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# The You Turn

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This introductory paper sets out a framework for approaching some of the claims about the second person made by the papers collected in the special edition of *Philosophical Explorations on The Second Person* (2014, 17:3). It does so by putting centre stage the notion of a ‘bipolar second person relation’, and examining ways of giving it substance suggested by the authors of these papers. In particular, it focuses on claims made (and denied) in these papers (a) about the existence and/or nature of second person thought, second person reasons for action and second person reasons for belief and (b) about possible connections among thought-theoretical, ethical and epistemological issues and debates in this area.

Keywords: second person; second person thought; second person reasons; bipolarity; second person relations

## 1. Introduction

The past few years have witnessed an exponentially growing body of work conducted under the ‘second person’ heading, in various areas of philosophy (philosophy of mind, philosophy of language, ethics and epistemology), in developmental psychology, in psychiatry and even in neuroscience.<sup>1</sup> To put it at its most general, and ambitious, the idea driving much of this work is this. Proper attention to the ways we relate to each other when we are in position to refer to each other using the second person pronoun, can deliver something like a paradigm shift in the way we address questions about a range of fundamental issues in these fields. In particular, appeal to second person relations is said to show how, contrary to centuries of theorizing in philosophy, we in fact bridge what is often supposed to be an unbridgeable gap between our first person awareness of ourselves and our third person awareness of others, where this in turn is supposed to have deep implications for our understanding of morality, knowledge transmission and more.

‘Like Martin Buber, who likens Feuerbach’s laying hold of Thou to a Copernican revolution in human self-understanding, I can get carried away by such talk. But what does it mean?’ asks Douglas Lavin in ‘Other Wills’, this issue. And, one might add, what exactly does ‘it’ refer to? For there are many such talks, across many domains, and a rich variety of accounts of why and to what taking the second person seriously makes a difference. Confronted with this abundance, a natural reaction is to steer clear of attempting to relate debates under the ‘second person’ heading in one field to those in another, and focus, instead, as is already the practice, on trying to get clearer on issues in one particular area.

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Fruitful as this kind of approach has been, though, such internal debates often seem to flounder on two related questions. The first is the question of what makes something a second person this or that – how do we distinguish between stipulation and substance? Call this the ‘existential question’. The second is the question of why it matters whether there are such things, what kind of difference does one answer or another to the existential question make? Call this the ‘significance question’. Of course, how one answers the latter depends, in part, on answers to the existential question, which in turn can, and arguably should, be influenced by the significance question, and there is danger of reaching a point where wheels begin to spin in a vacuum.

Such problems are, of course, not unique to the second person. In this respect, though, second person issues are arguably at an advantage precisely because the ‘second person’ heading is used in several areas of research. For what this provides, for each debate, is scope for widening the circle of considerations relevant to formulating and addressing both the existential and the significance questions. That, at any rate, is the thinking behind this issue. In the next section, I say something about the areas of research touched on, and sketch a framework for comparing existence and significance claims made (and denied) by the papers in this issue. Before that, a brief word about my title.

If we take ‘you turn’ to refer to a doctrine or set of worked out new answers to age-old problems, the negative point to emerge from widening the debate is that we do not yet command a clear enough view of the shape of the terrain to formulate, let alone assess, anything that might count as a ‘second person theory’ of anything (for an eloquent expression of doubt on this score, see Lavin). On a less dramatic understanding of ‘you turn’, though, to take the turn is to think that raising questions under the ‘second person’ heading introduces fascinating new ways of connecting problems in areas of research that tend to be sealed off from each other. That is the intended reading of the title, and the sense in which I think it is right to say that all the contributions to this issue are engaged in the turn. Here, we focus exclusively on a small number of philosophical issues raised by the ‘you turn’, thus understood, in ethics, epistemology, theory of thought and philosophy of mind, with the hope that doing so will also provide the beginning of a framework for approaching other closely related philosophical problems and interdisciplinary questions raised by psychologists working under the ‘second person’ label.

## 2. Second person relations

To get going, it will help to have before us the following stipulative, minimal and topic-neutral definition of the notion of a ‘second person relation’. Suppose you and I are having a conversation, about anything – a book, a philosophical problem, the state of the world, someone we are both looking at. In virtue of having such a conversation we are each in position to use the second person pronoun to address each other. Conversations are not the only kind of exchange that makes use of the second person pronoun possible and appropriate simply in virtue of engaging in the exchange. Any form of verbal communication does this, but so too do jointly attending to an object, sharing a smile, exchanging gifts and so forth. I will call instances of the relation in which two people stand to each other, in virtue of which use of the second person is possible and appropriate, ‘second person relations’.

To take us one step further in characterizing this relation, thickening it, so to speak, but in a topic-neutral way, I will avail myself of the metaphor of ‘bipolarity’, coined by Michael Thompson in his ‘What is it to Wrong Someone? A Puzzle about Justice’. In that paper, Thompson argues that there are propositions such as: ‘*X* wronged *Y* by doing *A*’; ‘*X* has a duty to *Y* to do *A*’ and many others, which are such that in judging them to be true,

I may be said to view a pair of distinct agents as joined and opposed in a formally distinctive type of practical nexus. They are for me like the opposing poles of an electrical apparatus: in filling one of these forms with concrete content, I represent an arc of normative current as passing between the agent-poles, and as taking a certain path'. (2004, 335)

Such judgements, in Thompson's terms, exhibit an essential 'bipolarity', and

this special posture of the mind in coupling certain representations of agents marks the resulting judgements as belonging to the element of *justice* ... The mark of this special virtue of human agents, as Aristotle says, is that it is 'toward another', *pros heteron* or *pros allon* ... It is characteristic of the individual bearer of justice, in this traditional sense, to apprehend this order of thought and to deliberate with *first-person* judgements of the bipolar type ... —and thus to view *herself* as related to others, and as other to others, in this peculiar way. (2004, 336)

Appealing to a relation in which I stand to you to explain moral duties I have with respect to you is contrasted by Thompson with appealing to monadic, that is, non-relational norms, moral laws and the like. Later, I return to the role that appeals to bipolarity might play in discussions of the role of the second person in ethics. Here, I want to strip the metaphor of its specifically ethical point, and use it to give a topic-neutral thickening to the notion of a 'second person relation'.

To this end, consider the following judgements (a) 'Jack saw Jill'; (b) 'Jack and Jill watched a film together'; (c) 'Jack promised Jill that p' or 'Jack told Jill that p'. In the first, although two people are referred to, the predicate 'seeing' applies to one of them only, Jack (singular predication). In the second, two subjects are referred to and the predicate 'watched a film' applies to both (plural predication). When we turn to the third group, it may seem to have the surface form of singular predication, it is Jack who is promising or telling, but when we look at the truth conditions for such judgements, this turns out to be misleading. Or so the bipolarity intuition suggests. There are various ways of putting this intuition. Minimally, in contrast to the first group, we might say that although the form is superficially that of singular predication, some kind of response or 'uptake' from the second subject is required. More substantively, and this is where the contrast with simple plural predication steps in, what is required from the second subject is both distinct from, and interdependent with, what is required from the first. This is, very minimally, some of what the idea of two 'opposing poles' is meant to capture, which Thompson himself also signifies by appeal to the idea of one subject being 'opposite' or 'as against' the other. (For an extended, far less crude account of related distinctions, on which I have drawn, see Sebastian Rödl's 'Intentional Transaction', this issue.)

Given a few such contrasting threesomes of judgements, it is plausible to claim that people would generally agree with each other about how to categorize them (where this allows for occasional divergence and hesitation over particular cases). Suppose we think such agreement serves to 'save the phenomenon', so to speak. As always, the interesting question is whether it has an explanation, and if so, what it is. One way of putting the question all the papers here have a bearing on is this. If there are interesting explanations of it, do they introduce substantive second person existential and significance claims?

In fact, much of the current literature tends to divide into two independent ways of giving substance to the bipolarity metaphor. One appeals to particular kinds of thinking involved in, or on some accounts constitutive of, second person bipolar relations. We find this in discussions of whether there is such a thing as 'you-thinking' or second person understanding of others. The second attempts to give bipolarity normative substance by appealing to relations of accountability and authority that are said to be presupposed in

speech acts such as telling or commanding or demanding, where the idea is that participating in these provides subjects with something properly labelled ‘second person reasons’, moral and epistemological.

Each of these ways of developing the bipolarity metaphor has generated a large, somewhat technical, self-contained literature, the point of which can be lost when our interest is in why the second person has seemed to many to be so important. It is the burden of Lavin’s paper that progress with what I called ‘existence’ and ‘significance’ questions in these distinct areas rests on recognizing their interdependence, and several of the papers here point to ways of doing so. This is also the rationale for this issue. For the purposes of introduction, though, I will initially adhere to the division. In Section 3, I introduce papers concerned with the problem of second person thought; in Section 4, I introduce issues raised by the claim that testimony and morality are grounded in speech acts that provide for second person reasons for action and belief. Finally, in Section 5, I return to questions raised by several papers of possible connections among these different ways of explicitly or implicitly using the metaphor of bipolarity to give the second person relation substantive import.

### 3. Second person thought

#### 3.1. *The you-indexicality claim*

One version of the thought-theoretical problem can be introduced by considering a variation on an example of John Perry’s in ‘The Essential Indexical’ (1979). Suppose you see someone in the mirror and on that basis judge: ‘that person is dispersing sugar on the supermarket floor’. At some point you may realize: ‘I am that person’. Perry’s idea is that ‘I’-thinking is essentially indexical in the sense that its expression cannot be replaced by any term other than the first person, and the aim of his paper is to give a substantive characterization of what this way of thinking is.

Our question can, by analogy, be introduced as follows. Suppose you see someone else, Sally, trailing sugar and think to yourself ‘That person is trailing sugar’. You then decide to inform Sally of this, and say to her: ‘You are trailing sugar’. Our question is: are you, in addressing Sally, expressing a new way of thinking of Sally, one which, by analogy with the indexicality claim made about ‘I’-thinking, can only be expressed in this way? Call a positive answer to this question the ‘you-indexicality claim’.

A much-cited negative answer to this question is to be found in the following passage by Richard Heck.

Consider the indexical ‘you’. As a matter of its standing meaning, an utterance of ‘you’ refers to the person addressed in that utterance. But in the sense that there is such a thing as a self-conscious, first person belief, there is no such thing as a second-person belief, or so it seems to me ... I mean to deny that there is any such thing as an essentially indexical second-person belief. The phenomenon of the second person is a linguistic one, bound up with the fact that utterances, as we make them, are typically directed to people, not just made to the cosmos. (If there were speakers of a language who never directed their utterances to their fellows, they would have no use for the second person.) The word ‘you’ has no correlate at the level of thought: if not, then the contents of the beliefs we express using the word ‘you’ have very little to do with its standing meaning. (2002, 12)

What exactly does Heck mean when he denies that there is an essentially indexical second person belief? Longworth’s suggestion in ‘You and Me’, which I adopt, is that the most plausible reading of his claim emerges when we take on board the sense in which Heck thinks there are first person indexical beliefs. According to Heck, there is a kind of

thought about oneself one can think only if one is the person thought about; and this precisely mirrors the conditions for the correct use of ‘I’ to refer to a person – one can only use it if one is that person. That is the sense in which such thoughts are essentially indexical. Heck’s claim about the second person is that, in contrast, there is no way of thinking that can only be employed when conditions for the use of the second person pronoun are met. I will label this the ‘non-indexicality claim’.

The intuition underpinning the non-indexicality claim can be brought out by returning to our example. As I presented it, you are thinking demonstratively about Sally and then decide to address her. The simple intuition is that as far as thought about Sally is concerned you already have everything needed, and this is true of every occasion in which you are in a position to use ‘you’ – you have the other in mind in virtue of perceiving her or representing in her in some other way. Of course, this on its own does not rule out the claim that you are now, in using ‘you’, also thinking of her in a new, you-indexical way, but, at the very least, it does seem to make any such new thinking redundant. What role could it have, given that you already have Sally in mind?

One immediate response to this question can help refine Heck’s challenge. The response says that when I address Sally, I do not think of her merely as ‘that (perceived) object’. I think of her as *a subject*, a thinker of ‘I’ thoughts who is aware of my own ‘I’ thoughts and of my awareness of her as a subject. Suppose, following Christopher Peacocke, we call this kind of awareness ‘interpersonal self-consciousness’ (Peacocke 2014).<sup>2</sup> On Peacocke’s own account, this requires three levels of embedding in the contents of each subject’s self-conscious thought. But, crucially, on his account, properly explaining interpersonal self-consciousness does not affect the Heck claim, which he endorses. For none of these iterated levels of self-consciousness require, on his account, that the other person one is thinking of be represented in a way that requires that the conditions for the use of ‘you’ be met. That is, on such an account, doing justice to interpersonal self-consciousness only requires invoking *ways of thinking about another person that are available to be engaged in independently of the occurrence of the kind of social interaction that warrants the use of ‘you’*.

This is a rough formulation of the kind of claim the you-indexicality claim should be seen as pitted against. What the you-indexicality claims says, in response, is that the kind of self-consciousness we find in instances where the second person relation, as so far stipulatively defined, holds, essentially involves a way of thinking of another, which I label ‘you-thinking’, that can only be expressed by ‘you’ – a way of thinking of another that requires that one meet conditions that exactly mirror the conditions for the use of ‘you’.

That is the claim. Versions of it, though sometimes differently expressed, are argued for and defended by four of the papers collected here, those by Rödl, Longworth, Heal and Haase. They do so in distinct ways, in some cases from very different thought-theoretical and even metaphysical perspectives. Each of these papers is rich in claims and ideas I cannot hope to touch on here. I make do with a telegraphic summary of claims they make that are relevant to articulating, developing and arguing for the you-indexicality claim, and then return to a discussion of key points they have in common.

In his contribution to this issue, Rödl puts centre-stage something he calls ‘intentional transactions’ such as giving someone an apple. The distinctive mark of such transactions, according to Rödl, is they cannot be analysed into a combination of two acts – they are essentially acts for two. This, in turn, is to be explained, he argues, by treating such transactions as constituted by a kind of thinking he labels ‘dyadic self predication’, which is an essentially relational kind of self-consciousness, a thinking of oneself as ‘opposite’ or ‘towards’ the other, in which each subject employs something he calls an ‘I-you’ concept. A key claim he argues for, as far as the you-indexicality claim is concerned, is

that we cannot explain the kind of self-consciousness involved in such transactions by equipping each subject with a kind of interpersonal self-consciousness that has the content it has independently of the transaction.

For Longworth, the intuitive datum we *prima facie* fail to account for if we reject you-indexicality is something he calls the ‘coordination claim’. One part of it says that it is a requirement on A’s understanding B telling her, for example: ‘You are about to miss your train’ that B must think ‘I am about to miss my train’. He suggests that the best explanation of what is involved in such interpersonal coordination will appeal to a shared ‘I-you’ thought, expressed by A using ‘I’ and B using ‘you’, see also Longworth 2013. Crucially, on his account, such sharing demands different things of each participant, different ways of grasping, and hence thinking, the same I-you thought, depending on one’s relation to the referent. In particular, what is required of B in grasping the I-you thought she express in saying ‘You are about to miss the train’ requires that she stand in, and be sensitive to, a relation to A that makes appropriate the use of the second person, as the you-indexicality claim maintains.

Heal’s main aim in ‘Second Person Thought’ is to make plausible and compelling the very idea that social interactions can impose constraints on each participant’s thinking by proposing an imaginative reconstruction of kinds of thinking that are more primitive than those that presuppose self-consciousness and language use but which can be strengthened in such a way as to be said plausibly to underpin learning to use the second person pronoun. To this end, she suggests we look at forms of cooperative activity which involve a kind of reasoning the validity of which can best be understood as requiring something like a ‘we-minus-I’ way of thinking. This is in a sense one-step more sophisticated than pure plural reasoning, but one step less than full blown you-thinking. We have the underpinnings for latter when we have a form of cooperative activity, which she labels ‘face-to-face’. With this in play, she argues, a child would meet the conditions required for picking up the meaning of ‘you’.

Finally, as Matthias Haase notes in ‘Am I You?’, it is part and parcel of Heck’s rejection of the you-indexicality claim that it is conceivable that there could be ‘speakers of a language who never directed their utterances to their fellows’. It is, on his picture, inessential to thought that the speech that expresses it is in fact addressed to others rather than the cosmos. This appears to rule out in advance the very idea of ‘essentially communicative thinkings’. Haase contrasts Heck-like views with a view he himself argues for, and ascribes to Reid, according to which there do exist essentially ‘social operations of mind’. Unlike their ‘solitary’ correlates, these require, ‘*as acts of mind*, “intercourse with some other intelligent being who bears a part in them”’. For Reid, as interpreted by Haase, these acts of mind depend for their very existence on the other’s uptake: such acts ‘cannot exist [ . . . ] without being known to the other’ (Reid [1788] 2010, 330).

### 3.2. *The significance of the you-indexicality claim*

In summarizing claims relevant to developing the you-indexicality claim, I have not merely glossed over other topics central to each of the four papers, but also over potential disagreements among them, which are arguably as important and interesting as is their agreement on the key intuition underpinning the you-indexicality claim. Such issues include the fundamentally important question raised by Heal’s paper of how much illumination, and of what kind we can gain from considering more primitive ways of thinking – important in its own right and crucial for assessing the philosophical significance of work in developmental psychology, for example. There is also the thought-theoretical question of whether and how the basic Fregean framework can handle the very idea of you-thinking, raised in particular by comparing Longworth’s and Ro’dl’s contributions (see also Thompson 2004). Finally,



there is the question of the extent to which doing justice to you-indexicality requires endorsing some of the idealist claims implicit, arguably, in Ro'dl's account.

That said, I will make do here with underscoring what I take to be one key idea that unites them, the claim that there is a kind of thinking about another that can only occur when one is in fact standing to that person in a relation that warrants and makes appropriate the use of 'you'. One way of bringing out the import of this emphasis on relationality is to see it as analogous to the central claim made by so-called 'relational' theories of perceptual consciousness. In the latter case, the claim is that the way to take on board what might be called the 'essential relationality' of perception is to recognize that we need to refer to properties of perceived objects in describing how things are for the subject, from within her conscious perspective, when she has a perceptual experience. Subtract the perceived object and there is no *perceptual* phenomenology there to describe, though there may be similar and related phenomenologies. Analogously, one, minimally strong way of formulating the relational import of the you-indexicality claim is this. There is a kind of thinking about another, you-thinking, which is essentially relational in the following sense. In order to get right how things are from A's self-conscious perspective when she thinks of B in this way, we need to refer to B and to B's self-conscious thinking. Subtract B and her thoughts and there is, at best, a simulacrum of the kind of thinking A is employing in the relational case.

This is a very rough, minimally strong formulation of what the papers here may be seen as claiming, which needs refining and fine-tuning to take account of differences among them. So far, I have not attempted to engage with the details of the arguments put forward in the various papers, and this is how I will keep it, except to note a distinction between two different styles of argument. On one, the minimalist approach, the argument says not much more than: the you-indexicality claim is an intuitively attractive way of describing what is going on in such cases and it is up to you, the objector, to say what is wrong with it. I think all the papers here can be seen as presenting this kind of case. A more ambitious approach to take is: unless you adopt some variant of the you-indexicality claim there are various agreed *desiderata* you will not be able to explain. I leave it up to the reader to determine which of the papers should be read as making this stronger challenge and whether, if they do, they succeed.

Suppose at least some of these arguments for you-indexicality work. Suppose, that is, that the existence claim for you-thinking can be made good. What is its significance? Why does it matter and to what? Well, it clearly has implications for, and connections with, a wide range of issues in theory of thought. But our particular concern here is with the kind of issues that make people think that the 'second person' heading captures something important about the way we understand others, reason morally about them and depend on them for knowledge. The particular significance question of interest here, then, is this. Does and should the you-indexicality claim have a role to play in explaining why appeal to the second person is important in these other areas? I return to this question in the last section. Before that, I set you a way of talking about the nature and importance of the second person in ethics and testimony which makes no appeal at all to you-thinking.

#### 4. Moral obligation, testimony and the second person

##### 4.1. *Introduction*

In Section 2, I introduced a thin notion of a 'second person relation'. On this notion, it is the relation in which two people stand to each other, in virtue of which use of the second person pronoun is possible and appropriate. One topic-neutral way of thickening this relation that I

proposed was to appeal to the metaphor of bipolarity. The way I did so stripped it of the moral, normative content that informs Thompson's own use of the metaphor. It is now time to re-introduce it. A question that will concern us over the next two sections is this. Does the notion of the 'second person' have a role to play in explaining and/or justifying the claim that at least some moral obligations and rights have an essentially bipolar structure? One way to proceed, as noted earlier, is to ask about a possible role for you-thinking. In this section, though, I focus on a completely independent, much discussed way of attempting to link the second person with bipolarity.

Thompson's question, very crudely, is this. Can we explain what makes it wrong for me to break my promise to you, for example, by appeal to an arc of normative relations that hold between us, one that generates obligations I must respect if I am just? The alternative is to say that ultimately what makes it wrong to for me break my promise to you, or harm you in any other way, must always be explained by appeal to non-relationally specified norms, which supply me with monadic reasons for acting. Darwall calls the latter 'state-of-the-word' reasons, reasons that specify the way the world 'ought to be for its own sake' as Moore put it. Such reasons, on his account, are 'agent-neutral'. A chief claim Darwall makes in 'Bipolar Obligation' (2012) is that we need to appeal to his own, independently motivated account of what makes a reason for action second personal in order to explain and justify the existence of purely relational or bipolar obligations. In the next section, I set out the bare bones of his account of second person reasons in ethics, together with a closely related appeal to the second person in testimony. I then return to the question of whether this way of linking bipolarity and the second person can work.

#### 4.2. *The second person reason claim*

Darwall's *The Second-Person Standpoint: Morality, Respect and Accountability* is the source of much recent debate about the second person in ethics. His central claim is that morality rests on no more than a 'common competence . . . to enter into second-personal relations of reciprocal address' (2006, 59). As he develops it, it becomes clear that he is not interested in just any kind of address that warrants the use of 'you', but, rather, in subclass of these, one expressive of 'second person attitudes'. Again, the latter are not merely whatever attitudes one has when one is in a position to use the second person pronoun. The second person attitudes he is interested in are expressions of what he labels a 'second person standpoint', which is 'the perspective you and I take up when we make and acknowledge claims on one another's conduct and will' (2006, 3). When, as in Hume's much-cited example, I ask you to remove your foot from my gouty toe, according to Darwall, I make a claim on your conduct which I present as authoritative, and which in being acknowledged as such by you, gives you a *second personal reason to act*. As he summarizes it, a second personal reason 'is one whose validity depends on presupposed authority and accountability relations' (2006, 8).

As Peter Faulkner notes in 'The Moral Obligations of Trust', the structure of this way of filling in the notion of what it is for reason to be second personal is also found in the literature on testimony and trust. In Richard Moran's version, discussed by Will Small in 'Teaching and Telling', 'the special relations of telling someone, being told, and accepting or refusing another's word . . . provide a kind of reason for belief that is categorically different from that provided by evidence' (2005, 4). In Benjamin McMyler's version, discussed by Faulkner, when A tells B that p, A demands that B believe him, and presents this demand and so his telling, as justified. B in turn, in responding to this demand, is recognizing A's epistemic authority, and acquires thereby a distinctively *second personal reason for belief* (McMyler 2011).

#### 4.3. *Responses to the second person reason claim*

In both the testimonial and moral case, such appeals to authority and recognition of it are intended to show a sense in which moral reasons and testimony-based reasons are ‘irreducibly’ second personal. Darwall’s own response to second person reason claims in testimony, quoted by Faulkner, is this.

Someone can give you a reason to believe something not just by pointing to evidence, but also by simply telling you it is so. When you believe something for this reason, you give the person whose testimony you trust a kind of second-personal authority in your own reasoning about what to believe. But this authority is not second-personal all the way down. It ultimately depends upon and is defeasible by epistemic authority. (2006, 57)

Ultimately, the epistemic status of the belief you acquire through testimony, according to Darwall, turns on the speaker’s relation to the evidence for what she tells you. This general kind of criticism of ‘assurance theories’ is endorsed and independently argued for by Faulkner, but is then applied by him to Darwall himself. The main intuition driving his response to Darwall is similar in spirit to Wallace (2007). To return to the gouty toe case, surely, the intuition is, relieving your pain is something I ought to do whether or not you demand it, indeed whether anyone is so much as inclined to demand it. Actual demands seem neither here nor there, morally speaking.

It is in order to forestall this line of objection that Darwall writes that

it takes neither an explicit actual demand nor a demand that is implicit in actual human beings being prone to make it, either individually or collectively, in order for a claim or demand to be in force. The demand is made by the ‘moral community’ and by all of us insofar as we are members.

The ideal moral community should be likened, says Darwall, to ‘Kant’s idea of a ‘realm of ends’, a regulative ideal that we employ to make sense of our ethical thought and practice (Darwall 2007, 64–65).

This passage is referred to by the three contributors who discuss Darwall – Faulkner, Haase and Lavin, though to different effect. For all three, the move to the ideal moral community and demands it would make is tantamount to depriving Darwall’s second person reason claim of any substance and force. Faulkner, exclusively concerned as he is with Darwall’s version of the second person claim, uses it to bury it. He concludes that, in the end, the moral force of any demand I might address to you depends on the existence of a state-of-the-world reason to back it up – it is in this sense not ‘second personal all the way down’. Haase and Lavin, on the other hand, use it both to query Darwall’s particular version of the claim that there is an ineliminable second person core to ethics and to raise the possibility of different ways of linking the second person to ethics, specifically to the bipolarity issue.

A brief word on Faulkner on trust will serve as an introduction to this different approach. According to Faulkner, the trust underpinning episodes of A trusting B to do such and such, do not, contra McMyler, provide A with second person reasons for belief that B will do it, of the kind outlined above. Rather, trust is grounded in facts such as A’s dependence on B, where, according to Faulkner, this fact of dependence or reliance provides B with a state-of-the-world reason to do what she is being trusted to do. Interestingly, though, the relevant state-of-the-world reasons he cites consist of relations between two people, such as dependence, love and so forth. Unlike Darwall’s, that is, they are not ‘agent-neutral’. This might suggest a quite different route into linking the second person to Thompson’s contrast between relational and monadic obligations and rights. Rather

than giving Darwallian appeals to commitments incurred by various forms of address a foundational role in establishing bipolarity in ethics, the alternative appeals to the second person to describe ways of others being present to our minds, through various relations that might hold between us, where it is this that is said to ground the possibility of bipolar normative arcs. This is the line pursued by Lavin and Haase, and I return to it in the next section. Before that a final word about knowledge transmission and the second person.

#### 4.4. *Teaching and telling*

Telling is bipolar in the minimal sense that it succeeds by its own lights only when it results in the appropriate uptake by the person being told. Even if you think that reasons for belief in the testimonial case are not second personal ‘all the way down’, there is independent interest in the details of how this bipolar structure should be explained.

In this spirit, Small claims that if our interest in testimony and the second person is due, as Moran has it, to recognition of the enormity of our epistemic dependence on others, we should be looking at least as hard at how teaching works. Doing so serves to open up questions about how and whether authority plays a fundamental role in the transmission of knowledge between subjects. And when we do so, the issues turn out to be more complicated than relentless focus on the second person reason claim might suggest.

On the one hand, the relation of teacher and learner exhibit bipolarity in our thin, topic-neutral sense. In a manner similar to telling, teaching only succeeds, by its own lights, when there is uptake, in this case, when learning occurs. On the other hand, when we look to thicken it, Small argues, we cannot simply extend to teaching the explanation second person theorists apply to telling. For one thing, any authority I might claim as teacher is not my own. When I teach I am not saying, in Moran’s terms, ‘take it from me’, but am, rather, ‘speaking on behalf of the subject matter’. For another, teaching does not ‘aim at being believed’ (the latter is Moran’s characterization of the aim of telling). Learning, says Small, is not a matter of believing a heap of propositions, but, rather, a matter of learning to ‘do it for oneself’, whether it is maths or piano playing. And is what we aim to achieve in teaching. This is not to say authority disappears, but the way it enters the scene is far more complicated, Small argues; and one aim of his paper is to become clearer about how exactly it works in the teaching case.

Small’s subtle investigation of teaching contains the materials for exploring links with other topics that come up under the ‘second person’ heading. One worth highlighting is this. A central claim he develops is that in teaching we aim to initiate the student into our practice in such a way as to make her an independent contributor to the spread of knowledge. This emphasis resonates with a strain running through all discussions of the importance of the second person, in ethics, philosophy of mind and in at least some discussions of testimony, namely that in participating in bipolar transactions each pole in the transaction needs to treat the other as an autonomous subject. I turn now to attempts to establish links between bipolarity and the second person specifically targeted at highlighting the role the latter plays in making other subjects present to us as autonomous centres of consciousness.

## 5. Connections

### 5.1. *The you-indexicality claim and bipolarity in ethics*

Darwall’s retreat to demands that ideal moral communities would make appears to deprive his second person claim of substance. But to return it to centre stage, as he sets things up, would appear to require making moral obligations contingent on actual demands made by

others. One way of responding to the contingency problem, suggested by Christine Korsgaard and also endorsed by Darwall himself, is to say that self-address is internal to the very act of rationally taking on a moral obligation. ‘I think that every rational agent stands in what Darwall would call a second-personal relation to herself – she has a second personal voice within’ (Korsgaard 2007, 11). Contingency is thus avoided, and the second person is made, as she puts it, ‘unavoidable . . . because I do not have to discover, by making and responding to demands on others, that I am answerable to myself. That fact is made clear to me by the voice of the second person within’ (Korsgaard 2007, 23).

Haase’s paper is an extended investigation of whether this kind of internalization of second person address can be used to ground normative arcs and obligations between oneself and real others, as Korsgaard intends it to do. In effect, he presents this kind of view with a dilemma: either we treat such internal uses as derivative on uses in actual encounters with actual others, in which case we are still owed an explanation of how there can be normative relational arcs between two people which are not contingent on demands they happen to make. Or we treat self-address as a genuine case of interacting with another, as Korsgaard seems to suggest we should, in which case we need to invoke implausible and unworkable theories about self-division.

The idea that we need to appeal to the ‘you within’ in order to make the second person internal to self-conscious moral reasoning stems, Haase argues, from a picture of thinking which, like Heck’s, refuses to recognize essentially social ‘acts of mind’, in Reid’s terms, or, in our terms, the ideas underpinning the you-indexicality claim. In contrast, once we allow such acts, he argues, the presence of real, genuine others, can both be internal to the self-conscious thinking, thinking I employ when reasoning about what I ought to do, and, at the same time, depend on actual encounters with others. Or, rather, this is the promise implicit in the you-indexicality claim.

Haase’s response, I suggest, serves to separate out two distinct ingredients in Korsgaard’s appeal to the notion of ‘self-address’. The first retains Darwall’s emphasis on the notion of address, and uses the ‘second person’ label to describe commitments incurred by particular kinds of address. The other in effect shifts the point of appeal to the second person, away from using the label to refer to forms of address, to using it to label a way of thinking that make the presence of others internal to my practical reasoning. Haase can be read as proposing that we adopt the latter shift, and then saying that the you-indexicality claim makes the first component in Korsgaard’s response to Darwall at best redundant.

The idea that if the second person is important for ethics, we need to link it to questions about how others can be present to our consciousness is the key message Lavin aims to drive home in his paper. I end with his formulation of these issues, some challenges he raises, and one potential way of beginning to address them, implicit in Johannes Roessler’s ‘Reason Explanation and the Second-Person Perspective’.

## 5.2. *Other wills*

The traditional formulation of the conceptual problem of other minds asks: how do we make sense of the very idea of there being other subjects out there, other centres of consciousness, other points of view on the world? A potential attraction of the you-indexicality claim in this context turns on the main idea informing it, namely that indexical I-as-subject thinking about oneself can be internally linked to indexical ways of thinking of another, in a way that requires the reality of the other thus thought about. This, in turn, is one way of giving initial

expression to a major idea informing the ‘you turn’, mentioned at the outset, that appeal to the second person shows how we in fact bridge what is often supposed to be an unbridgeable gap between our first person awareness of ourselves as subjects and our awareness of others as such.

Attractive as it may be, this is still very schematic. For it to begin to look like a genuine move we need a more detailed account of how, when I am engaged in you-thinking about A, A’s perspective is both present to me as a genuinely ‘first person perspective’ and, at the same time, present to me as distinct from mine. One suggestion made by Lavin is that there is a deep interdependence between how we frame and respond to this question and how we respond to what Schopenhauer calls ‘the great mystery of ethics’. This the question of how it can make so much as make sense ‘for the well-being and woe of *another* to move my will immediately, i.e. in just the way that only my own otherwise does?’ (Schopenhauer [1841] 2009, 200).

As Lavin interprets it, Schopenhauer’s question is the following. How can my practical reasoning, concerned as it is with my own actions, incorporate deliberations about others in a way that both internalizes the other’s practical point of view and preserves its distinctness? Lavin, who agrees with those who argue that neither appeal to ideal communities nor to internalized second persons serves to give the second person a foundational role in ethical reasoning, suggests that if the second person has an important role in explaining morality, this is where its importance will lie. This suggests an immediate link with the conceptual problem of other minds. However, the latter is often approached, says Lavin, as if both the question and answers to it are of mere theoretical interest. He argues, in contrast, that if the second person is important in addressing the other minds problem this will be in part, at least, because it makes possible an understanding of the reality of other agents, other wills, in a way that simultaneously addresses Schopenhauer’s question.

The challenge he sets those who think the second person is important in explaining our relation to others, in both ethics and the philosophy of mind, is to make good such connections. Although independently motivated, Roessler’s paper, with which I end, suggests one way of beginning to engage with Lavin’s challenges.

### 5.3. *Others’ actions*

It is largely accepted in the current literature on action that when we ask why someone did something, there are two quite different kinds of understanding we may be after. We may be interested in making the action rationally intelligible, from the subject’s perspective, in which case we are interested in the subject’s ‘motivating reasons’. Alternatively, we may be interested in whether the subject really had a good reason to act. Interest in the latter question introduces a quite distinct enterprise, of asking for ‘normative reasons’. As Wallace elaborates the distinction, these two ways of asking for reasons ‘are characteristically posed from very different points of view’. The perspective ‘within which normative reasons have their place is characteristically prospective, first-personal and deliberative’ (Wallace 2006, 66). In contrast, ‘when we address the question of motivation, we typically focus on an action that has already been performed, and we think about the action from a distinctively third-person perspective’.

One suggestion Roessler makes is that this ‘two-concept’ view, as he calls it, distorts a fundamental aspect of the way we often make sense of others’ actions; and that the way to correct for this is to take seriously the second person setting in which Anscombe presents her account of practical reason. In what Roessler, following Thompson, calls Anscombe’s ‘fundamental scene’, my attention is caught by your doing A, I ask ‘Why are you doing A?’

and you proceed to tell me about your reason for doing A (Thompson 2011, 206). As Roessler notes, on Anscombe's account, this first question is often not the end of the matter; arguments and discussions follow, as I attempt to make sense of what you are doing. ('Roughly speaking, it establishes something as a reason if one argues against it.' (1957, 24). Were the enterprise of making your action intelligible always a matter of suspending my own deliberative perspective, arguing would not make sense as a way of furthering my understanding of what you are doing – I would, as Roessler notes, be switching to a different enterprise, and Anscombe would be guilty of a category mistake in treating such second personal exchanges as the core case for explaining how we make actions intelligible by asking for reasons. Roessler argues, in contrast, that we should take the second person context in which action explanation often occurs as a reason for thinking the two-concept view misrepresents the manifest image of intentional action.

Taking seriously the second person context, on Roessler's account, requires thinking of action explanation as often involving a *sharing* of a deliberative perspective, coupled with a capacity to recognize that others' perspectives on the right way to do things might differ – that is what arguing consists in. What, in particular, introduces the distinction between one's own perspective and that of the other is that one is engaging in such arguments, not in order to decide what to do, but in order to understand what others are up to. This way of presenting the importance of taking the second person seriously arguably bears directly on questions Lavin raises. For we have here, potentially, one way of beginning to address the other minds problem which does engage with the question of how awareness of others can be connected directly to what I do. If such sharing of normative perspectives is implicated in my understanding of others' actions, one kind of gap between others' wills and one's own actions may not be as wide as is sometimes supposed.

## 6. Concluding comment

It is worth stressing, again, that the issues I have touched on represent a small subsection of issues raised by individual papers. It is also worth noting, again, how many second person claims recently aired, in many areas of research, have not even been mentioned.<sup>3</sup> The latter said, though, the papers collected here, in addition to their intrinsic merits, do, I believe, provide a valuable basis for approaching these other claims – by jointly suggesting an initial mapping of the terrain they do cover, and giving shape and direction to some of the most fruitful questions to pursue in taking the you turn further.

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## Notes

1. For a good introduction to recent interdisciplinary work in neuroscience, developmental psychology and philosophy, see Schilbach et al.'s (2013) *Brain and Behavioural Science* target paper, and responses to it.
2. For an excellent discussion of Peacocke's paper see Martin (2014).



3. The latter include claims in developmental psychology, neuroscience and traditions of philosophical thought about the second person not represented here. Many of these are concerned with important topics I have not raised, ones that requires much separate discussion, namely the role of imagination, empathy and other emotions in connecting minds to each other. For more on these topics see, e.g. Schilbach et al. (2013), and philosophical papers in Thompson (2001).

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