insofar as human beings share – principally through language – a world with others to whom they have to respond and to whom they could in principle give an account of the reasons for their actions.[5] Through language people communicate with each other and thereby share how they experience each other and the world, and how they act and interact with each other and the world. It is only in a common language that people have a (shared) world at all[6] and it is largely by means of discursive exchanges that the world becomes meaningful for the communicating subjects. At the same time, by speaking about and of something, people address others and experience themselves as counterparts. For with every kind of linguistic interaction, more is implied than merely being a speaker, and it is not merely a question of 'sentences' that make assertions about the world. In every speech act, a *person* will always be addressed – this is true not only for everyday-conversations, but also for speeches and literature when an abstract collective is addressed or even for soliloquy, treating one's own self as a kind of inner audience. Language has aside from – or even perhaps before – its communicative function, a phatic function through which the contact between speaker and addressee is realised or maintained.[7] Thus, every speech act explicitly

finally like to express my gratitude to the editors of the European Journal for Philosophy of Religion, and those of this special issue, particularly Andrew Pinsent for his excellent editorial support.

[5] In *Verantwortung im Diskurs,* I develop this conception of responsibility by way of discussing the work of Hans Jonas, Karl-Otto Apel and Emanuel Levinas; it resembles Darwall's general approach regarding the relation of moral obligation to accountability, which Darwall links with the very idea of a 'second-personal reason': the 'kind of reason that simply wouldn't exist but for the possibility of the second-personal address involved in claiming or demanding'. *Second-Person Standpoint*, p. 9.

[6] See, Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception* (London; New York: Routledge Classics, 2002), p. 413.

[7] Communication theory speaks of communication on the 'Content and Relationship Levels'. (See, Paul Watzlawick, Janet Beavin Bavelas and Donn D. Jackson, *Pragmatics of Human Communication. A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes* (New York: Norton, 1967), pp. 51 ff.

or implicitly presupposes an addressee, without whom it would be void and would not be conceivable.

Furthermore, to address someone presupposes at the same time that the addressed person could answer if he is adequately trained in the same language and not inhibited or unwilling to do so, and beyond that, that the addressee could respond to the claim raised to him both in terms of the issue being addressed and, ideally also, the intention behind the address. As linguistic beings, humans are always in a state of potential to be addressed. Actualising this potential in second-person relations is largely how language first develops, and it is by means of language that human beings are able to construct and share a complex world with others, including with those third persons who are not present immediately to be addressed. But since human beings cannot avoid being addressed by others at will, they, by the same token, cannot refuse to respond (in the broadest sense of a reaction, even the reaction of willing not to respond in any overt way).[8] For once persons are as addressees 'affected by an addressing that makes a demand',[9] any act or behaviour following this address will refer, as Bernard Waldenfels puts it, to this demand and is thus, *nolens volens,* a response, regardless of whether it is positive or negative.[10] Even in the heat of a conflict, it is, as Christine Korsgaard points out,

> [...] impossible to hear the words of a language you know as mere noise. In hearing your words as words, I acknowledge that you are someone. In acknowledging that I can hear them, I acknowledge that I am someone. If I listen to the argument at all, I have already admitted that each of us is someone.[11]

Speaking and acting can thus generally be described in terms of a response to others, a response that also always takes account of previous sequences of speech or action. In this sense, one can state that we human beings *necessarily* answer or respond. And in responding, we simultaneously *recognise* the other – a recognition I see as the very core of what could perhaps be described in Stephen Darwall's vocabulary as the immediate

[8] See, Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomnology of Perception*, p. 420.

[9] 'von einem An-spruch, einem Ansprechen, das einen Anspruch erhebt, getroffen', Bernhard Waldenfels, *Bruchlinien der Erfahrung. Phänomenologie, Psychoanalyse, Phänomenotechnik* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2002), p. 127. My translation.

[10] Ibid.

[11] Christine Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 143.

ground of 'the *second-person* authority'[12] – the authority inherent in a person addressing us, simply in virtue of being a person. Just as we have to presuppose that every speech-act has an addressee, we must also assume that a human person only answers by responding to *someone* – to the message, the question, the expectation or actions – that *an other person* more or less explicitly directed at him. And people cannot – at least not completely – refuse to communicate with each other about the world which they share, since they thereby would lose or neglect an essential dimension of both the other person(s) and themselves. Responsibility is essential, not accidental, to what it means for us to be human.

Recognition, in the sense I have in mind here, should be distinguished from cognition. In the philosophical tradition, the term 'cognition' often implies an intentional 'reaching out' into the world and presupposes a form of consciousness which, in general, is able to cognise something *as something or as a person in a certain role or function*, with certain qualities, capacities, etc. In contrast, 'recognition' of the other describes an immediate, non-intentional and unpremeditated insight we have as soon as we encounter other human beings. Therefore this form of recognition does not take into consideration specific features of our inter-subjective relations with others.[13] Nevertheless the two modes of experience, cognition and recognition, different as they may be, constitute neither two different alternative relations to the world which mutually exclude each other, nor do they have two categorically distinguishable objects. We recognise the other person in that, at the same time we cognise him as a particular person by means of our sensual perception and our consciousness. Only through the entanglement of these two modes of relating do we perceive human beings as human beings. Besides cognition, recognition as grounding an attitude towards other humans is a concrete and common relation which is always present and constitutive of the way in which we exist in this world, and seems to be the essential way in which we encounter the other as a 'second-person authority'.

This 'second-person authority' we have to recognise, being the very core of responsibility, needs further explanation and consideration. But let me first further explicate my argument that responsibility is to be regarded as a fundamental anthropological determinant of our

[12] See, for example, Darwall, *The Second-Person-Standpoint*, pp. 126, 246, 320.

[13] See, for example, Axel Honneth's book on *Reification and Recognition: A New Look at an Old Idea* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008).

being-in-the-world: Ideally, a subject's responses or reactions will harmonise with the suitably expressed and interpreted expectations of others. Whatever way the subject does respond, however, will evoke further reactions from others, and from these related interactions a shared world emerges, being realised, structured and specified in one way or another by every answer given. Like individual musicians contributing their notes to a great, open-ended piece of music, and responding to the notes of others, no response given is truly ultimate.[14] Others who are directly or indirectly affected by each contribution will respond to it, and these responses require further responses, and so on. Every act and every form of behaviour can henceforth be understood as a response to a previous response, expanding the net of responses, and of responses to responses by means of which a world is constituted, structured, and ever renewed.

Equally, responding and speaking also implies that one speaks *about something*. And in uttering this something humans claim, at least implicitly, that what is spoken can be explained and justified. For without any such claim, utterances would be devoid of meaning and without a point; they could no longer be understood even in principle, and the speaker would be treated as aphasic if this practice were to happen constantly. Every claim raised explicitly or implicitly can be put into question by others, and just as the claims raised with every act differ, they can also be put into question in various ways. Furthermore, as persons affected by such an act, either as addressees or third-party observers, we may have and indeed express doubts about the appropriateness of the act in question. In such a case, the actor has to respond again and – according to the context – in different ways if he wants to uphold his claim that his act can be justified.

Every utterance – that is embedded in language, shared and co-determined by others – refers more or less directly or indirectly to previous utterances and can therefore also be described as a response to others, whether to words spoken just previously or in more temporally remote contexts. By the same token, human acts more generally can also be understood as a sequence in a nexus or network of interactions that can be interpreted as a response or reaction to acts preceding them. Both speaking and acting are thereby closely interwoven: speaking is

[14] I would like to thank one of the reviewers for suggesting this illuminating metaphor to me.

also acting, and acting being intentional can in principle be expressed in terms of reasons that in turn rely on language;[15] both are realised in this world shared with others, and both share the claim, at least to some extent, to be understandable and, according to the context, justifiable.

The harmonisation achieved in this 'game' of acts and responses is, however, a matter of degree: in practice, the more that we find our interests and demands being considered in others' speech and actions, the more easily we can accept those explicit or implicit claims as legitimate. Conversely, the less that others succeed in rendering their actions comprehensible and justifiable to us, the less those actions seem legitimate. All kinds of second-order considerations are also implicitly at play, such as the degree of justification that can be assigned to considering a demand as legitimate and so on. Collectively, all these demands and responses determine, structure and specify the relationship between people and, therefore, the communicative basis of a world that can potentially be shared by everyone.

So far, I have argued that it is part of humans' being-in-the-world that they are responsible to others. People cannot – or at least not completely – refuse to communicate with each other about the world that they share since they would thereby miss or neglect an essential dimension of both others and themselves. We cannot, therefore, even in principle choose whether we want to partake in the practice of responding and justifying.

But would it not be sufficient if people, driven by the endeavour to avoid isolation, justified themselves to others only insofar as it seemed necessary to them to achieve a degree of social interaction they subjectively find desirable? If, for example, someone feels obliged to justify his actions to his family but not to strangers, this seems at first glance compatible with the thesis that human beings are obliged to justify themselves to others because this is part of their being-in-the-world. After all, this person does accept responsibility, though not for all others, but only for his family.

As I see it, such a restricted version of being responsible is not compatible with the thoughts presented so far, for it would then be, at best, a particular obligation to *some* others and not a moral duty to *all* others, even if everybody generally had to comply with it. What would be left unaccounted for by such a view is what characterises the relation to

[15] Even if intentional action can *in principle* be described in terms of reasons, the subject of the action may not always be able to articulate these reasons himself.

the other *generally* – that is, independently of the particular relationship between concrete persons.

For it is to be kept in mind what has been stated above about the very core of the responsibility-relationship, namely that the recognition of the other has to be regarded as entangled with but also distinct from any particular intersubjective relation involving cognition of something *as* some 'thing' or *as* the other person in a certain role or function, with certain qualities, capacities, etc. To recognise someone does not mean that we necessarily cognise him as our friend, business partner, enemy, or even as 'the stranger', but rather denotes the pre-cognitive way in which we are bound up with every other: becoming aware of the fact that the other concerns us does not depend on the other being in a particular – positive or negative – relation with us, or him being strange to us, so to speak, in a 'neutral way'.

It is anything but easy to give everyday examples in order to illustrate this point. For almost always it could be argued that in every concrete case there exists a particular form of obligation, for example, stemming from social roles: a person explains to his friend why he did not get back to him; a business partner justifies to his colleagues why he had to raise his prices, and so on. Even in cases in which no personal relations apparently exist, such as, for instance, someone explaining to someone else, previously unknown to him and whom he encounters accidentally, why he demands something, mere convention might provide a motif for the justification. Thus, in almost any situation one can imagine, it is difficult to distinguish clearly whether we respond to the other because we perceive ourselves to be responsible to him due to a particular relational obligation, or more generally, because we simply recognise him.

Nevertheless, I am inclined to defend the idea that we have, independently of conventions or particular relationships, a general duty of responsibility towards other people simply because we recognise them. For even the rejection of an answer that is motivated by the conviction that our action is of no concern to the other implies that we have already conceded on the meta-level that, in general, the other has a right to ask for reasons and to expect a justification whenever our actions would indeed affect him.[16] This right seems to me to be a moral right: we respond to

[16] According to Korsgaard, we do not need reasons to take into account others and their reasons: 'We seem to need a reason not to. Certainly we do things because others want us to, ask us to, tell us to, all the time. We give each other the time and directions,

others and justify our actions to them not only or primarily for reasons that have to do with conventions, positive norms or the like, but because we simply recognise them.

That we recognise others is thus independent of the particular relationship in which we stand to them; what is even more, we cannot decide not to recognise someone[17] without losing an essential dimension of what it means to be a human being. This fundamental attitude of recognition has been summarised by Axel Honneth as 'our active and constant assessment of the value that persons or things have in themselves'.[18] We acknowledge another person not (only) in the form of a cognitive judgment, and we initially do so independently of the question as to which particular person we cognise the other to be, and in which relation we may stand to that person, but we acknowledge him, so to speak, in his 'second-person authority'.

RECOGNITION AND COGNITIVE INSIGHT

Moral responsibility is, as I have tried to make clear so far, inconceivable without the capacities of cognition and intentionality. Beyond the – mainly precognitive and non-intentional – experience that others concern us in their second-person authority, moral responsibility implies moral insight (i.e. that we owe them answers and justifications) and such an insight requires cognitive capacities.[19] For the more distinctly and precisely this sensibility is articulated, the more manifest it becomes that the pre-cognitive relatedness to the other is accompanied by a cognising consciousness that puts us in a position to act and to take into account the particular claims that others have on us. In order to be

---

open doors and step aside, warn each other of imminent perils large and small. We respond with the alacrity of obedient soldiers to telephones and doorbells and cries for help. You could say that it is because we want to be cooperative, but that is like saying that you understand my words because you want to be cooperative. It ignores the same essential point, which is that it is so hard not to.' (Korsgaard, *The Sources of Normativity*, pp. 141f.).

[17] However, this capacity may be numbed or partly destroyed as, for example, Honneth has pointed out in *Reification and Recognition*.

[18] See, ibid., p. 38.

[19] See, Martin Seel, 'Anerkennung und Aufmerksamkeit. Über drei Quellen der Kritik', in *Sozialphilosophie und Kritik*, ed. Rainer Forst, Martin Hartmann, Rahel Jaeggi and Martin Saar (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2009), pp. 157-178, 162ff.

able to act in accordance with the pre-cognitive recognition of the other, human beings need both a conception of what answers, reasons and justifications are, and knowledge about the particular needs and rights that others legitimately possess due to the specific ways in which they are affected. Human beings can only do so by recognising the other, yet by the same token reflecting, and finally judging in which specific ways the other concerns them. Part and parcel of the moral insight is thus also this other dimension: the duty of responsibility is not, as Rainer Forst emphasises, only 'recognised', but also 'cognised'.[20] Human beings must have a cognitive idea of how to do justice to the other if they want to respond to the other not just in any way, but rather in the most morally adequate way.

There are at least three aspects with regards to which cognition needs to supplement the 'sensed' insight upon which the responsibility to the other is based: First, the pre-cognitive recognition of the other has to be reflected upon, so that this experience can guide future action even in situations in which we otherwise might not correspond to it spontaneously. Second, cognition is required so that we can understand, on the basis of a fundamental recognition of the other, the demands addressed to us, weigh them and judge them in line with standards of justice. Finally, cognition comes into play in generalising and thereby in transferring this fundamental experience of a concrete encounter with one singular other *to all conceivable others* – without having encountered each of them personally. To recognise others presupposes personal encounters, or to put it slightly different, to encounter others in their second-person authority – we hereby become aware that we have to respond to them. But even in situations in which we do not encounter other human beings personally, we are able to think of ourselves as being responsible to them because we can and should, by a process of generalisation made possible by reason, transfer this recognition to all of them, just because we *can encounter* them in principle. This generalisation implies a shift from the second-person relation to one that includes others as third persons.

Pre-cognitive or non-intentional relatedness to the other (the recognition of the other) and the cognition of the duty of responsibility as well as the knowledge of the aptness and the possibility of universalisation

[20] Rainer Forst, 'Moral Autonomy and the Autonomy of Morality. Toward a Theory of Normativity after Kant', in *The Right to Justification: Elements of a Constructivist Theory of Justice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007), pp. 43-61, 54.

are thus inherently linked.[21] These processes are interdependent on the level of action, and therefore cannot be hierarchically ranked. We would not even reasonably think about how to respond adequately to others and their demands if we had not already recognised that these others concern us. Conversely, recognition without reason-guided reflection that, in turn, is instructed by the encounter with the other, would easily become a catchword without commitment. Thus, I agree with the general approach of Darwall's argument that we draw from second-person relatedness to ground the foundations of morality: the core of morality is neither a general law nor a relation to myself, but consists rather in our (finding ourselves as) being involved with the respective other human being we have to recognise. We cannot, however, adequately think about how to act in a morally responsible way without taking into account that this other is always already surrounded by others, third persons, whom we also have to recognise and take into account.

Nevertheless, even in those cases in which we not only have to respond to the singular other, but also to anyone who is one step further removed from us, moral responsibility is still in fact about concrete other human beings, for also 'all the others' – as Levinas puts it – 'that obsess me in the other do not affect me as examples of the same genus united with my neighbour by resemblance or common nature'.[22] They concern us, since they are all of them, each in his unique alterity, concrete others – and hence potentially second-person authorities, even if not present to us in a second-personal way at the moment of concern. In contrast to Kantian approaches to morality that start from the universality of the moral law and then subsume individual cases under this law, the experience with the concrete individual person is here transferred to every other person, because he is 'an other' too. It is thus not a question of living up to an abstract principle, but of taking into account the other human in the concrete peculiarity of his being human. Thus, the core of morality is not a general law, but the willingness to relate second-personally with another human being.

At this point in the argument, my more anthropological thesis on responsibility with which I began has been extended to a statement about moral philosophy: human beings recognise in the encounter with the other – independent of every particular relation and in a non-intentional

[21] See the respective thesis in Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being*, p. 159.
[22] Ibid.

way – that this other concerns them, and thereby they acknowledge at the same time that they have to respond to this other, or that they owe this other reasons. Not recognising or cognising that the other has such a fundamental 'right to justification' – as Rainer Forst phrases this core moral insight – would mean to deny him and oneself an essential dimension of what it means for a human to be in the world: namely, to be a creature that shares through language a world with others – a sharing that requires that one gives others justifications for one's actions by being prepared to provide adequate reasons for them.

ACTING RESPONSIBLY, ADJUDICATING DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES

If the core of morality is not a general law but the willingness to relate second-personally to another human being, in the concrete peculiarity of his being human, how can we avoid the risk of immediate second-person relatedness obscuring broader moral concerns? I would like to emphasise at least three aspects that seem important to me: the necessity of an intersubjectively valid measure, that is, *justice*; the possibility of *bracketing one's own perspectives* in order to take other perspectives into account; and finally *verbal communication* with others.

First, in the discourses of justification pertaining to the exercise of moral responsibility, a comparison between various particular claims is assumed that includes both the claims of other persons and one's own claims. In order to evaluate and decide which of them must be considered and to what degree, an intersubjectively *valid measure* is required – *justice*. This central concept of practical philosophy as well as of everyday life, however, is often regarded as being both unclear and complex and, moreover, it varies according to the context of application. But at the core of a generally shared basic understanding, the concept of justice is related at a minimum to the attributes of impartiality,[23] balanced

[23] Rainer Forst, *Contexts of Justice*, XI; see also, for example, Stefan Gosepath, *Gleiche Gerechtigkeit: Grundlagen eines liberalen Egalitarismus* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2004), pp. 36ff.; Otfried Höffe, *Politische Gerechtigkeit: Grundlegung einer kritischen Philosophie von Recht und Staat. Erweiterte Neuausgabe* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2002), pp. 43f.

judgment[24] and authority[25] in judging or, rephrased in a negative sense, to the avoidance of arbitrariness.[26]

Any exercise of moral responsibility, committed to justice in this sense, should therefore transcend the different subjective standpoints and claims, as well as the reasons brought forth to defend them, judging from a superordinate perspective that takes account of the claims of all persons concerned. Those persons must on the one hand be treated as morally equal, but at the same time the extent to which they are concerned by an action must be taken into account. A just evaluation of claims and resulting actions has to consider with equal weight the different contexts (which also implies a reiterative change of perspectives) in which such claims and actions and therefore also their various respective modes of justification can be seen. The kind of context in which an action occurs is neither an objective fact nor arbitrarily determinable. Often, the context is clear, or at least clear enough for moral evaluation, and is only put into question if the evaluation of an action and the claims that have to be considered turn out to be problematic. Nonetheless, every action is subject to a moral principle of justification insofar as, in every situation, every person can in principle demand justifications and this demand can only be rejected with good reasons. At a minimum, every actor in a social context must be at least potentially able to justify why in any particular case he does *not* justify his action.[27] Thus no one can be rightfully exempted from this kind of obligation; hence I argued in the first sections of this paper that we as human beings are potentially concerned with all other human beings, each of whom already affects us as soon as we encounter him. Based on that general provision, human beings are additionally obliged to justify their actions to particular others according to the respective context and particular relations.

In ordinary life, actions are seldom or never completely justified explicitly in detail since the appropriate consideration of all claims and interests hardly ever succeeds, but it is possible to speak of

[24] Forst, *Contexts of Justice,* p. XI.

[25] Ibid.

[26] Forst, *The Right to Justification*, p. 2.

[27] As an extreme example, consider for instance the response given to a prisoner by a guard at Auschwitz, which at least took the form of a minimal justification of why he did not justify his action, 'Hier gibt es kein Warum' ('Here there is no why'). See Primo Levi, *If This is a Man: The Truce* (London: Abacus, 2007), p. 35. I would like to thank one of the reviewers for providing this addendum.

a gradual realisation of such justice. Actions are all the more just the more comprehensively they could in principle be justified to all those concerned with or affected by them. Therefore, it is not possible to determine in advance what is just in individual cases,[28] but it has to be ascertained in discourses of justification, which have to be pursued each time anew. Hence, on the level of application, responsibility and justice are closely entangled: Whereas responsible acting demands that people justify their actions with reasons while taking into account others, their claims and their interests, justice is the measure by which the relevance of the different claims is evaluated in a discourse of justification. Here the third-person perspective, once it emerges, is definitely dominant, although the basic moral reason underpinning this perspective is still second-person authority. For no action can be just if the actor does not conceive himself as responsible in principle to every particular other affected by his actions. On the other hand, in order to be capable of responding and thus to act responsibly at all he has to disregard particular interests, at least temporarily.

This consideration leads me to the *second* point I want to spell out briefly, namely that persons should be able to step back from the immediacy of situations and *temporarily refrain from judging* so that they can weigh different, possibly conflicting or competing, claims against one another. Every actor certainly always remains bound to his own perspective. As a person in the world, however, he is not only reacting to the *external stimuli* of what is immediately present to him, but he also possesses the capacity to reflect upon his actions and thus to step away from his own perspective. Furthermore, every person has, given his different social roles and the very fact that he lives in different and changing contexts, various subjective perspectives and, at the same time, the capacity to switch from one to the other. In order to act responsibly with respect to others, persons must have developed this capacity sufficiently for intermittent dissociation such that they are able to adopt the perspectives of others provisionally in addition to their own. Beyond this capacity, they must also be capable of bracketing these perspectives in order to be able to evaluate the situation from a superordinate

[28] This does not mean that general laws such as 'murder is generally unjust' are not valid, generally. But there may be extreme situations, in which killing seems to be the best and also the most legitimate of all the bad alternatives (it is, however, an open question if we should describe such actions nonetheless as 'murder').

standpoint that is intersubjectively shared most broadly among those influenced by a particular action.

Nevertheless, the final perspective referred to here should not be interpreted as adopting the position of a 'neutral observer', since such an observer simply judges 'in the light of his own individual understanding of the world and of himself',[29] instead of as a result of communication with others. Moreover, in order to minimise the risk of being caught up in one's own views about how to adjudicate between the claims of others 'paternalistically', communications to appropriate the perspectives of others would, I suggest, need to be as direct as possible. The aim ought to be the attainment of an intersubjectively shared perspective, or at least one with some aspects that are apt for reaching consensus.[30] (This process may also be described as a kind of mediation between the second and third-person perspective.) From such an intersubjectively shared perspective, the standpoints that have to be considered can be more easily evaluated impartially since all relevant others have their say and judge the (relative) legitimacy of the particular claims together. It is also possible to qualify one's own position so that a compromise, a conciliation, or even better an agreement, can be attained even in cases of clashes of interests that seem *prima facie* irreconcilable.

Not only is cognitive understanding important in this process, but also considering 'that the normative claims of other subjects can be appraised in terms of their moral weight only if at the same time the particular views [...] are also understood'.[31] For in order to actually understand what kind of 'value a particular interest has for a concrete person', it is equally necessary 'to comprehend his individual life ideals and modes of orientation'.[32] This requires, beyond the cognitive role-adoption, 'a certain degree of reciprocal empathy'.[33] What is implied by empathy is *inter alia* the person's willingness to temporarily suspend the affective evaluation of his own claims and interests. By linguistic means or by specific modes

[29] Jürgen Habermas, 'Remarks on Discourse Ethics', in *Justification and Application* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: MIT Press, 1994), pp. 19-111, 48.

[30] See also Habermas, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990), p. 146; Habermas, 'Remarks on Discourse Ethics', p. 48.

[31] Axel Honneth, 'The Other of Justice: Habermas and the Ethical Challenge of Postmodernism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, ed. Stephen K. White (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 289-323.

[32] Ibid.

[33] Ibid., p. 303.

of speaking that emphasise the merely thetic character of his assertions, as well as by means of certain registers of speech that implicitly 'bracket' their validity, a person can indeed present his claims, from a first-person perspective, in a suspended or provisional way. With the help of such relativising gestures, the person indicates that he distances himself from his own claims and, as a consequence, can more openly defer to those of others. If all participants are able and willing to bracket their own claims, this (provisional) relativisation of their own perspectives will result, it is hoped, in better mutual understanding.

Nevertheless, the attempt at weighing and evaluating interests provisionally, impersonally and without an immediate pressure to act does not preclude an eventual failure. Three cases seem to be of special relevance: a) a lack of rational reflection (for instance, if we in principle care more about our own interests and reasons without justifying this prioritisation); b) a lack of empathy (if we are not willing or able to understand the perspectives, thoughts, feelings and reasons of others because we are too committed to our own and take them to be 'objectively correct'); c) a lack of pragmatism and an inability to reduce complexity (if we do not succeed in balancing the different perspectives in a way that allows us to reach a judgement on which we can then act).

Finally there is a *third* aspect to emphasise: the importance of *communicative interaction*. In order to justify his actions to others possibly concerned by them, the person has to integrate these actions with their claims according to norms which are recognised by – ideally – all persons concerned as valid and appropriate to the situation. For this purpose, he has to demonstrate in his conversation with these others a willingness to reveal the motives and aims of his actions, so that they can come to understand them. For only in communicating with others is it possible for him to decide the extent to which his behaviour may affect the interests and lives of others.[34] By the same token, the acting subject himself can explain his motives and intentions and so on, allowing others to obtain a better understanding of his actions. Moreover the subject learns about others' attitudes toward his actions and what

[34] For Hans-Georg Gadamer, it is part of every true conversation 'that each person opens himself to the other, truly accepts his point of view as valid and transposes himself into the other to such an extent that he understands not the particular individual but what he says' (Hans-Georg Gadamer, *Truth and Method* (London; New York: Continuum, 1975), p. 387).

possible consequences (intended or otherwise) they might have which should be considered in future actions. Thus verbal communication should, however, be understood as always accompanying, sustaining and penetrating human actions[35] both beforehand as well as during subsequent communication.

Even in situations in which reaching an understanding is really intended, it is often not possible to obtain an agreement or some sort of an acceptable compromise. For often people are only insufficiently or not at all capable of articulating their own claims, needs or attitudes in a way that is comprehensible to others. On the contrary, they often find it difficult to engage with others' statements, and a willingness to include the interests of others as comprehensively as possible in one's own action cannot be taken as self-evident. So it is possible that differences cannot be overcome for these or for other reasons. In such cases, it is only possible to search for compromises acceptable for all participants or for situations of mutual avoidance in which justifications are no longer necessary.

Verbal communication is certainly always imperfect and therefore also somehow insufficient; this begs the question, however, of what alternatives are at our disposal to include others as peacefully and equitably as possible in our actions. For language implies the idea of understanding[36] and understanding conversely requires language. Even where we speak of a 'wordless' understanding, this occurrence is interpreted as a 'wordless language' or reflected in a meta-conversation. Thus language in any mode or shape is essential for the mediation of positions as well as for critique or doubts. Different modes of verbal communication, however, should be distinguished which are not equally suitable to maintaining or promoting responsible acting.[37] Moreover, the specific performance of understanding is also very much dependent

[35] See for the concept of communicative action, besides Jürgen Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action*, also his article 'Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action'.

[36] See for the concept of verbal communication, Gadamer, *Truth and Method*, p. 443.

[37] The form of language in which understanding is explicitly the aim is argumentative discourse as Karl-Otto Apel and Jürgen Habermas have described it. They presuppose that the very structure of communication allows for nothing else but the stronger argument and excludes any kind of coercion. Admittedly, this is an ideal construction which in reality is never realised in this form. Nevertheless, we presuppose in every real situation of discussion, indeed in every communication, as a regulative idea that peaceful understanding might be possible. Cf. Habermas, *Theory of Communicative Action, Vol. 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (London: Heinemann, 1984), p. 25.

upon the context in which it takes place because the claims to be provided at various times call for different forms of communication.[38]

Based on this last point, I would like to add a brief social observation. I suggest that one of the reasons why modern societies are so tension-filled and difficult is that more and more human actions may affect future generations with whom a real communication is impossible. Likewise, a direct dialogue – where we encounter others in their second-person authority – rarely takes place with people in distant continents who suffer from environmental and other damage originating in wealthy or industrialised regions. But that does not mean that under these conditions no mode of communication is possible and reasonable. For one thing, with modern means of communication, the potential for better information flow, as well as for visual and hence face-to-face, as well as oral-aural communication at a distance, has been greatly enhanced. In addition, language, due to its inherent capacity for adopting attitudes, also allows for a fictional communication with imaginary partners of dialogue and the anticipation of, in principle, an unlimited number of objections. What is important, however, is that the hypothetical status of those dialogues should be kept in mind and that they always must remain open to corrections and revisions resulting from real communication with the others.[39]

In summary, verbal communication with others, the bracketing of one's own perspective and the endeavour to appropriate the perspectives of others, as well as justice conceived as a discourse of justification,

[38] For instance, while in the legal realm arguments should hold priority due to their assumed aspiration to pertain as generally and as emotionally neutral as possible, other forms of communication have their place in private relations, since much broader ethical claims are at stake which also include the consideration of feelings and moods. Hereby the question of in which context we have to justify ourselves and which linguistic form should therefore be adequate can be interpreted and answered differently depending on the perspective. Seyla Benhabib, for example, underlies that 'situations' cannot be described as 'envelopes and golden finches [...] nor like apples ripe for grading' ('The Generalized and Concrete Other', in *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (Cambridge, England: Polity Press, 1992), pp. 148-177 (p. 163)).

[39] It may be a very interesting subject for further investigation whether some forms of religion may assist this process of second-person-commitment, as Andrew Pinsent has pointed out in a commentary to this paragraph. He suggests that in the generic sense such communication reflects the possible social origins of the term 'religion' from 'to re-connect' (*religare*), combined with a certain reverence and obligation to the other (*religio*).

have all been developed here as three aspects of the exercise of moral responsibility. As I have tried to point out, however, these three correlate inherently with one another: for a just consideration of all those who are concerned with an action, the bracketing of one's own claims and the consideration of the claims of others is always necessary, and we have the best access to those claims by including these others as directly as possible by means of verbal communication. In all of these three aspects, first-, second- and third-person perspectives are entangled. Whereas in *justice* the third-person perspective is usually regarded as predominant, especially when expressed in the form of moral laws, true justice is grounded ultimately on second-person relatedness, qualified by the fact that concrete human situations in practice require the ability to *change perspectives*. Moreover, the second and third-person perspectives are closely interrelated, to the extent that we could not imagine communicating about different claims and needs without the recognition and cognition of the other, even one who is not present, as a second-person authority.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Benhabib, Seyla, *Situating the Self: Gender, Community and Postmodernism in Contemporary Ethics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1992)

Buddeberg, Eva, *Verantwortung im Diskurs. Grundlinien einer rekonstruktiv-hermeneutischen Konzeption moralischer Verantwortung im Anschluss an Hans Jonas, Karl-Otto Apel und Emmanuel Lévinas* (Berlin; New York: Walter De Gruyter, 2011)

Darwall, Stephen, *The Second Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect, and Accountability* (Cambridge, Mass.; London: Harvard University Press, 2006)

Forst, Rainer, *Contexts of Justice: Political Philosophy beyond Liberalism and Communitarism* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2002)

Forst, Rainer, *The Right to Justification*: *Elements of a Constructivist Theory of Justice* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2007)

Gadamer, Hans-Georg, *Truth and Method* (London; New York: Continuum, 1975)

Gosepath, Stefan, *Gleiche Gerechtigkeit*: *Grundlagen eines liberalen Egalitarismus* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2004)

Habermas, Jürgen, *Theory of Communicative Action: Volume 1: Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (London: Heinemann, 1984)

Habermas, Jürgen, 'Remarks on Discourse Ethics', in *Justification and Application* (Cambridge, Massachusetts; London, England: MIT Press, 1994), pp. 19-111

Habermas, Jürgen, *Moral Consciousness and Communicative Action* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1990)

Höffe, Otfried, *Politische Gerechtigkeit: Grundlegung einer kritischen Philosophie von Recht und Staat. Erweiterte Neuausgabe* (Frankfurt/Main: Suhrkamp, 2002)

Honneth, Axel, 'The Other of Justice: Habermas and the Ethical Challenge of Postmodernism', in *The Cambridge Companion to Habermas*, edited by Stephen K. White (Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1995), pp. 289-323

Honneth, Axel, *Reification and Recognition: A New Look at an Old Idea* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2008)

Korsgaard, Christine, *Self-Constitution* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Korsgaard, Christine, *The Sources of Normativity* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996)

Levi, Primo, *If This is a Man: The Truce* (London: Abacus, 2007)

Levinas, Emanuel, *Totality and Infinity* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 1969)

Levinas, Emanuel, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence* (The Hague, Boston; London: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers, 1981)

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice, *Phenomonology of Perception* (London; New York: Routledge Classics, 2002)

Seel, Martin, 'Anerkennung und Aufmerksamkeit. Über drei Quellen der Kritik', in *Sozialphilosophie und Kritik*, ed. Rainer Forst, Martin Hartmann, Rahel Jaeggi and Martin Saar (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2009), pp. 157-178

Waldenfels, Bernhard, *Bruchlinien der Erfahrung. Phänomenologie, Psychoanalyse, Phänomenotechnik* (Frankfurt/M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, 2002)

Watzlawick, Paul, Janet Beavin Bavelas and Donn D. Jackson, *Pragmatics of Human Communication*: *A Study of Interactional Patterns, Pathologies, and Paradoxes* (New York: Norton, 1967)

THE SHADOW SIDE OF SECOND-PERSON ENGAGEMENT: SIN IN PAUL'S LETTER TO THE ROMANS

SUSAN GROVE EASTMAN

Duke University

Abstract. This paper explores the characteristics of debilitating versus beneficial intersubjective engagements, by discussing the role of sin in the relational constitution of the self in Paul's letter to the Romans. Paul narrates 'sin' as both a destructive holding environment and an interpersonal agent in a lethal embrace with human beings. The system of self-in-relation-to-sin is transactional, competitive, unidirectional, and domineering, operating implicitly within an economy of lack. Conversely, Paul's account in Romans of the divine action that moves persons into a new identity of self-in-relationship demonstrates genuinely second-personal qualities: it is loving, non-transactional, non-competitive, mutual, and constitutive of personal agency.

THE QUESTION OF THE SHADOW SIDE

At the end of the conference on 'The Second-Person Perspective in Science and the Humanities' hosted by the Ian Ramsey Centre for Science and Religion at Oxford in July 2013, a question was raised: 'What about the "shadow side" of second-person relationships?' The question highlights urgent issues that in turn press for further discussion. In the intensely intersubjective engagement that occurs between parent and child, what happens when the parent is so inwardly divided, overrun by aggression, or simply depressed and withdrawn, that the child suffers significant psychological if not also physical trauma?[1] What of relationships that

[1] See the questions posed by Vasudevi Reddy, 'A Gaze at Grips with Me', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. Axel Seemann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 137-157 (p. 150), and discussion of infant interaction with depressed and borderline personality mothers, in Peter Hobson, *The Cradle of Thought* (London: MacMillan, 2002), pp. 123-181.

are abusive? Are such interactions to be considered second-personal? Perhaps not; perhaps there is a line beyond which an interaction is more of an 'I-It' than an 'I-Thou' relation, in that one participant is depersonalized and objectified by the other. But where is that line, and are there states that are even worse than depersonalization, states in which one participant understands enough about typical intersubjective engagement to be able to recognize but pervert the capacity for second-personal engagement of the other, as in acts of intentional cruelty?[2]

To put the issues slightly differently, studies of human development and the development of mind through very early interaction between infants and adults have deepened and intensified our knowledge of the degree to which infants are vulnerable to the relational systems in which they are embedded from birth (and before). This is not to say that infants are born as completely passive blank slates. Clearly this is not the case. Rather, infants reach out for relationship and mimetically interact with their caregivers almost immediately after birth, as studies of neo-natal imitation have demonstrated.[3] That immediate interpersonal engagement awakens the interest and awareness of the infant, including an awareness of the self as the object of the parent's attention to the infant; as Vasudevi Reddy has argued, '[I]t is the other's attention at grips with the infant that makes attention exist for the infant.'[4] Even more strongly, Reddy claims, '[Y]ou have to be addressed as a subject to become one.'[5] In other words, from the very beginning the person is irreducibly a 'person-in-relationship-to-another'.[6] If this is the case, then the actions, attitude and gaze of the 'other' have profound power in the constitution of the self, for good or for ill. When parents basically love and attend appropriately to their infants, the infants flourish. But when for a myriad of reasons parents do not, or cannot, attend appropriately to their children, when

[2] Here I use the term 'intersubjective engagement' to refer to primary (dyadic) intersubjective engagement between infant and caregiver, rather than to developmentally later secondary (triadic) intersubjective attention to a third object. See Johannes Roessler, 'Joint Attention and the Problem of Other Minds', in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds.* ed. Naomi Eilan et al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 230-233.

[3] For early studies of infant imitation, see Andrew Meltzoff and M.K. Moore, 'Imitation of facial and manual gestures by human neonates', *Science* 198 (1977), 75-78.

[4] Reddy, 'A Gaze at Grips with Me', p. 138.

[5] Reddy, *How Infants Know Minds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 32.

[6] This formulation of intersubjective identity comes from Hobson, *The Cradle of Thought*, p. 183.

their intersubjective engagement with the child is disturbed, insufficient or destructive, the agency and cognition of the child must also be affected.[7] For example, what happens when the parental 'gaze' towards the infant is a blank stare that ignores the child's increasingly frantic bids for attention? And how will that child in turn interact with others?

These questions point to the 'shadow side' of second-person relatedness: the relational systems in which human beings are embedded and participate have enormous power for ill as well as for good. In this paper I will explore the characteristics of harmful versus beneficial intersubjective engagements, by discussing the relational constitution of the self in a particular New Testament text – Paul's letter to the Romans. Specifically, I will discuss the ways Paul narrates 'sin' as both a destructive holding environment and an interpersonal agent in a death-dealing embrace with human beings. For Paul, sin is not solely or even primarily an attribute or action of individual human agents, but rather operates in a dyadic relationship with humanity, in which persons' desires and actions are co-opted for sin's purposes. The characteristics of this relational system emerge in Paul's narrative accounts of sin and open the door to further consideration of factors affecting the intersubjective formation of persons.

SECOND-PERSON RELATEDNESS

Peter and Jessica Hobson discuss critical factors requisite in the development of genuinely second-personal engagement and joint attention. They take as 'pivotal ... the propensity to identify with the attitudes of other people'.[8] Elsewhere they describe this identification as more than imitation; it is a kind of emotional and psychological sharing that

> involves movement toward and adoption of aspects of another person's psychological stance vis-à-vis objects or events, and assimilation of this [stance] within one's own now-expanded subjective state. There is a sense in which one 'participates in' the other person's state, yet maintains

[7] For compelling evidence supporting this claim, see the studies of children in Romanian orphanages, which indicate a significant decrease in brain development in institutionalized children deprived of normal human interaction. *Scientific American*, 308 (April 2013), 62-67. Published online: 19 March 2013 | <doi:10.1038/scientificamerican0413-62> [Accessed 9 October, 2013.]

[8] Peter Hobson and Jessica Hobson, 'Joint Attention or Joint Engagement? Insights from Autism', in Seemann, *Joint Attention*, pp. 115-136 (p. 117).

> awareness of 'otherness' in the person with whom one is sharing, while also being affectively involved from one's own standpoint.[9]

This process of assimilation to the other's affective and psychological state without absorbing the other into oneself includes shared looks and emotions and a united psychological stance. This is second-personal interaction because it clearly involves an 'I' and a 'you' in mutual awareness. In primary intersubjectivity, parent and child share awareness of shared attention to the infant, such that the infant experiences herself as the object of the parent's gaze. In triadic joint attention, the focus widens to include a common stance towards third objects or events, so that two persons share an awareness of a shared focus.[10] Both cases require mimetic assimilation paired with respect for the otherness of one's relational partner; these notions of assimilation and otherness will guide my discussion of genuine versus pseudo second-person relatedness.

SIN AND THE SELF IN ROMANS

Before tracing the relationship between *sin* and human beings in Romans, two brief observations are in order.[11] First, simply by virtue of

---

[9] Ibid., pp. 120-121. They develop this point in depth, citing Freud's claim that 'identification is not simply imitation but *assimilation*', and the comments of Merleau-Ponty: 'Mimesis is the ensnaring of me by the other, the invasion of me by the other; it is that attitude whereby I assume the gestures, the conducts, the favorite words, the ways of doing things of those whom I confront. ... I live in the facial expressions of the other, as I feel him living in mine.' See Sigmund Freud, 'The Interpretation of Dreams', in J. Strachey, ed. *The Standard Edition of the Complete Psychological Works of Sigmund Freud*, vols 4-5 (London: Hogarth, 1900/1953), p. 150; M. Merleau-Ponty, 'The Child's Relations With Others', in *The Primacy of Perception* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1964), pp. 118, 145-146. Quoted in Hobson, 'Joint Attention or Joint Engagement', p. 130.

[10] Vasudevi Reddy, 'Before the "Third Element": Understanding Attention to Self', in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology,* ed. Naomi Eilan et.al. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 85-109; Peter Hobson, 'What Puts Jointness into Joint Attention?', Eilan et al., *Joint Attention*, pp. 185-204 (p. 185). See also the discussion of joint attention in Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas's Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (New York; London: Routledge, 2012), pp. 47-49.

[11] The interpretation of Romans is highly contested territory. For general support of the interpretation I propose here, see Leander Keck, *Romans* (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries: Nashville: Abingdon, 2005); Paul Meyer, 'Romans: A Commentary', in *The Word in This World: Essays in New Testament Exegesis and Theology* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004); Robert Jewett, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007).

its genre Romans is a second-personal communication, written from a second-person standpoint. It is, after all, a letter written by a particular 'I' – Paul – to a plural 'you' – the members of the churches in Rome, with whom Paul desires a reciprocal relationship of mutual encouragement (1:12) and from whom he hopes for assistance (15:24, 30). Although he did not found these churches, he ends his letter with lengthy greetings to individuals by name (16:1-16). Thus the beginning and ending of this letter bracket everything else Paul says within an affective, interactive bond of love: Romans is not a unidirectional sermon, but a relational appeal. Second, Paul's account of sin and human beings takes on a spiral structure in Romans 1-8, in which three repetitive, overlapping narratives progressively expand the cast of characters and then intensify the personal and emotional effects of Paul's language.[12] The first account depicts sin as what human beings do (1:18-5:12); the second narrative depicts sin as an agent that acts in human history (5:12-7:7); the third narrative dramatizes the relationship between this agent and the self (7:7-25). In their storied qualities, these narratives enclosed within this second-personal letter are themselves second-personal engagements with Paul's readers that draw them increasingly into the drama of sin's lethal involvement and God's life-giving engagement with human beings.[13]

SIN IS WHAT HUMANS DO

The first occurrence of 'sin' in Romans is as a verb that describes what all human beings do: 'All who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law' (2:12). Shortly thereafter Paul claims, 'all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (3:23). This depiction of sin as a human action is what one expects to hear from Paul. There are, however, only

[12] See Leander E. Keck, '[W]hat makes Romans 1–8 tick is the inner logic of having to show how the gospel deals with the human condition on three ever-deeper levels, each understood as a dimension of the Adamic condition: the self's skewed relationship to God in which the norm (law) is the accuser, the self in sin's domain where death rules before Moses arrived only to exacerbate the situation by specifying transgression, the self victimized by sin as a resident power stronger than the law.' 'What Makes Romans Tick?' in *Pauline Theology: Volume III: Romans,* ed. David M. Hay and E. E. Johnson (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), pp. 3-29 (p. 26).

[13] For discussion of stories as 'second-person accounts' see Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 77-81.

four verses in the letter where sin is a verb with human beings as the subjects: Romans 2:12, 3:23, 6:15, and 5:12, which will be discussed later.[14] In these verses, sin sums up other ways of describing human actions characterized as evil. Paul uses somewhat interchangeable verbs to depict this state of affairs: humans 'accomplish' evil (*katergazomai*; 2:9); they 'do' evil (*poieō*; 3:8); they 'practice' it (*prassō*; 1:32; 2:1-3). This human activity results from and further enacts a systemic condition into which human beings have been 'handed over' (*paradidōmi*) by God as a result of their primal idolatry. This condition includes a kind of cognitive impairment: they are delivered over to an 'unreasoning mind' (*adokimon noun*) that corresponds to their failure to acknowledge God (*edokimasan*; 1:28).

Thus sinful human actions are further characterized by a link between distorted cognition, false speech, and evil acts, all of which occur within and among persons: 'there is no one who shows kindness, there is not even one ... Their throats are opened graves; they use their tongues to deceive ... Their mouths are full of cursing and bitterness ... Their feet are swift to shed blood.' (3:9-18) We note in particular here the loss of understanding, the proliferation of false and destructive speech, and the violent breakdown of human relationships.

In this first part of Paul's account of sin, then, the verb denotes the human perpetration of horrifying lies and violence. Paul does not hesitate to label human beings as 'sinful' or 'sinners' (3:7; 5:8, 19; using the substantive *harmartōlos*). Yet at the same time, human 'sinners' act as those who have been handed over into a state of distorted cognition, and who therefore are 'under the power of sin' (3:9). That is, their actions do not enact the unqualified decisions of unfettered minds; they do not see clearly, and in this sense they do not act as free agents. Rather, in sin's first appearance as a noun denoting a power 'over' all people, we hear a hint of its role in the drama of human suffering and dereliction. Furthermore, Paul's analysis is global: '*all*, both Jews and Greeks, are under the power of sin.' This universal condition means there is no room here for labelling some as sinners and some as righteous. Indeed, a good part of Paul's argument leading up to this statement is a series

[14] The verb *hamartanō* appears in the indicative aorist active twice in 2:12, once in 3:23 and 5:12, and in the subjunctive in 6:15: 'Should we sin because we are not under law but under grace? By no means!' In contrast, the noun *hamartia* appears forty-eight times in Romans.

of second-personal warnings addressed directly to his readers, warning them against judging others as sinners in distinction from themselves (2:1-6, 17-29).[15]

The depiction of sin as something that humans do is thus already qualified by the impairment of human agency under an external and oppressive power. It is this oppressive power that comes to the fore in Paul's second narrative, which contains the thickest cluster of *harmartia* language in the letter. In Romans 5:12-8:3 he develops the personification of *sin* itself as a distinct entity that acts on and through human beings; here sin is the partner in an intersubjective constitution of persons-in-relationship.

'SIN' IS WHAT SIN DOES IN AND THROUGH PERSONS-IN-RELATIONSHIP-TO-SIN

In Romans 5:12, immediately after proclaiming salvation from wrath, reconciliation with God and the hope of salvation through the death of Christ, Paul abruptly reintroduces the topic of sin. Now, however, sin is emphatically the subject of active verbs: '[S]in came into the world through one man and death through sin, and so death spread to all human beings *so that* all sinned.'[16] It is through the disobedience of the 'one man', Adam, that 'the many were made sinners' (5:19) precisely because they existed in a cosmos in which death reigned (5:14, 17) and sin reigned through death (5:21). For this reason the human condition is one in which all die and all sin, and Paul traces the cause of this catastrophe back to the primal ancestor whose trespass unleashed the lethal rule of sin and death in human history. For the limited purposes of this paper, what is notable here is the thoroughgoing presumption of relational identity that undergirds Paul's argument. Humanity is so intimately intertwined that one primal person's actions affect all and even constitute all as 'sinners'. For Paul, 'six degrees of separation' is too much – here there are zero degrees of separation between the first ancestor and all human beings.

[15] See Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 192-237.

[16] The translation of this verse is controversial; it also could be translated, 'death spread to all human beings *because* all sinned', thereby laying the blame for death at the feet of human beings. In my view the first translation has stronger support both grammatically and in the context of the larger argument. See Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 375-376, for discussion of the grammatical issues.

Furthermore, sin is not an inert characteristic passed on from generation to generation; rather, it is a self-aggrandizing active agent bent on a hostile take-over of the human race. Sin 'increased' (5:20) and 'reigned in death' (*ebasileusen*; 5:21). Human beings can be 'in sin' (6:1) as well as 'under sin' (3:9), so that sin denotes a realm of existence like a household named after the slave master who rules over it (6:6-11). Sin 'lords it over' mortal bodies (6:12-13) and deals out death to its slaves (6:16-17, 20-21). In this context, the statement, 'The wages of sin is death' does not mean that God punishes sin with death, but that sin *pays* its minions with death; conversely, 'the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord' means that, in contrast with the tyrant sin, God freely *gives* life in the new relational identity constituted in Christ. Indeed, that new relational identity *is* a gift and *is* life, whilst sin's interaction with human beings is transactional and thereby death-dealing. Its slaves are 'free from righteousness' in that they are obeying sin rather than righteousness, but the payback for their actions is death (6:20). Within this transactional system even the law of God operates as a mode of control under sin's direction, as noted in the verse, 'The law came in to increase the trespass' (5:20). In other words, to be under the law rather than the gifted realm of God's grace is implicitly to be in the realm where sin rules (6:14); the law is not strong enough to break sin's grasp, but rather becomes a weapon in the hands of this oppressive regime.

Paul has personified sin as an agent in a death grip with human beings. Here is an account of human beings constituted as 'sinners' in a participatory relationship with sin as a distinct and hostile acting subject. Over against this relationship, he names a different, more powerful participatory engagement with Christ. Whereas sin binds its human minions in a transactional interaction, the constitution of personhood 'in Christ' is characterized by an abundance of 'grace'; this constitution occurs in a relationship qualified by gift rather than wages (5:17; 6:23). Whereas sin's rule overtakes and diminishes the agency of its 'slaves', the dominion of grace strengthens the agency of those who receive grace, so that they themselves 'reign in life through the one man Jesus Christ' (5:17).

In Romans 5:12-21, Paul contrasts these two relational matrices through a third-person account of sin's dominion and the more powerful dominion of grace through Christ. In 6:1-7:6 he switches to the second-person plural to address his listeners and occasionally assumes the posture of an inclusive first-person plural 'we'. Just as the presumed

notion of persons in regard to sin is relational and participatory, so the basis of his appeal to the Romans is their shared baptism 'into' Christ's death so that they might also live together with Christ and each other (6:2-9). Paul conceives of this sharing in Christ's death as a real event in which 'the body of sin' has been destroyed. Metaphorically, this 'body of sin' denotes persons' bodily participation in the relational matrix of sin and death; it has been overthrown by a more powerful relational identity, which also is embodied, being constituted 'in Christ', 'under grace', and through 'the body of Christ' (6:11, 14; 7:4). This is the agency of humanity-in-relationship-to-an-other that is both transcendent and immanent, and Paul repeatedly qualifies the relationship as one of gift (*charisma*) and overflowing, limitless grace (*charis*).[17] Remarkably, the gift is more powerful than sin or sin's use of law. Thus Paul confidently encourages his hearers: 'sin will not rule over you, for you are not under law but under grace.' (6:14)[18]

THE SELF'S CRY FOR FREEDOM

Paul could stop here, but he does not. Yet a third time he narrates the drama of sin and redemption, but now he speaks in the first-person singular (7:7-25). Here the 'I' dramatically performs the experience of the self-in-relation-to-sin and to sin's cooptation of the law. The action of sin is portrayed in increasingly forceful terms, and the human actor recedes increasingly into the background. Sin uses the law of God as a military staging area (*aphormē*) from which to launch its lethal attacks on humanity, specifically by using the law to awaken covetous desires (7:8) and to deceive and kill (7:11). In relationship to sin, the self seems weakened in its own capacity to act effectively. So whereas Paul has depicted the relational matrix of grace as one in which divine action

[17] Rowan Williams catches the sense of this non-competitive and transcendent 'Other' when he describes the 'soul' as 'a whole way of speaking, of presenting and "uttering" the self, that presupposes *relation* as the ground that gives the self room to exist, a relation developing in time, a relation with an agency which addresses or summons the self, but is in itself no part of the system of interacting and negotiating speakers in the world'. *Lost Icons: Reflections on Cultural Bereavement* (London; New York: Continuum, 2003), p. 196.

[18] For the notion of being 'under grace' and the powerful construction of a new human agent therein, see John M. G. Barclay, 'Under Grace: The Christ-Gift and the Construction of a Christian Habitus', in *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5-8*, ed. Beverly R. Gaventa (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013), pp. 59-76.

strengthens human agency rather than competing with it, he depicts sin's agency in competition with the wishes of the self:

> I do not know (*ginōskō*) what I am bringing to pass (*katergazomai*). For
> I do not do (*prassō*) what I want, but I do (*poiō*) the very thing I hate.
> Now if I do (*poiō*) what I do not want, I agree that the law is good.
> But in fact it is no longer I who brings it to pass (*katergazomai*), but sin that dwells within me.
> For I know that nothing good dwells within me, that is, in my flesh.
> For I can want the good, but I cannot accomplish it.
> For I do not do (*poiō*) the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I do (*prassō*).
> Now if I do (*poiō*) what I do not want, it is no longer I who brings it to pass (*katergazomai*), but sin that dwells within me.
> So I find it to be a law that when I want to do what is good, evil lies close at hand. (7:15-21)

We recall that in Paul's first account of sin, human beings are 'sinners' who 'sin'; here sin itself is the surpassing 'sinner' (7:13). Now a conflicted dyadic agency that Paul names 'I-yet-not-I but sin-dwelling-in-me' performs actions previously ascribed to human beings, using the same interchangeable active verbs: doing (*poiō*), practicing (*prassō*) and bringing to pass (*katergazomai*) evil. In this self-in-relation, the agency of sin overrides the wishes of the self, so that Paul repeats verbatim, 'It is not I bringing it to pass, but sin dwelling in me.' Here is an interaction in which one partner overtakes the agency of the other, who says, 'I thought I was acting, but really it was sin acting in me.'[19]

Paul says quite precisely, 'I want to do the good, but what sin accomplishes through me is evil.' Or to paraphrase further, 'I want to do the good, and even think I am doing the good, but find that the results of my actions are evil. So I must not be the one acting, but sin dwelling in me.' Most scholars do not think that Paul is speaking in explicitly autobiographical terms here, but perhaps aspects of his experience can illuminate his meaning. In his letter to the Philippians, for example, he describes himself paradoxically 'as to zeal a persecutor of the church, as

[19] This discussion of agencies merits further development which is beyond the scope of this essay. See in particular the importance of 'congruence between anticipated outcome and actual outcome' for a personal sense of agency, in Elisabeth Pacherie, 'The Phenomenology of Joint Action: Self-Agency versus Joint Agency', Seemann, *Joint Attention*, pp. 343-390.

to righteousness under the law blameless' (Philippians 3:6). Paul thought he was zealously keeping the law and serving God, but discovered that at the same time he was opposing God.[20] Something similar seems to be going on in Romans 7:15-20, where the problem is not one of intentions, but of actions that result in death. In fact the 'I' does not examine or judge his intentions. He does not say, 'Even when I do the good, my desires are selfish or sinful.' He does not say, 'I want to do the good, but am powerless to act.' Rather, an alien agent called sin intrudes between the actions of the one who desires the good and the effects of those actions, producing evil rather than the desired good.[21] In this way Paul drives a wedge between the self that seeks the good and sin as an occupying power. Furthermore, nothing in the text says that Paul here is only talking about believers or unbelievers, regenerate versus unregenerate humanity, or any other re-inscription of a divide between 'godly' and 'ungodly' human beings. Rather, this 'I' who wants the good but finds even that desire for the good exploited by sin is all humanity 'in the shadow of Adam'.[22]

So within Paul's account of the competing agencies of self and sin, sin confiscates the self's desire for the good for its own purposes. Nonetheless there is not a complete erasure of the self, which continues to 'know' (7:18), to 'want' (7:15, 16, 19, 20), to 'find' (7:21), to 'see another law at work in my members' (7:23), and even to 'delight in the law of God in my inmost self' (7:22). The self here is described as occupied territory, its subjectivity colonized by an oppressive foreign power, its members mobilized for actions contrary to its deepest wants, but yet it remains cognizant of its loss of freedom. It experiences this combination of cognizance and crippled capacity as inner division, which is the internalization of sin's lethal embrace.

SECOND-PERSON REFLECTIONS

In second-personal terms, we might say that the self internalizes the relational matrix that Paul calls sin, and experiences that internalization

[20] Jewett, *Romans*, pp. 468-470.

[21] 'Sin causes an objective kind of contradiction between willing and achieving the good.' Jewett, *Romans*, p. 467.

[22] The phrase comes from Otfried Hofius, 'Der Mensch im Schatten Adams', in *Paulusstudien II* (*WUNT* 143; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), pp. 104-154. For my claim that all humanity is in view here, see also Paul W. Meyer, 'The Worm at the Core of the Apple: Exegetical Reflections on Romans 7', in *The Word in This World*, pp. 57–77.

as a division within itself. Peter Hobson discusses the internalization of patterns of relationship by citing Freud's advice to really listen to severely depressed patients:

> Freud concluded that, although one seems to be listening to a single, individual patient expressing his woes, in effect one is witnessing a relationship. An *internal* relationship. And an unpleasant relationship at that. There is one part of the patient who cruelly accuses and torments another part of the patient. ... The patient is the perpetrator as well as the victim of the horrible onslaught. Freud went further than this: he also suggested how this relationship becomes installed in the personality. It has been internalized from outside.[23]

Similarly Paul narrates sin as both external and internal: human beings are 'in sin' and 'under sin', and yet also indwelt by sin. For this reason the self-in-relation-to-sin does not fully know its own actions; it is inwardly divided, it does not understand what it is doing, yet retains some awareness of its predicament.

The effects of such an internalized relationship might be traced out in a multitude of directions. The division within the self contributes to conflicted interaction with others. I noted above the competitive aspect of Paul's portrayal of sin in relationship to human agency: when sin increases, the human capacity for effective action decreases. Such interaction hardly qualifies for the notion of genuine second-personal engagement as empathetic, assimilating to the stance of the other and simultaneously respecting the other's difference. Rather, given the internalization of a competitive intersubjective relational matrix, what happens when persons share attention toward a third object? That is, how does such a distorted primary intersubjectivity open out to secondary or triadic intersubjective engagements? These are immense questions that are beyond the scope of this paper, but Paul's depiction of sin does point towards some possible effects. One might anticipate, for example, interactions characterized by conflict rather than shared enjoyment of an object. In a non-competitive relationship, shared desire is a mode of shared mind; perhaps in competitive relationships, triadic attention leads to the development of mimetic rivalry.[24]

---

[23] Hobson, *The Cradle of Thought*, pp. 162-162.

[24] See in particular Scott Garrels, 'Imitation, Mirror Neurons, and Mimetic Desire: Convergence Between the Mimetic Theory of René Girard and Empirical Research on

In a detailed and moving account of a 'play session' between a child and a mother with borderline personality disorder, Hobson describes the gradual disintegration in their interaction. It began with competition:

> The interchange began with the infant leaning across to take a carriage that was just within reach. The mother held on to the carriage so that the child could not take it, took up a figure herself, and said, 'Put the man in the train', while performing this action herself.[25]

Things went from bad to worse; at one point the mother tugged at the carriage while the child pulled it away. Although allowing the child to have the toy, the mother immediately turned her attention to another carriage rather than to her child. The mother attempted unsuccessfully to catch her child's attention, and the infant attempted to get the mother's attention, also unsuccessfully. In Hobson's words, 'There was a sense of impending chaos', as the mother continued to play without acknowledging her child's wants, and the child turned away from the mother. Towards the end of the session, 'The infant had managed to put her figure in her carriage, and for a brief instant she looked up to her mother, but they did not smile to each other. The infant moved her carriage so that the figure fell over; her mother tried to reach it, and the baby pulled the carriage away. Mother withdrew as if at a loss.'[26] Hobson observes, 'This mother found it very difficult to attune to her infant's current feelings and actions. Again and again she strove to impose her own focus of attention, or to intrude her own action, as the means to get her infant to behave in the way she wanted.'[27] Is this second-person relatedness? Or is it a shadow of second-person relatedness, in which some aspects of the framework of interaction and engagement are present but the substance of genuine joint attention is lacking? One senses a hollow facsimile of engagement without any real union of attention or desire, analogous to the ways in which Paul depicts the interaction between sin and the self as one in which sin overrides the wants of the self and shuts down its agency,

I do not mean in any way to suggest that this troubled mother is a personification of 'sin' in any form, including intentional cruelty. To the

---

Imitation', in *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture*, Issue 12-13 (2005-2006), 47-86.

[25] Hobson, *The Cradle of Thought*, p. 130.

[26] Hobson, *The Cradle of Thought*, p. 131. Hobson is discussing attachment theory, not competition per se, but the competitive, or in his words, 'intrusive' qualities of the mother's interaction with her child thread throughout the account.

[27] Ibid.

contrary, by distinguishing between sin and the self, Paul provides a way to name the interpersonal difficulties without demonizing the person.[28] The patterns of interaction display analogies with Paul's depiction of sin as a kind of debilitating relational *system* in which *both* mother and child are caught. It is worth emphasizing that the dyad of mother and child, or any dyadic relationship, never exists in a vacuum. The mother herself has been formed through other internalized relationships, and also she and her child are embedded in larger, complex social realities. In this case, Hobson describes the disjointed thinking and unresolved past traumas of the mother with borderline personality disorder, and correlates this with her inability to engage with her child. One wonders also if her 'intrusive' or competitive actions disclose psychological impoverishment, without enough emotional capital to sustain the suspension of her own needs for attention in order to attend to those of her child. Without help from other sources, the child in turn will suffer difficulties in thinking, integrating experiences, relating to others, and managing the stresses of life.

To return to Paul's depiction of sin, here sin is a relational matrix characterized by an economy of lack and competitive interactions. But Paul's depiction of sin is complex because he also narrates sin as an agent operating in and through human beings. Internalized, sin enters into a competitive interaction with the self: sin's power increases, and the self's agency decreases. The self experiences this internalized competitive relationship as inner division, a fragmentation of the self.[29] Indeed, there are hints that the fragmentation can become so great that the self loses all differentiation between 'the sin that dwells in me' and its own desires. The person's own wants become opaque to her conscious awareness; she becomes subject to drives that she does not understand, and any help for her will include learning to distinguish between those drives and her own personhood. For example, narrative therapy with victims of anorexia teaches them to distinguish between their own voice and that of anorexia.[30] When a young woman in recovery from anorexia

[28] On this dynamic see Andrew Delbanco, *The Death of Satan: How Americans Have Lost the Sense of Evil* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1995).

[29] See Stump, *Wandering in Darkness*, pp. 125-127.

[30] Richard Maisel, David Epston, and Ali Borden, *Biting the Hand that Starves You: Inspiring Resistance to Anorexia/Bulimia* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004). For a comparison of Paul's account of sin and therapy with victims of anorexia, see my 'Double Participation and the Responsible Self in Romans 5-8', in Gaventa, *Apocalyptic Paul*, pp. 93-110.

says, 'I was at one with anorexia. ... The voice you heard was not mine', her self-description is hauntingly similar to the words of the self in Romans 7:17, 20: 'It is no longer I doing it, but sin which dwells in me.'[31] We might say that Paul and this young woman are both utilizing what narrative therapists call 'a manner of speaking', a way of narrating the self as distinct from death-dealing powers and in need of liberation from them.[32]

Narrating sin as both a destructive relational environment and a hostile agent has many potential effects that invite further exploration. For example, Paul's transactional account of sin in comparison with the giftedness of gracious relationships as genuinely second-personal supports an understanding of his theology of redemption in non-transactional, second-personal terms. Similarly, the global scope of both sin and redemption undergirds his refusal to locate the origin of sin in any particular human beings or group, and thereby argues against an account of evil based on innate or developmental differences between persons.[33] Again, Paul's participatory anthropology could be developed in conversation with notions of the interpersonal foundations of human cognition, empathy and agency. In the remainder of this paper, I will limit myself to the contrast between sin as a pseudo second-personal engagement and the self-in-relation-to-Christ.

CHRIST AND THE SELF

The contrast is most striking when the pattern of Romans 7:17, 20 is placed alongside Galatians 2:20. We recall that in Romans the 'I' laments, 'It is no longer I doing [evil] but sin dwelling in me.' In Galatians Paul proclaims, 'It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me; and the life I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.' In both cases there is an 'I-yet-not-I-but-another' construction of the self. These two contrasting relational identities are thus formally parallel, but they are substantially opposite because the 'other' is radically different. In Galatians 2:20 the relational

[31] Maisel et al., p. 119.

[32] Ibid., pp. 80-89.

[33] One may contrast, for example, Simon Baron-Cohen's depiction of evil as the absence of empathy in some human beings. See his *Zero Degrees of Empathy: A New Theory of Human Cruelty* (London: Allen Lane, 2011).

partner 'loves me' and 'gave himself for me'. As Paul puts it in Romans 5:1, this abundance of divine gift creates an 'arena of grace' in which interpersonal engagement takes place. Similarly, in polar opposition to the 'indwelling sin' that works death, the 'indwelling Spirit of God' will give life to the mortal bodies of Paul's hearers (8:11). Such a relational matrix is indeed second-personal, characterized by a non-competitive, non-transactional account of generous interaction in which divine action promotes the flourishing of human actors.[34] This is the living relationship, of which the relational system that Paul calls 'sin' is a lifeless copy. It is not life, but sin itself that is 'but a walking shadow'.[35]

Are all human interactions one or the other? I do not think so, nor do I think Paul argues for such a radical distinction in human experience in the present time. This is a controversial claim, and it brings me back to the spiral structure of Paul's letter. Why does Paul keep re-telling the story of sin and redemption, moving from a third-person account, to a second-person address, to a first-person performance? I suggest that the repetition serves to name the complexities of human experience caught between the dominion of sin and the reign of grace. Despite Paul's cosmic claims regarding the distinctions between the self-in-relation-to-sin and the self-in-relation-to Christ, in *felt* experience the sequence from the first to the second is not so clear-cut. In Paul's view the cosmic reality is that 'sin' has been dealt a final blow; it has been done away with through the death of Christ (8:3). In fact, after Romans 8:3 sin ceases to play any notable role in the letter. As noted earlier in this essay, Paul employs the third person to narrate this state of affairs. He shifts into second-person plural to encourage his hearers to realize their freedom in union with Christ and shake off the bondage of their subservient relation to sin. But as if recognizing that his listeners' experience may lag far behind this new reality, in Romans 7:7-15 he shifts into first-person singular, employing a method of classical rhetoric known as 'speech in

[34] It may seem odd to characterize the Spirit of God as second-personal rather than as an abstract, impersonal entity. Scriptural language about God, however, is intensely personal and affective, and Paul's language in Romans is no exception. The Spirit is the medium of divine love 'poured into our hearts' (5:5); the thoughts and attitudes (*phronēma*) of the Spirit are life and peace (8:6); the Spirit of God 'leads' people (8:14) and 'intercedes' for them (8:26). Indeed, the Spirit 'bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God' (8:16). The Spirit thus is characterized as a personal agent who operates internally in human lives.

[35] Shakespeare, *Macbeth*, Act 5, Scene 5.

character' or *prosopopoeia*, which ancient orators used to 'depict and elicit emotion'.[36] And Paul's language is indeed full of pathos. Towards the end of this performance, the speaker cries out, 'Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?' (7:24).

Here the 'I' describes in profoundly affective language what Paul earlier narrated as the cosmic and corporate reality of human bondage. That is, the speaker assimilates to the emotional experience and attitude of the listener who *feels* that bondage, thereby inviting her into a responsive identification with the speaker. This is a literary enactment of the 'propensity to identify with the attitudes of others' that Hobson and Hobson name as critical for joint engagement with others.[37] I suggest that it has the capacity to 'move' the reader motivationally and emotionally as well as cognitively.[38] The speaker identifies with the reader, the reader identifies with the speaker, and together they hear Paul's words of encouragement: 'There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus ... the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set *you* free from the law of sin and death.' (8:1-2) This is a movement from joint engagement to joint attention in the context of a gifted relationship.

Finally, this mutual engagement mirrors and enacts God's second-personal involvement with humanity. Immediately after announcing liberation from sin, Paul grounds that liberation in God's act of sending 'his own Son in the likeness (*en homoiōmati*) of the flesh of sin and for sin' (8:3). Space precludes a full discussion of this dense and crucial claim for Paul's theology; the point here is that the language of 'likeness' is that of mimetic assimilation to the condition of another, which, in the context of the life of Christ, is also an expression of a desire for the good of the other and for union with the other.[39] God in Christ moves into the human condition, assimilates to it, is attuned to it. The logic of Paul's second-personal appeal to the Romans proceeds from this embodied

[36] Stanley K. Stowers, *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994), p. 20.

[37] 'Joint Attention or Joint Engagement?', pp. 117, 130.

[38] Ibid.

[39] For exegetical and critical support of this claim, see my 'Philippians 2:6-11: Incarnation as Mimetic Participation', *Journal for the Study of Paul and his Letters*, 1.1 (Fall 2010), 1-22. A finely-tuned definition of the twofold desires of loving union with another is offered by Silverman as follows: 'a disposition towards relationally appropriate acts of the will consisting of disinterested desires for the good of the beloved and unity with the beloved held as final ends.' See Eric J. Silverman, *The Prudence of Love: How Possessing the Virtue of Love Benefits the Lover* (Lexington Books, 2010), p. 59.

divine participation in the human condition, which in turn invites and instigates a responsive second-personal engagement with God in Christ.

CONCLUSION

Paul would find himself at home in second-person accounts of the development of personhood through participation in primary relationships that irreducibly shape us. For Paul, human agents never act alone; they always are constituted in interpersonal matrices that also are internalized. Human agents always are selves-in-relation-to-another, and hence also breathtakingly vulnerable to malign relational networks that appropriate aspects of what would today be called second-person relatedness but lead to destructive ends. It is impossible to opt out of this condition of relatedness, which is necessary for human flourishing and yet renders a person vulnerable in the absence of a more potent relationship of love. Indeed, for Paul, as also for contemporary accounts of the constitution of personhood in terms of second-person relatedness, there are no freestanding individuals, but only selves constituted through participation in intersubjective engagements characterized either by sin or by the grace of God in Christ. The first kind of engagement is transactional, competitive, unidirectional, and domineering, operating implicitly within an economy of lack or emptiness. Within this deficient interpersonal environment the actions of the human agent become dissociated from her wants or, more precisely, there is no longer a wholly coherent meaning to what 'she' wants because she is internally divided. This is a picture of pseudo second-personal relatedness; a sort of pseudo engagement that appropriates aspects of the form but lacks the bond of love that underwrites genuine joint attention and interaction. In contrast, Paul's account in Romans of the divine action that moves persons into a new identity of self-in-relationship demonstrates genuinely second-personal qualities: it is loving, non-transactional, non-competitive, mutually responsive, and constitutive of human agents who may thereby 'reign in life through the one man, Jesus Christ' (5:17).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Barclay, John M. G., 'Under Grace: The Christ-Gift and the Construction of a Christian Habitus', in Beverly R. Gaventa, ed., *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5-8* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013), pp. 59-76

Baron-Cohen, Simon, *Zero Degrees of Empathy: A New Theory of Human Cruelty* (London: Allen Lane, 2011)

Delbanco, Andrew, *The Death of Satan: How Americans Have Lost the Sense of Evil* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1995)

Eastman, Susan, 'Double Participation and the Responsible Self in Romans 5-8', in Beverly R. Gaventa, ed., *Apocalyptic Paul: Cosmos and Anthropos in Romans 5-8* (Waco: Baylor University Press, 2013), pp. 93-110

Eastman, Susan, 'Philippians 2:6-11: Incarnation as Mimetic Participation', *Journal for the Study of Paul and his Letters*, 1.1 (Fall 2010), pp. 1-22

Garrels, Scott, 'Imitation, Mirror Neurons, and Mimetic Desire: Convergence Between the Mimetic Theory of René Girard and Empirical Research on Imitation', in *Contagion: Journal of Violence, Mimesis, and Culture*, Issue 12-13 (2005-2006), 47-86

Hobson, Peter, *The Cradle of Thought* (London: MacMillan, 2002)

Hobson, Peter, and Jessica Hobson, 'Joint Attention or Joint Engagement? Insights from Autism', in Axel Seemann, ed., *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 115-136

Hobson, Peter, 'What Puts Jointness into Joint Attention?', in Naomi Eilan et.al., eds., *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 185-204

Hofius, Otfried, 'Der Mensch im Schatten Adams', in *Paulusstudien II* (*WUNT* 143; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), pp. 104-154

Jewett, Robert, *Romans: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis: Fortress, 2007)

Keck, Leander, *Romans* (Abingdon New Testament Commentaries: Nashville: Abingdon, 2005)

Keck, Leander, 'What Makes Romans Tick?', in David M. Hay and E. E. Johnson, eds., *Pauline Theology: Volume III: Romans* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1995), pp. 3-29

Maisel, Richard, David Epston, and Ali Borden, *Biting the Hand that Starves You: Inspiring Resistance to Anorexia/Bulimia* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2004)

Meltzoff, Andrew and M.K. Moore, 'Imitation of Facial and Manual Gestures by Human Neonates', *Science*, 198 (1977), 75-78

Meyer, Paul W., 'Romans: A Commentary', in *The Word in This World: Essays in New Testament Exegesis and Theology* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004)

Meyer, Paul W., 'The Worm at the Core of the Apple: Exegetical Reflections on Romans 7', in *The Word in This World: Essays in New Testament Exegesis and Theology* (NTL; Louisville: Westminster John Knox, 2004), pp. 57–77

Pacherie, Elisabeth, 'The Phenomenology of Joint Action: Self-Agency versus Joint Agency', in Axel Seemann, ed., *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 343-390

Pinsent, Andrew, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas's Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (New York; London: Routledge, 2012)

Reddy, Vasudevi, 'A Gaze at Grips with Me', in Axel Seemann, ed., *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 137-157

Reddy, Vasudevi, 'Before the "Third Element": Understanding Attention to Self', in Naomi Eilan et.al., eds., *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 85-109

Reddy, Vasudevi, *How Infants Know Minds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008)

Roessler, Johannes, 'Joint Attention and the Problem of Other Minds', in Naomi Eilan et al., eds., *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 230- 233

Silverman, Eric J., *The Prudence of Love: How Possessing the Virtue of Love Benefits the Lover* (Lexington Books, 2010)

Stowers, Stanley K., *A Rereading of Romans: Justice, Jews, and Gentiles* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1994)

Stump, Eleanore, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010)

Williams, Rowan, *Lost Icons: Reflections on Cultural Bereavement* (London; New York: Continuum, 2003)

THE SECOND-PERSON PERSPECTIVE IN THE PREFACE OF NICHOLAS OF CUSA'S *DE VISIONE DEI*

ANDREA HOLLINGSWORTH

Berry College

Abstract. In *De visione Dei*'s preface, a multidimensional, embodied experience of the second-person perspective becomes the medium by which Nicholas of Cusa's audience, the Benedictine brothers of Tegernsee, receive answers to questions regarding whether and in what sense mystical theology's divine term is an object of contemplation, and whether union with God is a matter of knowledge or love. The experience of joint attention that is described in this text is enigmatic (paradoxical, resisting objectification), dynamic (enactive, participatory), integrative (cognitive and affective), and transformative (self-creative). As such, it instantiates the *coincidentia oppositorum* and *docta ignorantia* which, for Cusa, alone can give rise to a vision of the infinite.

I. INTRODUCTION

In the fall of 1452, Kaspar Ayndorffer – Abbot of the Benedictine cloister of St. Quirin in Tegernsee – wrote a letter to Nicholas of Cusa in which he asked the cardinal for clarification on the relationship between knowledge [*intellectus*] and love [*affectus*] in the path toward union with God.[1] As M.L. Führer has shown, this question – which was debated among late medieval and Renaissance theologians such as Hugh of Balma, Jean Gerson, and Vincent of Aggsbach – was intricately connected with what Ernst Cassirer has called the Renaissance's 'subject-object problem'.[2] As

[1] Edmond Vansteenberghe, 'La correspondence de Nicolas de Cuse avec Gaspard Aindorffer et Bernarde de Waging', Letter 3 in *Autour de la docte ignorance: Une controverse sur la théologie mystique au XVe siècle,* Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters (Münster: Aschendorff, 1915), XIV, p. 110.

[2] M.L. Führer, 'The Consolation of Contemplation in Nicholas of Cusa's *De visione Dei*', in *Nicholas of Cusa on Christ and the Church*, ed. by Gerald Christianson and

it bore on the theory and practice of contemplation, the subject-object dilemma was this: Does mystical knowledge of God involve sentience of God as divine object apprehended by the rational faculties? Or, rather, does such knowledge so obfuscate the felt distinction between the human mind and God that the divine cannot be seen but only indwelled and loved? When Cusa wrote *De visione Dei* ('*On the Vision of God*', hereafter *DvD*)[3] in late 1453, he did so in large part to address the monks' concerns and confusions over this core question.

My wager in this essay is that attending to the rich and subtle ways in which the second-person perspective (hereafter SPP) permeates *DvD* will shed important light on Cusa's method of addressing the theological puzzles that corresponded to the Renaissance's subject-object problem. Although this suffusion is evident throughout the treatise, it is most potent in *DvD*'s unique preface – the 'zero degree' of the work that 'serves as basis for all the chapters the follow'.[4] Attending (with an eye to both form and content) to the suffusion of the SPP in the preface will demonstrate that, in *DvD*, a multi-dimensional experience of relationality becomes itself the answer to the theological queries the Tegernsee community had posed to Cusa.

How could an experience of the SPP begin to solve the complicated question of whether and in what sense God is an object of contemplation? Let us begin by noting that, for Cusa, God is as God acts. In *De Docta Ignorantia*, for example, Cusa figures the divine as gerund – infinite

---

Thomas M. Izbicki (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 221-240; Ernst Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, trans. by Mario Domandi, rev. edn (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2000), pp. 123-191.

[3] For the Latin I have consulted Jasper Hopkins, *Nicholas of Cusa's Dialectical Mysticism: Text, Translation and Interpretive Study of De Visione Dei* (Minneapolis, MN: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 1985). English renderings of the text are from H. Lawrence Bond's translation in *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings* (New York, NY and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), pp. 235-289.

[4] Michel De Certeau, 'The Gaze Nicholas of Cusa', *Diacritics* 17, no. 3 (Autumn 1987), 2-38 (p. 11).

[5] *De Docta Ignorantia* (*On Learned Ignorance*) II.3.107, in *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings*, trans. by H. Lawrence Bond (New York, NY: Paulist Press, 1997), pp. 86-206 (p. 135).

[6] *De apice theoriae* (*On the Summit of Contemplation*). Here Cusa indicates that some of his earlier works (among them *DvD*), when properly understood, show the same basic understanding of God as presented in this, his final work (viz., God as *Posse Ipsum*). ¶ 16, in *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings*, trans. by H. Lawrence Bond (New York, NY and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), pp. 293-303 (p. 300).

becoming: 'God [...] is the enfolding (*complicatio*) of all in the sense that all are in God, and God is the unfolding (*explicatio*) of all in the sense that God is in all.'[5] In his final work, Cusa names God *Posse Ipsum*[6] – pure possibility, the '"Can" before, behind, and present in all that "is"'.[7] Furthermore, for Cusa, this God who makes possible and subsists within the world's unfurling cannot be thought, named, or experienced except via *docta ignorantia*, learned ignorance, wherein subtle dialectical reasoning reveals God's unknowability and impossibility to be theology's positive content. Learned ignorance is achieved through the *coincidentia oppositorum*, the coincidence of opposites, a theological method that 'resolves contradictions without violating the integrity of the contrary elements and without diminishing the reality or the force of their contradiction'.[8] In *DvD*'s preface, I argue, it is the phenomenon of the SPP which functions as the experiential vehicle that carries ignorance and coincidence, and, in so doing, serves to answer the monks' core question about whether mystical theology's divine term is apprehended along subject-object lines, and whether that apprehension is a matter of love or knowledge. Like the divine infinity of which Cusa speaks, second-person relationality is experienced as enigmatic (paradoxical; non-objectifiable), dynamic (active; participatory process), integrative (holistic; uniting cognitions and affections) and transformative (creative; self-forming).

II. DEFINITIONAL AND METHODOLOGICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The mode of interpersonal relatedness called 'second-personal' has, in recent years, been closely associated with phenomena denoted by the term 'joint attention'. Diverse modes of joint attention are commonplace, but often studied in relatively 'pure', since uncluttered, forms in parent-child interactions such as pointing, gaze-following, and reciprocal turn-taking. With Andrew Pinsent, I think Peter Hobson's phrase 'share[d] awareness of the sharing of the focus'[9] is a helpful (because clear yet broad) specification of 'joint attention', which, for reasons Pinsent

[7] H. Lawrence Bond, 'Introduction', in *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings*, ed. by H. Lawrence Bond (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1997), pp. 3-84 (p.57).

[8] Bond, 'Introduction', p. 22.

[9] Andrew Pinsent, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas' Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (New York and London: Routledge, 2012), p. 43. Peter Hobson, 'What Puts Jointness into Joint Attention?' in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy*

has highlighted, is often used interchangeably with 'second-person perspective'. To my mind, this close association is usually not problematic as long as (1) it is acknowledged that the focus of subjects' joint attention can be either each other, (an) outside object(s), or a combination of these; and (2) following Vasudevi Reddy's suggestion, language is changed from 'attention' to 'attending', for the second-person phenomenon is a dynamic, embodied, relational process rather than a static mental state in the mind of a single detached observer.[10] Reddy's argument is in line with others in psychology and social neuroscience critiquing spectator theories of social knowing (rooted in cognitivist paradigms) and calling instead for models that are based on emotional and interactional engagements between subjects, rather than mental states associated with mere observation of one person by another.[11]

With regard to method, the interpretive approach employed in the present study is based in Paul Ricoeur's hermeneutic phenomenology. In his *Symbolism of Evil*, Ricoeur discusses ways in which mythic forms of discourse constitute the 'verbal envelope of a form of life, felt and lived before being formulated.' Myths and other forms of poetic language are, he claims, 'broken expressions of a living participation in an original Act' – expressions which refer readers 'back to an experience lying at a lower level than any narration or any gnosis'. A reader's access to this experience comes by way of 'sympathetic imagination' – a 're-enactment' in which the interpreter 'adopts provisionally the motivations and intentions' of the subjectivity (or subjectivities) figured by the text. Mystical texts are often deeply mythic and poetic, and Cusa's *DvD* is no exception.[12] It therefore admits of precisely the interpretive tactic just outlined. Thus, in Ricoeurean form, I aim carefully to surface the phenomenological features of the experience to which *DvD* attests through an imaginative and interdisciplinary recovery of the 'initial

and Psychology, ed. by Naomi Eilan, Christoph Hoerl, Teresa McCormack, and Johannes Roessler (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 185-204 (p. 185).

[10] Vasudevi Reddy, 'A Gaze at Grips With Me', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Axel Seeman (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), pp. 137-157.

[11] On this topic, the literature is vast; a helpful and up-to-date starting point is: Leonard Schilbach, Bert Timmermans, Vasudevi Reddy, Alan Costall, Gary Bente, Tobias Schlicht, and Kai Vogeley, 'Toward a Second-Person Neuroscience', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 36 (2013), 393-462.

[12] Paul Ricoeur, *Symbolism of Evil*, trans. by Emerson Buchanan (New York: Harper and Row, 1967), pp. 166, 167, 6, 19.

event' of the discourse. I maintain a cautious eye to the 'distanciation' between (on the one hand) *DvD's* initial *Sitz-im-Leben* and (on the other hand) the way the work appears to my contemporary eyes; however, I also acknowledge the possible fruitfulness of risking a 'new event of discourse' made possible by the 'range of interpretations' that that very distanciation opens up.[13] My interpretation is attuned to textual attestations of the experience(s) of implied author and implied readers, and is informed by multiple disciplines, including theology, philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience.

III. THE SECOND-PERSON PERSPECTIVE IN *DE VISIONE DEI*'S PREFACE

Imagine the surprise at St. Quirin when Cusa's long-awaited manuscript arrived with an extra item – a painting of an all-seeing face, probably Christ's. In *DvD*'s preface, Cusa guides the monks through a quasi-liturgical exercise revolving around the painting he sent to Tegernsee along with his treatise. Cusa describes the portrait's omnivoyant face as a similitude which, when meditated upon in the manner he describes, will give rise to a vision of the invisible.

In the greeting immediately preceding the preface, Cusa addresses the Tegernsee monks directly as *dilectissimis fratribus,* 'dearest brothers', informing them that his explicit aim is to reveal or make known [*pando*] to them the facility [*facilitatem*] of mystical theology. How will this revelation occur? '[B]y means of a very simple and commonplace method I will attempt to lead you [*vos*] experientially [*experimentaliter*] into the most sacred darkness.'[14] A kind of SPP relation between implied authorial subject and implied reader-subjects is thus grafted into the treatise's formal structure from the very start. The joint focus of the relation is movement toward the sacred darkness, but from different vantage points: the author leads through writing, and the audience follows through reading. And yet the obvious spatial and temporal separations between author and readers mean that it is a deeply ambiguous relation, constituted as much

[13] Paul Ricoeur, 'Philosophy and Religious Language', in *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination,* trans. by David Pellauer, ed. by Mark I. Wallace (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), pp. 35-47 (p. 38).

[14] *DvD*, ¶ 1. Citations will follow H. Lawrence Bond's numbering system, which divides the treatise into chapters and paragraphs. As the greeting and preface precede the first chapter, references to them cite paragraph numbers only.

by invisibility and absence as by intimate, reciprocally-aware presence. Sharing or jointness, note Hobson and Hobson, 'requires connectedness and differentiation between [at least] two people (with minds)';[15] surely this requirement is met at a basic level. Yet the incongruous timetable and lack of a clear sense of the other's presence render the engagement[16] less than straightforward. Yet, as will become increasingly apparent, the deep enigma of relationality is a key part of Cusa's overall theological point.

In the preface, Cusa tells the brothers that the painting of the all-seeing figure will help him in his efforts to 'transport [*vehere*] you [*vos*] to divine things by human means'.[17] The engine of the transport Cusa means to elicit is, I argue, the SPp. In *DvD*'s preface, the experience of mystical theology emerges slowly from the folds of a subtle and fecund relational matrix. Ultimately it is the mysteries that inhere within the act-event of attending jointly (through, e.g., bodily coordination, gaze, mentalization, dialogue around shared experience) which constitute the conditions for an experienced revelation, the intellectual and emotional impact of which will begin to address the brothers' deep theological concerns.

3.1 The First Phase

The preface's exercise consists of three distinct yet interrelated moments or phases.[18] The first corresponds with Cusa's instructions to the monks to:

> Hang this up some place, perhaps on a north wall. And you brothers [*vos fratres*] stand around it, equally distant from it, and gaze at it. And each of you will experience that from whatever place one observes it the face will seem to regard him alone. To a brother standing in the east, the face

[15] Peter Hobson and Jessica Hobson, 'Joint Attention or Joint Engagement? Insights from Autism', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Axel Seeman (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), pp. 115-135 (p. 120).

[16] For De Jaegher et al., 'engagement' – defined as 'the qualitative aspect of a social interaction as it starts to "take over" and acquire a momentum of its own' – can transpire even if the experience of another person being there is ambiguous. The authors also concede that the 'relational dynamics' of the 'coupling' of 'autonomous agents' can happen on quite different levels as well as timescales. Hanne De Jaegher, Ezequiel Di Paolo, and Shaun Gallagher, 'Can Social Interaction Constitute Social Cognition?', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences,* 14, no. 10 (Oct. 2010), 441-447 (pp. 441, 442, 443).

[17] *DvD*, ¶ 2.

[18] Michel De Certeau, 'The Gaze Nicholas of Cusa'.

> will look eastward; to one in the south, it will look southward; and to one in the west, westward. First, therefore, you will marvel [*admirari*] at how it is possible that the face looks on all and each one of you at the same time. For the imagination of the one who is standing in the east cannot conceive that the icon's gaze is turned in any other direction, such as the west or south.[19]

Upon commencement of the ritual described in this passage, observe how the dimensionality of shared awareness of the sharing of the focus multiplies considerably, going far beyond the imperfect author-reader relation earlier discussed. Mere preparation for the ritual – that is, the cooperative act of creating a semicircle around the icon with each brother placed equidistantly in relation to it – demands shared attention to, at minimum: the treatise's instructions (read or spoken), bodies (one's own and others'), the painting, and a common idea of what the space will look and feel like when everyone is in place. As they get in formation, the brothers' embodied, mutually-aware relations create a container for what will become a shared experience of the uncontained.

Once begun, the meditation itself soon produces a room full of immobile admirers – in De Certeau's terms, a 'simultaneity of stupefactions'. The all-seeing eyes of the portrait's face are a point whose vectors 'implant' in each spectator,[20] forming with each one a captivating relation experienced as exclusive and inimitable.[21] Cusa later says that this undividedly attentive gaze, which 'never abandons anyone',[22] looks

---

[19] *DvD*, ¶ 3.

[20] De Certeau, 'The Gaze Nicholas of Cusa', p. 15.

[21] As McGinn notes ('Seeing and Not Seeing'), the common link between divinity and *visio* in Platonic-inspired Christian theologies can be observed in (among many others) Meister Eckhart and William of St. Thierry, both of whose writings Cusa engaged. The roots of this connection can probably be traced to two main sources: first, Paul, who had utilized language of face to face vision, beholding, and transformation in his letters to the church at Corinth (1 Cor. 13:12; 2 Cor. 3:18); second, Plotinus, who had indicated that the essence of intellectual principle (*nous*) is movement toward the good through coincident seeing and being-seen (*Ennead* V.6.5). Bernard McGinn, 'Seeing and Not Seeing: Nicholas of Cusa's *De Visione Dei* in the History of Western Mysticism', in *Cusanus: The Legacy of Learned Ignorance*, ed. by Peter J. Casarella (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), pp. 27-53. For a comparison between Plotinus and Cusa on *visio*, see Werner Beierwaltes, *Visio facialis – Sehen ins Angesicht. Zur Coincidenz des endlichen und unendlichen Blicks bei Cusanus,* Phil.-hist. Klasse. Sitzungsberichte Jahrgant 1988, Heft 1 (Munich: Bayerische Akademie de Wissenshaften, 1988).

[22] *DvD* V.15.

on all things for the express purpose of bringing each one into its best possible state of existence.[23] Within this intimate and life-formative experience, it is reasonable to suppose that there are phenomenological similarities to what developmental psychologist Vasudevi Reddy calls the 'gaze at grips with me', which forms, in infancy, the basis for attentional abilities later in life.[24] '[T]his ability to feel gaze to self', argues Reddy, 'is crucial for further development of the meaning of attention.'[25] For Reddy, the roots of what it means to establish a relation between subject and object are in the feeling of the gaze directed toward the self. In this first moment of Cusa's para-liturgy, wherein each monk is asked to sense himself as the object of an infinitely caring, non-abandoning divine sight, there is, I think, a kind of re-entrance into what D.W. Winnicott called 'transitional space' – a primordial relational sensibility in which 'subject' and 'object' are two sides of one emergent, creative process. To begin to understand what it means to attend to mystical theology's divine object, one must re-enter – via disciplined, contemplative imagination – the paradoxical yet self-formative space of the 'gaze at grips with me'.

Yet, if the icon is to mediate a vision of infinity, the gaze cannot remain so particularized. Each brother is thus asked to direct his imagination to the perspectives of other exercitants who are placed variously around the perimeter. Here it may prove fruitful to venture educated hypotheses regarding brain networks involved in this kind of mental act. Contemporary social neuroscience has shed some light on neural networks involved in attending to an object whilst maintaining explicit

[23] *DvD* IV.9.

[24] Reddy's research on early infant interpersonal interactions has added to the growing body of evidence suggesting that infants as young as two months of age respond emotionally to attention directed to the self. Vasudevi Reddy, 'On Being an Object of Attention: Implications for Self-Other Consciousness', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences* 7, no. 9 (Sept. 2003), pp. 397-402; Vasudevi Reddy, *How Infants Know Minds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008). Reddy's research complements neurological studies showing young babies' remarkable sensitivity to mutual gaze. Direct gaze has been correlated with enhanced cortical arousal in infants as young as 4-months, and has also been associated with enhanced neural processing of emotional expressions in babies of the same age. See, respectively, Teresa Farroni, Gergely Csibra, Francsca Simion, and Mark H. Johnson, 'Eye Contact Detection in Humans from Birth', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 99, no. 14 (July 2002), 9602-9605; Tricia Striano, Franziska Kopp, Tobias Grossmann, and Vincent M. Reid, 'Eye Contact Influences Neural Processing of Emotional Expressions in 4-month Old Infants', *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience* 1, no. 2 (2006), 87-94.

[25] Vasudevi Reddy, 'A Gaze at Grips With Me', p. 144.

awareness of (an)other's attending to the same object. Several studies have demonstrated activation of the medial frontal cortex, particularly the ventral and dorsal regions, during joint attending.[26] Such activation, it is hypothesized, may correspond both to the monitoring of emotions in the self and the other as well the monitoring and predicting of actions (one's own and others').[27] Attending jointly, then, appears to activate brain areas responsible for both emotional and evaluative processing. Based on this research, we might hypothesize that the Tegernsee monks, as they take up the invitation to attend to both the self's and the other's perspective(s) in relation to the icon's gaze, enter an experiential space marked by both emotional processing and cognitive appraisal – an integration of *affectus* and *intellectus*.

In the first phase of the ritual, then, the monks enter an 'interpersonally coordinated affective [and cognitive] state'[28] which serves to open up a new perception of the painting. As each brother contemplates the perspective of self, other, and the gaze, he begins to experience the omnivoyant face as an iconic window onto the coincident eternality and temporality, finitude and infinity, of the divine. The SPP has, moreover, formed a space wherein the brothers' *own* relationally-constituted minds and bodies become instantiations of innumerable coincidences of opposites.[29]

3.2 The Second Phase

The next phase of the exercise introduces movement. The brothers are instructed to fix their eyes on the gaze while walking from west to east,

---

[26] David M. Amodio and Chris D. Frith, 'Meeting of Minds: The Medial Frontal Cortex and Social Cognition', *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 7, no. 4 (2006), 268-277; Leonhard Schilbach, Marcus Wilms, Simon B. Eickhoff, Sandro Romanzetti, Ralf Tepest, Gary Bente, N. Jon Shah, Gereon R. Fink, and Kai Vogeley, 'Minds Made for Sharing: Initiating Joint Attention Recruits Reward-Related Neurocircuitry', *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience* 22, no. 12 (2010), 2702-2715.

[27] Amodio and Frith, 'Meeting of Minds'; Chris D. Frith and Uta Frith, 'The Neural Basis of Mentalizing', *Neuron* 50, no. 4 (2006), 531-534; Schilbach et al., 'Minds Made for Sharing'.

[28] Hobson and Hobson, 'Joint Attention or Joint Engagement?', p. 116.

[29] This prefigures the theme of contemplator-as-icon, which will emerge more explicitly later in the treatise. On this topic see H. Lawrence Bond, 'The "Icon" and the "Iconic Text" in Nicholas of Cusa's *De Visione Dei* I-XVII', in *Nicholas of Cusa and His Age: Intellect and Spirituality*, ed. by Thomas M. Izbicki and Christopher M. Bellitto (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 177-97.

and then back again from east to west, in opposite directions. In so doing, each:

> will discover that the icon's gaze continuously follows him. And if he returns from east to west, it will likewise not leave him. He will marvel [*admirari*] at how its gaze was moved, although it remains motionless, and his imagination will not be able to grasp [*capere*] how it is moved in the same manner with someone coming forth to meet him from the opposite direction.[30]

Silent awe attends the experience of being uninterruptedly followed by a physically immobile moving gaze. Bewilderment is, moreover, doubled as the brothers are asked to imagine the perspective of other brothers walking in opposite directions; for they, too, experience the gaze's uncannily fluid fixity.

The SPP profoundly shapes the contours of this experience. At a basic level, the exercise demands attention be paid to one's own movement and one's own gaze. But the icon's stationary-yet-peripatetic eyes represent another kind of aware and attentive 'other', and it is awareness of this other's constant awareness of one's own movement (and gaze) which becomes a key source of astonishment. Additionally, when the exercitant's imagination attempts to grasp the perspective of another brother who is focused on the icon's eyes (and on whom the icon's eyes are focused), but moving in the opposite direction, a yet deeper sense of awe sets in, for there now emerges a confounding 'co-possibility of two meanings ... which are *opposites*'.[31] Here, theological meaning – namely, the coincidence of opposites, the ideal of which is, for Cusa, Christ – emerges out of the feeling of bodily movement in an attuned relational context. Such movement is reminiscent of what psychobiologist Colwyn Trevarthen calls 'synrhythmicity' between infant and caregiver – that is, closely engaged, cooperative 'brain-generated rhythms of intentional and emotional movement'.[32] This 'synrhythmic regulation', posits Trevarthen,

---

[30] *DvD*, ¶ 3.

[31] De Certeau, 'The Gaze Nicholas of Cusa', p. 16.

[32] Colwyn Trevarthen, 'The Generation of Human Meaning: How Shared Experience Grows in Infancy', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Axel Seeman (Cambridge, MA, London, England: The MIT Press, 2011), pp. 73-113 (p. 85). Cf. Colwyn Trevarthen, Kenneth Aitken, Marie Vandekerckhove, Jonathan Delafield-Butt, and Emese Nagy, 'Collaborative Regulations of Vitality in Early Childhood: Stress in Intimate Relationships and Postnatal Psychopathology', in *Developmental Psychopathology: Vol. 2. Developmental Neuroscience*

gives rise to the infant's later propensity to engage in ritual play, games with objects, shared tasks, and eventually symbols, naming, and discourse.[33] If Trevarthen is right that early intersubjective synrhythmic regulation becomes the bedrock for later cognitively-complex acts of imagination, self-awareness, and shared meaning, then perhaps Cusa's instructions to the Tegernsee brothers to synchronically orbit the icon represents a kind of return, re-uptake, and re-appropriation of the primal 'vitality dynamics'[34] of infancy out of which emerge higher cognitive capacities – for example, capacities to think about (and find oneself astonished by) the paradoxes of the concept of infinity.

Moreover, the experience that attends this second moment of the exercise does indeed appear to be marked by astonishment at just such paradoxes. Glimmerings of mystical theology's term begin to show forth from within the 'felt immediacy'[35] of attending and being-attended-to in mutual, moving awareness. But this term, it seems, is non-representable: 'The abnormality of this persistent gaze brings about the disappearance of the possibility of grasping it as one object among others, before or after others. The observer thought he was seeing. Changed into the observed, he enters into an "astonishment" which is not accompanied by any representation. The experience of the gaze is a surprise without an object.'[36] What does the contemplator contemplate if not an infinite coincident*ing*-of-opposites which he both passively undergoes and actively creates? The non-representable but nevertheless real proliferation of second-person awarenesses in the ritualistic movement around the icon serves to perform, through participation, the mystery to which the text attests. As described in this text, the mystery perceived is turning out to be inextricably tied to the dynamic and primal I-Thou relations in which each contemplator lives and moves and has his being.

(2*nd* ed.), ed. by Dante Cicchetti and Donald J. Cohen (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1995), pp. 65-126.

[33] Trevarthen, 'The Generation of Human Meaning', pp. 100-101.

[34] Trevarthen, 'The Generation of Human Meaning', p. 74. Cf. Daniel Stern, *Forms of Vitality: Exploring Dynamic Experience in Psychology, the Arts, Psychotherapy and Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

[35] Trevarthen, 'The Generation of Human Meaning', p. 74. Cf. Stein Bråten, *The Intersubjective Mirror in Infant Learning and Evolution of Speech* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2009).

[36] De Certeau, 'The Gaze Nicholas of Cusa', p. 18.

3.3 The Third Phase

If the monks have been duly awestruck by the first two phases of the exercise, there is perhaps a danger that the exercise will turn into a theatre of the absurd. If meaning is not to disappear in a dark emotional sea of wonder, what is needed is some kind of 'common vision'[37] or 'universal viewpoint'[38] that can begin to form a bridge of rational understanding between the marvelled actors. The third stage, which makes explicit the implicit sociality that has undergirded the para-liturgy all along, provides this bridge. It repeats the processional movement of the second, but adds an element of verbal interpersonal engagement. The brothers are instructed to coordinate, once again, their opposed travels around the half-circle perimeter of the all-seeing image. But this time, the brothers' bodies will not merely pass each other by; rather, they will stop, turn toward each other, and co-testify to the *aporiae* they have experienced:

> Let [a brother] have one of his brothers pass across from east to west while looking at the icon, as he himself moves from west to east. When they meet let him ask the other whether the icon's gaze continuously turns with him, and he will hear that it moves just the same in the opposite direction. He will believe [*credere*] him, but unless he believed him, he would not imagine this to be possible. And when he is shown this by his brother, he will discover that the face looks unfailingly on all who walk before it even from opposite directions. Therefore, he will experience that the immobile face ... is moved toward a single place in such a way that it is also moved simultaneously toward all places, and that it beholds a single movement in such a way that it beholds all movements simultaneously.[39]

The brothers first torque their movements, thereby creating opposition, then attune their communications, thereby creating cohesion. In De Certeau's words: 'The scene of this third moment combines two opposed activities which consist, for the partners, in each one doing the opposite of the other (inverse trajectories) and then in saying to each other the same thing ("You, too? Yes."). The "doing" stems from a contradictory plurality: the "saying", from a unifying coincidence.'[40] Second-person relating makes possible this plurifying and unifying movement – a movement

[37] Ibid., p. 19.
[38] McGinn, 'Seeing and Not Seeing', p. 39.
[39] *DvD*, ¶ 3.
[40] De Certeau, 'The Gaze Nicholas of Cusa', p. 20.

which, as De Certeau points out, essentially amounts to an enactment of Cusa's doctrine of *coincidentium oppositorum*.

The brothers' 'interpersonally coordinated affective state'[41] of wonder now becomes explicit as they use language to participate in each other's attitudes. But the encounter goes beyond emotional sharing only; the brothers are also mutually engaged in a high-level cognitive act – namely, conceptualization of the other's perspective in relation to the self's standpoint, along with abstract philosophic reflection on universality and particularity, and temporality and eternity. Here it is interesting to note that many current SPP/joint attention theorists argue that human capacities for higher-order cognition and cultural learning are rooted in the more basic, affectively-charged experience of attending jointly with others during the first years of life. For example, Tomasello et al. argue that the early sharing of emotions, experience, and activities with others ('shared intentionality') enables human children to build and employ dialogic cognitive representations later in life.[42] Likewise, according to Hobson and Hobson, 'higher functions of human mentality arise through the interiorization of interpersonal processes'.[43] Henrike Moll and Andrew N. Meltzoff argue that joint attention in the first years of life offers the necessary foundation for the development of the later ability to take perspectives, including the capacity to understandthe 'clash' of confronting perspectives.[44] In light of such theories,[45] the third moment

---

[41] Hobson and Hobson, 'Joint Attention or Joint Engagement', p. 116.

[42] Michael Tomasello, Malinda Carpenter, Josep Call, Tanya Behne, and Henrike Moll, 'Understanding and Sharing Intentions: The Origins of Cultural Cognition', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 28 (2005), 675-691. Tomasello's claim that humans are the only species to engage in shared intentionality has been significantly discounted by findings in primatology. See David A. Leavens, 'Joint Attention: Twelve Myths', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Axel Seeman (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), pp. 43-72.

[43] Hobson and Hobson, 'Joint Attention or Joint Engagement', p. 131.

[44] Henrike Moll and Andrew N. Meltzoff, 'Joint Attention as the Fundamental Basis of Understanding Perspectives', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Axel Seeman (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), pp. 395-413. Moll and Meltzoff's recent work appears to indicate that while children as young as 3 years old can take other people's visual perspectives, it is not until the ages of 4 or 5 that children are able to understand another's point-of-view of an object when it directly confronts their own perspective of the same object. Henrike Moll, Andrew N. Meltzoff, Katharina Merzsch, and Michael Tomasello, 'Taking Versus Confronting Visual Perspectives in Preschool Children', *Developmental Psychology*, 49, no. 4 (April 2013), 646-654.

of Cusa's exercise witnesses to a richly integrative and transformative experience. At its core there remains the sense of being held within the grip of a loving, life-giving gaze – an experience akin to elementary preverbal, emotion-based, nonrepresentational[46] forms of joint attending in infancy. But with the addition of verbal social interaction *about* others' minds/perspectives, the ritual comes to enact or perform a turn to more explicitly attributive, contentful thinking about others' minds.[47] Here we have what might be described as an intelligent and adaptive return to and performance of the developmental transition *from, on the one side,* the preverbal, emotion-based 'synrhythms' of infancy (what Hans Loewald calls the 'primary level of mentation' that precedes awareness of distinctions between the inner and the outer, the subjective and the objective) *to, on the other side*, linguistically-mediated, contentful, concept-based representations of others' mental states and subjective experiences. The Tegernsee monks' worries over whether mystical knowledge of God is a matter of being affectively submerged within the divine or set at a noetic remove from the divine are addressed as the brothers enact ritualistically the human developmental transition *from* implicit-automatic, 'affective' mentalization *to* explicit-controlled 'cognitive' mentalization.[48]

If the brothers' dialogue with each other represents explicit thought and speech about the content of each others' experience – that is, if the conversation is about something that is, in some sense, objective – then we need to inquire as to what that thing might be. What, indeed, *is* the

[45] All of which are connected to the idea of neural 're-use' in which brain circuits initially established for one cognitive purpose can be put to different uses later on. Michael L. Anderson, 'Neural Reuse: A Fundamental Organizational Principle of the Brain', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 33, no. 4 (2010), 245-266.

[46] Daniel D. Hutto proffers a theory he calls 'Radical Enactivism' by which he seeks to defend the existence of (and explain the developmental salience of) such early nonrepresentational forms of 'mind minding'. See Daniel D. Hutto, 'Elementary Mind Minding, Enactivist-Style', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Axel Seeman (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 2011), pp. 307-341.

[47] Developmentally speaking, this transition usually happens between ages three and five, and is, as Hutto argues, likely mediated by language acquisition. Daniel D. Hutto, *Folk Psychological Narratives: The Sociocultural Basis of Understanding Reasons* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012).

[48] Peter Fonagy and Patrick Luyten, 'A Developmental, Mentalization-Based Approach to the Understanding and Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder', *Development and Psychopathology*, 21, no. 4 (2009), 1355-1381.

experience that is being reciprocally witnessed to and believed in this third phase of the ritual? The preface's instructions read: 'When they meet let him ask the other whether the icon's gaze continuously turns with him, and he will hear that it moves just the same in the opposite direction.'[49] The content of the conversation is, then, the experience of the infinite gaze as mediated by the icon while one is moving (with others). But is this experience contentful in any real sense? Is it some*thing* that can be talked about? Not really. As we have seen, the experience of the gaze is deeply ambiguous – it is a kind of non-objectifiable relational dynamism. What, moreover, has conditioned the possibility of this non-objectifiable relational dynamism? Precisely second-person relatedness, as previously discussed. What all of this means is that when the actors communicate about the experience – when they bear witness to one another and believe one another – they are, in fact, relating second-personally with reference to an experience of relating second-personally. That is to say, the positive *content* of the brothers' shared attending is *itself* the mystery that emerged from their prior experience of shared attending. Like two mirrors faced together, the brothers reflect the limitless back to one another as they mutually testify and mutually believe.

3.4 Summarizing the Preface's Three Phases in Light of the SPP

In the three phases of the exercise in *DvD*'s preface, rich and multilayered second-person relatedness integrates and transforms motifs common in Platonically-inspired streams of Christian thought (e.g., the perspective shift, the similitude/image, the gaze, the reflection, the face, the mirror). This transformation results in a liturgical performance which leads exercitants into an experience of *coincidentia oppositorum* and *docta ignorantia* – one that is mediated, I suggest, by a kind of ritualized re-entrance into the developmental cradle of human consciousness wherein distinctions between emotion and cognition, and subject and object, are only just beginning to dawn. Cusa's reader/hearers are invited to learn ignorance by re-entering the relational primordiality of infancy, the cradle of the self's emergence with all its varieties of chaos and genesis. The embodied relational rhythms of infancy, inasmuch as they give rise to the neurocognitive architecture that structures selfhood, represent a kind of zenith of 'possibility' with regard to human life: at no other

[49] *DvD*, ¶ 3.

point in the lifespan is synaptic growth and bio-psycho-social-emotional development more intense or more important. To re-enter through ritual the relational patterns of infancy is to re-enter the space of possibility out of which the self emerged. Contra Freud, such re-entrance is not regressive but rather, I think, adaptive: 'It seems that there are a variety of ways in which evolution has allowed living creatures to outwit Darwinian pressures and "have a life" after all', writes Robert Bellah. 'It may even turn out that it is "functional" to have spheres of life that are not functional [...] What are sometimes called "offline" activities, like sleep, play, and worship, may in fact turn out to be adaptive.'[50]

The brothers at St. Quirin had wondered about the nature of the 'highest capability of the mind' [*synderesis*] by which the devout soul attains unto God.[51] The attainment unto God via the highest capability of the mind cannot be described with propositions, Cusa seems to reply; however, if you experience yourself being (re)created, moment-by-moment, in and through the dynamisms of the I-thou encounter, perhaps you will experience union with *Posse Ipsum*, possibility itself.

In DvD's preface, sharing awareness of the sharing of the focus furnishes the Tegernsee monks with an embodied experience that becomes symbolic of or contemporaneous with the infinite divine *visio* whose reality is both felt and cognized, and can be neither objectified nor dissolved. In the main text of *DvD* – which is written in the form of a prayer, reminiscent in many ways of Augustine's *Confessions* – Cusa continues to shepherd his readers/hearers down the path of the coincidence of opposites to the place of learned ignorance and on into the dark luminescence of a vision of God – a vision he hopes can perhaps quiet (even if it does not completely resolve) the conundrum of whether God can be a term of human apprehension, and whether such apprehension, if possible in this life, happens through knowledge, love, or both. Throughout the treatise, what would today be called the *SPP* remains influential. However, it is the preface's richly relational ritual which sets the brothers' feet on the mystical theological path in the first place, underscoring how this path, and second-person relatedness generally, has to be known subjectively rather than merely known about objectively.

[50] Robert N. Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), pp. xx, xxii.

[51] Vansteenberghe, 'La correspondence de Nicolas de Cuse', p. 110.

IV. CONCLUSION

Ernst Cassirer has shown how Renaissance artistic and scientific sensibilities gave rise to new complications in the relationship between knowing subject and known object in 13th – 16th c. Europe. On the one hand, 'Only by maintaining a distance between [subject and object] can we possibly have a sphere for the aesthetic image and a sphere for logical-mathematical thoughts.'[52] On the other hand, these very aesthetic images and logical-mathematical thoughts deeply challenged the reigning Aristotelian-Scholastic cosmos with its fixed places and measurements, emphasizing instead the relativity of local determination and pressing thought in the direction of absolute form: 'Every part of the cosmos is what it is only in connection with the whole [...] what manifests itself in movement is [...] this mutual relationship of things, their own immanent "reality"'.[53] Where did the human subject fit within this new world of infinite dynamism and relative perspective?

As the Renaissance individual observed the world and gave it meaning, he manifested both his immersion within and his transcendence from it: 'The infinity of the cosmos threatens [...] to annihilate [the Ego] completely; but the same infinity seems also to be the source of the Ego's constant self-elevation, for the mind is like the world that it conceives.'[54] In ways not unlike Renaissance artists and philosophers of nature for whom contemplation of the cosmos was now self-destroying, now self-elevating, Renaissance-era mystics like the brothers of St. Quirin found themselves perplexedly fascinated by questions about the shape and effects of devotional engagement with mystical theology's divine object. Cassier's comment that the Renaissance man, 'like Goethe's Ganymede [...] confronts the divinity and the infinite universe as both "captor and captive"'[55] would seem to apply equally to the Tegernsee monks in their contemplative confrontation with God.

Cusa's *DvD* speaks directly to this subject-object problem as it bore upon Christian spirituality and theology. In the treatise overall, and the preface especially, the Tegernsee monks are offered something that is not really an answer to the problem in any straightforward sense, but rather, an experiential heightening and intensifying of the paradoxes that

[52] Cassirer, *The Individual and the Cosmos*, p. 170.
[53] Ibid., p. 180.
[54] Ibid., p. 190.
[55] Ibid., p. 191.

constitute the problem itself – one designed, moreover, to effect its own unique kind of resolution through transformation. For Cusa, the object of theology is not a substance or essence, but living dynamism – creative enfolding [*complicatio*] and unfolding [*explicatio*] in which the world's perduring subsists. Cusa's God is unavailable except as God *acts*; this God is *Posse Ipsum* – pure possibility, wellspring of being, discernable only through a learned unknowing that comes by way of a confrontation with absolute contradiction. The *coincidentium oppositorum* is 'the way God works',[56] it is the mode by which God creates. Therefore, to know God, one must experience coherence without elision; one must understand what it means for there to exist radically separate and ever shifting perspectives that are, nevertheless, radically conjoined because mutually constitutive; one must intuit the inherent co-constitution of emotion and cognition in human experience. Most importantly, one must learn to indwell possibility itself. If second-person oriented psychology and neuroscience is right to posit that the experience of being addressed by others prepares human motor responses to pick up and respond to possibilities for action and interaction,[57] then it should not come as a surprise that Cusa, to inform the Tegernsee brothers of the nature of mystical union with *Posse Ipsum*, drew so deeply from the wells of primordial human relational experience.

The Benedictine brothers at Tegernsee had wished for an explanation of Cusa's doctrine of *coincidentium oppositorum* that was salient for their devotional life, that addressed the issue of whether or not God is object of one's contemplation, and that spoke to the problem of how knowledge and love are related in the mystical journey toward union with God. What is remarkable is that the exercise they received in *DvD*'s preface, which was apparently intended to allow them to experience the answers holistically, corresponds closely to phenomena described in terms of second-person relatedness today. Cusa, in setting his theo-philosophical proposals on the scaffold of the I-thou relation, effectively socializes, somaticizes, and emotionalizes the more abstract, mathematically-oriented, propositionally-articulated theology of coincidence he had previously set forth in *De Docta Ignorantia*. Cusa's experientially-attuned and relationally-structured meditation in *DvD*'s preface allows him to communicate in a clear, existentially-salient, and body-involving way

[56] Bond, 'Introduction', p. 45.
[57] Schilbach et al., 'Toward a Second-Person Neuroscience', p. 402.

his nuanced theological epistemology and metaphysic. The content of his teaching is something akin to this: like the experience of the second-person perspective, the experience of mystical theology's divine term is *enigmatic* (resisting objectification); *dynamic* (enactive and participatory); *integrative* (interweaving cognition and emotion); and *transformative* (self-creative and self-forming).

In *DvD*'s preface, Nicholas of Cusa showcases ways in which a second-personally suffused yet philosophically sophisticated mystical theology is able to fold speculative concepts into a rich socio-emotional phenomenological field. As such, this interpretation also shows how the second-person perspective can shed new light on mystical texts of the past that have enduring relevance for the philosophy of religion today.[58]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Amodio, David M. and Chris D. Frith, 'Meeting of Minds: The Medial Frontal Cortex and Social Cognition', *Nature Reviews Neuroscience* 7, no. 4 (2006), 268-277

Anderson, Michael L., 'Neural Reuse: A Fundamental Organizational Principle of the Brain', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* 33, no. 4 (2010), 245-266

Bellah, Robert N., *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (Cambridge, MA: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011)

Bond, H. Lawrence, 'Introduction [to Nicholas of Cusa]' in *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings* (New York/Mahwah: Paulist Press, 1997), pp. 3-84

Bond, H. Lawrence, 'The "Icon" and the "Iconic Text" in Nicholas of Cusa's *De Visione Dei* I-XVII', in Thomas M. Izbicki and Christopher M. Bellitto, eds., *Nicholas of Cusa and His Age: Intellect and Spirituality* (Leiden: Brill, 2002), pp. 177-97

Beierwaltes, Werner, *Visio facialis – Sehen ins Angesicht. Zur Coincidenz des endlichen und unendlichen Blicks bei Cusanus,* Phil.-hist. Klasse. Sitzungsberichte Jahrgant 1988, Heft 1 (Munich: Bayerische Akademie de Wissenshaften, 1988)

Bråten, Stein, *The Intersubjective Mirror in Infant Learning and Evolution of Speech* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2009)

Cassirer, Ernst, *The Individual and the Cosmos in Renaissance Philosophy*, trans. by Mario Domandi, rev. edn (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, 2000), pp. 123-191

[58] I thank the Center of Theological Inquiry (Princeton, New Jersey, USA) for supporting this research.

De Certeau, Michel, 'The Gaze Nicholas of Cusa', *Diacritics*, 17, no. 3 (Autumn 1987), 2-38

De Jaegher, Hanne, Ezequiel Di Paolo, and Shaun Gallagher, 'Can Social Interaction Constitute Social Cognition?', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 14, no. 10 (Oct. 2010), 441-447

Farroni, Teresa, Gergely Csibra, Francsca Simion, and Mark H. Johnson, 'Eye Contact Detection in Humans from Birth', *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 99, no. 14 (July 2002), 9602-9605

Fonagy, Peter and Patrick Luyten, 'A Developmental, Mentalization-Based Approach to the Understanding and Treatment of Borderline Personality Disorder', *Development and Psychopathology*, 21, no. 4 (2009), 1355-1381

Frith, Chris D. and Uta Frith, 'The Neural Basis of Mentalizing', *Neuron*, 50, no. 4 (2006), 531-534

Führer, M.L., 'The Consolation of Contemplation in Nicholas of Cusa's *De visione Dei*', in Gerald Christianson and Thomas M. Izbicki, eds., *Nicholas of Cusa on Christ and the Church* (Leiden: Brill, 1996), pp. 221-240

Hobson Peter, and Jessica Hobson, 'Joint Attention or Joint Engagement? Insights from Autism', in Axel Seeman, ed., *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience* (Cambridge, MA, London, England: The MIT Press, 2011), pp. 115-135

Hobson, Peter, 'What Puts Jointness into Joint Attention?', in Naomi Eilan, Christoph Hoerl, Teresa McCormack, and Johannes Roessler, ed., *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 2005), pp. 185-204

Hopkins, Jasper, *Nicholas of Cusa's Dialectical Mysticism: Text, Translation and Interpretive Study of De Visione Dei* (Minneapolis, MN: The Arthur J. Banning Press, 1985)

Hutto, Daniel D., 'Elementary Mind Minding, Enactivist-Style', in Axel Seeman, ed., *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience* (Cambridge, MA, London, England: The MIT Press, 2011), pp. 307-341

Hutto, Daniel D., *Folk Psychological Narratives: The Sociocultural Basis of Understanding Reasons* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2012)

Leavens, David A. 'Joint Attention: Twelve Myths', in Axel Seeman, ed., *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience* (Cambridge, MA, London, England: The MIT Press, 2011), pp. 43-72

McGinn, Bernard, 'Seeing and Not Seeing: Nicholas of Cusa's *De Visione Dei* in the History of Western Mysticism', in Peter J. Casarella, ed., *Cusanus: The Legacy of Learned Ignorance* (Washington, DC: The Catholic University of America Press, 2006), pp. 27-53

Moll, Henrike and Andrew N. Meltzoff, 'Joint Attention as the Fundamental Basis of Understanding Perspectives', in Axel Seeman, ed., *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience* (Cambridge, MA, London, England: The MIT Press, 2011), pp. 395-413

Moll, Henrike, Andrew N. Meltzoff, Katharina Merzsch, and Michael Tomasello, 'Taking Versus Confronting Visual Perspectives in Preschool Children', *Developmental Psychology*, 49, no. 4 (April 2013), 646-654

Nicholas of Cusa, *De apice theoriae* (*On the Summit of Contemplation*), in H. Lawrence Bond, ed. and trans., *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings* (New York, NY and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), pp. 293-303

Nicholas of Cusa, *De Docta Ignorantia* (*On Learned Ignorance*) in H. Lawrence Bond, ed. and trans., *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings* (New York, NY and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), pp. 86-206

Nicholas of Cusa, *De visione Dei* (*On the Vision of God*), in H. Lawrence Bond, ed. and trans., *Nicholas of Cusa: Selected Spiritual Writings* (New York, NY and Mahwah, NJ: Paulist Press, 1997), pp. 235-289

Pinsent, Andrew, *The Second-Person Perspective in Aquinas' Ethics: Virtues and Gifts* (New York and London: Routledge, 2012)

Reddy, Vasudevi, 'On Being an Object of Attention: Implications for Self-Other Consciousness', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 7, no. 9 (Sept. 2003), 397-402

Reddy, Vasudevi, A Gaze at Grips With Me', in Axel Seeman, ed., *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience* (Cambridge, MA: London, England: The MIT Press, 2011), pp. 137-157

Reddy, Vasudevi, *How Infants Know Minds* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2008)

Ricoeur, Paul, 'Philosophy and Religious Language', in David Pellauer, ed., Mark I. Wallace, trans., *Figuring the Sacred: Religion, Narrative, and Imagination* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1995), pp. 35-47

Ricoeur, Paul, *Symbolism of Evil*, trans. by Emerson Buchanan (New York: Harper and Row, 1967)

Schilbach, Leonard, Bert Timmermans, Vasudevi Reddy, Alan Costall, Gary Bente, Tobias Schlicht, and Kai Vogeley, 'Toward a Second-Person Neuroscience', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 36 (2013), 393-462

Schilbach, Leonhard, Marcus Wilms, Simon B. Eickhoff, Sandro Romanzetti, Ralf Tepest, Gary Bente, N. Jon Shah, Gereon R. Fink, and Kai Vogeley, 'Minds Made for Sharing: Initiating Joint Attention Recruits Reward-Related Neurocircuitry', *Journal of Cognitive Neuroscience*, 22, no. 12 (2010), 2702-2715

Stern, Daniel, *Forms of Vitality: Exploring Dynamic Experience in Psychology, the Arts, Psychotherapy and Development* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

Striano, Tricia, Franziska Kopp, Tobias Grossmann, and Vincent M. Reid, 'Eye Contact Influences Neural Processing of Emotional Expressions in 4-month Old Infants', *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 1, no. 2 (2006), 87-94

Tomasello, Michael, Malinda Carpenter, Josep Call, Tanya Behne, and Henrike Moll, 'Understanding and Sharing Intentions: The Origins of Cultural Cognition', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 28 (2005), 675-691

Trevarthen, Colwyn, 'The Generation of Human Meaning: How Shared Experience Grows in Infancy', in Axel Seeman, ed., *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience* (Cambridge, MA, London, England: The MIT Press, 2011), pp. 73-113

Trevarthen, Colwyn, Kenneth Aitken, Marie Vandekerckhove, Jonathan Delafield-Butt, and Emese Nagy, 'Collaborative Regulations of Vitality in Early Childhood: Stress in Intimate Relationships and Postnatal Psychopathology', in Dante Cicchetti and Donald J. Cohen, eds., *Developmental Psychopathology: Vol. 2. Developmental Neuroscience*, 2nd edn (New York: John Wiley and Sons, Inc., 1995), pp. 65-126

Vansteenberghe, Edmond, ed., 'La correspondence de Nicolas de Cuse avec Gaspard Aindorffer et Bernarde de Waging', Letter 3 in *Autour de la docte ignorance: Une controverse sur la théologie mystique au XVe siècle,* Beiträge zur Geschichte der Philosophie des Mittelalters (Münster: Aschendorff, 1915), XIV

DELIGHTING IN NATURAL BEAUTY: JOINT ATTENTION AND THE PHENOMENOLOGY OF NATURE AESTHETICS

JOHAN DE SMEDT & HELEN DE CRUZ

Ghent University *University of Oxford*

Abstract. Empirical research in the psychology of nature appreciation suggests that humans across cultures tend to evaluate nature in positive aesthetic terms, including a sense of beauty and awe. They also frequently engage in joint attention with other persons, whereby they are jointly aware of sharing attention to the same event or object. This paper examines how, from a natural theological perspective, delight in natural beauty can be conceptualized as a way of joining attention to creation. Drawing an analogy between art and creation, we propose that aesthetic appreciation of nature may provide theists with a unique phenomenological insight into God's creative intentions, which are embodied in the physical beauty of creation. We suggest two directions in which this way of looking at the natural world can be fleshed out: in a spontaneous way, that does not take into account background information, and with the help of science.

I. INTRODUCTION

Although not all of nature is scenic, and some aspects of nature elicit negative aesthetic appraisals, people have a strong tendency to evaluate nature in positive aesthetic terms.[1] This has been attested in several

[1] In this paper, we have chosen to focus on the positive aesthetic appraisal of nature that humans have. The increasing realization that stochastic (to humans) unpredictable processes have been crucial in the emergence of the natural world generates a number of theological challenges. Natural selection produces beauty but also generates what seem to be excessive amounts of animal and human suffering. Darwin (1860) remarked that the ichneumonidae, parasitic wasps that lay their eggs in the larvae of another species,

cross-cultural studies (as, for instance, summarized in Ulrich 1993), conducted in East Asia, North America, Europe, Central Africa and Australia. Across these cultures, subjects evaluate natural scenes (even unspectacular ones) as beautiful, and they consistently judge urban scenes to be less attractive than natural scenes, especially if they lack water or vegetation. This finding is surprising, as, since the built environment was designed by humans for humans, one would *prima facie* expect humans to feel more aesthetically attracted to buildings than, say, trees. Aesthetic preference of nature is also reflected in real estate prices: properties with a view on natural scenery, such as mountains, lake or farmland are consistently more expensive than those that do not offer such a view, in countries as diverse as The Netherlands, China, and New Zealand (Jim & Chen 2009). While the appreciation of nature differs across times and cultures,[2] humans consistently find at least some aspects of nature beautiful. This tendency is not only present in adults, but also in young children in diverse cultures, indicating that it is robust and emerges early in development, prior to extensive cultural influence. Young children express a strong interest in and attraction to nature, e.g., in their drawings of animals and plants, even when they grow up in environments where their interaction with nature is limited (Kahn 1997). Exposure to nature also has a restorative effect on physical and mental health and increases psychological wellbeing (Velarde et al. 2007, Howell et al. 2011). Under experimental conditions, and from self-reports, we know that nature elicits a wide range of positive emotions, including enjoyment, awe and wonder (Shiota et al. 2007, Saroglou et al. 2008).

Authors like Basil of Caesarea (see section 5), C. S. Lewis (1949) and Frederic Tennant (1930) have explored how this positive appraisal of nature can be interpreted in a theistic framework. They regard the beauty of the natural world as theologically significant, as revealing something of God's nature and intentions. This paper will draw on cognitive science and environmental aesthetics to explore how aesthetic experience of nature

seem incompatible with a benevolent creator. This challenge needs to be taken seriously, and a full theological appraisal of natural beauty from the perspective of science should ultimately take into account natural evil as well. See e.g., Southgate 2008 for a theological exploration and attempt to meet this challenge.

[2] The enjoyment of the mountains and the sea are recent phenomena in western culture; the Japanese concept of *wabi-sabi*, an aesthetic sensitivity to things that are imperfect, ephemeral and incomplete, such as a budding or decaying cherry blossom, does not have a corresponding concept in western nature aesthetics.

can be regarded as a form of joint attention to creation with its creator. We do not present an aesthetic argument for the existence of God, but rather consider how natural beauty can be interpreted and experienced from a theistic point of view. After a brief methodological reflection, we look at art as a model of creation. Next, we consider the role of joint attention in nature appreciation, taking into account theoretical work in developmental psychology. We then discuss how natural beauty can be aesthetically enjoyed, using insights from environmental aesthetics.

II. METHODOLOGICAL REFLECTION

Analytic philosophy of religion attempts to answer questions like, 'Does God exist, and if so, what evidence do we have for his existence?' or 'What properties does God have?' To provide an answer to such questions, analytic philosophers rely on precise and clear definitions, clear-cut idealized scenarios and (often quite contrived) counterexamples, moving from premises to conclusions using established forms of argumentation. This approach dovetails with the methodology of systematic theology since the Middle Ages, which moves 'from what God can do to what he has done, rather than the other way round ... to move from the abstract to the concrete: from abstract omnipotence or absolute power to the economy of creation and redemption' (Gunton 1998: 147). This way of reasoning, while very useful, risks obscuring the fact that those who purportedly come to know God do so as concrete, embodied creatures, living in particular ecological (terrestrial) systems, and responding to creation in particular ways. Although many theistic philosophers, such as Augustine, have spoken of being in direct relationship with God, in practice such experiences tend to be reported after a considerable period of enquiry into the nature of the world. More generally, professed knowledge of God, or knowing God, tends to be connected in some way with knowledge of the world, or is even mediated through the world.[3]

In analytic philosophy of religion (e.g., Stump 2010, Trakakis 2008), there is a renewed appreciation that not all knowledge is easily translatable into a series of analytic statements, for instance, knowledge with phenomenological qualities or knowing how. It is therefore useful to explore alternative paths to philosophical knowledge in addition

[3] As Bayer (2007: 152) puts it, 'ein wesentlich weltlich vermitteltes Verhältnis' (a relationship that is truly mediated through the world).

to the idealized and abstract scenarios of many traditional arguments for theism. Rich narratives, for example, can provide knowledge by exemplification and illustration, rather than by conceptual analysis (Stump 2010, chapter 2). Narratives are irreducible to the precise, abstract propositions that tend to be used in formal reasoning processes, but they can provide an experiential knowledge that is more imprecise (analytically speaking) but that is also more evocative, memorable and illuminating. The epistemic value of narratives is not so much that they offer new facts (although they sometimes do), but that they offer a perception which allows listeners to see features of the world that would otherwise be invisible, what Wittgenstein called 'aspect perception', or 'seeing as' (see Schroeder 2009 for discussion). A pertinent illustration of aspect perception, and the knowledge it provides, can be found in *That Hideous Strength*, a novel by C.S. Lewis. It describes how Jane Studdock experiences a religious conversion in a garden. Even though there is no obvious change in her surroundings, her new perspective of the world means that she nonetheless perceives the garden in a radically different way:

> Then, at one particular corner of the gooseberry patch, the change came. What awaited her there was serious to the degree of sorrow and beyond. There was no form nor sound. The mould under the bushes, the moss on the path, and the little brick border were not visibly changed. But they were changed. A boundary had been crossed. She had come into a world, or into a Person, or into the presence of a Person. Something expectant, patient, inexorable, met her with no veil or protection between (Lewis 1945: 441).

Appeals to natural beauty in theistic arguments capitalize on this effect of seeing the same phenomena in a different way. The observation that nature (or much of nature) is beautiful seems theologically significant, even though this observation cannot easily be moulded into a classic premise-conclusion style argument. Formal arguments from beauty (roughly of the form 'there is beauty in nature, therefore God exists') have been formulated in the past, but such arguments have few contemporary defenders (however, see Swinburne 2004: 190-191, for a brief discussion of beauty within his cumulative case for God's existence). There seems to be more scope for beauty as a source of knowledge of God, however, if it is *not* used in arguments of this kind. Our knowledge of natural beauty, because it has no clear boundaries, and does not have a context of artistic

criticism, is inherently imprecise. Foster (1998: 132) calls this imprecise, phenomenological knowledge of aesthetic properties the 'ambient dimension of aesthetic value': it is the aesthetic response that cannot be put into words, the way we respond to the world 'as existentially embodied beings'. This intrinsic ambiguity, like the ambiguity and imprecision of narratives (from an analytic perspective), can be an advantage when we are thinking about matters that are inherently hard to grasp. The awe, wonderment and delight we feel when we walk in nature and contemplate aspects of it may even provide us with some immediate knowledge of the divine.[4] It should be noted, however, that such attempts to use natural beauty as a road to knowledge about God do not replace formal arguments for the existence of God. Rather, they may provide a source for a different kind of knowledge about God (including phenomenological and personal knowledge) in addition to the analytic statements of recent philosophy of religion.[5]

III. ART AS A MODEL OF CREATION

Theologians traditionally understand *creatio ex nihilo* as a unique act, the effects of which have unfolded on a scale, scope and timeframe that surpasses human understanding. To get at least some grasp of what this event means, they have offered what are clearly understood to be imperfect analogies of God as being akin to a human creator. Such analogies gain a certain traditional warrant for their use in the scriptures of monotheistic faiths such as Christianity and Judaism. For example, Isaiah 45:9, Jeremiah 18 and Romans 9:21 refer to God as a potter, forming clay with his hands and potter's wheel, and Psalm 104 and Job 38 imagine him as an architect, laying out beams and cornerstones.

[4] Philosophers and theologians subsequently attempt to articulate the ineffable by developing concepts and arguments, but there always remains a gap between our experiences and our expressions of natural beauty (Heschel 1955, chapter 11).

[5] While we think appeals to beauty can co-exist with more formal natural theological arguments, Plantinga (2000: 175) explicitly pits non-inferential knowledge of God that natural beauty provides against arguments for God's existence: 'It isn't that one beholds the night sky, notes that it is grand, and concludes that there must be such a person as God: an argument like that would be ridiculously weak ... It is rather that, upon the perception of the night sky or the mountain vista or the tiny flower, these beliefs just arise within us. They are *occasioned* by the circumstances; they are not conclusions from them. The heavens declare the glory of God and the skies proclaim the work of his hands: but not by way of serving as premises for an argument.'

These images are compatible with an understanding of creation in terms of an artwork, with the beauty of the natural world testifying to some kind of intentional and artistic divine action.

Can a valid analogy be drawn between creation and the work of an artist more generally, as these passages suggest? This question has attracted considerable scholarly attention, examples including the work of Hendry (1980, chapter 8) and Migliore (1991, chapter 5). Unsurprisingly, there are some obvious disanalogies. For example, a human artist cannot create *ex nihilo* but works instead with pre-existing materials. Aesthetic appreciation of nature also lacks the guidance of artistic context that we typically have for artworks, such as reference artworks or styles (Brady 1998). Finally, not all nature appears to be aesthetically valuable: there are parts of nature that are unscenic, dull or inhospitable (Saito 1998).

Despite these limitations, the analogy of creation as a work of art still unifies many traditional theological claims about God. For example, an artist enjoys freedom about whether to create and what to create, a freedom that is also attributed to God (albeit in an unimaginably greater sense). In art, as in the natural world, there is also a radical ontological distinction between creator and creation. Moreover, even in the absence of a satisfactory definition or understanding of what *beautiful* means, it is uncontroversial within philosophical aesthetics that as least some works of art and some aspects of nature possess that quality – the recent renewed attention to beauty in both art criticism and nature aesthetics (see De Clercq 2013, for review) testifies to this judgment.

If the analogy is at least partially valid, then it is possible to consider what kind of knowledge of the artist and hence also of the creator might be communicated by means of their respective works. For example, Gauguin depicted Tahitian women in oil paintings, pastel drawings, woodcarvings and woodcuttings, but in spite of the substantial differences of these media, his works exhibit an undeniable 'Gauguinesque' quality. In considering such qualities, Merleau-Ponty (1945: 212) has drawn attention to the unity of the mental and physical in art: works of art cannot be separated from what they express, e.g., the musical meaning of a sonata 'is inseparable from the sounds which are its vehicle'. There is, in other words, no idea *behind* an artwork that is separate from it. Rather, the artwork is constitutive of the ideas through its physical characteristics, such as the sounds that constitute a sonata or the strokes of paint that make up a portrait. In a similar way, the beauty

of creation arguably also constitutes and embodies God's creative ideas for the universe.

Of course, drawing attention to the beauty of creation invariably raises questions about these aspects of creation that do *not* seem beautiful, but here too the analogy of human artwork suggests some intriguing lines of thought. Although artworks are the expression of an artist's will and intentions, they also tend to take on some independence from their makers. Novelists often notice how characters acquire a will of their own, and how a story takes them in directions they did not foresee. As a famous example, Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings* was originally conceived as a light-hearted and brief sequel to *The Hobbit*, but turned out radically different. Artists often deliberately embrace this unpredictability, examples being the techniques of wet-on-wet (*alla prima*) in oil painting, and wet-into-wet in watercolour. Painters use these techniques to great effect (e.g., the lovely colour blends in Rembrandt and Velázquez that suggest depth and rich fabrics), but they are not entirely under their control; such effects are what painters call 'controlled accidents'. In the same way some aspects of creation may have come about through a kind of willed spontaneity, processes that are made possible but also given some causal independence by their creator.

IV. BEAUTY IN NATURE AND JOINT ATTENTION

Given the possibility that natural beauty might reveal something of the nature and purposes of God, what kind of attention to nature might be required for this revelation to be manifest? In addressing this question, a few preliminary observations may be helpful. First, as far as we know, human beings are the only living creatures to produce works of art. Second, works of art are typically attended to not only by their creators but also by other persons. A helpful way to conceptualize our experience of natural beauty *qua* creation is by examining what cognitive psychologists call *shared* or *joint attention*, phenomena that are closely associated with second-person relatedness.

Over the past few decades, developmental and cognitive psychologists have studied the phenomenon of joint attention. While there is no agreement on a precise definition, there is consensus on what instances of shared experience constitute joint attention. For example, a toddler pointing excitedly at a hot air balloon, with her father also looking at the

balloon and commenting on its colour, are engaged in joint attention. By contrast, two pedestrians, waiting to cross the road, are both attentive to the traffic light but may at that moment be oblivious to one another and so are not experiencing joint attention. Typically, people who are engaged in joint attention have a phenomenological sense of being emotionally and cognitively attuned to each other, for instance, they can both be disgusted or delighted by the same event, and realize that the other has the same reaction as they have. We could characterize joint attention approximately as social interactions where two or more agents not only jointly direct their attention toward an object, agent or event, but crucially, they share awareness of being in this state.

According to Tomasello and Carpenter (2007), joint attention is a crucial building block of human social relationships and of cumulative human culture, as it allows for the sophisticated social interactions that humans engage in, and for activities like teaching and other forms of explicit instruction. In spite of their sophisticated social cognition, chimpanzees and other great apes seem to lack joint attention (Call & Tomasello 2008). In the first few months of life, social cognition in humans and chimpanzees is very similar: both human and chimpanzee infants prefer their mother's face and engage in dyadic interactions with her, such as smiling and mutual gazing. At around four to six months, members of both species become proficient at following the gaze of their mothers and other individuals. At about nine months, human infants develop the ability to share attention to a specific object with another person, e.g. by pointing out a cat that crosses the street. This 'nine-month revolution' (Tomasello & Rakoczy 2003) does not occur in chimpanzees. In stark contrast to humans who from then on can engage in triadic interactions – caregiver, infant and object – chimpanzees learn from dyadic interactions only: they observe their mothers' behaviour carefully, and this helps them to reconstruct object-oriented actions for themselves.[6] Moreover, chimpanzee infants, unlike human infants, do not look at the experimenter's face after following a gaze or pointing, which is one of the common elements of joint attention in human infants. Although some nonhuman animals are able to engage in some aspects

[6] Tomonaga et al. (2004) not only observed many hours of exclusively dyadic interactions between chimpanzee infants and their mothers. They also repeatedly attempted to engage in triadic interactions with the infants, but failed to replicate the results obtained with human infants: for example, when they tried to engage in shared attention to a toy, chimpanzee infants would take it away to play by themselves.

of joint attention, such as dogs, which are able to use eye direction and pointing gestures to retrieve hidden food rewards, joint attention seems to be of special importance in human cognition and culture, and if Tomasello and co-authors are correct, it is a crucial building block for human culture.

How is the phenomenon of joint attention related to art? This question has not received much attention in the cognitive psychological literature. Nevertheless, there is preliminary evidence that joint attention plays a crucial role in artistic understanding. Take the way in which young children eagerly show pictures they have drawn to their parents ('Look, a car!') and point out relevant features. Also, both the production and appreciation of art involve attention: children and adults spontaneously take the 'design stance' (a perspective by which a work is evaluated in terms of its intended function and identity) when they interpret artworks. Two-year-olds, for example, are more likely to call a vaguely zoomorphic spot 'a bear' when they learn that someone carefully painted it than when they hear it was the result of someone accidentally kicking over a bucket of paint (Gelman & Ebeling 1998). Similarly, preschoolers and adults recognize an irregular piece of stone as a sculpture when they hear it was deliberately chiselled and polished, but call it a rock if they learn it has this form because someone hurled it against a wall (Gelman & Bloom 2000). Literary artists also take into account our expectations and mental states by keying in on features they know will grasp our attention. For example, Jane Austen's astute descriptions of awkward social situations reveal her mischievous delight in human shortcomings, giving her readers a sense of implicit joint attention and complicity. Austen comments on and draws our attention to 18th-century social situations, such as how to get a suitable marriage partner if one has no money. We share in her thoughts about these situations and how her characters experience them by the way she fleshes them out in her novels.

Such interpretations are made easier if there is background information available about the creator's intentions in producing the artwork. Three- and four-year-olds already infer intentions of absent artists by relying on background information, e.g., when two scribbles are presented as an elephant and a mouse drawn by a child with a broken arm, they reasonably infer that the smallest scribble represents the mouse (Bloom & Markson 1998). Indeed, a standard model in contemporary philosophy of art is the psychohistorical approach (Levinson 1993, Bullot & Reber 2013), which focuses on the importance of this background information.

But what if no background information is available? According to Lehrer (2006), we still gain ineffable and immediate knowledge from an artwork by direct interaction with it, a kind of knowledge that cannot be obtained by even the most exhaustive linguistic description in the absence of the artwork itself. For example, the bold colour contrasts and whirling brush strokes of Vincent Van Gogh's *Starry Night* (1889) reveal something about his artistic intentions. The painting is an implicit invitation to share Van Gogh's mode of attending the scene, an experience that could not be replicated by written descriptions, even if we had a detailed linguistic account of his intentions, e.g., in letters to his brother Theo (De Smedt & De Cruz 2013).[7] To give an extreme example, Paleolithic cave paintings and sculptures are artworks for which we have no biographical and very little cultural information, and their meaning and the purposes for which they were made remain topics of debate. Nevertheless, despite our lack of knowledge, the physical exposure to the artworks themselves is overwhelming, and they speak to a contemporary audience in a very direct way. The lustre and detail of small ivory sculptures of mammoths, horses and birds express with immediacy the care their makers took in their production (De Smedt & De Cruz 2011). This observation accords well with our phenomenological approach to joint attention: instead of conceiving of artistic intentions as something separate that we have to reconstruct painstakingly by relying on background information of the artist's life and context, the intentions of an artist are not separable from the way she physically expresses them in paint, sounds or words. Because some of these intentions have been embodied in the media they are expressed in, it is still possible to engage in a kind of joint attention with these long-deceased artists. In the following sections, we consider how this way of joining attention to art can be applied to the appreciation of nature within a theistic framework.

[7] There is something about an artwork itself and what it conveys that cannot be translated in any other way. To wit, we have ample information about the ancient Greek painter Apelles (4th century BCE) in written sources like Pliny the Elder's *Naturalis Historia*, up to the techniques he used to achieve depth. But because no works survive, and no paintings can be reliably identified as faithful copies of his original output, we do not really know anything about Apelles' creative intentions. This is because an artwork is constitutive of the ideas it expresses. Our direct experience with an artwork remains the source of our understanding of it and ultimately issues from it, no matter how many layers of interpretation it subsequently receives (Merleau-Ponty 1962).

V. JOINT ATTENTION TO CREATION IN THE ABSENCE OF BACKGROUND INFORMATION

We will now discuss aesthetic appreciation of nature in the absence of background information, such as revealed theology or science. If some aspects of joint attention with another human person are possible by means of a work of art, is this also possible with God in the case of creation? What can sustained attention to nature alone teach about God?

One model in nature aesthetics, offered by Carroll (1993) examines the visceral and immediate response that people have to nature to understand our aesthetic appraisal of it. Even if we have little or no background knowledge about the landscape we find ourselves in, we can be moved by the grandeur of a waterfall, the lazy twirl of an autumn leaf, a lonely poppy in a field of grain. Aesthetic enjoyment of nature is inherently participatory, since we are also part of nature and part of the scene we are contemplating. The experience is also multi-sensory: the forlorn cries of seagulls, the feeling of sunlight and wind, the taste of salt in the air, the waves crashing and gritting all contribute to an aesthetic experience of a rocky seashore. This participatory experience allows humans to appraise nature with little background information about what it is they are experiencing.

In the psychology of nature appreciation, awe is a positive emotion that is frequently cited in response to natural beauty. In studies that require participants to keep a diary, being in a vast landscape, like the Grand Canyon, seems to be the prime elicitor of awe (Shiota et al. 2007). The main psychological model for awe is Keltner and Haidt's (2003) prototype model: awe is elicited when we are confronted with something that is vast and that we attempt, but fail, to accommodate. Vastness is the experience of something being much larger in relation to oneself. Sundararajan (2002) has expanded this model by adding self-reflexivity. Awe frequently brings about a self-reflective attitude: while in awe, we perceive ourselves as experiencing a sense of smallness in relation to what is contemplated, mixed with a paradoxical sense of greatness. This may be combined with a kind of joyful willingness to be wholly absorbed by, or surrendered to this experience, what Otto (1923, 21-22) calls 'self-depreciation'. The sense of awe captures well the sentiment expressed in a Hasidic adage that a person should always carry two pieces of paper in his pocket, one that says, 'I am but dust and ashes', and the other that says 'The world was created for me' (Wettstein 2012: 32). This duality of

feeling both humbled and elevated has been confirmed in self-reports of aesthetic experiences of natural beauty, indicating that participants feel a sense of smallness or personal insignificance, a decreased awareness of day-to-day concerns, a sense of something greater than themselves, and a desire for the experience to continue (Shiota et al. 2007). When in a state of awe, humans feel small and insignificant, yet elevated and exhilarated. This state of mind is thus unlike other humbling emotions like shame or regret which make one feel both small and miserable (Keltner & Haidt 2003). People who experience awe sense a heightened connectivity to the world around them, a sense of the tremendous value of the natural world, and a lack of pettiness (Shiota et al. 2007).

How, then, does the sense of awe relate to the model of joint attention? By itself, awe does not seem to have a necessary connection to theistic awareness. In one study that probed feelings of awe in atheists, a majority of atheists reported having felt awe and being part of something greater than themselves, suggesting that atheism and awe are psychologically compatible (Caldwell-Harris et al. 2011). Nevertheless, there is some evidence of a close psychological connection between awe and religiosity: empirical studies indicate that the experience of awe, as elicited by scenes of natural beauty, increases religious belief (Valdesolo & Graham, in press). Although awe does not automatically trigger belief in God, for a theist, it can strengthen theistic belief. The initial sense of God may be innate, as in Calvin's *sensus divinitatis*, or inferred as a conclusion of reason to a particular kind of first cause, or simply entertained as a hypothesis in the manner of Pascal's Wager. Once the possibility of God is raised, however, the contemplation of some awesome aspect of nature as possibly the work of God may have a multiplier effect in two senses: a heightened interest in this aspect of nature and an increased sense of divine presence.[8]

[8] Emil Brunner argued that the doctrine of the *imago Dei* entails that there is a 'point of contact' where God reveals himself to us (see Smedes forthcoming, for review). However, he left the exact nature of this point of contact unspecified. The centrality of awe in religious life and its importance in cultivating a religious sensibility are good candidates for this: from a theistic perspective, delight in creation allows one to join attention with God, and thus share in his joy. Wettstein (2012) has argued that this sense of awe is a basic feature of religious life that allows one to cultivate a religious sensibility even if one does not hold an explicit belief in God – awe is more central to religious belief than (detached) metaphysical attitudes about God's existence.

We will now consider how theologians have explored this visceral, intuitive response to natural beauty as a way of gaining knowledge of God. The 18th-century theologian Jonathan Edwards (see Lane 2004, for review) wrote extensively about the spontaneous, untutored appreciation of nature. He argued that by being attentive to natural beauty, and by delighting in it, humans develop a *sensus suavitatis*, a perceptual mode that gives the believer access to a religious sensibility that integrates and heightens ordinary sense experience. Nature is a school of desire that provides humans with a multisensory knowledge of God through the beauty of his creation. Basil of Caesarea, too, exclaims his visceral delight in creation throughout his commentary on Genesis (Schaefer 2001). Likewise, the Jewish theologian Abraham Heschel (1955: 74) considers a cultivated sense of awe of natural beauty as a prerequisite for faith: 'Awe ... is more than an emotion; it is a way of understanding.' Thus, our sense of awe and wonderment at nature

> enables us to perceive in the world intimations of the divine, to sense in small things the beginning of infinite significance, to sense the ultimate in the common and the simple; to feel in the rush of the passing the stillness of the eternal (Heschel 1955: 75).

In our everyday lives, we are caught up in thinking about the world around us from a particular point of view, and habitually we consider our personal perspective as the whole picture. However, Heschel (1955: 75) argues that through awe, we can become aware of what escapes us, we acquire 'the ability to look at all things from the point of view of God'. Recent empirical studies (e.g., Rudd et al. 2012) indicate that experiences of awe alter time perception; it brings people into the present moment, and this acute awareness of the present makes them feel that they have more time available. As Lewis wrote,

> [T]he Present is the point at which Time touches Eternity. Of the present moment, and of it only, humans have an experience analogous to the experience which [God] has of reality as a whole; in it alone, freedom and actuality are offered them (Lewis 1942: 75).

Although these theologians write within the confines of their respective traditions, the delight in natural beauty they describe is unmediated and spontaneous. For them, the beauty of nature is not merely a semiotic system that refers to beauty beyond the world (a reflection of the creator's beauty); it also points to the inherent value of creation, the beauty in

and of the world. Theists can thus interpret awe as the state of mind in which they can share attention with God over at least some aspects of creation. As in ordinary forms of joint attention, this does not mean they literally can see things the way God does, anymore than a toddler joining attention with her father over a horse in a meadow gets access to all her father's knowledge of or earlier experiences with horses. However, by sharing attention she can get a phenomenological sense of joining minds with her father, and becomes aware of the features of the horse that capture his attention. This conceptualization of awe as joint attention over creation provides a new way of interpreting the phenomenological experience of aesthetic nature appreciation, as when we ponder the empty expanse of the prairie or the intricacy of frozen cobwebs.

VI. JOINT ATTENTION TO CREATION WITH BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Having reviewed how awe of nature can provide theists with an unmediated sense of joining attention with God to creation, we now discuss how background information could further inform and guide this experience. An obvious source would be scripture, and indeed, the Bible contains several passages that provide a context for nature appreciation, e.g., Genesis 1-2 and Psalms 19 and 104. The natural theologian can additionally turn to the Book of Nature as studied by science, as a way to sustain and ground aesthetic appreciation of nature. A deep appreciation and sense of wonder for the beauty of the natural world has been an important driving force, both in natural theology and in scientific practice. Although contemporary natural theological arguments are typically rigorously formulated, they originate in prescientific sentiments, including an admiration for the beauty of creation. As Evans (2010) argues, a sense of wonderment for nature underlies natural theological arguments, even the most rigorously formulated ones. Scientific and aesthetic approaches to nature are not mutually exclusive, but can enrich and strengthen each other, see e.g., Paley's (1802) scientifically-informed natural theology, which exudes his love for nature; an avid fisherman, he greatly enjoyed spending time outdoors. Next to the fertile relationship between aesthetic appreciation of nature and science, we also focus on science as background information because the science-based approach has been very influential in nature aesthetics: Carlson (e.g., 1979, 1995)

has argued that scientific knowledge of the natural world is as vital to the aesthetic appreciation of nature as art critical (historical, biographical) contexts are for the appreciation of artworks.

The science-based approach in nature aesthetics can interlock with a natural theological approach to beauty, where science can provide background information about creation. One way in which science can do this is by providing clues that can heighten aesthetic experience. Edwards (2012: 70) discusses a scientific awareness of nature as a form of 'beauty skills', skills that enrich our experiences, and that allow us to see aspects of the beauty of creation we would otherwise overlook. Although it is possible to enjoy forests only for their shapes, colours and sounds, and to be totally oblivious of the taxonomy of the species one encounters, forests are dynamic entities, shaped by ancient and continuing evolutionary and ecological processes. Their enormous time scale is part of their objective reality, and realizing this can contribute to our aesthetic appreciation. Without scientific knowledge, there is little awareness of this time dimension of evolution, geology and other processes that are not immediately perceptible to the untutored. Science can help us appreciate what is not evident, e.g., the remarkable efficiency of photosynthesis can add a sense of wonder when we behold a forest canopy (Rolston 1998). Evolutionary theory and geology afford us a very different way of encountering the natural world compared to our forebears: e.g., they could not know that erosion by long-vanished glaciers gave rise to the stunning limestone pavements in the Yorkshire Dales.

The science-based approach to nature aesthetics by itself does not favour a theistic point of view. Many atheistic authors (e.g., Dawkins 1998) have reflected on the beauty of the natural world, and on how their scientific understanding has enhanced this experience. However, for theists, the aesthetic appraisal of nature has epistemic value. From a theistic perspective, the beauty manifest in the natural world is not an accident but a consequence of the work of divine intellect, and thus it can say something about divine creative intentions. We saw in the previous section how the aesthetic experience of nature can be a visceral response, in the absence of background information. Science provides background information that can help to interpret and colour this aesthetic experience, and insights from science can help to bring experiences into focus that are otherwise fleeting and would be difficult to interpret.

We conclude by commenting briefly on two key insights of scientific practice that are relevant for the aesthetic appraisal of nature: its diversity and its inherent stochasticity. When asked what one could conclude about the nature of the creator from a study of his creation, the biologist Haldane allegedly quipped, 'an inordinate fondness for beetles'. The original quote[9] is less gripping, but the general point remains: given the richness and diversity of the natural world, it is hard to maintain a purely anthropocentric interpretation of natural beauty. In the past, theologians have tended to interpret the natural order in anthropocentric terms, with humans at the summit of the created natural world. Nowadays, when we consider the tree of life from its earliest beginnings, we no longer think of this tree as one straight stem, steadily growing to its pinnacle, humanity, but rather as a large bush with many small twigs, of which we are but one. For theists, a natural way to interpret this is that God delights in the diversity and beauty of nature in its many forms, extending back deep in time. For example, McNamara et al. (2012) reconstructed the original colours of fossil beetles that lived between 15 and 47 million years ago. Their iridescent blues, greens and golds were obviously not designed for human delight: these beetles were beautiful long before humans were there to behold them.

An aesthetic appreciation of nature through science not only cautions us against an overtly anthropocentric interpretation of nature, it may also provide some insights into God's artistic intentions. The openness, stochasticity and freedom of creation, as exemplified by evolution through natural selection, can be a further source of aesthetic enjoyment. Organisms are not just passive objects in evolutionary history, but dynamically shape their environment, as active participants. Such interactions between organisms and environment can afford a sense of aesthetic delight: termite nests shape their own microclimate, beaver dams impact the wider ecology, increasing species diversity. Science helps uncover less obvious examples, such as the role of cyanobacteria in creating our oxygen-rich atmosphere. Like controlled accidents in painting, stochasticity in creation can be intentional; 'God can will accidental events as *accidental*', as Jaeger (2012: 87) puts it. Such controlled accidents bring about remarkable results, with manifold anatomical and cognitive specializations. Such outcomes are beautiful, and the dignity

[9] '[T]he creator would appear as endowed with a passion for stars, on the one hand, and beetles on the other' (Haldane 1947: 239).

bestowed on their having a certain freedom and spontaneity of their own may be part of that beauty.

Acknowledgments. We thank Andrew Pinsent, John Schneider and Howard Wettstein for helpful comments on an earlier version of this paper. This research has been financially supported by the British Academy and Ghent University.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Bayer, Oswald. 2007. *Martin Luthers Theologie* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck)

Bloom, Paul, and Lori Markson. 1998. 'Intention and Analogy in Children's Naming of Pictorial Representations', *Psychological Science*, 9: 200-204

Brady, Emily. 1998. 'Imagination and the Aesthetic Appreciation of Nature', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 56: 139-147

Bullot, Nicolas J., and Rolf Reber. 2013. 'The Artful Mind Meets Art History: Toward a Psycho-Historical Framework for the Science of Art Appreciation', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 36: 123-180

Caldwell-Harris, Catherine L., Angela L. Wilson, Elizabeth LoTempio, and Benjamin Beit-Hallahmi. 2011. 'Exploring the Atheist Personality: Well-being, Awe, and Magical Thinking in Atheists, Buddhists, and Christians', *Mental Health, Religion & Culture*, 14: 659-672

Call, Josep, and Michael Tomasello. 2008. 'Does the Chimpanzee Have a Theory of Mind? 30 Years Later', *Trends in Cognitive Sciences*, 12: 187-192

Carlson, Allen. 1979. 'Appreciation and the Natural Environment', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 37: 267-275

Carlson, Allen. 1995. 'Nature, Aesthetic Appreciation, and Knowledge', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 53: 393-400

Carroll, Noel. 1993. 'On Being Moved by Nature: Between Religion and Natural History', in Salim Kemal and Iwan Gaskell, eds., *Landscape, Natural Beauty and the Arts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press), pp. 244-266

Darwin, Charles. 1860. Letter to Asa Gray, 2 May 1860. Available at: <http://www.darwinproject.ac.uk/entry-2814> [accessed 09/12/13]

Dawkins, Richard. 1998. *Unweaving the Rainbow: Science, Delusion and the Appetite for Wonder* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin)

De Clercq, Rafael. 2013. 'Beauty', in Berys Gaut and Dominic McIver Lopes, eds., *The Routledge Companion to Aesthetics* (3rd ed.) (Abingdon: Routledge), pp. 299-308

De Smedt, Johan, and Helen De Cruz. 2011. 'A Cognitive Approach to the Earliest Art', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 69: 379-389

De Smedt, Johan, and Helen De Cruz. 2013. 'The Artistic Design Stance and the Interpretation of Paleolithic Art', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 36: 139-140

Edwards, L. Clifton. 2012. 'Artful Creation and Aesthetic Rationality: Toward a Creational Theology of Revelatory Beauty', *Theology Today*, 69: 56-72

Evans, C. Stephen. 2010. *Natural Signs and Knowledge of God. A New Look at Theistic Arguments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Foster, Cheryl. 1998. 'The Narrative and the Ambient in Environmental Aesthetics', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 56: 127-137

Gelman, Susan A., and Paul Bloom. 2000. 'Young children are sensitive to how an object was created when deciding what to name it', *Cognition*, 76: 91-103

Gelman, Susan A., and Karen S. Ebeling. 1998. 'Shape and representational status in children's early naming', *Cognition*, 66: B35-B47

Gunton, Colin. 1998. *The Triune Creator: A Historical and Systematic Study* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans)

Haldane, J.B.S. 1947. *What is Life?* (New York: Boni and Gaer)

Hendry, George S. 1980. *Theology of Nature* (Philadelphia: Westminster)

Heschel, Abraham Joshua. 1955. *God in Search of Man: A Philosophy of Judaism* (London: Souvenir, 2009)

Howell, Andrew J., Raelyne L. Dopko, Holli-Anne Passmore, and Karen Buro. 2011. 'Nature Connectedness: Associations with Well-Being and Mindfulness', *Personality and Individual Differences*, 51: 166-171

Jaeger, Lydia. 2012. *What the Heavens Declare: Science in the Light of Creation* (Eugene, Or.: Wipf and Stock)

Jim, C.Y. and Wendy Y. Chen. 2009. 'Value of Scenic Views: Hedonic Assessment of Private Housing in Hong Kong', *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 91: 226-234.

Kahn, Peter H. 1997. 'Developmental Psychology and the Biophilia Hypothesis: Children's Affiliation with Nature', *Developmental Review*, 17: 1-61

Keltner, Dacher, and Jonathan Haidt. 2003. 'Approaching Awe, a Moral, Spiritual, and Aesthetic Emotion', *Cognition and Emotion*, 17: 297-314

Lane, Belden C. 2004. 'Jonathan Edwards on Beauty, Desire, and the Sensory World', *Theological Studies*, 65: 44-72

Lehrer, Keith. 2006. 'Knowing Content in the Visual Arts', in Matthew Kieran and Dominic MacIver Lopes, eds., *Knowing Art: Essays in Aesthetics and Epistemology* (Dordrecht: Springer), pp. 1-18

Levinson, Jerrold. 1993. 'Extending Art Historically', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 51: 411-423

Lewis, C.S. 1942. *The Screwtape Letters* (London: HarperCollins, 2002)

Lewis, C.S. 1945. *That Hideous Strength* (London: HarperCollins, 2005)

Lewis, C.S. 1949. 'The Weight of Glory', in *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses* (London: HarperCollins, 2001), pp. 25-46

McNamara, Maria E., Derek E.G. Briggs, Patrick J. Orr, Heeso Noh, and Hui Cao. 2012. 'The Original Colours of Fossil Beetles', *Proceedings of the Royal Society B*, 279: 1114-1121

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 1945. *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. by Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 2002)

Merleau-Ponty, Maurice. 1962. 'Eye and Mind', trans. by Michael Smith, in Galen A. Johnson, ed., *The Merleau-Ponty Aesthetics Reader: Philosophy and Painting* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 1993), pp. 121-149

Migliore, Daniel L. 1991. *Faith Seeking Understanding: An Introduction to Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans)

Otto, Rudolf. 1923. *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, trans. by John W. Harvey (London: Humphrey Milford)

Paley, William. 1802. *Natural Theology or Evidence for the Existence and Attributes of the Deity, Collected from the Appearances of Nature,* M.D. Eddy and D. Knight, eds. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006)

Plantinga, Alvin. 2000. *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York: Oxford University Press)

Rolston, Holmes. 1998. 'Aesthetic Experience in Forests', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 56: 157-166

Rudd, Melanie, Kathleen D. Vohs, and Jennifer Aaker. 2012. 'Awe expands people's perception of time, alters decision making, and enhances well-being', *Psychological Science*, 23: 1130-1136

Saito, Yuriko. 1998. 'The Aesthetics of Unscenic Nature', *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 56: 101-111

Saroglou, Vassilis, Coralie Buxant, and Jonathan Tilquin. 2008. 'Positive Emotions as Leading to Religion and Spirituality', *Journal of Positive Psychology*, 3: 165-173

Schaefer, Jame. 2001. 'Appreciating the Beauty of Earth', *Theological Studies*, 62: 23-52

Schroeder, Severin. 2010. 'A Tale of Two Problems: Wittgenstein's Discussion of Aspect Perception', in John Cottingham and Peter Hacker, eds., *Mind, Method and Morality: Essays in Honour of Anthony Kenny* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), pp. 352-371

Shiota, Michelle N., Dacher Keltner, and Amanda Mossman. 2007. 'The Nature of Awe: Elicitors, Appraisals, and Effects on Self-Concept', *Cognition and Emotion*, 21: 944-963

Smedes, Taede A. forthcoming. 'Emil Brunner Revisited: On the Cognitive Science of Religion, the *Imago Dei*, and Revelation', *Zygon: Journal of Religion and Science*

Southgate, Christopher. 2008. *The Groaning of Creation: God, Evolution, and the Problem of Evil* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press)

Stump, Eleonore. 2010. *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

Sundararajan, Louise. 2002. 'Religious Awe: Potential Contributions of Negative Theology to Psychology, "Positive" or Otherwise', *Journal of Theoretical and Philosophical Psychology*, 22: 174-197

Swinburne, Richard. 2004. *The Existence of God* (6th ed.) (Oxford: Clarendon Press)

Tennant, Frederic. 1930. *Philosophical Theology* (volume 2): *The World, the Soul, and God* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press)

Tomasello, Michael, and Malinda Carpenter. 2007. 'Shared Intentionality', *Developmental Science*, 10:121-125

Tomasello, Michael, and Hannes Rakoczy. 2003. 'What Makes Human Cognition Unique? From Individual to Shared to Collective Intentionality', *Mind and Language*, 18: 121-147

Tomonaga, Masaki, Masayuki Tanaka, Tetsuro, Matsuzawa, Masako Myowa-Yamakoshi, Daisuke Kosugi, Yuu Mizuno, Sanae Okamoto, Masami K. Yamaguchi, and Kim A. Bard. 2004. 'Development of social cognition in infant chimpanzees (*Pan troglodytes*): Face recognition, smiling, gaze, and the lack of triadic interactions', *Japanese Psychological Research*, 46: 227-235

Trakakis, Nick. 2008. *The End of Philosophy of Religion* (London: Continuum)

Ulrich, Roger S. 1993. 'Biophilia, Biophobia, and Natural Landscapes', in Stephen R. Kellert and E.O. Wilson, eds., *The Biophilia Hypothesis* (Washington, DC: Island Press), pp. 73-137

Valdesolo, Piercarlo and Jesse Graham. in press. 'Awe, Uncertainty, and Agency Detection', *Psychological Science*

Velarde, M.D., G. Fry, and M. Tveit. 2007. 'Health Effects of Viewing Landscapes – Landscape Types in Environmental Psychology', *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 6: 199-212

Wettstein, Howard. 2012. *The Significance of Religious Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press)

JOINT ATTENTION, UNION WITH GOD, AND THE DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL

DONALD BUNGUM

St. Louis University

Abstract. Eleonore Stump has argued that the fulfilment of union between God and human beings requires a mode of relatedness that can be compared to joint attention, a phenomenon studied in contemporary experimental psychology. Stump's account of union, however, is challenged by the fact that Mother Teresa, despite her apparent manifestation of the love of God to others, herself experienced an interior 'dark night of the soul' during which God seemed to be absent and to have rejected her completely. The dark night of the soul poses a problem for Stump's account, since, if anyone had a union of divine love with God, it would seem that Mother Teresa did. Nevertheless, I argue that the isolation and abandonment of Mother Teresa's dark night are contrary to the conditions assumed to be required for joint attention with God. As an alternative to Stump's account, I suggest that the dark night of the soul might be better understood by reference to a combination of joint attention and blindsight, according to which interpersonal closeness might be realized through a consistent pattern of external actions without, however, a direct awareness of one person by the other.

INTRODUCTION

Cognitive scientists, psychologists, and philosophers have recently made great strides in characterizing the phenomenon of joint attention, and although joint attention has proved difficult to define philosophically, it is nevertheless easy to illustrate. For example, joint attention occurs when a father looks intently into the eyes of his baby daughter, and she looks intently into his. Both father and daughter are aware not only of the other person, but also of the other's awareness, and further of the other's

awareness of their own awareness.[1] Other examples of joint attention are commonplace in daily life and include pointing, reciprocal smiling, gaze-following, and so on.[2] In each case, joint attention is marked by a certain mutuality and 'out-in-the-openness' that solitary attention lacks.

Research into the nature of joint attention has also found fruitful applications in philosophical theology. For example, Eleonore Stump has recently argued for an analysis of the theological virtue of charity (*caritas*, also sometimes translated as 'divine love' or simply 'love') that includes joint attention as one of its critical components.[3] On her account, charity involves union with God, and the fulfilment of union with God requires both mutual closeness and mutual personal presence. In Stump's view, mutual personal presence occurs between persons only if they share attention, and the relevant 'sharing' is that of joint attention, which minimally involves 'a shared awareness of the sharing of the focus' with another person.[4] Stump's account of charity is attractive, since charity is what most closely unites human beings with God, and, between persons who love each other, the closest interactions seem to involve joint attention.

By making joint attention necessary for the fulfilment of interpersonal union, however, Stump's account appears to encounter difficulties when faced with the so-called 'dark night of the soul', an advanced stage of the

[1] John Campbell, 'Joint Attention and Common Knowledge', in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. by Naomi Eilan and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 287–297.

[2] Among adults, there are also many manifestations of joint attention, such as mirroring behaviours, although such manifestations between adults are often masked by other complex interpersonal interactions. For joint attention and second-person interaction in adults, see Leonhard Schilbach and others, 'A Second-Person Neuroscience in Interaction', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 36 (2013), 441–462.

[3] Eleonore Stump, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), chap. 4–6. Stump offers a series of arguments for the claim that joint attention is possible between God and human beings. I accept these arguments, and, for the purposes of this paper, I will simply assume that joint attention is possible between God and humans. This possibility, of course, presupposes that God exists, that he possesses intellective and volitional states that can be understood by human beings, and that it is possible for him to enter into the sorts of causal relationships required for joint attention to occur.

[4] Stump, *Wandering in Darkness*, pp. 116–160; R. Peter Hobson, 'What Puts the Jointness into Joint Attention?', in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. by Naomi Eilan and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), p. 185.

spiritual life marked by the subjective sense that God has abandoned and rejected one.[5] The dark night of the soul has recently attracted some interest, since the private correspondence of Mother Teresa of Calcutta reveal that she spent much of her life in this condition.[6] Thus Mother Teresa stands as a well-documented case of a human person seeming to possess a profound personal union with God despite lacking joint attention with him.[7] Together, Mother Teresa's apparent union with God and her crushing experience of his absence seem to present a counterexample to Stump's claim that a human being possesses the fulfilment of personal union with God only if she shares attention with God.

In this paper, I consider the compatibility of interpersonal union and joint attention in Mother Teresa's experience of the dark night of the soul. I argue that, in the face of the theological data, the prospects are not good for the claim that joint attention alone provides an adequate analogical understanding for charity and union with God at this purportedly advanced stage of the spiritual life. I then offer an alternative account of union based on the phenomenon of blindsight, and I show how this account can be defended against the criticisms raised for Stump's view.

JOINT ATTENTION AND 'PRESENCE TO AWARENESS'

It is helpful to begin by thinking in general about joint attention and what is present to the awareness of a participant in joint attention. If God's absence is part of the problem of Mother Teresa's dark night, as she experienced it, what then is the 'presence' of another person that characteristically belongs to joint attention? Recent scholarship suggests that joint attention makes two things present to its participants: (a) an iterative awareness of the other's awareness,[8] and (b) an introspective awareness that one and the other are presently sharing attention.[9]

---

[5] On the dark night, see *The Dark Night of the Soul* and its introduction in John of the Cross, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, ed. by Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez (Washington, D.C: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1979). For more recent accounts, see Reginald Garrigou-Lagrange, *Christian Perfection and Contemplation, According to St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John of the Cross*, ed. by M. Timothea Doyle (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1937); Antonio Royo Marin and Jordan Aumann, *The Theology of Christian Perfection* (Dubuque, Iowa: Priory Press, 1962).

[6] Mother Teresa, *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta*, ed. by Brian Kolodiejchuk (New York: Image, 2007). (Henceforth, 'Teresa'.)

[7] See the collection of Mother Teresa's personal reflections contained in Teresa.

Turning first to the iterative character of joint attention, it will be useful first to examine a case in which joint attention *fails* to exist between two persons.[10] Consider two people facing each other, separated by a thick pane of glass. Suppose that each person falsely believes that the glass separating him from the other person is a one-way mirror, one that allows him to see the other person, but that prevents the other person from seeing him. In this case, each person really sees the other person, but falsely believes that the other cannot see him. Clearly, this situation is far from having the full openness of joint attention, and the reason is that, since each person believes that the other person cannot see him, neither is in a position to perceive that the other perceives him, nor that he perceives that the other perceives that he perceives him, nor any other higher-order iteration of 'y perceives that x perceives that y perceives x.' While it remains disputed exactly *how* the iterative openness of joint attention should be characterized, for the purposes of this paper, it is sufficient to note the uncontroversial point that the openness of joint attention serves as an experiential, categorical *basis* for x's deriving infinitary knowledge of the direction of y's attention.[11] That is, even if the participants never go on to state explicitly any of the higher order iterations of their mutual awareness in joint attention, nevertheless the experience of joint attention makes knowledge of such states in principle available to sufficiently mature participants capable of analytic reasoning. I will call the availability of such infinitary knowledge to each participant the 'iterative availability' of joint attention.

In addition to iterative availability, however, joint attention also involves a certain 'introspective availability', which is nothing more than

[8] This awareness is *iterative* in the sense that for two persons x and y jointly attending each other, x is aware of y, and x is aware that y is aware of x, and x is aware that y is aware that x is aware of y, and so on. In principle, these nested iterations could be expanded infinitely.

[9] Here I draw on discussions in Campbell, 'Joint Attention and Common Knowledge'; John Campbell, 'An Object-Dependent Perspective on Joint Attention', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Axel Seemann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 415–430; Christopher Peacocke, 'Joint Attention: Its Nature, Reflexivity, and Relation to Common Knowledge', in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. by Naomi Eilan and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 298–324.

[10] Adapted from Peacocke, p. 299.

[11] For views regarding the iterative character of joint attention, see Peacocke; Campbell, 'Joint Attention and Common Knowledge'; Michael Wilby, 'The Simplicity of Mutual Knowledge,' *Philosophical Explorations*, 13 (2010), 83–100.

each participant's ability to be aware by introspection that he is currently sharing attention with the other. Consider again the two people facing each other. Another way to see that joint attention fails between them is to recognize that neither person is in a position to perceive that the other is jointly attending with him. Since each person falsely believes that the other cannot see him, neither will experience the full openness of shared attention as present between them. On the other hand, suppose that the two people simultaneously realize that the glass before them is not a one-way mirror, say, by an announcement over a loudspeaker that was manifestly audible to both of them. Suddenly, the openness and jointness of their attention would be present to the consciousness of each participant, such that each could be aware that he was now sharing attention with the other simply by introspection.

Joint attention, then, seems to require that two sorts of availability be present to the awareness of each participant. The first, which I have called iterative availability, is the availability to each participant of a certain sort of knowledge about the other participant. This knowledge can be described by an iterative and potentially infinite sequence, since it is gained by deducing from the full openness of joint attention propositions of the form ' ... x perceives that y perceives x'. Even if neither participant carries out any such deductions, joint attention is marked by making this sort of knowledge possible for its participants.[12] The second sort of availability, which I have called introspective, is the availability of an introspective awareness about the situation in which the participants find themselves. When joint attention occurs between two people, the openness of their shared attention is present to the consciousness of each participant, such that each can know by introspection that he presently shares attention with the other. Such introspective availability can obtain even if neither participant possesses the concepts of 'shared attention' or 'mutually manifest openness', since the phenomenon can be familiar to and recognizable by each participant even while its names or theoretical formulations are not.

[12] Campbell (2005, 2011) argues that it is only by being the experiential *basis* for this sort of knowledge that joint attention can help solve the 'Two Generals' problem first elaborated in E. A. Akkoyunlu, K. Ekanadham, and R. V. Huber, 'Some Constraints and Tradeoffs in the Design of Network Communications', in *Proceedings of the 5th ACM Symposium on Operating Systems Principles*, ed. by James C. Browne and Juan Rodriguez-Rossell (New York: ACM, 1975), pp. 67–74.

MOTHER TERESA AND SPIRITUAL FACULTIES

Given these claims concerning joint attention, it will be useful next to turn to the theological data concerning Mother Teresa's dark night of the soul. The aim is to see whether the relevant phenomenological aspects of Mother Teresa's darkness, as recounted to her confessors and spiritual directors between 1947 and 1997, are consistent with the claim that Mother Teresa engaged in joint attention with God during this time, as expected by Stump's analysis of the meaning of charity. In order to do this, I will first rule out the view that Mother Teresa failed to engage in joint attention with God merely because she lacked the spiritual or psychological faculties necessary to do so. On the contrary, Mother Teresa's writings suggest that she possessed powers of spiritual discernment equal to those of great mystics such as St. John of the Cross or St. Teresa of Avila.[13] After establishing this claim, I move to analyze how the sense of isolation and abandonment is present in Mother Teresa's writings during her dark night. On the basis of this analysis, I will show why it is reasonable to think that no one in such a spiritual state could experience the presence of either the iterative or the introspective availability required for joint attention with God.

Turning to the faculties required for joint attention, we can note that there are many reasons why human beings can fail to share attention

[13] Consider, for example, a typical report from St. Teresa of Avila: 'One day when I was at prayer ... I saw Christ at my side – or, to put it better, I was conscious of Him, for I saw nothing with the eyes of the body or the eyes of the soul [the imagination]. He seemed quite close to me and I saw that it was He. As I thought, He was speaking to me. Being completely ignorant that such visions were possible, I was very much afraid at first, and could do nothing but weep, though as soon as He spoke His first word of assurance to me, I regained my usual calm, and became cheerful and free from fear. All the time Jesus Christ seemed to be at my side, but as this was not an imaginary vision I could not see in what form. But I most clearly felt that He was all the time on my right, and was a witness of everything that I was doing ... if I say that I do not see Him with the eyes of the body or the eyes of the soul, because this is no imaginary vision, how then can I know and affirm that he is beside me with greater certainty than if I saw Him? If one says that one is like a person in the dark who cannot see someone though he is beside him, or that one is like somebody who is blind, it is not right. There is some similarity here, but not much, because a person in the dark can perceive with the other senses, or hear his neighbour speak or move, or can touch him. Here this is not so, nor is there any feeling of darkness. On the contrary, He appears to the soul by a knowledge brighter than the sun. I do not mean that any sun is seen, or any brightness, but there is a light which, though unseen, illumines the understanding.' Quoted in William P. Alston, *Perceiving God* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991), p. 13.

with each other. For instance, one person can be prevented from sharing attention with another by boredom, distraction, insensitivity, or perceptual incapacity. Not every reason why a person could fail to share attention with others, however, seems to be one that affects the fulfilment of his interpersonal union with others. For it is possible to distinguish two sorts of obstacles to joint attention: (a) those that are caused by the lack of some faculty that enables joint attention, and (b) those that are not. For example, a person might be inhibited in his ability to share attention in the first way because of congenital blindness or autistic spectrum disorder.[14] On the other hand, he might be inhibited in his ability in the second way because he habitually avoids contact with other people, despite having the faculties for sharing attention with them. Obstacles of the latter sort are relevant to the fulfilment of union between persons, since the union between two persons with all the faculties required for shared attention is greater insofar as they actually engage in joint attention. Obstacles of the former sort, however, seem less relevant to the fulfilment of union between persons, since the degree of union that is possible for two persons, one of whom lacks a faculty required for shared attention, is less than the degree of union that is possible for two persons who possess all the requisite faculties. Thus, if the fulfilment of interpersonal union between persons is nothing besides realizing the greatest degree of union possible between them, then the first type of obstacle to shared attention is not thereby an obstacle to the fulfilment of interpersonal union.

Turning to shared attention between God and human beings, it is plausible that the ways in which human beings could fail to share attention with God are similar to the ways in which they fail to share attention with each other. Thus, by analogy with the distinction above, it might be supposed that Mother Teresa experienced her dark night only because she lacked some faculty that is spiritually or psychologically

[14] This not to say that persons affected by congenital blindness or autistic spectrum disorder cannot engage in joint attention at all. They can and do. My point is merely that the integrity of sensory and psychological capacities is necessary for full joint attention and that disruption to these capacities can constitute an obstacle to second-personal engagement. For the connections between shared attention, congenital blindness, and autism spectrum disorder, see R. Peter Hobson and Martin Bishop, 'The Pathogenesis of Autism: Insights from Congenital Blindness', in *Autism: Mind and Brain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 109–125.

necessary for someone to share attention with God.[15] But if Mother Teresa's darkness could be explained by the mere lack of some faculty required for joint attention, then presumably her case would pose no challenge to Stump's claim concerning interpersonal union. For, when it is said that there is the fulfilment of union between two persons only if there is joint attention between those persons, the fulfilment in question is plausibly interpreted *de re* as 'the greatest degree of union possible given the faculties of the individuals involved'.[16] Consequently, if Mother Teresa simply lacked the requisite faculties for joint attention with God, then the greatest degree of union possible between her and God would be something considerably less than the degree of union she might have achieved with those faculties. Thus, the fulfilment of union between Mother Teresa and God would *not* require joint attention, since the greatest union open *to her* would be one that could be achieved without joint attention. As a result, Mother Teresa's failing to share attention with God during the dark night would not challenge Stump's view, interpreted as the claim that, 'for any human being *with faculties for joint attention with God*, the fulfilment of interpersonal union requires joint attention.'

The theological data, however, do not support this line of reasoning. Mother Teresa's perceived inability to communicate with God during her darkness is most evident in contrast to her extraordinary reported *ability* to communicate with God in intimate and loving ways at other times. For example, in September 1946, Mother Teresa was still a member of the Sisters of Loreto, and she was sent by train from Calcutta to Darjeeling for her annual retreat. During the journey, she had a mystical encounter with Christ, concerning which she later wrote:

> [It] was a call within my vocation. It was a second calling. It was a vocation to give up even Loreto where I was very happy and to go out into the streets to serve the poorest of the poor. It was in that train,

[15] One of Mother Teresa's most outspoken critics, Christopher Hitchens, makes a similar claim when he calls her darkness a 'personal crisis of faith': Christopher Hitchens, 'The Dogmatic Doubter', *Newsweek*, 10 September 2007, 40–42. See also his criticism of her charitable activities in Christopher Hitchens, *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice* (London; New York: Verso, 1995).

[16] This reading of the condition is supported by the fact that Stump consistently speaks of individuals as growing in the capacity for union to the extent that they are psychically integrated around the good: Stump, *Wandering in Darkness*, chap. 7; Eleonore Stump, 'Atonement and the Cry of Dereliction from the Cross', *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 4 (2012), 1–17 (p. 2).

> I heard the call to give up all and follow Him into the slums – to serve Him in the poorest of the poor ... I knew it was His will and that I had to follow Him.[17]

Following this encounter, Mother Teresa received a series of interior locutions that lasted almost a year. Mother Teresa kept a record of 'what went on between Him and me during the days of much prayer', and she later called this record 'the copy of the Voice since September 1946'.[18] Although Mother Teresa desired to act immediately upon the 'second calling' that she discerned in her conversations with Christ, nevertheless, under the guidance of her spiritual director, Jesuit Father Céleste Van Exem, Mother Teresa for several months resisted Christ's call and remained silent about what it contained. Finally, however, in January 1947, Father Van Exem judged that Mother Teresa's inspiration was from God, and he permitted her to write the Archbishop of Calcutta, Ferdinand Périer, to inform him of what she believed God was calling her to do and to ask his permission to found a new religious order. In her letter to the Archbishop, Mother Teresa writes:

> Your Grace,
>
> From last Sept. strange thoughts and desires have been filling my heart. They got stronger and clearer during the 8 days retreat I made in Darjeeling ... One day at Holy Com.[Communion] I heard the same voice very distinctly – "*I want Indian nuns, victims of My love, who would be Mary & Martha, who would be so very united to Me as to radiate My love on souls ... Wilt thou refuse to do this for Me?*" ... I tried to persuade Our Lord that I would try to become a very fervent holy Loreto nun, a real victim here in this vocation – but the answer came very clear again. "*I want Indian Missionary Sisters of Charity – who would be My fire of love amongst the very poor – the sick – the dying –the little street children. – The poor I want you to bring to Me – and the Sisters that would offer their lives as victims of My love – would bring these souls to Me. You are I know the most incapable person, weak & sinful, but just because you are that I want to use you, for My Glory! Wilt thou refuse?*" These words or rather this voice frightened me. The thought of eating, sleeping – living like the Indians filled me with fear ... [But] the more I prayed – the clearer grew the voice in my heart and so I prayed that He would do with me whatever

[17] Teresa, p. 40.

[18] Teresa, p. 45.

> He wanted. He asked me again and again ... This is what went on between Him and me during the days of much prayer.[19]

While Mother Teresa gives much additional evidence concerning her conversations with and visions of Christ, these passages are sufficient to suggest that Mother Teresa possessed considerable powers of spiritual discrimination.[20] Under the guidance of Father Van Exem, Mother Teresa explicitly considered alternative construals of her experience, such as that it was the product of pride or self-delusion,[21] and she finally rejected any alternate construal in favour of the view that God Himself was present to her. Further, Mother Teresa clearly distinguished between the types of experience, since, at certain times, she identified her state as one of hearing the voice of Christ, while at other times she identified her state as one of seeing Christ on the Cross amid the suffering poor.[22] It adds to the credibility of her reports that Mother Teresa clearly differentiates between the content of her experiences and that she grew increasingly confident in characterizing her experience in the months leading up to her founding the Missionaries of Charity. Thus, Mother Teresa's experience of and response to extraordinary communication from God suggests that she possessed, on her own account, the required spiritual and psychological faculties to engage in joint attention with God. On the reasonable assumption that these faculties did not simply vanish as soon as she began to experience her dark night, it follows that, during her darkness, the mere absence of the relevant faculties was not a reason for Mother Teresa's failing to engage in joint attention with God.

DARKNESS AND ABANDONMENT IN MOTHER TERESA'S DARK NIGHT

In her private writings, Mother Teresa recounts that, shortly after founding the Missionaries of Charity in 1948, Mother Teresa felt herself to have lost all communication with God. In a letter to the Jesuit theologian Joseph Neuner, Mother Teresa contrasts her early experience

[19] Teresa, pp. 47–49.

[20] For a similar argument concerning powers of spiritual discrimination, see Alston, p. 42. Notice also the interplay of 'I' and 'you' in this passage, indicative of a relationship that is plausibly second-personal, i.e., the kind of relationship that, in other contexts, is manifested in joint attention.

[21] Teresa, p. 89.

[22] Teresa, p. 101.

of God's communication with the spiritual deafness and blindness that followed. She writes:

> In Loreto, Father I was very happy. – I think the happiest nun. – Then the call came. – Our Lord asked directly – the voice was clear & full of conviction. – Again & again He asked in 1946. – I knew it was He ... The sweetness & consolation & union of those 6 months – passed but too soon ... Now Father – since [19]49 or 50 this terrible sense of loss – this untold darkness – this loneliness – this continual longing for God – which gives me that pain deep down in my heart. – Darkness is such that I really do not see – neither with my mind nor with my reason. – The place of God in my soul is blank. – There is no God in me. – When the pain of longing is so great – I just long & long for God – and then it is that I feel – He does not want me – He is not there. ... God does not want me. – Sometimes – I just hear my own heart cry out – 'My God' and nothing else comes. – The torture and pain I can't explain. [23]

And, in a letter to a different spiritual director, she comments again on her inability spiritually to hear or see God, saying, ' ... the silence and emptiness is so great that I look and do not see, listen and do not hear ... '[24] Together, these passages suggest that, for Mother Teresa, God's silence during her darkness stood in painful contrast to the clear and direct communication she received from God earlier in life. Not only did she lack the extraordinary locutions and visions that she knew before founding the Missionaries of Charity, but she seems also to have missed any ordinary awareness of God through her reason. On the contrary, it seemed to Mother Teresa that nothing of God remained within her, and, if we keep in mind her abilities for spiritual discrimination, we can conclude from this that God's apparent absence from her experience was not merely due to some general psychological or spiritual incapacity.

In addition to pointing out the absence of communication from God, Mother Teresa also mentions in the passage above her pain at feeling *unwanted* by God. Mother Teresa gives a typical example of her sense of unwantedness when she says that her spiritual state could be illustrated only by analogy to her beloved poor in the streets:

> How cold – how empty – how painful is my heart. – Holy Communion – Holy Mass – all the holy things of spiritual life – of the life of Christ in

[23] Teresa, pp. 1–2.

[24] Teresa, p. 288.

> me – are all so empty – so cold – so unwanted. The physical situation of my poor left in the streets unwanted, unloved, unclaimed – are the true picture of my own spiritual life, of my love for Jesus ...[25]

From these passages we can see that, in addition to the lack of any communication from God, Mother Teresa's darkness was marked by a painful sense of God's absence and rejection.

From this brief summary of the theological data concerning Mother Teresa's dark night, it is clear that Mother Teresa experienced an interior torment arising from her sense of God's absence. Even if she had the faculties for sharing attention with God, Mother Teresa's sense of being abandoned by God demonstrates that she could not actually do so. To see this, consider the case of someone who believes that his friend neither communicates with him nor is present to him in any way. Such a person would be disposed to believe further that his friend is *absent*, in the sense that there is not any causal, communicative, or emotional interaction between himself and his friend. A person who believes that his friend is absent in this sense cannot be aware that he is sharing attention with his friend, since, even if he were merely mistaken in this belief (e.g., as through a hallucination), and his friend were actually present beside him, his unshakeable belief to the contrary precludes his believing that he is sharing attention with his friend. Indeed, the case of the person who believes his friend to be absent is relevantly similar to the case of the two persons who mistakenly believe the glass between them to be a one-way mirror. For, in each case, the beliefs of the participants preclude the sorts of iterative and introspective availability characteristic of joint attention. Someone who is fully convinced that his friend is entirely absent cannot perceive that his friend perceives him, and even less can he determine by introspection that the full openness of joint attention exists between him and his friend. Thus, even if we suppose that God *was* present to Mother Teresa during her darkness, and present in such a way that he was accessible for joint attention, nevertheless, Mother Teresa's belief that God was absent from her implies that she was in no position to share attention with God.

[25] Teresa, p. 232.

A RESPONSE FROM TRIADIC JOINT ATTENTION

While the data concerning Mother Teresa's dark night of the soul seems to rule out her sharing attention with God, there is an additional piece of evidence concerning Mother Teresa's service to the poor that suggests an interesting reply for an advocate of Stump's claim about interpersonal union. In addition to describing her interior life of prayer, Mother Teresa also reflects on serving the poorest of the poor in Calcutta's slums. Turning to these reflections, we note that, while serving the poor, Mother Teresa experienced herself as working with a person present and living within her. She writes:

> When outside – in the work – or meeting people – there is a presence – of somebody living very close – in very me. – I don't know what this is – but very often, even every day – that love in me for God grows more real.[26]

Here, Mother Teresa speaks about her 'work' outside the convent, work which involved both nursing the sick in their homes and gathering the homeless and dying from the street. In this work, Mother Teresa attended to the concrete needs of other people, but this passage suggests that Mother Teresa also experienced this service as *with* another person, a person whom she describes as 'somebody living very close – in very me'. Since she claims not to know what this somebody is, yet associates his presence with the increase of the love for God in her, it is plausible that, for Mother Teresa, the person with whom she experienced Christ's care for the poor was Christ himself. Thus, when serving the poor, Mother Teresa seemed both to carry out Christ's service to the poor and to serve them *with* Christ, living within her.

These features of Mother Teresa's experience move us to consider the distinction between two types of joint attention – dyadic and triadic joint attention – and to explore whether Mother Teresa could have engaged in triadic joint attention with God while serving the poor, even if she could not engage in dyadic joint attention with God during solitary prayer.[27] Unlike dyadic joint attention, which is a person-person

[26] Teresa, p. 211.

[27] For reflections on the distinction and interaction between dyadic and triadic joint attention, see Vasudevi Reddy, 'Before the "Third Element": Understanding Attention to Self', in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. by Naomi Eilan and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 86–109; Johannes Roessler, 'Joint Attention and the Problem of Other Minds', in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*,

scenario involving two people and their attention to each other, triadic joint attention is a person-person-object scenario involving two people and their attention to something distinct from themselves. Here is a typical case of triadic joint attention: suppose that someone is sitting on a park bench, watching a swan, and his friend comes to sit next to him on the bench.[28] If they acknowledge each other's presence, then it is possible that the quality of their experience will shift from solitary attention to the swan to fully joint attention with each other. Once in this joint condition, each person is not the focus or object of the other's attention, since it is only the swan that each is attending to. Nevertheless, the other person is there, as co-attender, at the periphery of each one's experience, and as long as they are jointly attending to the swan they both share an awareness of their shared focus on it.

Return now to the case of Mother Teresa. An advocate of Stump's claim concerning interpersonal union might argue that the tension between Mother Teresa's dark night and Stump's claim is removed if it is possible that Mother Teresa engaged in what could be characterized as triadic joint attention with God. And, given Mother Teresa's comment about the presence of someone 'living very close' within her during her service, it *does* in fact seem possible that Mother Teresa engaged in triadic attention with God while at work, insofar as the sense of blindness, isolation, and rejection that ruled out her engaging in dyadic joint attention fails to rule out her engaging in triadic joint attention while working with the poor. For, while it is true that no one can engage in dyadic joint attention with another if he believes he cannot perceive the other, the same is not the case for triadic joint attention. In the swan example, the two friends do not see each other as they jointly attend to the swan, and they would most likely believe that they *cannot* see each other just as long as they attend to the swan together. Nevertheless, this belief does not prevent each one from being aware of the other's presence at the periphery of his experience. Thus, even if Mother Teresa lacked any sense of God's directly

ed. by Naomi Eilan and others (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 230–259; Elisabeth Pacherie, 'The Phenomenology of Joint Action: Self-Agency Versus Joint Agency', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Axel Seemann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 343–390; Shaun Gallagher, 'Interactive Coordination in Joint Attention', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Axel Seemann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 293–306.

[28] Campbell, 'Joint Attention and Common Knowledge', p. 288.

communicating with her, such a lack of awareness is not an obstacle to her engaging in triadic attention with God while serving in the streets.

EVALUATING THE TRIADIC ATTENTION RESPONSE

The above response based on triadic attention displays a number of strengths. First, and most to the point, the response identifies a recognized mode of joint attention that seems consistent with the phenomenological characteristics of Mother Teresa's dark night. Second, the response helps to make sense of Mother Teresa's report of 'someone living very close within her', a comment that seems a strikingly apt description of how a co-attender might figure into the periphery of one's experience during triadic joint attention. Finally, the response suggests a reason why Mother Teresa did not lose her faith in God despite the pain of the dark night, since perhaps she grew in union with God through triadic engagement even while she longed for greater closeness of dyadic interaction.

Despite these advantages, however, the response from triadic attention will not work to save Stump's claim concerning interpersonal union. While it is clear that triadic joint attention allows co-attenders to have some awareness of each other without directly perceiving one another, it is less clear that the sort of awareness made possible by triadic attention alone is one that is conducive to interpersonal union. For, when we consider the ways in which a co-attender can be present at the periphery of one's experience in triadic joint attention, it is important not to confuse (a) the presence of the other *as a person* and (b) the presence of the other *as some person in particular*. Consider the following case of triadic attention described by Adam Green:

> [I]f [persons] A and B are carrying a large piece of furniture up some stairs and A cannot see B, A still experiences the couch-carrying differently than A would if A thought he were carrying it alone. Even though A is focused on carrying the item up the stairs and may not even see B, A is mediately aware of B ... If A reaches the top of the stairs only to realize that A was carrying the item alone, A will not think that an inferential error was made somewhere along the way. It will feel like an illusion. The experience ends up being of a different nature than it seemed to be at the time even if A was focused on the furniture and not on B, the

> reason being that A took himself/herself to be aware *of B* in the way that B affected A's sense of the weight and movement of the couch.[29]

In this example, person A cannot see person B while A and B carry the couch up the stairs together. Nevertheless, it is plausible that A and B engage in triadic joint attention during this activity, insofar as they consciously coordinate their movements in order to navigate. If A and B engage in triadic joint attention while moving the couch, it is clear that A and B each have some awareness of each other through how they each affect the couch's weight and movement. But if we suppose that the *only* engagement A and B have is this triadic one, and that, say, A and B do not acknowledge, recognize, or perceive each other before or after moving the couch, then the awareness that A and B have of each other through moving the couch will be merely as of another person and not as of some person in particular. Without some dyadic interaction to frame and contextualize the experience of the triadic interaction, the triadic interaction alone is nothing more than co-attention with an unidentified *other*.

Now, according to the triadic response, Mother Teresa engaged in triadic joint attention with God without dyadic joint attention. But if the argument above is correct, then Mother Teresa's awareness of God could have been only as of a person, not as of some person in particular. And this is precisely what we ought to conclude from revisiting her report of the one 'living within her':

> When outside – in the work – or meeting people – there is a presence – of somebody living very close – in very me. – I don't know what this is – but very often, even every day – that love in me for God grows more real.[30]

It is tempting to interpret Mother Teresa's statement as implying that she did not know what sort of *being* it is that lived very close within her. If this is her meaning, then much less could she claim to know *which* being was living within her, and thus we could conclude that she had no awareness *of God* as living within her. But even if we take her statement to mean that she did not know what sort of *phenomenon* she was experiencing, the fact that she refers to the one living within her as 'somebody', combined

[29] Adam Green, 'Reading the Mind of God (without Hebrew Lessons): Alston, Shared Attention, and Mystical Experience', *Religious Studies*, 45 (2009), 455–470 (p. 468, original emphasis).

[30] Teresa, p. 211.

with the fact that Mother Teresa had ample experience of what she took to be direct converse with God, forces us to conclude that her experience of this person was not an awareness of some person in particular, much less an awareness of God himself.

Applying these results to Stump's claim concerning interpersonal union, we find ourselves forced to ask whether the type of joint attention required for the fulfilment of union with God is one in which human beings purportedly share awareness with God (a) merely as a person or (b) as some person in particular. Suppose, then, that only (a)-type, triadic joint attention is necessary. This would mean that, from the (first-person) perspective of the human, the iterative availability of triadic joint attention would be the human's ability to know propositions of the form 'I perceive that S perceives [...] that I perceive that O', where O is the object of joint attention, and S is a co-attender of which the human subject is aware merely as a person, but as a person unknown to him. Further, the introspective availability of the joint attention would be nothing other than the human's ability to perceive by introspection that he jointly attends an object with another person, but a person whose identity is obscure.

Put in this way, it is difficult to see how such encounters could make any sort of contribution to interpersonal unity. Even if we suppose that the object of joint attention is something that is suited to increase the union between God and the human subject (e.g., a homeless child whom one intends to care for), the fact that the subject's co-attender is unknown means that the joint attention itself can neither perfect the human subject nor draw him closer to God. Triadic joint attention with an unknown co-attender neither increases one's knowledge about the co-attender, nor increases one's desire to know him, nor removes obstacles to knowing him, since, beyond the fact that such joint attention could give little (if any) information about the co-attender, the subject cannot identify whom the information is about. At best, the unknown co-attender's presence at the periphery of the subject's experience might induce a certain wonder about who the co-attender is, but even if it is possible that such wonder is conducive to divine-human union, this should not convince us that joint attention in *this* sense is necessary for the fulfilment of union with God. Thus the response from triadic joint attention cannot both preserve Stump's claim and offer plausible way in which Mother Teresa could be said to engage in joint attention with

God. If Mother Teresa engaged in triadic attention at all, it was a sort not necessary for interpersonal union.

AN ALTERNATIVE SUGGESTION

The difficulties that I have pointed out for Stump's view concerning joint attention and interpersonal union could be solved if there were a way to hold that human beings, while experiencing the dark night of the soul, can engage in joint attention with God without being aware of their doing so. Suppose that the thoughts and activities of a person are directed by God through joint attention, but that the person is not aware of God's involvement in directing his activities. Then God and the person will be united in their actions, but the person will not be in a position to know this. Stump is kept from such a solution by the assumption that joint attention is a sort of shared awareness of sharing of focus, so that she would then also have to say that joint attention is in fact not taking place.

In my view, the problem is insoluble for Stump because she assumes that joint attention occurs only if each party is aware that joint attention occurs. On this view, if someone is not aware that he is engaged in joint attention with another, or if he does not recognize the other with whom he is engaged, then he is not engaged in joint attention at all. Therefore, if someone, like Mother Teresa, is prevented by the dark night from becoming aware of sharing attention with God, then that person is prevented from sharing attention with God altogether. Consequently, if shared attention is necessary for the fulfilment of interpersonal union with God, such a person also lacks the fulfilment of interpersonal union.

Recent work in experimental psychology, however, suggests that a person's attention can influence his actions even if that person is not aware of what he is attending to or how his attention is being directed. For example, patients with blindsight retain the ability to detect, discriminate and localize objects in areas of their visual field in which they report that they are subjectively blind.[31] Furthermore, despite

[31] See Lawrence Weiskrantz, *Blindsight: A Case Study Spanning 35 Years and New Developments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009). For reflections on the epistemological significance of blindsight, see Ned Block, 'On a Confusion About a Function of Consciousness', *Brain and Behavioral Sciences*, 18 (1995), 227–247; Fred Dretske, 'What Good Is Consciousness?', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 27 (1997), 1–15. For evidence suggesting that attention is not sufficient for phenomenological awareness in sighted persons, see R. W. Kentridge, T. C. W. Nijboer and C. A. Heywood, 'Attended

lacking subjective awareness of the objects with which they interact, patients with blindsight still exhibit visually guided behaviours such as negotiating obstacle courses and correctly judging and reacting to others' facial expressions.[32] It is likely, then, that human beings can attend to and process information about objects without being aware of them. More importantly, however, other research suggests that another's gaze or orientation towards an object can direct a person's attention and influence his actions towards that object without his being aware of it.[33] This research suggests that, even if full joint attention requires awareness of the other, there is a way in which the causal conditions presupposed by joint attention can be met without a person's being aware of it. That is, it is possible that one of the causal factors sustaining a person's attention on an object might be that another is attending to that same object, even though the person has no explicit thoughts about the direction of the other's attention or awareness that the person is there.[34]

If these views about attention and awareness are correct, then there seems to be a different sort of joint attention that does not require a person to be aware that joint attention occurs.[35] When this sort of joint attention occurs, one's attention is guided by the attention of another person, and one's sharing attention with the other leads to one's acting differently from how one would act in the absence of such joint attention. The entire process, however, occurs without one's being explicitly aware of the other.

This alternative form of joint attention suggests a different analogy by which we might understand Mother Teresa's experience of the dark

---

but Unseen: Visual Attention Is Not Sufficient for Visual Awareness', *Neuropsychologia*, 46 (2008), 864–9.

[32] Beatrice de Gelder, 'Uncanny Sight in the Blind', *Scientific American*, 302 (2010), 60–65.

[33] Jari K. Hietanen, 'Does Your Gaze Direction and Head Orientation Shift My Visual Attention?', *Neuroreport*, 10 (1999), 3443–3447; Wataru Sato, Takashi Okada, and Motomi Toichi, 'Attentional Shift by Gaze Is Triggered Without Awareness', *Experimental Brain Research*, 183 (2007), 87–94; Shan Xu, Shen Zhang and Haiyan Geng, 'Gaze-Induced Joint Attention Persists Under High Perceptual Load and Does Not Depend on Awareness', *Vision Research*, 51 (2011), 2048–2056.

[34] Campbell, 'Joint Attention and Common Knowledge', p. 288.

[35] Note a similar distinction between the causal and awareness conditions of joint attention in Timothy P. Racine, 'Getting Beyond Rich and Lean Views of Joint Attention', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Axel Seemann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 21–42.

night of the soul. I do not claim that this analogy is correct, or that it is the analogy that Stump would accept, or that it is the analogy that she ought to accept. My point is simply to show that the connection between interpersonal union and joint attention is not *entirely* severed by the dark night, and that there is at least one way in which someone enduring the dark night might lack awareness of God and yet share attention with him. Suppose then, on analogy with the different sort of joint attention described above, that Mother Teresa's attention and activities were directed by God's own attention. That is, suppose that God attended to and adopted a certain stance towards persons and objects in Mother Teresa's environment, and that God's attention and stance were factors sustaining Mother Teresa's own attention to and stance towards those persons and objects. Furthermore, suppose that during her darkness, Mother Teresa was affected by a sort of 'spiritual blindsight', according to which she lacked any awareness of God as directing her attention or stance towards other things. On this analogy, Mother Teresa's union with God would not be characterized by joint attention alone, but rather by the causal conditions underlying joint attention coupled to a state of spiritual perception similar to blindsight. For simplicity, let us call this analogy the 'blindsight view' of Mother Teresa's interaction with God.

If something like the blindsight view correctly describes Mother Teresa's condition in the dark night of the soul,[36] we can say that Mother Teresa engaged in some sort of joint interaction with God without having to suppose that she was aware of her sharing attention with God. Moreover, this account helps us to explain the features of Mother Teresa's dark night that we have found to be incompatible with her sharing full joint attention with God. Indeed, on the blindsight view, Mother Teresa's sense of isolation and abandonment is explained by her lacking any subjective awareness of the object of her attention in prayer, and her failure to identify the person 'living within her' as some person in

[36] There is perhaps good theological reason to think that something like the blindsight view is correct for human beings enduring the dark night of the soul. For one thing, the Book of Psalms, which Christians have traditionally taken to describe every stage of spiritual development, is replete with references to God's 'hiding his face' from those who desire to see him (e.g., Psalms 30.7; 44.24; 69.17; 88.14; 89.46; 104.29). For another thing, mystics such as St. John of the Cross compare the dark night of the soul to the blindness that results from staring at the sun: God's extreme closeness to a person in the dark night renders him unable perceive spiritually (cf. John of the Cross, p. 335).

particular is explained by her lacking any awareness of the one directing her attention to and stance towards the poor.

A further consequence of the blindsight view is that Mother Teresa's union with God had less to do with shared attention than with shared *activity*, and this consequence fits well with how Mother Teresa came to understand her darkness during the later parts of her life. For example, as she grew more at peace with her spiritual darkness,[37] Mother Teresa came to characterize the union she enjoyed with God as a union not of affect, but a union of will and of work. She writes, 'I am not alone. – I have His darkness – I have His pain – I have the terrible longing for God – to love and not to be loved. I know I have Jesus – in that unbroken union – for my mind is fixed on Him and in Him alone, in my will.'[38] And again: 'I know that I want with my whole heart what He wants, as He wants and for as long as He wants. Yet ... this "aloneness" is hard. The only thing that remains is the deep and strong conviction that the work is His.'[39] The blindsight view, however, provides a way of understanding a union of will and of work in a way that is compatible with one party feeling isolated from and rejected by the other. For, on the blindsight view, God's attention to and stance towards the poor sustained and directed Mother Teresa's own attention and stance, and consequently God and Mother Teresa came to will the same things in the same way. But despite willing the same things as God and being directed by him to serve others, Mother Teresa continued to feel isolated and alone insofar as she had no awareness of God as directing her work. Finally, the blindsight view goes some way towards explaining why the dark night of the soul contributed to interpersonal union between God and Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa recognized God's work in her activities, but she lacked any awareness of his presence as she carried them out. Her acute sense of God's absence, however, caused her to be even more attentive to God's commandments of love, and this in turn united her even more intimately to God's will. Thus, the blindsight view makes sense of Mother Teresa's experience in a way that is not possible based on joint attention alone.

[37] See, for example, Mother Teresa's 1974 letter to Fr. Don Kribs, where she comments that one's degree of interior 'emptiness' is proportionate to the degree to which God lives 'His life in us': Teresa, p. 275.

[38] Teresa, p. 223.

[39] Teresa, p. 236.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, I have examined a problem for Stump's claim that joint attention is necessary for the fulfilment of interpersonal union with God, a problem posed by the dark night of Mother Teresa. Mother Teresa's experience of darkness, isolation, and rejection is inconsistent with her engaging in dyadic joint attention with God. Furthermore, while some aspects of her service to the poor might seem to suggest that she engaged in triadic joint attention with God, I have argued that this view also must be rejected, since triadic joint attention with an unknown co-attender is not conducive to interpersonal union. Faced with these conclusions, I have suggested one way in which a person might be directed in his activities by God's own attention without being aware of God's involvement. On this 'blindsight view' of Mother Teresa's dark night of the soul, Mother Teresa's spiritual condition involved both the causal conditions presupposed in joint attention and also a sort of spiritual blindsight. Whether this proposal is ultimately coherent will also depend, however, on whether it can help us to make better sense of *why* the dark night of the soul, and thus spiritual blindsight, might be instrumental for increasing interpersonal union with God. This question promises to provide another fruitful avenue for engagement between cognitive science, psychology, and philosophical theology.[40]

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Akkoyunlu, E. A., K. Ekanadham, and R. V. Huber, 'Some Constraints and Tradeoffs in the Design of Network Communications', in *Proceedings of the 5th ACM Symposium on Operating Systems Principles*, ed. by James C. Browne and Juan Rodriguez-Rossell (New York: ACM, 1975), pp. 67–74

Alston, William P., *Perceiving God* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991)

Block, Ned, 'On a Confusion About a Function of Consciousness', *Brain and Behavioral Sciences*, 18 (1995), 227–247

Campbell, John, 'An Object-Dependent Perspective on Joint Attention', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Axel Seemann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 415–430

[40] Thanks to Eleonore Stump, John Greco, Andrew Pinsent, Lawrence Feingold, Errin Clark, Robert Hartman, Max Parish, Jeremy Skrzypek, and participants in the 2013 Ian Ramsey Centre Conference on the Second-Person Perspective for helpful comments on earlier drafts of this paper.

Campbell, John, 'Joint Attention and Common Knowledge', in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. by Naomi Eilan, Christoph Hoerl, Teresa McCormack, and Johannes Roessler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 287–297

Dretske, Fred, 'What Good Is Consciousness?', *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, 27 (1997), 1–15

Gallagher, Shaun, 'Interactive Coordination in Joint Attention', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Axel Seemann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 293–306

Garrigou-Lagrange, Reginald, *Christian Perfection and Contemplation, According to St. Thomas Aquinas and St. John of the Cross*, ed. by M. Timothea Doyle (St. Louis, MO: B. Herder Book Co., 1937)

Gelder, Beatrice de, 'Uncanny Sight in the Blind', *Scientific American*, 302 (2010), 60–65

Green, Adam, 'Reading the Mind of God (without Hebrew Lessons): Alston, Shared Attention, and Mystical Experience', *Religious Studies*, 45 (2009), 455–470

Hietanen, Jari K., 'Does Your Gaze Direction and Head Orientation Shift My Visual Attention?', *Neuroreport*, 10 (1999), 3443–3447

Hitchens, Christopher, 'The Dogmatic Doubter', *Newsweek*, 10 September 2007, 40–42

Hitchens, Christopher, *The Missionary Position: Mother Teresa in Theory and Practice* (London; New York: Verso, 1995)

Hobson, R. Peter, 'What Puts the Jointness into Joint Attention?', in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. by Naomi Eilan, Christoph Hoerl, Teresa McCormack, and Joannes Roessler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005)

Hobson, R. Peter, and Martin Bishop, 'The Pathogenesis of Autism: Insights from Congenital Blindness', in *Autism: Mind and Brain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004), pp. 109–125

John of the Cross, *The Collected Works of St. John of the Cross*, ed. by Kieran Kavanaugh and Otilio Rodriguez (Washington, D.C: Institute of Carmelite Studies, 1979)

Kentridge, R. W., T. C. W. Nijboer, and C. A. Heywood, 'Attended but Unseen: Visual Attention Is Not Sufficient for Visual Awareness', *Neuropsychologia*, 46 (2008), 864–9

Marin, Antonio Royo, and Jordan Aumann, *The Theology of Christian Perfection* (Dubuque, Iowa: Priory Press, 1962)

Mother Teresa, *Mother Teresa: Come Be My Light: The Private Writings of the Saint of Calcutta*, ed. by Brian Kolodiejchuk (New York: Image, 2007)

Pacherie, Elisabeth, 'The Phenomenology of Joint Action: Self-Agency Versus Joint Agency', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Axel Seemann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 343–390

Peacocke, Christopher, 'Joint Attention: Its Nature, Reflexivity, and Relation to Common Knowledge', in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. by Naomi Eilan, Christoph Hoerl, Teresa McCormack, and Johannes Roessler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 298–324

Racine, Timothy P., 'Getting Beyond Rich and Lean Views of Joint Attention', in *Joint Attention: New Developments in Psychology, Philosophy of Mind, and Social Neuroscience*, ed. by Axel Seemann (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011), pp. 21–42

Reddy, Vasudevi, 'Before the "Third Element": Understanding Attention to Self', in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. by Naomi Eilan, Christoph Hoerl, Teresa McCormack, and Johannes Roessler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 86–109

Roessler, Johannes, 'Joint Attention and the Problem of Other Minds', in *Joint Attention: Communication and Other Minds: Issues in Philosophy and Psychology*, ed. by Naomi Eilan, Christoph Hoerl, Teresa McCormack, and Johannes Roessler (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005), pp. 230–259

Sato, Wataru, Takashi Okada, and Motomi Toichi, 'Attentional Shift by Gaze Is Triggered Without Awareness', *Experimental Brain Research*, 183 (2007), 87–94

Schilbach, Leonhard, Bert Timmermans, Vasudevi Reddy, Alan Costall, Gary Bente, Tobias Schlicht, and others, 'A Second-Person Neuroscience in Interaction', *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 36 (2013), 441–462

Stump, Eleonore, 'Atonement and the Cry of Dereliction from the Cross', *European Journal for Philosophy of Religion*, 4 (2012), 1–17

Stump, Eleonore, *Wandering in Darkness: Narrative and the Problem of Suffering* (Oxford: New York: Oxford University Press, USA, 2010)

Weiskrantz, Lawrence, *Blindsight: A Case Study Spanning 35 Years and New Developments* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009)

Wilby, Michael, 'The Simplicity of Mutual Knowledge', *Philosophical Explorations*, 13 (2010), 83–100

Xu, Shan, Shen Zhang, and Haiyan Geng, 'Gaze-Induced Joint Attention Persists Under High Perceptual Load and Does Not Depend on Awareness', *Vision Research*, 51 (2011), 2048–2056