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## Preprint

### Consciousness Incorporated

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Thomas Nagel (1979, Ch 12) introduced the topic of consciousness to contemporary philosophical debate, arguing that a mental state is conscious when, in an intuitive sense, there is something it is like for the subject to instantiate it.<sup>1</sup> The question I address here is whether the incorporation of a group as an agent introduces a new collective sort of consciousness. There are good grounds for holding that incorporation as an agent brings a new intentional subject into being: a subject with a relatively autonomous structure of intentional attitudes like belief and desire and intention (List and Pettit 2011; see too Tollefsen 2015). And those grounds naturally generate the question as to whether incorporation as an agent has an impact on consciousness that parallels its impact on intentionality. I consider that question here from the point of view of my commitment to corporate agency, and to the joint intentionality it generally presupposes. Unfortunately, I have to do so in the compass of a single paper without due consideration of all alternatives.

#### *Consciousness and coawareness*

Nagel's test fails to distinguish, in my opinion, between two views of what consciousness involves. On one view of consciousness, all that it need involve is a mental state such that that you as subject are aware of its intentional content—this may be real or imagined—taking that content to prompt and explain the responses to which the state disposes you.<sup>2</sup> On the other view, consciousness is an intrinsic property of the

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<sup>1</sup> Does consciousness presuppose a mental state? I assume so. There is something it is like to be upright, for example, despite the fact that being upright is not a mental state. But there is something this is like, presumably, only because there are associated mental states—perceptions from an upright position—such that there is something it is like to instantiate them.

<sup>2</sup> The content will only be imagined in the case of a visual illusion or, to take a less familiar example (Evans 1982), in the case of what appears to be a demonstrative belief about a particular object, when there is no object there.

mental state—a feel or *quale* it displays—that belongs to it independently of its having an accessible content, if indeed it has a content.<sup>3</sup>

The idea behind the first view can be illustrated with the contrast between conscious and unconscious belief, in a perfectly ordinary sense of that contrast (Mellor 1977). By a familiar, functional account, to believe that things are thus and so is, other things equal, to be disposed to act as if they were indeed that way, yet disposed to change in face of evidence that they are not (Stalnaker 1984). For all that this requires, however, your belief that things are thus and so may be unconsciously instantiated; you need not be aware of holding it. To believe the proposition consciously would require not only that you have the appropriate functional profile, but that you are aware of things as being thus and so, able to see their being that way as the reason for acting as you are disposed to act, and ready to change the belief if you become aware of conclusive counter-evidence.

On the second view of consciousness, it is not enough that you have this sort of access to the content of your belief, where that is cast as an epistemic relationship you have to your own state. According to this view, such access consciousness, as it has been called, is less significant than phenomenal consciousness (Block 1997). And what distinguishes phenomenal consciousness, so it is said, is the intrinsic feel of the relevant state, which is not dependent either on its having an intentional content or on its content being accessible. This sort of consciousness, according to defenders, counts as the real thing—the only proper deserver of the name—perhaps because it raises such a daunting difficulty for a physicalist account of mind (Strawson 1994; Chalmers 1996).

My own view is that however real or daunting phenomenal consciousness is—I set aside that issue here—it remains the case, contrary to the assumptions of many, that access-consciousness also ensures that there is something it is like to be in a mental state.

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<sup>3</sup> The claim that both forms of consciousness pass Nagel's test is not generally accepted but, in my view, that is because those immersed in these discussions have come to think of it as just a test of whether a state has a distinctive feel or *quale*; they have lost sight of the contrast emphasized here between a purely functional state and one that involves awareness of the content. For an excellent overview of different approaches to consciousness in the contemporary literature see (Van Gulick 2014).

If you believe consciously that things are thus and so, to stick with that example, you will be able to recognize the reason why you are disposed to act in a certain way: viz., that things are thus and so; able to realize how differently the world would look, perhaps prompting quite a different action, if you did not hold it; and able to see that you would cease to hold the belief, if you became aware of evidence that things are not thus and so. None of this need be true, however, if the belief is not conscious in the access sense. We all understand the sense in which there is something it is like to hold a belief with access to its content, where there is nothing it is like—nothing it is like in any sense of the phrase—to hold a belief without such access.

It may be misleading, however, to cast the sort of consciousness involved here as an access state. That description suggests that just as you may hold unconscious beliefs about certain aspects of the world, so access consciousness requires only that you may hold unconscious beliefs about certain of your mental states.<sup>4</sup> If access consciousness were like that, then it could hardly be guaranteed to pass the something-it-is-like test.

The description also suggests that just as your access to the contents of my beliefs will not necessarily engage any response, so access to the contents of your own beliefs might leave you equally unmoved. But in being aware of the content of a belief—for example, in being aware, as you see it, that *p* and that if *p*, then *q*—you will recognize and be moved by a reason, other things equal, to respond appropriately: in this case, to believe that *q*. And in being aware of the contents of other intentional states, say those of desire or intention, you will presumably be responsive to the different sorts of reasons relevant in those cases (Schmitz 2017).

In order to cancel those misleading suggestions, I propose to describe access-consciousness as coawareness. The prefix ‘co’ indicates that this sort of consciousness always attends a particular state or act, with a corresponding content. And it signals also that the state, or rather the content of the state, has an important resonance for you as its subject, providing you with a reason for responding as the state requires.<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>4</sup> This is a claim defended by some; it is an example of a higher-order theory of consciousness. On such theories, among which the theory defended here should figure, see (Carruthers 2016).

<sup>5</sup> Coawareness, as I describe it, might be better described in other terms: say, as cognizance or as mindfulness. When I hold a belief with coawareness I might reasonably be said to hold it cognizantly or mindfully.

### *The project*

Our question is whether the incorporation of a group as an agent introduces a new collective sort of consciousness, as it introduces a new level of intentionality. In addressing that question, I shall concentrate on coawareness, abstaining from whether there are any content-independently conscious states and from whether incorporation prompts a new sort of content-independent consciousness.<sup>6</sup> This abstention is motivated partly by a wish to remain uncommitted on the reality of content-independent consciousness, and partly by a sense that, even if it is a real phenomenon, incorporation is unlikely to trigger it a new form.

There are three kinds of coawareness that I shall discuss in pursuing the question addressed.<sup>7</sup> In terms explained later, they are: first, propositional coawareness; second, perceptual coawareness; and third, an apperceptive form of coawareness that each of them presupposes. One benefit of considering the link between consciousness and incorporation, as will appear, is that it makes these distinctions salient; in particular, it gives prominence to the role of apperceptive consciousness.<sup>8</sup>

In what follows I shall look in turn at how far incorporation—and more generally, joint action—is likely to trigger these three forms of coawareness. The paper is in three sections, each devoted to one of the three forms. Since it sets out material

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<sup>6</sup> Acknowledging the possibility of phenomenally conscious states, Christian List (2016) looks at whether corporate bodies have such states and, on the assumption that integrated information theory gives the best account of phenomenal consciousness, argues a negative line. He concludes that on the question of whether there is something in the phenomenal sense that it is like to be a group agent ‘the answer may well be: (close to) nothing’. List’s paper is designed as a reply to (Schwitzgebel 2015).

<sup>7</sup> They figure in a variety of literatures, including those often described under the general title of cognitive phenomenology. For a recent overview of approaches within this tradition see (Jorba and Moran 2016).

<sup>8</sup> In a broadly congenial account of group agency, Deborah Tollefsen (2015, 52) remarks that ‘access consciousness seems required for intentional agency’ but does not give much significance to this fact. Thus, while she rightly denies that group agents are phenomenally conscious, she does not make anything of the fact that, by this remark, they have to enjoy access consciousness; she ignores a distinction of which I make much, between intentional states with and without coawareness. Thomas Szanto (2014) also denies that group agents are phenomenally conscious, and conscious indeed in any significant manner, maintaining that they are zombie agents.

that is relevant to all sections, however, the first section is rather longer than the other two.<sup>9</sup>

### **1. Incorporation and propositional coawareness**

#### *Propositional attitudes*

Propositional attitudes are attitudes like belief and desire that can be paired with contents they target—intentional contents, in the traditional term—and, more specifically, with propositional contents that lend themselves to expression in sentences; in the normal case, sentences of ordinary language. While equally representable as coming in degrees—in the case of beliefs, degrees of confidence—I shall concentrate for simplicity on propositional attitudes in an on-off sense (Pettit 2016b).

Being expressible in sentences, the contents of these states are sometimes described as ‘digital’ rather than ‘analog’ in character: they carry information about their subject-matter in the way a digital as distinct from an analog watch carries information about time (Dretske 1999). Their contents may have implications for how things are in other regards: this in the way ‘if p, then q’ implies that q in the event that p. But in themselves, they carry only the limited or digitalized information expressed, by ordinary criteria, in the corresponding sentences, and they contrast in that respect with analog representations like maps or pictures. As a sentence may provide the information that New York is north of Washington, a map may do just the same. But unlike the sentence, the map will also give us indefinitely rich information on the comparative distance between those cities, on their relative positions, on the cities in between, and so on (Braddon-Mitchell and Jackson 1996).

Propositional attitudes in the sense employed here may have contents that require for their expression, not just general terms and proper names, but indexical terms like ‘I’, ‘now’ and ‘here’ that introduce a particular individual or time or place (Perry 1979; Lewis 1983, Ch 10). Such an attitude can be taken to focus on a property of

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<sup>9</sup> I do not look here at whether the issue addressed has significance for normative questions, as suggested by David Sosa (2009). My own view is that the intentional agency that groups can display is of normative significance, independently of any connection with consciousness.

the self and in that sense to be *de se*, about the self.<sup>10</sup> To believe that *I* am of medium height is to self-ascribe the property of being of medium height; to believe that it is raining *here* and *now* is to self-ascribe the property of being at a time and place where it is raining; and to desire that *I* go swimming is to seek to realize the property of being in the water. This *de se* feature means that the contents of propositional attitudes need not always be expressed in a that-clause. Thus, the desire that I go swimming can equally be described as a desire to go swimming and an intention that I go to the Department meeting an intention to go to the Department meeting.

*Propositional attitudes without coawareness*

The striking thing about propositional attitudes in this broad sense is that the conditions sufficient for counting as having such an attitude, on standard approaches, do not necessitate a coawareness of the content of the attitude. Those conditions are broadly functional, and vary with whether the attitude is one of belief or desire or whatever. To stick with the case of belief, they make it enough for believing that *p*, to put things over-simply and in an off-on mode, that three sorts of clauses are satisfied, at least when things are normal in an independent sense (Stalnaker 1984). First, you are sensitive at the input end to evidence that *p*, being disposed for example to drop the attitude in face of evidence that not *p*. Second, you are sensitive at the output end to the relevance of the fact believed for how to act or adjust; you are disposed to pursue your desires, for example, as if it were the case that *p*. And third, you are sensitive to the significance of the attitude for your other attitudes, being disposed for example to believe that *q*—or revise the belief that *p*—in response to evidence that if *p*, then *q*.

There is no reason whatsoever why you might not have an intentional state like a belief or desire or intention without being aware of the content. To instantiate such a state is just to satisfy functional conditions of the kind that our three clauses characterize in the case of belief. And you might satisfy those conditions without

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<sup>10</sup> Lewis argues that it makes for theoretical simplicity to take all beliefs to be *de se*, interpreting a non-indexical belief, say that human beings are mortal, as ascribing to oneself the property of belonging to one of those possible worlds where that is so. Indexical beliefs locate subjects among populations and in the realm of space and time, as well as in logical space. Non-indexical beliefs locate subjects in logical space only.

coawareness. Indeed some intentional systems might satisfy them without ever attaining coawareness.

Consider the simple robot that scans its environment with some input-detecting organs, and acts for its pre-designed ends in a way that makes sense in light of the environmental information its scanning reveals. This might be a small robot that moves about a room, for example, putting any objects on their sides into an upright position and remaining at rest if all are already upright. Even such a simple entity displays intentional states of belief and desire and proves itself an intentional agent by acting according to its beliefs for the satisfaction of its desires; or by acting in that manner, at least, when conditions for its functioning properly are favorable: the lights are on, the battery is charged, and so on. And yet clearly, it does not have a coawareness of any propositions it believes.

As the robot holds all of its attitudes without propositional coawareness, so the same may be true of many animals. And so the same may be true of sophisticated agents like you and me in any of a range of the beliefs and desires and intentions that we hold. That we must hold by some of our beliefs in this manner, indeed, is established by the observations in Lewis Carroll's (1895) famous article on reasoning.

It may be useful to recall Carroll's argument. If you argue from the fact that  $p$  and that if  $p$  then  $q$ , to the conclusion that  $q$ , you will rely on the rule of *modus ponens* in order to carry you to the conclusion. In effect, you will believe that rule and, in the nature of the case, do so without being coaware of the content you believe. But it may seem that there is a way out of this limitation. Suppose you expand the argument so as to state the relevant instance of the rule as a premise; suppose you add a third premise, to the effect that if it is the case that  $p$  and that if  $p$ , then  $q$ , then it must be the case that  $q$ . Would that not introduce an awareness of the content of your modus-ponens belief? Yes, it would; but not in a very helpful way.

In face of the expanded set of premises you will rely on a further rule of inference to take you to the conclusion. And that rule, like the rule in the previous case, will itself be unarticulated, so that you believe it without coawareness. An infinite regress looms, if you contemplate yet another move of this kind. And so, it becomes obvious that no matter how sophisticated you are, you must hold by some intentional states—

specifically, some beliefs about what you are allowed to infer from what—without being aware of their contents.

*Propositional attitudes with coawareness*

These observations should make it clear that propositional coawareness is not a simple property that is realized more or less routinely in any intentional subject. Even human beings like you and me are bound to hold many of our attitudes without any awareness of the contents associated with them. It may be obvious from how you act and adjust to evidence, for example, that you believe that John is untrustworthy, or that you desire Mary's approval, but you may never have formulated the corresponding thought and may believe it without any coawareness.

But why should you sometimes hold some attitudes with propositional coawareness, and others without? The answer is that there is at least one form of human activity—I leave aside the issue of whether it is the only one—that requires coawareness to be present. This is the activity of reasoning or deliberation, which we human beings certainly practice, albeit perhaps only on an occasional basis.

Reasoning in this sense consists, first, in attending to the contents of certain intentional states—say, to take ordinary theoretical reasoning, the contents of your beliefs that  $p$  and that if  $p$  then  $q$ ; and, second, in being led on the basis of that attention and in accordance with a rule of inference, valid or invalid, to form a belief in a distinct proposition: say, assuming validity, the belief that  $q$  (Pettit 1993, 2007; Broome 2013; Pettit 2016a). It is not just to be led automatically by believing in the functional sense that  $p$  and that if  $p$  then  $q$ —and by believing in *modus ponens*—to the belief that  $q$ , although this sort of natural transition may frequently occur. It is to be led to the belief that  $q$  in such a way that you are disposed to express the formation of that belief in words like 'so  $q$ ' or 'therefore  $q$ ' or 'it follows that  $q$ '. What you express in those words is the fact that you took the contents of the premise-beliefs to require and elicit assent to 'q'—in effect, a belief that  $q$  (Boghossian 2012). And in that case the contents of the premise-beliefs must have been matters of attention, as the content of the new conclusion-belief will obviously have to be a matter of attention too.

There need be nothing mysterious about the idea of attending to the content of a belief or indeed the content of any intentional state. In order to form a belief that



something is thus or so in your environment you must attend to objects in that environment; even the robot does this when it forms the belief that this chair or stool is on its side. Reasoning from certain premises to a conclusion means believing that the propositions are connected in the manner expressed in the use of ‘so’ or ‘therefore’. And that requires attending to those propositions as the environmental belief requires attending to items in the environment (O'Madagain and Tomasello 2017).<sup>11</sup>

But how might abstract entities like propositions ever become objects of attention in this sense? One salient way in which they might assume this status is by being expressible in words that you can understand (Pettit 1993, Ch 2). Let the ‘p’ and ‘q’ of our earlier schematic example be ‘Socrates is a man’ and ‘Socrates is mortal’. You will be able to attend to either proposition by understanding the corresponding sentence and by being able to take that sentence, not as a particular phonetic or alphabetic sequence, but as an exemplar of a certain equivalence class (Goodman 1969). ‘Socrates is a man’ is equivalent in the relevant manner to ‘Socrates is a human being’, ‘Socrate est un homme’, ‘Socrates ist ein Mensch’ and so on. These sentences are equivalent in the sense that by our pragmatic standards they can be used to say the same thing (Davidson 1984, Ch 7). In order for you to attend to the proposition involved you need only be able to attend to the sentence, taking it under that same-saying aspect.

Propositional coawareness marks a big divide amongst intentional subjects. Presumably there is nothing it is like to instantiate propositional attitudes in the purely functional sense introduced; there is nothing it is like, for certain, to instantiate attitudes in the manner in which the simple robot instantiates them. And by contrast there is certainly something it is like to hold such attitudes with coawareness. It requires that over and beyond believing that Socrates is a man, you can consider that state of affairs as a matter of fact that commands your belief; you can treat it as a reason for holding by certain other beliefs such as that Plato’s dialogues are not just pieces of fiction; and you can think about how far other matters of fact that you believe with coawareness offer evidence for it: how far it is borne out, for example, by other texts from Athens in the fifth century B.C.E.

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<sup>11</sup> As explained in (Pettit 2016a), this sort of ‘meta-propositional’ belief need not require intellectual sophistication.

To believe with coawareness in such a proposition is to hold that belief consciously, as we intuitively say. And to desire or suppose or intend any proposition with coawareness will equally be to hold that intentional state consciously. The contrast in each case is with the unconscious way in which you may hold such a state, as when you act on a belief that John is untrustworthy, or a desire to for Mary's approval, while remaining ignorant of what it is you believe or desire. In that sort of case it may require the observation of a third person to alert you to the presence of the intentional state. Friends may surprise and enlighten you when they point out, on the basis of how you act, that you believe that John does not deserve to be trusted or that you hanker after Mary's approval.

### *Corporate bodies*

The question we must now address is whether groups that are incorporated as agents enjoy propositional coawareness. Such groups will include formal organizations like companies and unions and universities but also less formal associations and partnerships. I argue that they do enjoy consciousness in this sense, because they inevitably reason about what to think or seek or do (Pettit 2007; List and Pettit 2011, Ch 3).

Groups will perform as agents insofar as they hold by certain purposes, form more or less reliable representations about their environment, and act in pursuit of those purposes as their representations make it sensible to act. But they do not organize themselves to satisfy such conditions in the pre-designed, mechanical manner in which our simple robot is organized to satisfy them. They achieve the organization required in virtue of a commitment by their members to act as is required of them—this may vary with the different roles they occupy—if the group is to display the purposive-representational profile needed for agency.

Thomas Hobbes (1994, Ch 16) was one of the earliest thinkers to give a detailed account of the sort of commitment whereby a group can become an agent. First, the members must voluntarily commit to an arrangement whereby a voice is established to speak for the purposes and representations of the group; strictly, it will be enough if

they acquiesce, however reluctantly, in the arrangement.<sup>12</sup> Second, a condition left implicit by Hobbes, that voice must live up to the arrangement, adopting only purposes and representations—presumably, representations supported by evidence—that conform to the terms agreed.<sup>13</sup> Third, the members must be primed to act as is required of them in their several roles, if the group is to display those attitudes and enact them. And all of this must hold fairly reliably, at least under conditions that count independently as favorable for the functioning of the body.

Under any arrangement of the kind envisaged, the voice that speaks for the group—say, the duly authorized spokesperson—does not speak with just the epistemic authority of a reporter who has good but defeasible evidence on what the group agent seeks or holds. The voice speaks with a practical authority deriving from the contractual or quasi-contractual acquiescence of members and, provided it honors the terms of the arrangement, can speak for what the group desires and believes without fear of contradiction. Thus, when it says that we, the group, hold such and such or promise so and so, inviting others to rely on the group, that voice is not speaking in the corrigible manner of a journalist or anthropologist. It speaks with the sort of authority that you enjoy as an individual human being when you speak for yourself, whether in avowing an attitude or pledging an action, and invite others to take you at your word.

When you speak for yourself in avowing an attitude of belief or desire or intention, you foreclose or rule out the possibility of excusing a failure to live up to your words by claiming that you got your mind wrong. And when you speak for yourself in pledging an intention or action, you go one better, foreclosing in addition the excuse that you changed your mind since the time at which you spoke (Pettit 2016b). A group agent will speak for itself, via the designated voice, with the same sort of authority. Hobbes associates this authority with being a person: with being able to personate or represent yourself to others in an authoritative way. And in this functional sense a group agent will also count as a person: an artificial as distinct from a natural person.

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<sup>12</sup> This is acknowledged by Hobbes insofar as he thinks a voluntary contract may be entered under duress: even, the duress associated with a threat of death. See (Pettit 2008, 67-69)

<sup>13</sup> In the special case of the commonwealth, Hobbes (1994, Ch 16) holds that the members can impose no terms on the voice authorized—that of the sovereign—and that the authorization is ‘without stint’.

How is the voice of the group agent to be established? One way, of course, is by setting up a single individual to act as spokesperson for the group, an arrangement that Hobbes favors in the case of the commonwealth, casting the monarch in the role of spokesperson. But this arrangement is of marginal interest, since it can as well be said to recruit members for extending the agency of the spokesperson as it can be said to give members the status of a group agent proper.

Hobbes thinks that the spokesperson role can also be played by a broadly majoritarian committee, whether a committee of the whole or an elite committee of some sort. In this claim, however, he is mistaken. A minimal condition on the voice that the members of a group can authorize, establishing itself as a body on whose word others can rely, is that it should issue consistent judgments or, at the least, be capable of rectifying any inconsistency pointed out. And it turns out that if a group tries to follow the majority voice of its members—or the majority voice of any other committee—then it must fail to satisfy this condition. Indeed it turns out that a group is likely to confront the same problem if it tries to follow any voice that is generated, issue by issue, from the bottom up: that is, from the individual opinions of its members (List and Pettit 2002; List and Polak 2010).

The problem in the majority case is easily illustrated. Jones, you and I may imagine that we can organize as a group on the basis of majority voting, thereby forcing the group agent to reflect our individual attitudes on each issue we confront. Suppose we have to decide our group mind on whether  $p$ , whether  $q$ , whether  $r$ , and whether  $p$ -and- $q$ -and- $r$ . We may be a political party and, at whatever cost to the national debt, the issues may be whether to raise taxes, whether to increase (or maintain or decrease) defense spending, whether to increase (or maintain or decrease) other spending and whether to do all three, allowing the national debt to rise.

Jones and you might vote that  $p$ , I against; Jones and I that  $q$ , you against; and you and I that  $r$ , Jones against. And in that case each individual proposition would be supported by a majority. But if we are individually consistent we will each vote against the conjunction,  $p$ -and- $q$ -and- $r$ : after all, each of us rejects one of the conjuncts. And so we will be committed by majority voting to hold that  $p$ , that  $q$ , that  $r$  but that not- $p$ -and- $q$ -and- $r$ . In order to get our act together as a group agent we will have to reject our majority view on one of the individual propositions or our unanimous view on the

conjunction, letting the attitudes of the group break away from those of individuals and assume a certain autonomy.<sup>14</sup>

There are a variety of methods whereby we might achieve collective coherence and rationality as a group, letting the group attitudes break away on one or another issue from our attitudes as individuals: letting the group cease to be individually responsive in the attitudes it adopts (List and Pettit 2011). These will enable us to establish a voice for the group—and a mind corresponding to that voice—other than by borrowing the voice from a single individual or from anything like a majoritarian process (Pettit 2014).

Thus, we might adopt the following straw-vote procedure:

- take a majority vote on each issue as it comes up;
- check whether there is an inconsistency with any existing view;
- if there is not, endorse the vote;
- if there is, isolate the minimal inconsistent set and
- decide as a group on which proposition to reject.

Following this procedure in our example, the group might come to endorse p, q, r and p-and-q-and-r or, depending on how the debate went, any other consistent set of answers.

The reason a procedure like this promises to succeed in identifying a voice for the group to follow is that it is not required to reflect the views of members, issue by issue. It does not borrow a voice from majority process but, using that process to generate candidate views on each issue from the bottom up, it then introduces a top-down corrective to eliminate any inconsistency among the bottom-up candidates.

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<sup>14</sup> The voting in matrix form would look like this:

	Raise taxes: p	Increase defense: q	Increase other: r	p&q&r
Me	No	Yes	Yes	No
You	Yes	No (decrease)	Yes	No
Jones	Yes	Yes	No (decrease)	No
Majority	Yes	Yes	Yes	No

This generates the discursive dilemma (Pettit 2001, Ch 5): the members of the group will have to choose between endorsing views that are individually responsive at the cost of collective rationality, and seeking collective rationality at the cost of individual responsiveness. Note that we are individually consistent, although I must let the national debt rise.

This move can be replicated, of course, in any procedure for establishing the guiding voice of a group, no matter how the candidates are generated. Provided there is some top-down corrective for ensuring consistency, the voice involved may be generated by different sub-groups on different issues, by interaction between sub-groups on some issues, by different processes in the case of each sub-group or each interaction, and so on through a thousand possibilities. And the device for ensuring consistency may involve a committee for reviewing the candidate attitudes overall or a set of committees for reviewing candidates in different areas. Or it may consist in a requirement on the candidates considered and proposed in different areas to cohere with candidates already adopted. And so on.<sup>15</sup>

*Propositional coawareness in corporate bodies*

Whatever form it assumes, the top-down procedure involves reasoning on the part of the group, whether the reasoning is conducted by one or more individuals, or by some committee or committees, authorized to act for the group. Consider the move whereby the group or those who act for it register that a vote against ‘p-and-q-and-r’ is inconsistent with the votes in favor of each of the conjuncts. And consider the response it triggers according to which the group—or we the group, as it will be said—must therefore reject one of the four judgments involved: one of the three judgements for the conjuncts or the fourth judgment against the conjunction. That itself is a kind of higher-order reasoning. And it will give way to reasoning of a more routine kind if the group decides, for example, to accept the conjunction: in that case it will argue that because by assumption it is the case that p, that q and that r, it must be the case that p-and-q-and-r; the formula endorsed, implicitly or explicitly, will be of the form, ‘p, q, r; so p-and-q-and-r’.

Since a group agent must rely on some top-down filter to ensure the coherence of the voice that it authorizes, it has to rely on reasoning of broadly this variety: that is, on reasoning conducted and applied with its authorization. Any transition of the kind that the top-down test requires members to make, whether in the domain of beliefs or

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<sup>15</sup> At least in the case of the commonwealth, Hobbes would reject any such mixed constitution—any ‘mixarchy’, as he mischievously dubbed it (Hobbes 1990, 116)—as functionally unworkable; this rejection went hand in hand with his hostility towards the republican theory that supported such a popular regime (Pettit 2008).

of other intentional states, will count as an instance of reasoning. And this implies, by our earlier argument, that the group must hold the beliefs or candidate beliefs generated by majority voting, or by any such process, with a coawareness of their contents. For it is only in virtue of being aware of what is believed or proposed for belief, to stick to the case illustrated, that the group can reason its way to coherence, adopting a voice that can be recruited without problems in the service of agency. On this front, it operates as an agent, not in the manner of the simple robot, but rather in the manner in which individual human beings operate when they reason.<sup>16</sup>

But if a group agent is bound to hold its propositional attitudes with a coawareness of their contents, where is that coawareness going to be situated? Does the group agent constitute a site for this form of consciousness that is distinct from the sites that are constituted by the individual members? Before addressing that issue, however, some general observations must be put in place about the corporate site of intentionality and its relationship to members.

#### *The corporate site of intentionality*

The upshot of the fact that the members of a group cannot rely on achieving the coherence required for agency via a bottom-up generation of attitudes is that the voice and mind they authorize is not borrowed from elsewhere like the voice determined by majoritarian or other forms of voting. It is a voice that the members make up as they go along, responding in top-down adjustment to the requirements of group agency, and so it expresses a mind that they bring into existence for the first time (Pettit 2014). That mind is individuated by the set of intentional attitudes they endorse in the name of the group—that is, wearing the group hat rather than individual hats—and by the updating procedure for amending those attitudes in response to new evidence: this may be as simple as the straw-vote procedure.

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<sup>16</sup> Robots of the kind envisaged, and perhaps non-human animals, achieve coherence in their attitudes solely on the basis of unconscious or sub-personal adjustments. Individual human beings achieve it on the basis of a mix of such adjustments and instances of active reasoning. Group agents achieve it in a process that relies even more explicitly on reasoning; it has an unconscious or sub-personal psychology only in the sense of an organizational structure that commits it to certain principles of inference: say, the principle implicit in the straw-vote procedure.

The updating procedure is of crucial importance for the status of the membership as an agent proper. It means, in a term from decision theory, that the group has a kinematics, being so organized by the procedure that for various counterfactual scenarios—though not perhaps all—there is a fact of the matter as to how its attitudes would update there and as to how it would therefore perform. No unorganized group of people will have a kinematics of that kind, allowing us to counterfactualize, without going down to the level of individuals, about how it would behave under various scenarios. This is even true of the group of people who collaborate to act on a particular joint intention, such as the people on the beach who form a chain to save a swimmer in difficulty. There will be no organizational ground for counterfactualizing about what they would think or how they would act if a chain were infeasible, and certainly no ground for counterfactualizing about their attitudes or actions would be in other situations.<sup>17</sup>

These observations mean that there is one sense in which the group agent is an agent apart from its members and another sense in which it is not. It is an agent apart from its members in the sense that it has an agential identity distinct from their several identities as individual agents and distinct from their identity as a set of individual agents. No individual agent can have the same attitudes and kinematics as the group agent, and the same agential identity, except in the marginal case of a dictatorial group. And, not having a kinematics, the set of members as such has no agential identity at all. In this sense, therefore, the group agent is an autonomous entity, distinct from its members. It is a network of members and exists, not just in virtue of the members at its nodes, but also in virtue of the networked connections between those nodes.

Despite this form of autonomy, however, there is another, equally important sense in which the group agent is not an agent apart from its members. It is not a particular entity that can exist apart from them in the way a child exists apart from its parents. The group agent is realized in its members, albeit only insofar as they set aside their attitudes as individual agents and enact the mind of the group. It exists as a network individuated by its nodes, and the relationships between those nodes, and not as a being apart.

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<sup>17</sup> Margaret Gilbert (2015) postulates the emergence of a plural subject in any instance of joint action but she operates with looser criteria than I presuppose here.



As is often noted, a statue is not the same statue as the set of molecules in its make-up, because the set of molecules is not, as such, a statue at all. But still, the statue is a set of molecules—a suitably organized set, of course—and qua set it is the same collection as the set of molecules that make up the statue. Under one aspect, the statue is distinct from the set of molecules, under the other it is not.<sup>18</sup>

As the statue relates to its molecules, so the group agent relates to its members. The group agent is not the same agent as the set of its members, because the set of members is not, as such, an agent at all. But still, the group agent is a set of members—a suitably organized or networked set—and qua set it is the same collection as the set of members who make it up. The group agent is distinct from the members under the one aspect but not distinct from them under the other.

*The corporate site of propositional coawareness*

Returning to our question, then, does the group agent represent a distinct site of propositional coawareness? The answer, frustratingly, is: yes and no.

The group agent is not a distinct site of coawareness in the same sense in which it is not a distinct site of intentionality. As the intentional mind of the group agent does not require anything other than the individual members in which to inhere—the agent is the same set as those individuals—so the same is true of the propositional coawareness that characterizes that mind. That propositional coawareness does not materialize in a subject that exists apart from the members in the sense in which the members exist apart from one another.

But notwithstanding the lack of separation, the group agent is a distinct site of coawareness in the sense in which it is a distinct site of intentionality. As the members of the group instantiate the attitudes of the group agent in virtue of being disposed to adjust and act appropriately—adjust and act so as to maintain the agency of the group—so they instantiate on the same basis the propositional coawareness that characterizes those attitudes. The individuals severally realize their own personal minds but by virtue of incorporating as a group agent—by virtue of constituting a suitable network—they collectively realize the distinct group mind. And by virtue of

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<sup>18</sup> This is not to say that identity never has an absolute character, as in the thesis of relative identity, defended by Peter Geach (1972).

incorporating in that way—specifically, by virtue of instantiating the reasoning that group agency requires—they collectively realize at the same time the propositional coawareness that such reasoning presupposes. The propositional coawareness is a networked form of coawareness, not something realized in any one of them alone.

The idea that the group agent can be a site of corporate attitudes, and of the propositional coawareness with which they are held, may be counterintuitive. But it registers nothing more than a fact about their existence conditions. As the member of a group, you do not instantiate those attitudes in yourself, and you do not instantiate the corresponding propositional coawareness, unless these are suitably aligned with the attitudes of others. In the absence of others, or in the absence of alignment with others, you do not instantiate such coaware attitudes, despite the fact that it may seem that you do. When they are suitably aligned across members, the attitudes materialize in each, not in an entity separate from them. But they materialize in each only insofar as they materialize across the network of members; they are attitudes held with coawareness by all of them together, operating as a corporate body.

Anticipating later discussion, the argument for the approach taken here is bound to apply to any form of corporate coawareness, propositional or otherwise. If there is any new form of consciousness triggered by incorporation it has to be a new form of consciousness that individuals develop in their role as members. It cannot involve a separate site of consciousness but it must require the distribution of that consciousness across the network of members; it cannot exist in any one of them alone.

#### *Joint action without incorporation*

There is one last question we must address before leaving the topic of propositional coawareness. Is reasoning and propositional coawareness required, not just for group agents proper, but for any group of people who act jointly for the realization of a certain end?<sup>19</sup>

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<sup>19</sup> There are many accounts of joint action but we need not decide on most of the issues that divide them. See (Tuomela 2007; Searle 2010; Bratman 2014; Gilbert 2015); for an overview, see (Schweikard and Schmid 2013). The only exception may be the issue as to whether a joint intention remains present in one person, even there is a failure on the part of others. Searle holds that there is, contrary to the line taken here.

In incorporating as a group agent, members will more or less inevitably form joint intentions and perform joint actions, each acquiescing in the group's pursuing this or that set of goals, in the group's following these or those procedures of attitude-formation and updating, and in its delegating different members or sets of members to act in the group name on different fronts. But where incorporation as a group agent requires joint intention and action, joint intention and action may not always involve incorporation. They may not be rich enough to support the range of attitudes required for group agency, or to determine how these are to update and evolve over changing circumstances. They may be focused on a more episodic agenda, as in the example of the people on a beach acting to save a swimmer in difficulty (Pettit and Schweikard 2006).

Consider a case, then, where joint action does not involve incorporation, and does not lead to the emergence of a group agent. Does it suffice to support a form of propositional coawareness among collaborators? The answer is that it may.

As we act on a joint intention, however episodic, we may certainly rely on reasoning. Those of us on the beach may act together on the basis of someone's observation, for example, that the only means of saving the child is to form a chain into the water and that this or that is the way to do it. And that means that we as group must hold those beliefs with propositional coawareness. We may not constitute a corporate agency, only a network of contingent collaborators. But still, we will each have to adopt the point of view of the group and live in coawareness of the things we register together and of the joint responses we take them to support.

The propositional coawareness required for merely episodic joint action, however, is not as striking as that which is required for an incorporating network of members. The viewpoint shared in episodic collaboration is highly short-lived and fragile, whereas the viewpoint associated with incorporation has an indefinitely extended time span and has to be robust against various forms of disruption. But episodic collaboration, as we shall see, has a much more prominent role in relation to perceptual coawareness.

## ***2. Incorporation and perceptual coawareness***

The questions raised by perceptual coawareness can be dealt with more briefly, in light of the general observations we made about incorporation and joint action in

dealing with issues of propositional coawareness. Our discussion divides into three subsections. The first deals with the nature of perceptual coawareness, the second with perceptual coawareness in the case of incorporated agents and the third with perceptual coawareness in the case of relatively small scale joint action: a sort of joint action that may occur inside or outside a corporate context.

### *Perceptual coawareness*

Perceptual states include the states associated with visual, auditory and other sensory sensitivity, as well as states of sensitivity to one or another part of the body. Like propositional attitudes, they have an intentional content, representing the world or the body to be thus and so and possibly representing it to be a way that it isn't; even bodily sensitivity can be misleading, as in the case of the amputees who have sensations, as it seems, in a missing limb.

The big difference between perceptions in this broad sense and propositional representations—in effect, beliefs or judgments—is that their contents are of an analog rather than a digital character. We think of one and the same perception as delivering further and further information as the focus of the subject's attention shifts. The information, as we conceive of it, is encoded in the perception and is excavated at finer and finer levels as the focus moves, say from the background buildings in a city view to the cars that are stalled on the street, to the identity of the people standing by. There is a sharp contrast with the content of a belief, such as the belief that the cars are stationary. While the proposition believed in this case may have implications, as in the implication that there is a traffic jam or that the lights are red, we do not think of that implication in the same way as being part of the original representation. The contrast between the digital belief and the analogue perception, in a parallel noted earlier, is akin to the difference between a map or a picture of a scene on the one side and a description of the scene on the other.

As propositional attitudes may lack coawareness of content or display coawareness of content, so we may assume that this is generally true of perceptual states. A propositional attitude will lack coawareness if it merely serves to fulfill its function as a belief or desire or whatever and does not require you to attend to the content as something, for example, that supports a transition in reasoning. A perceptual state will lack coawareness if it does nothing more than play a parallel, functional role.

It may trigger an autonomic adjustment, as in causing you to duck an oncoming object, or it may trigger the formation of a belief or a desire; but it can do this without requiring you to attend to how it represents things to be. The idea of blind-sighted subjects who report seeing nothing but still display the ability to avoid obstacles in their path offers a dramatic illustration of the possibility of perception without coawareness (Weiskrantz 1986). But subliminal perception of any kind may also provide plausible examples.

As the content of propositional attitudes has to come to awareness in the presence of reasoning, so something similar is true of the content of perceptual awareness. The unconscious perceptual state might presumably leave you with this or that disposition or this or that belief in the way that proprioception delivers the disposition to remain still and the belief that you are upright. But it does this without delivering as an object of potential attention any evidence—any purported way things are—for the suitability of the disposition or the truth of that belief. When a perception involves coawareness it does deliver such an object of attention, which we naturally describe as how things look or sound, taste or smell or feel. It comes to awareness in any subjects for whom the way things present in these modalities can change with shifts of attention and thereby trigger a change in how the subjects treat the objects presented or a change in their belief about the character of those items.

Perceptual contents may presumably trigger such changes and be available as matters of coawareness without any sophisticated awareness on the subject's part that they may not be faithful or full representations. Hence quite unsophisticated animals may enjoy perceptual coawareness, as when the cautious dog or cat has a good smell of the scrap of food that you hold out before opting to eat it. There is likely to be something the world they perceive is like for such animals and something therefore it is like for them to instantiate such perceptual states.<sup>20</sup> Further possibilities open up, however, for creatures like us, given we can reason from how things look or sound, taste or smell or feel, to how they probably are. We must be able to recognize that things are not always how they perceptually present. Otherwise we couldn't practice *modus tollens*; we

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<sup>20</sup> It is abstractly possible that perceptions trigger such responses, at least in less developed animals, in the way proprioception triggers my sense of position and posture, without delivering a content capable of being brought to awareness.

couldn't reason from the fact that the stick is not actually bent to the non-veridical character of how it looks in water.

Despite the analog character of perception, the relationship between a perceptual content and the things it represents is not like the relationship between a picture and the scene it depicts. We can inspect the picture, as we can inspect the scene, and ask about how it in turn looks. But we cannot inspect how things look or sound and ask about how that look looks or that sound sounds. The look or sound or whatever is available only in the way the relevantly perceived things dispose us to treat them and to believe they are. It is like a sensory inference ticket that takes us automatically to the relevant treatment or belief. It exists for us as an object of attention in the movement of body or mind that it disposes us to make, not as something we can examine in itself. There is a way that things look, or in any way seem perceptually to be, but there is no way that a look looks or a seeming seems.<sup>21</sup>

But while perceptual contents are elusive in this way, existing as dispositive aspects of the things perceived, they can mutate in a manner that exemplifies highly salient shifts of consciousness. What sounded earlier like a foreign language suddenly presents as English spoken in a strange accent. What looked like the experience of being passed by a moving train now presents as the experience of moving past a stationary train. What smelled like something disgusting now smells like a rich, ripe cheese. The examples become even more striking as we consider longer-term shifts like those that occur as music pupils learn to read a score or novice pilots learn to read off the orientation of a plane from the instrument panel. Perhaps the most striking of all is the shift documented in blind people who learn with time to use the sensations on their skin that a camera activates as a way of seeing that which the camera records; the proximal sensations fall out of view and the perception assumes a distal, quasi-visual content (Bach-y-Rita 1984).

#### *Perceptual coawareness in corporate bodies*

By the account sketched earlier, agency requires a purposive-representational structure, whether in a robot, a human being or a group. It requires that the system

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<sup>21</sup> This observation fits with the view defended about the nature of looks in (Pettit 2003).

have purposes; form more or less reliable representations of its environment, in particular of the means whereby it can realize its purposes; and act more or less reliably for the realization of those purposes according to those representations. But the representations required for action may just be the digital sorts of representations we describe here as beliefs. And that is certainly all that they need be in the case of the incorporated agent.

The incorporated agent has to hold a set of beliefs and other attitudes under a procedure for maintaining and updating those attitudes that is capable of ensuring coherence. And as we saw, that means that while it may generate candidate attitudes from the inputs of some or all of its members—from the individual attitudes they communicate, say by voting—the need for coherence means that it cannot let those attitudes be formed in a mechanical, bottom-up way. It must impose a top-down corrective that ensures its own collective rationality, whatever the cost may be to its individual responsiveness: that is, to its responsiveness, issue by issue, to member attitudes.

A principal role of perception in subjects like you and me, and in other animals, is to generate the beliefs that action, and ultimately desire-satisfaction, requires. But these observations mean that the incorporated agent has no need of perceptions in order to generate its own beliefs. It typically generates those beliefs on the basis of the beliefs that members communicate on relevant matters and the procedure it uses to derive a coherent set of corporate beliefs from those candidates. The perceptions of individuals are important in generating their own beliefs—and so the beliefs that they communicate as candidates for corporate belief—but those perceptions don't need to be appropriated by the corporate subject. Unlike the beliefs they trigger, they don't need to be integrated into a coherent set that individuals endorse in their role as incorporating members (Buchak and Pettit 2014).

This argues for the conclusion that as it materializes amongst us, incorporation need not trigger the emergence of any new form of perceptual coawareness. The perceptions of members can remain unchanged even as those members incorporate with one another in establishing a group agent. If they are to incorporate as a unified group agent, members have to embrace distinctive judgments and intentions in their

role as members. But they do not have to do anything of that kind at the level of their perceptions.

*Perceptual coawareness in small-scale joint action*

But that, as it turns out, is not the end of the matter. Whenever a corporate agent forms an attitude or chooses an action, it does so via one or more of its members. And when a number of agents act to such a purpose in a group's name, they may well do so in a way that involves perceptual coawareness. If such action in the corporate name involves small-scale joint action, it is liable to require this sort of coawareness. And it is also liable to require it, even outside a corporate context.

Perceptions may be important, first of all, in the perception that gives rise to certain sorts of joint action. Take, for example, the perceptions involved when you and I and perhaps a third person are collaborating in a game of soccer to try to stop the advance of some players from the other team. It is not enough for our purposes that we each individually form our own perceptions. We must do so in mutual awareness of the advances we are each observing and of how we are each adjusting to them. We must perceive the attacking players, not just as they present to us individually, but as they present in the somewhat different perspectives of the three of us. And so, we must register the content of our combined perceptions, not just the content of our own isolated perception, as a matter of coawareness. We must practice joint attention, as it is commonly known (Seemann 2011).<sup>22</sup>

The idea in joint attention is that the content of our individual perceptions is embedded in the content of our combined perceptions. What we each respond to—what we each see as giving reason for this or that response—is the way things are, as they are presented to us in combination, not the way things are as they are presented to each of us individually. How things were presented to each of us individually may be identifiable after the event, in an attempt to recall what we were individually registering in the course of the defensive episode. But it will be eclipsed in the immediate experience of defending against the attack by the joint percept to which we each adjust and readjust, as the attack evolves.

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<sup>22</sup> I am grateful to Michael Schmitz for drawing my attention to this possibility.



But perceptual coawareness may also assume this shared form at another point in the development of such joint action. Perceptions serve agents, not just in enabling them to form the beliefs that guide action but also in enabling them to keep track of how their efforts are evolving in the performance of any action. Even an agent as simple as the little robot imagined must have perceptual feedback on how it is doing as it lifts its arms and seeks to put an object into upright position; without such monitoring it could not adjust appropriately in response to difficulties (Hurley 1998). The only sort of perceptual feedback that could plausibly serve this purpose in sophisticated subjects like you and me has to assume a coaware form. And it may assume a shared, coaware form when the action monitored is of a joint character, as in our action of protecting against attack in the football game.

In defending against the attack, it will be essential that we each monitor how we are doing in combination as a group, not just how we ourselves are individually performing. And as we adjust our individual responses, we must do so as part of a combined adjustment on the part of all three. We may be very skilled at this, in virtue of good coaching and a lot of practice, or we may be mere neophytes. But as we advance in skill, we will presumably get to be better and better at registering how we are doing in combination, thereby developing a shared form of perceptual coawareness. It is even possible with some forms of joint activity that as we advance in skill, we come to know how to do something together, focusing on it as a matter of perceptual coawareness, without any longer being able to identify what it is we individually do.

With every action that I perform as an individual there will be some basic aspect under which I perform it intentionally without doing anything else intentionally in order to bring off that performance (Hornsby 1980). Thus, having learned how to tie my shoelaces, I may be able to perform that action intentionally just as such and not by knowing or monitoring what I do with my left hand, what I do with my right, and so on. Something similar may hold with actions that we perform in combination. The football case may not provide a plausible example but other joint activities do. Thus, you and I may know how to tango together, without either of us knowing what it is we do separately in bringing off that performance. The joint action of tangoing, described as

such, may be a basic action for each of us and may be the only action of which we are perceptually coaware.<sup>23</sup>

### 3. Incorporation and apperceptive coawareness<sup>24</sup>

#### *Apperceptive coawareness*

When a perception leads to the formation of a belief, or a desire leads in the context of suitable beliefs to an intention and action, there is always a determinate subject in whom the new belief or intention forms. It's not as if the process materializes in an impersonal fashion without determining in advance where an ensuing attitude or action will materialize. The perceptions that support the belief that it is time to go to the meeting lead to my and not your forming that belief, the desire that supports the intention to get moving leads me and not you to move. And so on.

All of this can happen without any coawareness, of course: that is, without any awareness of the self that is implicated as the targeted subject: me, in these examples, as distinct from you or anyone else. The process materializes even in the simple robot that is led by the perception of an object on its side to go and put it upright. But when I deliberate or reason about what to think or do, I bring that self to awareness in an important sense. I conclude that it is time *for me* to go to the meeting or that *I* should be on my way. Or I draw a conclusion that implicitly involves such an indexical self-reference as in holding that now is the time to go or that the meeting is about to start.<sup>25</sup>

The self that is brought to awareness in this way is not an object of perception: an object, as we may assume, that might be perceived under this aspect or that. Were the self presented in that manner, then I might as well have argued that it is time for PP to go to the meeting or that PP should be on his way; the proper name would presumably pick out that perceived entity just as effectively as the indexical 'I' or 'me'. But the self revealed in deliberation is not something that might be just as well accessed in that manner. Consistently with such a mode of presentation, I might not know that I

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<sup>23</sup> As I argue in (Pettit 2017), that we can perform joint action on such a joint basis is consistent with the sort of analysis provided for example by Michael Bratman (2014).

<sup>24</sup> The discussion in this section, although it is phrased quite differently, draws heavily on (List and Pettit 2011, Ch 9).

<sup>25</sup> Bernard Williams (1978) uses this fact to argue against Georg Lichtenberg's idea that Descartes's '*Cogito ergo sum*' is excessively rich in presupposing a self: the 'I' involved in 'I think' and 'I exist'.

was PP and might not be moved by the deliberative conclusion. I might accept the conclusion but be afflicted by temporary or permanent ignorance as to who exactly bears that proper name: I might be stymied by an epistemic gap.

If the deliberative conclusion is to serve its proper role in moving me to a suitable belief or intention or action, its expression in ordinary language must involve the indexical *I* essentially. It is only if the content of my awareness is properly expressible with such an indexical—it is time *for me* to go, *I* ought to get moving—that the epistemic gap will disappear. And when it is properly expressible in that way, the gap will indeed disappear, for while I may not know who PP is, I cannot fail to know who I am (Perry 1979; Lewis 1983, Ch 10). I may get some of my intentional states wrong but I cannot do so by misidentifying who I am (Evans 1982).

In knowing who I am in this indexical mode, the self I know is identified just by being implicated in the process of attitude-formation and action-performance. That self is the addressee of the lessons derived in deliberation and is revealed in the deliberative role given to the premises. This is not a self that I perceive, not being something potentially accessible under different modes of presentation. It is a self I apperceive, to introduce an old, variously understood word in a new role. That self is picked out for me in deliberation, not in the way a photograph picks out different features of a landscape, but rather in the manner in which it picks out the location from which the landscape was photographed. As it was expressed earlier, it is a self that I do not see focally, to invoke a visual metaphor, but only out of the corner of my eye.<sup>26</sup>

Apperceptive coawareness is as clearly a mode of consciousness as propositional or perceptual coawareness. It involves a consciousness of the self involved in the attitudes at issue as distinct from a consciousness of their contents. But it should be distinguished, of course, from self-consciousness in the ordinary sense of that phrase. Self-consciousness, as ordinarily understood, means an awareness of oneself as one among many different subjects. It requires of me, not just that I have an apperceptive

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<sup>26</sup> The apperceived nature of the self surely explains David Hume's (1978, Bk 1, pt 4) famous finding. 'For my part, when I enter most intimately into what I call myself, I always stumble on some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never can catch myself at any time without a perception, and never can observe any thing but the perception'.

sense of self—not just that I can think of myself in the way that makes it a referent of ‘I’—but that I understand that I am PP, or that I am the person others are talking about, or whatever. It requires that I recognize the common referent shared by the egocentric mode of self-reference involved in apperception and the allo-centric mode of self-reference that situates me amongst others.

*Apperceptive coawareness in corporate bodies and joint action*

Apperceptive coawareness, by the account just given, appears in any case of reasoning or deliberation, however immediate, directing us as it must do to the subject targeted in the process: the subject who is purportedly required to adjust attitude or perform action as the premises of the deliberation require. But this gives us good ground straightaway for thinking that incorporation is bound to introduce a new form of apperceptive coawareness: an awareness on the part of relevant members of the subject implicated in their collective deliberation; a presumption, as any one of them may express it, about who *we* are.

This is the subject identified in the first-person plural, as members draw conclusions about what they—in their mouths, about what *we*—ought to think or seek or do. By the account of group agency sketched in the first section, the members of the group have to integrate their attitudes into a coherent whole that represents what they together believe, and they have to establish a procedure or procedures—a kinematics—for determining how those attitudes are to evolve under novel inputs and issue in appropriate action. Thus, they have to take the perspective of the corporate agent and they have to respond to the matters registered in corporate belief, or to the goals adopted in corporate policy, as that perspective requires them to respond. They must set aside the self apperceived in thinking and acting as individuals and apperceptively target the self of the agent they constitute together.<sup>27</sup>

The need for this reorientation towards a collective standpoint has lessons, not just for group agency, but also for joint action. Such action, as in the case of the people on the beach, may be focused on a particular, episodic aim and does not require the formation of the range of attitudes associated with group agency and the kinematics needed to update them appropriately. But joint action, even joint action in the absence

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<sup>27</sup> For a convergent point of view of these issues, at least as I read it, see (Schmid 2014).

of group agency, requires apperceptive coawareness. As we on the beach recognize that a chain of people into the water is the only way to save the child, we must have an apperceptive awareness of the group that is implicated in our using that observation to initiate joint action. We must adjust to the observations we register in common in the way that makes sense from our viewpoint as a cooperative group.

The apperceptive coawareness that goes with incorporation is of a deeper character, however, than that which suffices for joint action. The incorporating group must establish a suitable set of common attitudes, a kinematics for updating them, and a means of determining who is to act on the basis of those attitudes in its name. And that means that when individuals deliberate in their role as active members about what is to be thought or sought or done, the self that they target in apperception is a self that endures robustly across different possible scenarios, not the self of a contingent, temporary coalition. This is a self with which they may identify in a stable way, now considering what the actual circumstances require of it, now considering what would be required under a variety of counterfactual variations. It is a self that can play a recurrent role in their deliberations akin to the role that the personal self plays in their individual reasoning about what to think or seek or do.<sup>28</sup>

In *Being and Nothingness* Jean-Paul Sartre (1958) characterizes the conscious subject—better, as he might think, the conscious processing or stream—as the *pour-soi*, the for-itself. In that book Sartre himself focuses on the individual subject, exploring the way in which we each exist for ourselves as individuals, even as we lose ourselves in external activity: even, for example, as we run frantically in an effort to catch a bus (Sartre 1957). But his observations can also be extended to our case. The fact of incorporation and group agency demonstrates that as we exist for ourselves individually in an apperceptive manner, so we may exist for ourselves collectively in a

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<sup>28</sup> There is an issue in the group case, raised sharply by (Szanto 2014), as to whether we the members can be wrong about our corporate states through misidentifying who *we* are. Each of us must make a presupposition about the identity of that *we*, as we make a presupposition in the individual case about the identity of the *I*, attributing mental states to our group on the basis of the presupposition; we do not have to search around, after all, for the group that '*we*' refers to. But still, the presupposition may fail in the corporate case, where it cannot fail in the individual. There is a topic here for further exploration.

parallel way. The *pour-soi* may not just have the singular form of the *pour-moi*; it may also assume the plural form of the *pour-nous* (Schmid 2014).

### **Conclusion**

The observations we have made in introducing the different forms that coawareness can take should suffice to show that by any metric it constitutes a form of consciousness sufficient to engage philosophical interest. It may not be as challenging and mysterious as the phenomenal consciousness posited by many but it does not deserve to be set aside as a merely epistemic reality. Epistemic it certainly is but not in any sense that would make it unworthy of notice.

It should be of some interest, therefore, that incorporation and joint action require individuals to develop three novel forms of coawareness, tailored to the group agent they form or the joint plan they enact. They must reason about the various propositions established as the intentional contents of corporate or joint beliefs, desires and intentions, and must hold those attitudes with coawareness of what they thereby endorse together. At least in smaller groups like our football defenders, they must register and respond to the grounds for joint actions as well as the joint actions they actually take, and must develop a perceptual coawareness of those grounds and of their efforts in response. And, perhaps most strikingly of all, they must form their attitudes in guidance of corporate or joint action; they must treat them as significant only from the collective standpoint, targeting the group self in an apperceptive form of coawareness.<sup>29</sup>

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