

# Co-Subjective Consciousness Constitutes Collectives

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## 1. Introduction

In this article, I introduce and defend what I call the “subject mode account” of collective intentionality. I propose to understand collectives from joint attention dyads over small informal groups of various types to organizations, institutions and political entities such as nation-states, in terms of their self-awareness. On the subject mode account, the self-consciousness of such collectives is constitutive for their being. More precisely, their self-representation *as subjects* of joint theoretical and practical positions toward the world—rather than as objects of such positions—makes them what they are. Members of such collectives represent each other as *co-subjects* of such positions and thus represent the world from the point of view of the collective.

I will try to show how this account applies at different levels of collective intentionality and how it is preferable to its rivals at each level. At the preconceptual level of joint attention and action, our co-attenders are not *what* we attend to. They are not the objects of attention, but rather who we attend *with*. Analogously, at the conceptual level of joint beliefs, intentions, desires, and so on, collectivity is not a matter of *what* we believe about others and what we intend with regard to them, but who we believe and intend things *with*. Finally, at the institutional or organizational level, where individuals and groups function in formal roles such as being a manager or a committee, these roles do not, as some philosophers, notably John Searle (1995, 2010), have suggested, exist because people believe that they exist. The primary, collective-constituting intentional phenomena are not beliefs about these roles, but people viewing the world from the vantage point of these roles—and other roles defined relative to them—in a self-aware way, in what I will call “role mode.” For example, a head of a corporation may be aware of giving an order *as chairwoman*, or committee members of making a recommendation *as a committee*.

It has become standard to distinguish three main philosophical approaches to collective intentionality: content, subject, and mode approaches (Schweikard and Schmid 2013). According to the content approach, collective intentionality can be understood in terms of the content of intentional states, where that content, in the context of the received understanding of propositional attitudes, is taken to be *what* is believed, intended, and so on. On this perspective, the best-known representative of which is Michael Bratman (1992, 2014), the we of joint

action is represented in the content of intentions, but these intentions are always of the form “I intend that we J,” so that no collective we-subject of intentional states is represented. According to Bratman, at least small scale cooperative activity can be understood without appealing to we-subjects.

At the opposite end of the spectrum we find those who, like Margaret Gilbert (1989) and Hans Bernhard Schmid (2009), unabashedly embrace the notion of collective, plural subjects. According to Gilbert, committing to go for a walk together is already sufficient to create a subject that is irreducibly plural. The we-mode approach is most closely associated with the work of Raimo Tuomela (e.g., 2013), but Searle, even though he does not himself use the term “we-mode,” can also be seen as one of its champions.<sup>1</sup> Searle holds that we-intentionality is conceptually irreducible to I-intentionality, but that it can be entirely located in the minds (and heads) of individuals, and that these individuals—and only these individuals—are the logical subjects of this intentionality. So Searle rejects both Bratmanian conceptual reduction and ontologically irreducible collective subjects, which he and many others take to be ontologically mysterious.

There is a sense in which the present proposal synthesizes elements of all these approaches. With the mode approach it holds that collective intentionality should be understood in terms of people displaying characteristic and irreducible forms of *group mindedness* such as the we-mode. But it proposes to understand this group mindedness itself in representational terms and at least in part as a representation of the subject. It, therefore—in a sense—also agrees with the content approach that collective intentionality can be explained in terms of content. But I will argue that we need to extend the notion of content beyond *what* subjects believe, intend, and so on, to include content representing the subject—*subject mode* content—and its position such as intending or believing—*position mode* content. Finally, with the subject approach it embraces the reality and irreducibility of collective subjects. But at the same time it tries to explain and demystify these subjects in terms of mode representation. I will show that, properly understood, collective subjects are not mysterious, or free-floating relative to individuals. They just are individuals *as related in certain ways*—by being aware of one another as co-subjects of positions toward objects, including states of affairs, facts or goals, in the world. And these relations are intentional relations that obtain in virtue of intentional contents in the co-subjects’ minds.

The big puzzle for the subject mode account is as follows: How can ontologically real collective subjects be constituted or created by representation? Isn’t that like magic? Now, the thought that social entities may be created or constructed through representation, that, for example, a certain piece of paper constitutes a dollar bill because it is believed to have a certain function (Searle 1995), is well-established in current debates. Most contemporary approaches to social ontology agree that social kinds and collectives exist in virtue of the intentionality of subjects (but see Epstein 2015). They think of intentionality as being constitutive for collectivity. But at the same time, many do *not* think of

the relevant intentionality as the self-awareness of ontologically real subjects. This is true in particular of the mode approaches of Searle and Tuomela, but it also applies to others like Schmid's (e.g., 2014) version of the subject account in terms of plural pre-reflective self-awareness.

Searle does not believe that there are collective subjects at all. Tuomela thinks group agents are mere fictitious creations, with merely derived intentionality, of the ontologically real subjects, flesh-and-blood individuals with intrinsic intentionality. Schmid *identifies* collective subjects with plural self-awareness. He says (with reference to my (Schmitz 2017) version of the mode account) that "what is called a mode here is really *the subject*," and that "self-awareness *is* the subject" (both quotes are from Schmid 2017; both italics are his). In a similar vein, Björn Petersson (2017) defends the irreducibility of a we-perspective, but explicitly rejects the idea that this we-perspective could be understood as the representation of an ontologically real subject. And again, it is easy to sympathize with this kind of move when one confronts the apparent difficulty of making sense of the idea that one could create an ontologically real subject by being aware of it.

Still, I will try to show in this article that the sense of mystery surrounding this idea can be dispelled, and that on reflection it is actually easier to make sense of the widely accepted constitutive role of intentionality for collectives, if this intentionality is self-awareness, awareness of the collective as a subject rather than as an object. To make this plausible, the following points are crucial.

First, let me clarify what the relevant subjects are, beginning with the individual case. It is essential to my view that individual subjects are flesh-and-blood creatures, not purely mental selves or anything of this kind. Whether it makes sense to speak of such selves or not, they are not my topic here, but the self-awareness of flesh-and-blood creatures. Accordingly, collective subjects comprise such flesh-and-blood individuals as related in certain ways. Both individuals and collectives are essentially subjects of both mental and physical attributes, but as such straddle these categories. So even though the self-awareness of these subjects is essential to what they are, neither people, nor corporations or other collectives are as such purely mental or purely physical entities.

The second step is to see that a subject can evolve, can become a new kind of subject, by taking up new attitudes, new positions toward the world, in a self-aware way. Again consider the individual case first. Based on its preconceptual actional and perceptual experience and its sense of itself as a spatially located and spatially extended creature, a child will at some point take its self-understanding to a new level by starting to say "I," by beginning to report its memories and to construct a narrative of its life, a self-image, and so on. The child existed before, it was even self-aware before, but it is still transformed by this capacity for a new kind of self-awareness. By representing itself and its position in the world in new ways, it simultaneously grows into a new kind of being, it becomes a person. Analogously, by becoming more and more sensitive

to others in sensory-motor-emotional interactions, by experiencing and thus representing them as like us and as sharing and doing things with us, we become their co-attenders and co-actors, form joint attention and joint action units. Then, after starting to say “we,” we begin constructing a shared narrative, negotiating joint beliefs, values and plans and committing to them, and so take our relationship to a new level and create a new kind of group entity: a couple perhaps, a friendship, or maybe just a subject of a commitment to take a walk together. Finally, we may also grow into predefined institutional roles or create such roles ourselves from scratch, by representing power relationships with regard to certain domains and in relation to other people.

Third, such constitution of collectives through representation is, fittingly, a divided labor. It depends on all or at least several of the co-subjects doing the representing. Only, for example, because we both represent taking a walk together as our goal, do we become a we-subject of joint intention. Fourth, this collectivity constituting kind of self-awareness is *not* awareness of some antecedently existing mental fact about a group. It is rather the awareness involved in *jointly taking up a position in a self-aware way*. When you say “Let’s go for a walk together, shall we?” and I respond “Yes, let’s go!,” neither of us is reporting the existence of a joint intention. Neither is representing the intention as an object of belief or of another theoretical, mind-to-world direction of fit, attitude. If we conceive the relevant self-awareness in this way, it is indeed mysterious how it could have a constitutive role regarding what it represents. But what is rather going on is this: you propose a joint walk and by positively responding to your proposal, I complete the shared labor of representing this joint commitment. We undertake this commitment by representing it jointly. And in so doing, we don’t represent our joint walk as a fact, but as a goal we are adopting in a self-aware way, by jointly taking a practical position toward it and being aware of this position at the same time. This is how we create a we-subject of a commitment to walk together.

I believe that in this way we can make sense of how we constitute collectives by being conscious of others as co-subjects of positions toward the world. These collectives are not fictitious, but just as real as the persons which are their members. And their intentionality is also real. Even when collectives are created outright by explicit declaration like corporations, their members, officers, and other agents still need to grow into their respective roles in order for this legal entity to function appropriately in the world. They need to internalize these roles, and, as I will argue later, this means that they have to take theoretical and practical positions from the vantage points of these roles. I think this also means that this intentionality is not merely extrinsic and derived. Just like we-intentionality, role-intentionality is rather a specific form of the intrinsic intentionality of individuals and their co-subjects.

The gist of my argument is that we can and should make sense of a constitutive role for collective self-awareness if we think of it as the awareness of jointly taking up positions toward the world. If this is correct, it also means that

self-awareness and awareness of the world are inextricably linked, that awareness of the self *as subject* and the world *as object* are two sides of the same coin. This point also already applies at the individual level.

I want to make fully explicit an assumption of my picture here, namely that our *primary* kind of self-consciousness generally is not an introspective awareness of some preexisting mental fact, but an awareness of taking up a position toward the world. As many philosophers since Wittgenstein have emphasized, when I am asked something like whether I believe that it will rain, I will look at the sky, not inside myself. I don't aim to discover a fact about myself, but to take a position, to make up my mind, with regard to whether something is a fact in the world. The point equally applies to making up one's mind with regard to what to do and to collective subjects—for example, consider a parliament deciding whether to pass a law. Nor is it restricted to cases of making up one's mind in the sense of an initial deliberation. Even if I routinely take a certain position, having done it many times before, it's still the taking of a position rather than the report of one as a fact. If an argument for this is wanted, it can be that I could always change my mind at this very moment and sometimes do.

Though this point strikes me as compelling, it sits rather uneasily with deeply entrenched ways of thinking about mind and language, in particular with the received understanding of speech acts and so-called propositional attitudes. There is a deep-seated tendency to think self-consciousness must be consciousness of oneself *as an object*, and the standard understanding of propositional attitudes reflects this insofar as their representational content is taken to be identical to *what* is believed or intended (and this content in turn is taken to be identical to a proposition). That is, the subject and the mode of the attitude are not represented. To represent them, we need an additional attitude which has the first as its object, such as, for example, knowing that one believes.

Therefore, to try to make sense of our point in the received framework, one has to think of such cases as somehow simultaneously involving taking a position and something like acquiring the knowledge that one believes or intends, and so on. One might even, like Matthew Boyle, think of the belief and the knowledge of it “as two aspects of one cognitive state” (2011, 228). While such a view is a step in the right direction and rightly emphasizes that each belief has an aspect of self-awareness, I will try to show that this idea can be more straightforwardly made sense of if we abandon the traditional conception of propositional attitudes in favor of the mode account, according to which in every intentional state the subject is aware of its theoretical or practical position toward the world.

This is especially important for the collective case. While the received framework allows that each of us can have our joint walk as an object of individual intention, it cannot make sense of how we are both aware of us *as co-subjects* of a joint intention, notably in the act of jointly taking up this position, as I have argued we are. It cannot make sense of how we are aware of each other as co-subjects of positions toward the world, because already in the individual case

it reduces what is represented to the object of the attitude. This is most obviously true for the content account, but as I already pointed out above, it is also true for those versions of the mode and of the subject account that try to account for mode or the constitution of the subject in nonrepresentational terms.

In contrast, I propose that already in the individual case awareness of the subject and its position is an integral part of each intentional attitude. The collective case can then be understood in terms of an extension of this subject pole of an attitude to include others represented as its co-subjects. However, the received framework of propositional attitudes is still deeply entrenched in contemporary philosophy, even though it has received some cogent criticisms lately (e.g., Hanks 2015). Therefore, in the next, second, section I want to briefly address what I take to be its deeper roots in the philosophical tradition and justify my general outlook of seeing self- and world-consciousness as essentially related, as the two poles of each intentional attitude. In the third section I critique the received model and explain the alternative subject mode account in more detail. In the three following sections I will then sketch how this account works on the preconceptual level of joint attention and action, the conceptual level of joint propositional attitudes, and the institutional level of corporations and other institutional actors. I conclude with some thoughts on whether this approach commits us to the idea of group minds and in which regard it is collectivist and in which individualist.

## 2. Self-Consciousness between Subjectivism and Objectivism

There are two broad tendencies of philosophical thought which, even though they are diametrically opposed, agree in treating self- and world-awareness as independent. On the subjectivist, broadly Cartesian version, it is usually taken for granted that we can know the contents of our mind independently of knowledge of the external world. Objectivism, which historically arose in response to this subjectivism, conversely tries to characterize knowledge of the world as being completely independent of any reference to the subject. For example, it supposes that the content of such knowledge can be exhaustively specified in nonindexical terms, that is, without referring to its subject as such, or to anything in terms of its relations to this subject. It becomes mysterious then what in the world an indexical sentence such as, for example, “I am Thomas Nagel” might be about (Nagel 1986).

Both subjectivism and objectivism tend to treat the subject as a “mere limit of the world” (Wittgenstein 1922, §5.632), as like an unextended point to which the world is somehow coordinated, but which is not really part of it. On the subjectivist picture, the basic reality of sense data or other mental items is somehow given to a subject—a “transcendental ego” or the like. On the objectivist version, the basic reality of the physical world is apprehended from an implied impersonal, “god’s eye” point of view. But both equally struggle to make sense of the other side of the dichotomy or dualism they have constructed. This is true

in epistemological as well as in ontological respects. As an epistemological example, since sense data block immediate access to the world, the subjectivist picture puts us into the familiar predicament of trying to make sense of knowledge of the world against skepticism. The main ontological problem of objectivism is how to integrate subjectivity into its picture. Often this leads to attempts to overcome these dualisms by force, as it were, viz. by reducing the other side of the dualism to one's preferred side. For example, subjectivism tries to reduce the world to a logical construction of sense data, or objectivism subjectivity to one out of behavior.

I've sketched this background history because I believe that current philosophy is still too strongly influenced by the objectivist response to the excesses of subjectivism that dominated the twentieth century. We need to move beyond these oppositions. Kant's response to Descartes in the first critique provides a model for a better reaction, namely to think of self- and object awareness as inextricably linked, as two sides of the same coin. Of course Kant's philosophy as a form of idealism—even as a transcendental form of idealism—is ultimately itself a form of subjectivism. Luckily, however, we now possess detranscendentalized, naturalized versions of Kant's original insight, thanks to the work of such thinkers as Jean Piaget, Peter Strawson, Gareth Evans, and José Luis Bermúdez.

The crucial claim I want to make here is that every attitude also has an aspect of self-consciousness. We are never aware of objects (including states of affairs) from nowhere, as it were—and as by nobody—but always situate them in relation to ourselves—spatially, temporally, causally, cognitively, conatively, and so on—and even in relation to our social and institutional position, as we will soon discuss. In contrast, subjectivist and objectivist attempts to dissolve the connection between how we represent the world and how we represent ourselves and our positions in it, end up robbing these notions of their meaning. For example, I cannot understand mind independently of knowledge of the external world because in order to distinguish mind and its contents from its objects I need to understand misrepresentation; but a reason to ascribe a bad case of misrepresentation, such as in a perceptual illusion, to myself can only come from a good case of successful representation (Schmitz forthcoming). Nor can I know the spatial or temporal location of something through a purely objective, allocentric means of representation such as a map or a system of temporal reference alone. If I have no clue where I am on the map now or have been in the past, or cannot locate the present time, my now, relative to the dates specified on a calendar, there is a perfectly ordinary sense in which I do not know where the locations on the map are, or when the times specified on the calendar were. So objective, nonindexical, forms of representation cannot really function and determine conditions of satisfaction independently of subjective, indexical ones. And the most characteristic and fundamental use of the paradigmatic indexical "I" is its use in subject position (Wittgenstein 1958), as part of what I call subject mode content, not as part of object content, of what I see, think, or am otherwise aware of, but in essential relatedness to it.

### 3. Propositional Attitudes and the Representationality of Mode

Let us now look more closely at the received view of propositions and propositional attitudes (compare McGrath 2005; Hanks 2015) and its shortcomings. For this purpose it will be useful to fix some terminology. As the received view applies to intentional attitudes as well as speech acts, it will be handy to have a term covering both, and I will use “posture” in that sense. I will use “position mode” for a representation that represents the position such as asserting or ordering, believing or intending, that a subject takes up vis-à-vis a state of affairs and “subject mode” for a representation of that subject as subject. Subject modes include the we-mode and role modes.

The received view has been held in different forms through its history, but one important version of it can be characterized through the following claims:

- (1) Postures are attitudes toward propositions, which are their objects/ contents.
- (2) The representational content of a posture is, therefore, identical to that of the relevant embedded proposition. Subject and mode make no contribution to representational content. They are only represented in reports of postures.
- (3) Propositions are the contents of both practical and theoretical postures, that is, they are what is asserted and believed as well as what is ordered or intended. That is, a proposition is asserted or believed to be true, or there is an order or intention to make it true.
- (4) Propositions are truth value bearers. (Indeed they are often seen as the constant, underived truth value bearers.)

I have already criticized the received view extensively elsewhere (Schmitz 2013, 2017) and will be brief here. (1) and (2) together embody its view-from-nowhere aspect. The proposition represents a state of affairs, but the subject of this representation and its position vis-à-vis that state of affairs are not represented at all. That the proposition is sometimes treated as the content and sometimes as the object of the posture and often that distinction is not clearly drawn, or not at all, reflects the opposition between subjectivism and objectivism and the conceptual confusion it has often generated: either one tries to do without any subjective notion of content distinct from what in the world the posture is about, or one misconstrues subjective content as an object of the mind. On the present view, the object of, for example, a belief that it is raining is the corresponding state of affairs in the world, the condition of satisfaction *as thing required*. The content is not between mind and world, blocking immediate access to the world, as the objectivist fears, but is rather that property of the subject in virtue of which it is directed at this state of affairs rather than others, that which sets the conditions of satisfaction *as requirement* (Searle 1983, chapter 1).

(3) and (4) show how in the received view the proposition is deployed in what I believe are two incompatible roles: as a mere representation of a state of affairs, which can be the content/object of practical postures like intention, as well as of theoretical postures like belief, in 3), and as a representation of a state of affairs from a theoretical position as in (4). As a truth value bearer, a proposition must be connected to a theoretical position, since truth is representational success from a theoretical position. But a mere representation of a state of affairs is as such neutral between the practical/theoretical distinction and essentially incomplete: it needs to be connected to a theoretical or a practical position in order to become the bearer of a truth or other satisfaction value.

Now there are different ways to think about how the subject's position is connected to the representation of a state of affairs. Most philosophers, if they think about mode/force/position at all, will tend to think about it in functionalist terms, but purely phenomenal, normativist, or expressivist accounts are also possible. The most important reason I favor a representationalist account is simply that I find it plausible that we always experience our position, our kind of relatedness to the world, or have a sense of it. In perceptual and actional experience, we experience our passive, respectively active, position toward the world. In believing, we have at least a sense of being receptive to the world and of our position being grounded in perception—our own, or, via testimony, that of others. By contrast, in intending we have a sense of an active position, of practical responsibility to bring about a state of affairs. And I believe we also always have a sense of the strength of our position, metacognitive feelings of the degree of our epistemic confidence, for example, or the strength of our desire for an outcome or our sense of control over it. Note that the claim here is not that we necessarily have a concept of our position: experiencing our position or having a sense of it are nonconceptual forms of representation.<sup>2</sup>

But there are also more theoretical arguments for the view that position mode is representational. Let me briefly mention four here. The first departs from Searle's observation that a variety of postures such as actional and perceptual states, memories, intentions, and orders, have a causal component in their satisfaction conditions (Searle 1983). For example, an intention or order needs to cause what is intended or ordered to count as executed and thus as satisfied, while a perceptual state or a memory needs to be caused by what is perceived or remembered to count as veridical or true and thus as satisfied. Under the influence of the received view, Searle sought to capture this by inserting into the propositional content of these postures a clause to the effect that they themselves cause the relevant state of affairs or be caused by it—he refers to this as “causal self-referentiality” or, more recently, as causal “self-reflexivity” (2015). However, the self-reference is potentially problematic, the idea that the contents of perceptual and actional experience represent experience itself is questionable (Armstrong 1991; McDowell 1991), and the analysis has the further implausible consequence that, because of the difference in the direction of causation

between, for example, intentions and memories, an intention and a memory could not have the same content/object (Schmitz 2013, 2017).

But the most fundamental objection is just that it seems wrong to locate the difference in mind–world causal relations between theoretical and practical postures, between remembering and asserting, intending and ordering, in *what* is remembered or asserted, intended or ordered. That my order or intention can only count as executed if it causes you/me to do what I order/intend is not a matter of *what* I order/intend, but of my ordering/intending it (see also Recanati 2007). To locate this difference in the “what-content” or “object content” is an artifact of the traditional view and its conception of content. What I intend when, for example, I intend to close the door, is not that the intention causes this action. Rather, I represent this action from a position of directedness at causing it, of being committed and poised to cause it. So the alternative to Searle’s account I am proposing is to say that the subject of—to stick with our example—an intention represents her position and has at least a sense of that position as an active one that is only satisfied if it causes the intended action.

Searle arrives at his account on the basis of three key assumptions: first, that (at least) some satisfaction conditions have the causal components we discussed; second, that satisfaction conditions (as thing required) must be determined by intentional content; third, that intentional content is propositional (and conceptual) content in the sense of the traditional model. I accept the first observation and also the second principle—notably against externalist, disjunctivist and so-called relational, as well as radically enactivist theories, which all, though partly for different reasons, at some points try to work without a notion of representational content. Given my criticism of Searle’s account and thus of the third point, I think the first two points provide a powerful argument in favor of the idea that mode is representational.

The second general consideration in favor of this thesis is that once we clearly separate the notion of what-content as that which represents a state of affairs and may be shared between different theoretical or practical postures, from the theoretical or practical positions vis-à-vis those states of affairs, we also open up the possibility of generalizing standard propositional and quantificational logic, so that we cannot only formalize deductive inferences with propositions, but with arbitrary postures. For properly understood, propositions at least as they occur in standard propositional logic, are just statements, that is, what-contents with a statement-mode, while, again, propositions as what is supposed to be common between different attitudes are best thought of as incomplete what-contents. So basically all we need to do is to add mode symbols to the apparatus of standard logic as an additional category of nonlogical signs which complete the postures. The postures are then our *Elementarsätze*, on which we can now perform all the same logical operations which we used to perform on statements alone (Schmitz N.d.). And the

most straightforward way then to think of the mode symbols in this logical context is as representing relations between subjects and states of affairs.

The third theoretical argument in favor of the thesis is that it allows a straightforward solution to all forms of Moore's paradox. For example, I cannot assert that it rains and then go on to deny that I believe that it does because in asserting it I already present myself as having some form of cognitive access to this state of affairs, perhaps even as knowing it. The fourth and related point I want to mention is that the thesis harmonizes well with knowledge accounts of assertion (Williamson 2000), which claim that assertion is subject to a knowledge norm. Is that norm just imposed from the outside, or how is it connected to assertion? A straightforward answer is: assertion presents its subject as knowing.

That position mode is representational under natural assumptions also entails that every posture represents its subject, as the subject cannot represent its position without representing itself. Note that on the mode account neither the subject nor its position are represented as something that is the case, as the object of a theoretical position, while the received view of propositional attitudes tacitly assumes that all representation is representation of what is the case. On the mode account the same state of affairs can be represented as something that is the case, as a fact, from a theoretical position, and as a goal from a practical position. But the subject and its position when they are represented as such, that is, not as part as the relevant state of affairs, are not represented from a theoretical position, as there is no further position from which the subject and its position are represented—nor a further subject doing the representing. That is part of what it means to say that it is represented as a subject.

The core idea behind extending the subject mode approach to collective intentionality is that we can understand collective intentionality in terms of subjects representing others as co-subjects of positions we jointly take up toward the world rather than as objects of such positions. To make this work, we need to understand how experiencing and otherwise representing others as co-subjects is different from representing them as objects. To understand this, we need to begin at the level of joint intentionality below the level of beliefs and intentions, of practical and theoretical thought. Just as there are prelinguistic, preconceptual, and nonpropositional forms of individual self-awareness, for example in perception and action, as was argued most forcefully by José Luis Bermúdez (1998), I believe there are also corresponding forms of collective self-awareness in joint attention, perception, and action. And just as Bermúdez showed that we can make progress in understanding conceptual level I-self-awareness by investigating how it is grounded in preconceptual self-awareness, I hope to be able to show that we can also make progress in understanding conceptual level we-self-awareness by investigating how it is grounded in preconceptual, pre-reflective collective self-awareness. Later we will then see how I- and we-role mode self-awareness functions against the background of both pre-conceptual and conceptual collective self-awareness.

#### 4. Co-Subjective Consciousness in Joint Attention and Action

How do I experience the other so that, should she also experience me in this way, that makes us co-operators, co-attenders, and co-actors, rather than just mutual objects of awareness?<sup>3</sup> In this section I will try to explain what it means to experience somebody as a co-subject rather than just as an object of attention. In accordance with the thesis of an inextricable link between self- and object-awareness, I will then argue that the way I experience the other is also reflected in how I experience the world, or rather in how we jointly experience it.

One source of inspiration for the idea that an entity can be construed subjectively was mentioned already, Wittgenstein's distinction between subjective and objective uses of "I." From the linguist Ronald Langacker (1987) I borrow a metaphor and a basic theoretical construct. The metaphor is that to construe something subjectively is to construe it as part of one's perceptual apparatus, as part of what gives one access to the world as opposed to what one accesses, somewhat in the way one experiences one's glasses. Normally one does not attend to one's glasses as objects in their own right. One rather primarily experiences them as something that improves one's access to the objects one attends to. We can add that analogously a tennis player is not normally attending to her racket, but experiences it as an extension of her actional apparatus, as something that improves her actional reach in the world. I propose to extend this metaphor to how we experience others as co-subjects, even though it falls short in one important respect: while tools just serve my theoretical and practical needs and goals (and are in that sense mere objects), my co-subjects share at least some of them. I experience them as like me (Meltzoff 2007), or as exhibiting what Michael Tomasello (2014) refers to as "self-other equivalence." But what this means is that they likewise extend my perceptual and actional access to the world, making it our access.

The related theoretical idea I borrow from Langacker is that we construe an entity subjectively when we construe it as part of or in relation to what he calls the ground, by which he means the speech situation with speaker and hearer, the immediate context, mental background, and so on. I will extend the notion of such subjective construction from linguistic, semantic content to the intentional content of experience, and in this sense I will speak of experiencing others as co-subjects or subjectively. The theoretical and practical capacities and positions we share are part of the ground, which thus becomes a common ground.

In experiencing somebody as a co-subject, I don't experience him as something that is the case, for that would be to experience him from a theoretical position, as an object of observation. I experience him as a potential or actual partner for theoretical, epistemic as well as for practical cooperation; as a source of information about the world and at the same time as somebody who will help and guide me; as somebody who draws my (our!) attention to new, exciting, interesting things and who I in turn want to show interesting things to; but also as somebody whom I can trust in a dangerous situation, as, for example, in so-called social referencing.

While these various aspects are conceptually distinguished in the description, they are experienced in a more undifferentiated, gestalt-like form. To make this vivid through a fairly extreme case, imagine you have been lost for some time in an unfamiliar city in an apparently deserted part of town. The streets appear empty until you suddenly spot a friendly-seeming person. You'll most likely have a relieved sense of this person as a potential co-operation partner (Searle 1995), a gestalt-like sense of this person as affording co-operative action. He might tell you where you are, point you in the right direction, perhaps even walk you to the next bus station. You can distinguish these possibilities (and indefinitely many more) in conceptually articulated thought, but in the experience itself they are only present in an inchoate, gestalt-like form.

The level of experience we are talking about here is also the level where we are attuned to others, resonate with them and are aligned with them in various ways, for example, with regard to mimic, gesture, and posture. That we are more sympathetic to those who are attuned to us more or even imitate us with regard to such features and are more likely to respond positively to their wishes and requests is a well-known phenomenon often called the "chameleon effect" (Chartrand and Bargh 1999).

Many insights into how others are experienced, understood, and treated in joint attention can be gleaned from studies that reveal the characteristic deficits autistic children show in this regard. I will present some of these results to illustrate the theoretical fruitfulness of the distinction between co-subject and object representation. For example, in a well-known study, when asked where a sticker should go more than half of the children with autism never indicated the place by pointing to their own bodies rather than at the other's body, whereas all neurotypical children did this (R. P. Hobson and Meyer 2005). This is a very vivid illustration of the difference between a co-subjective and an objectifying style of reference. To point to a place on one's own body to pick out the corresponding place on that of the other, is to treat her as somebody like oneself rather than as an object.

Research by Peter Hobson and Jessica Hobson also shows a correlation between sharing looks and role reversals in joint action. They conclude that "the results suggest that the mode of social perception that involves sharing looks [also] gives rise to self-other transpositions in imitation" (2011, 124). On the subject mode approach this can be explained as an instance of experiencing the other as a co-subject, as somebody who is like me, because people like me can perform the actions that I perform, and because I experience myself as forming a joint subject of action with the other, so that it does not matter so much who does what and we can switch easily between different roles in the pursuit of a shared goal.

Autistic children also engage much less in the kind of affirmative nodding people often show when listening to others (J. Hobson et al. 2009). A straightforward interpretation of this is that they experience common ground less and/or have less interest in emphasizing it and in maintaining the emotional connection that it brings with it. Similarly, autistic children also have difficulties "in sustaining engagement with the questioner and appreciating how their

communication established common ground between self and other in relation to which a third party was ‘he’ according to a joint perspective” (R. P. Hobson and Hobson 2011, 128). That is, autistic children often refer to third parties with proper names or address them directly in the second person, thus failing to establish or maintain common ground.

That being in joint attention mode is not only manifest in how co-attenders are experienced, but also in how the world is experienced—namely relative to their interests and to the common ground—is illustrated by another finding: non-autistic children were much more likely to show a concerned “checking” look at a tester, with whom they were in a joint attention situation, when the tester’s drawing was torn, than autistic children (J. Hobson et al. 2009). A similar result comes from a study where infants shared several toy ducks with one experimenter and then several teddy bears with another. When they then entered a room with just one of the experimenters, in which both a duck and a teddy bear picture were on the wall, they were much more likely to point to the picture of the object they had earlier shared with the experimenter they were with (Liebal et al. 2009).

The relevant common ground can come from joint action just as well as from joint attention. Michael Tomasello describes another study from the same paper by Liebal et al., who

Had a one-year-old infant and an adult clean up together by picking up toys and putting them in a basket. At one point the adult stopped and pointed to a target toy, which the infant then cleaned up into the basket. However, when the infant and adult were cleaning up in exactly this same way, and a second adult who had not shared this context entered the room and pointed toward the target toy in exactly the same way, infants did not put the toy away into the basket; they mostly just handed it to him, presumably because the second adult had not shared the cleaning up game with them as common ground. (Tomasello 2014, 55)

This talk of common ground can be further explained by saying that the first adult was experienced as a co-subject of the joint action of cleaning up, but the second was not, so that his point was not interpreted in terms of the joint action relation. So the same thing in the world, which is also the object of two behaviorally identical pointing gestures, is treated rather differently depending on whether it is experienced as an object of one joint action relation or another.

The practical and theoretical aspects of jointness are essentially connected. As Tomasello writes, “Joint actions, joint goals, and joint attention are . . . of a piece, and . . . must have coevolved” (2014, 44). His argument is that humans must coordinate their attention in order to act jointly. Against certain tendencies in philosophy to think of joint attention as a purely perceptual phenomenon, this argument can also be made in the opposite direction: joint attention can only be joint if the co-subjects are at least disposed to joint action, for nothing else could distinguish it from mere mutual perception, as for example in a competitive situation (compare Schmitz 2015). To experience somebody as a co-attender is to

experience her as at least a potential co-subject of both theoretical and practical positions toward the world.<sup>4</sup>

There is some direct evidence that subject mode intentional content rather than object content explains certain kinds of social understanding and social actions based on that understanding. For example, fourteen-month-old infants understood an ambiguous request by an adult on the basis of a shared joint attention episode, but not by merely observing his otherwise identical interactions with the relevant objects. After the adult and the infant had shared two objects and the infant had explored one object alone, the infant was able to correctly interpret an ambiguous request for “that one,” made with an excited expression by the adult, as referring to the new object. But fourteen-month-old infants were not able to do the same in conditions where infants merely observed the adult examining the objects by himself, or engaging in joint attention with another person (Moll, Carpenter, and Tomasello 2007). Moll and Meltzoff conclude that “joint engagement is thus at least helpful, if not necessary, for infants of fourteen months to register others as becoming familiar with something” (2011, 397).

To summarize the main points of this section: co-attenders and co-actors are bound into the representation of the intentional relation to the goal in a special way—as co-subjects—that is reflected in the very structure of the relevant intentional states. So in the mode of joint attention and action, the co-attender is experienced as (1) like me in important respects and as (2) a co-subject of a joint intentional relation to a state of affairs—a shared goal or fact. This relation of sharing a common ground is (3) affectively charged in such a way that (4) the co-subjects are at least disposed to joint action and (5) to experience the world with regard to the theoretical and practical needs, concerns, and interests of the co-attender.

I call this account of joint attention the PAIR account (Schmitz 2015). “P” because this intentional relation has an irreducibly practical, pragmatic aspect: joint attention essentially brings with it at least a disposition for joint communicative actions of sharing and normally also for other joint actions. The “A” signifies that this relation is affectively charged and typically involves alignment with, attunement to, and affirmation of one’s co-attenders. The “I” indicates that this relation is intentional and involves identification with and imitation of one’s co-attenders, including imitative styles of reference to them. Finally, the “R” reminds us that this relation obtains in virtue of the representational contents in the subject’s minds and fosters role reversal and reciprocity more broadly. In a nutshell, we can say that the PAIR account conceives of joint attention as a pragmatic, affectively charged intentional relation that obtains in virtue of mode content in the co-attenders’ minds that binds them together as co-subjects.

## 5. We-Mode Co-Subjective Consciousness

To see how one can move from the mode of joint attention and action to the we-mode of joint conceptual level postures such as belief and intention, consider

the example of a couple that through the sensory-motor-emotional exercise of walking together establishes a bond and a joint habit of going on the same walk together.<sup>5,6</sup> In principle such a series of episodes can be initiated just at the level of sensory-motor-emotional interactions, say through jointly attending to the beautiful scenery, through a sharing look, a pointing gesture toward a possible destination, followed by a nod of agreement. And in principle these interactions could remain on the nonconceptual level for an indefinite amount of time—perhaps they just always take the same walk at the same time anyway. But at some point—and in real life normally sooner rather than later—they will start planning their walks. Perhaps one of them will say: “I can’t come tomorrow, but let’s walk again together the day after tomorrow!” This illustrates a fundamental function of the conceptual level relative to the nonconceptual one and generally of higher levels of collective intentionality relative to lower ones, namely to manage disruptions and crises and create more enduring social bonds through less context-dependent forms of representation. If language hadn’t been available, the sensory-motor bond and habit might have been broken right there. But through language this can be prevented.

Against the background of their nonconceptual bond, the couple can say “we” in the affectively charged way that is a sure sign that a truly collective, not merely distributive, interpretation of the first person plural is in play. And through language they can take their relationship to the next level by negotiating common values and a shared narrative, and by establishing joint plans and commitments. On the basis of being co-subjects of episodes of joint attention and action and of joint dispositions, they begin to create a joint we-subject of conceptual level postures through their interactions, their joint reasonings, deliberations and negotiations, growing continuously into being such a subject.

I see nothing objectionable or even mysterious in the idea of such a subject. It’s not a mere summation of individuals because “we” picks out these individuals as being related in certain ways, first through nonconceptual, sensory-motor-emotional bonds, then increasingly through being co-subjects of conceptual level attitudes. Nor is this relatedness like another person, or emergent in some mysterious or objectionable way. In this way I think we can bring out both why the reductionist content approach fails and how the collective subject is constituted.

Another advantage of the subject mode approach is that it helps to dissolve traditional puzzles about the representation of such attitudes as joint attention and common knowledge. The literature here has been dominated by approaches in terms of some potentially infinite iteration of states (e.g., Schiffer 1972), as in the following example:

x knows [that it rains]  
 y knows [that it rains]  
 x knows [that y knows that it rains]

y knows [that x knows that it rains]

x knows [that y knows that x knows that it rains]

y knows [that x knows that y knows that it rains] . . . and so on. . .

This kind of infinity is a result of treating mode as nonrepresentational and as a mere object of ascription from an external point of view. If we treat it this way, each iteration of ascribing knowledge to the other will produce a new position with regard to that knowledge which is itself not represented—here symbolized by the fact that it appears outside of the square brackets. When that position is then represented, yet another new position is created, and so on, ad infinitum. The subjects can never catch up with each other, so to speak, and achieve a position of shared co-subjective consciousness of a state of affairs. But if we accept that subject and position mode are representational, we—any member or members of the relevant group, or the group in unison—can just simply say, or think, for example, “We know that it rains” to indicate common knowledge of the fact that it rains.

Note that on the present proposal, our statement is not an expression of an (individual or collective?) state of belief or knowledge that we know that it rains. This would mean that the linguistic representation would once more be an expression of a mental state where the subject takes a further position with regard to the linguistically represented situation, which position would again not be represented, reintroducing the traditional picture. That is, we would get something like “I know that we know that it rains,” and then the question would arise whether the other person knows this and knows that I know that we know, and so on. What is represented through mode representation is not again represented from another theoretical or practical point of view “behind it.” The infinite iteration is stopped at the first step. Both of us simply have an attitude of the form “We know that it rains.” This is of course not to deny that we can say or think something like “We know that we know that it rains” or even iterate this further. The point is just that the potential infinity of iteration is not what represents (or rather replaces) the commonality of knowledge or other postures. Note once more that this dissolution of the puzzle is only made possible by accepting the representationality of mode. Only because subject mode represents the we as the subject of the position and not as its object can we make sense of our shared epistemic position.<sup>7</sup>

But how can it be appropriate for an individual to think a thought like “We know that it rains” if its satisfaction requires that its co-subject share this attitude? Consider a joint attention situation. After two weeks of rain on our vacation, the weather forecast has promised sun the next morning. But looking out of our window together, we see that it is raining again and look at each other, rolling our eyes—a “sharing look.” In such a situation it is certainly perfectly fine for each of us to think we know. This is not because it would be inconceivable for this thought to be mistaken, but because we would need a reason to doubt it rather than further epistemic support.<sup>8</sup>

But isn't the subject of any particular posture an individual on my view? So, who is really the subject of the state of common knowledge (belief, intention, attention, etc.)—is it the individual or is it the collective? The answer is that the individuals are jointly the subject. That is why it is a plural subject. The key here is to see that we can and must ascribe the state to both the individuals and the group because the individuals jointly make up the group. An individual thinks our thought from the we-perspective of a group member and so represents the group state. The labor of representing the group's postures in the group-constituting subject mode is essentially shared between its members. The group represents its postures by one or more of its members representing it.

The subject mode account is also superior to one that accounts for any kind of collective posture as a special kind of posture—as opposed to a posture with a special kind of subject—as Searle (1990) does in interpreting we-intentions as a special kind of intentions, that still have individuals as subjects, in his version of the we-mode approach. In contrast, on the present approach we can give an interpretation of we-intentions and any kind of we-subject postures that is both compositional and referential. We are not dealing with a special kind of intention, but with an intention had by a special kind of subject, a we that can also be the subject of various other attitudes. It seems natural to say that an individual and a group may share a goal and thus the same kind of attitude toward a state of affairs, and it is essential in joint practical deliberation to also refer to the beliefs, plans, and values we have as a group.

It is crucial for the present proposal that sentences like “We intend to do X” or “We will do X together as a group” have readings where they are interpreted as expressions with a world-to-mind direction of fit, rather than as mind-to-world statements about intentions (Tuomela 2013, 77). We-mode intentions also have different satisfaction conditions than I-mode intentions (Tuomela 2013, 70). I think this even true when we consider aim intentions where the object of the intention is a state rather than an action. For example, if I intend for the meeting to be a good meeting, this has different satisfaction conditions than if we intend this, because in the latter case we rather than just I are poised to intervene to bring about a good meeting. Note that if we accept this together with the principle discussed above that satisfaction conditions must be determined by content, it follows that the difference between my and our intention must be reflected in content.

## 6. Role Mode Co-Subjective Consciousness

So far we have focused on the self-consciousness of small and informal groups. In this section I want to provide a brief sketch of how the subject mode account can be extended to explain larger groups from organizations such as corporations to government institutions and other political entities. These collectives, sometimes called “group agents” in the literature (e.g., List and Pettit 2011; Tuomela 2013), are often designated through proper names (“Unilever”) or definite descriptions

(“The University of Vienna”). Their identity is independent of the identity of their members, and they are characterized through formal roles, formal decision procedures, and so on. This is not the place for an extensive analysis of such collectives. I just want to make a *prima facie* case that they can be understood in terms of what I call “role mode” and that role mode is a subject mode.

The basic idea is that the identity of such groups over time and the positions they take can be explained in terms of the positions individuals take in role mode, that is, when they function as occupants of institutional roles within the organization. A crucial observation is that there are attitudes that individual and groups hold as the bearers of certain institutional roles, but not as the bearer of other such roles, or as private people or informal groups. For example, Angela Merkel may have criticized the SPD as leader of the CDU, but not in her role as chancellor of Germany. With politicians, it is often especially important in which of their usually many roles they take certain positions. But similar issues can be relevant in many contexts. Was the policeman on duty, did he act in his role as policeman when he intervened in the fight, or did he just act as a private citizen? Did he obtain evidence in an admissible way, so that he can base official measures against the suspect on it, or did he violate protocol? Questions like this can be of great legal and other significance.

The canonical representations of role mode are the “As [role]”-locution and the “In my role as [role]”-locution, as in the following:

As chancellor of Germany, I believe that. . .

As members of the committee, we intend to. . .

In my role as policeman, I arrested. . .

When attitudes are role-specific, so are reasons and the corresponding forms of reasoning. That somebody is smoking a joint may be a reason for the policeman to arrest him, though as a private person the bearer of this role may have no objection to it. So the policeman may reason from his belief as a policeman that a certain man has smoked a joint and his (let us assume) general obligation as a policeman to arrest people who do such things, to the particular obligation to arrest this man. It is necessary that this belief be one that the man holds as a policeman because if, for example, his personal belief was based on inadmissible evidence—say, obtained through illegal wiretapping—it could not provide a legally valid reason to arrest the man even if it was true.

Many real life and fictitious dramas revolve around the kinds of conflict entailed by such divergences between our personal postures and those that we hold or are at least supposed to hold in our official capacities: the policeman who seeks admissible evidence to legally convict somebody whom he personally knows to be guilty; the whistleblower who turns against the official line of his or her organization. Nothing here is meant to downplay such conflicts. The claim is not that role postures and personal postures are completely shut off from one

another in the minds of their bearers; quite the contrary. Of course there is still a single individual reasoner—like Angela Merkel in our example—who switches between roles and decides what to say and do in them. But it is still essential to recognize the importance of role differences. If Angela Merkel holds a different view as leader of the CDU than as chancellor, this is certainly a potential source of conflict, but it won't be a plain contradiction, as it might be if she held both views in one role. And while too much divergence between personal and role attitudes is unhealthy, a certain degree of it is most likely unavoidable for society and organizations to function.

The general point is that in our roles we have vantage points on the world that can differ from our merely personal, I-mode ones, both with regard to our practical and to our theoretical attitudes. Perhaps more obviously, we have special positive and negative practical powers, rights, duties and obligations, to do things. But we also may have what we could correspondingly call special theoretical, epistemic, positive, and negative powers with regard to what is the case. That is, in our roles we may have access to otherwise inaccessible sources of evidence, but yet other sources may also be legally, institutionally inadmissible, as in the policeman example. A case converse to that would be one where I have to accept something as true and act accordingly in my official capacity—say because it has been so determined by one of my superiors—even though personally I believe it to be false. That a role modifies the theoretical and practical vantage point of the role-bearer also explains why role mode is a form of subject mode. Acting in the role gives the subject theoretical and practical access to certain things and restricts or blocks access to others, just like putting on glasses or using tools would. So this is why role mode is subjective in the sense Langacker introduced.

This argument can be extended to apply to the relations between the functionaries of group agents—and to their relations to relevant role bearers from other group agents. To accept the power structure of a group agent and to function in it is not merely to believe, for example, that a certain person is chairwoman of a corporation. That is, it is not sufficient to merely represent this as part of object content. Such a belief could be shared by any outsider, including archenemies of this company who consider it a fraud and deny it any legitimacy. Nor is it merely the fact that she has been appointed through a legally valid document. Though this is of course a very important fact, she cannot function as chairwoman if she is not accepted as such by her colleagues. (And that she has been appointed in a legally valid way of course also means that people have appointed her acting in their roles, and that perhaps others have supervised or documented this in their respective professional roles, for example, as lawyers or notaries.)

To accept her authority means to accept that she has the power to make certain practical as well as theoretical determinations with regard to certain domains. She might say: "As chairwoman, I have determined that we are not selling enough in this market, and so I order you to take appropriate action." To accept this authority means to represent these domains from the vantage point of

the role as her subordinate and thus as subject to the powers she has in her role. Finally, its functionaries will identify with a corporation or any organization to the extent that they experience their co-functionaries as co-subjects in pursuit of a common cause or purpose, in spite or even because of the fundamentally different roles they may have in this pursuit. If that is not the case any more at all, we are dealing with a system of oppression rather than a collective enterprise. Where to draw this line in particular cases can of course be a very hard question.

It is a consequence of all this that, just as in the case of joint attention and of we-mode attitudes, the successful representation of group agents through subject mode representation is a collective enterprise. I can imagine being chairman and representing the world from the vantage point of this role, and if I suffer from delusions, I might even do this in all seriousness. But I can only actually be chairman and the corporation can only actually exist if many others also represent me in this role from the vantage points of their respective roles which are defined in relation to mine. By contrast, object content representation by a mere observer is neither necessarily collective—my personal, I-mode belief in the existence of the corporation can of course be completely accurate—nor is, conversely, collective object content belief in the existence of a group agent sufficient for its existence—even if belief in the existence of some corporation is part of the collective belief system of a group, that does not necessarily mean it really exists. For example, this belief might be part of a conspiracy theory held by this group.

## 7. Conclusion

I have argued that, in any posture, a subject is aware of its theoretical or practical position toward the world and that collective self-awareness should be understood as an extension of the subjective pole of the self–world relation by representing others as co-subjects of such positions rather than as their objects. When such representation is mutual, collective subjects from joint attention dyads to corporations are constituted.

In conclusion I want to address two basic and related ontological concerns, which I believe motivate many positions in this debate, from this point of view. Does the idea that we connect to others through co-subjective consciousness and thus constitute collective subjects commit us to the idea that there is also a group mind, a new subject—or as Philip Pettit (this volume) puts it, a new “site”—of consciousness? And in which way is my account collectivist or individualist/reductionist?

Pettit rightly responds to the question of whether a new site of consciousness is created by group agents by saying that in one sense it is, but in another it isn't. I interpret him as meaning that while a collective subject has been created as a unified subject of theoretical and practical positions, and these positions are essentially manifest in consciousness, for example in the conscious reasoning and deliberating of the group, this consciousness is still that of the group members. There is no new site of consciousness in the sense that this neither creates

a new subject as an additional creature, nor as a *fusion* of the members. The unity of the group is not the same kind of unity as the unity of an individual consciousness. It is a unity of minds, not of a mind. The collective subject is essentially a plural subject.

One way this comes out in the subject mode account is that, as I have emphasized, the task of representing the positions of the collective is also a joint task. An individual group member can always turn out to misrepresent the group's position, even if she is the group's leader, namely in case the other group members do not agree, or perhaps even revoke her authority to speak for the group.

Finally, the subject mode account is collectivist in that it embraces both the irreducibility of the we and other collective subjects and the irreducibility of special forms of group mindedness, in which we experience and otherwise represent others as co-subjects. These forms of irreducibility are really of a piece because appropriately shared group mindedness is sufficient to constitute a group. But there is also an important sense in which the mode account is individualistic: no collective can take a position without one or more of its members, functionaries, or agents taking this position on its behalf as a group member or role occupant. Again: group mindedness does not require group minds.

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## Notes

<sup>1</sup>Compare Salice (2015) and Wilby (2012). I extensively discuss Tuomela's account in Schmitz (2017).

<sup>2</sup>If we are always aware of our position in the way I am claiming, why is it often so difficult and sometimes impossible for us to see that some of our positions are merely ours in the sense of being epistemically subjective—for example, because we are blinded by our personal desires and prejudices, our position in society, and so on? I don't think there is a tension here, because awareness of the position I claim we always have is rather minimal. It just means that we are, for example, aware of whether we are perceiving or doing, intending or believing, and so on, not that we are aware of all the forces that shape our positions. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for the journal for raising this point.

<sup>3</sup>This section draws on Schmitz (2015).

<sup>4</sup>One can, therefore, also think about these kinds of experiences in terms of the notion of pushmi-pullyu representations (Millikan 1995), of affordances, or both.

<sup>5</sup>This section and the following draw on Schmitz (2017).

<sup>6</sup>I am of course alluding to Margaret Gilbert's (1990) famous example here.

<sup>7</sup>For a critique of this proposal, see Blomberg (this issue).

<sup>8</sup>For a relational account of how joint attention can ground thought and speech, see Campbell (2002) and for a relational version of intentionalism about joint attention and some thoughts on the epistemological issue of other minds Schmitz (2015).

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