Thinking About You

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This paper brings into focus the idea that just as no third-personal way of thinking could capture the self-consciousness of first-person thought, no first- or third-personal way of thinking (or combination of the two) could capture the especially intimate way we have of relating to each other canonically expressed with our uses of 'you'. It proposes, motivates and defends the view that second-person speech is canonically expressive of a distinctive way we have of thinking of each other, under a concept that refers *de jure* to its addressee and whose availability depends on standing in a relation of interpersonal self-consciousness with another.

There is a special kind of interconnectedness between the thoughts canonically expressed in English by uses of 'I' and those expressed by our uses of 'you'. This interconnectedness shows up in our patterns of understanding when it comes to related utterances: to understand what you are saying when you express a thought about me using the word 'you', I must think an 'I'-thought. As McDowell writes,

> Suppose someone says to me, 'You have mud on your face'. If I am to understand him, I must entertain an 'I'-thought, thinking something to this effect: 'I have mud on my face: that is what he is saying'. (McDowell 1984, p. 291)

A pair of questions immediately follow this observation. First, what kind of thought is canonically expressed by uses of the second-person pronoun, and in particular, is there a *distinctive* kind of thought so expressed? And second, what is the relation between the kind of thought so characterized and first-person thought such that these McDowellian understanding constraints are to be accounted for?

Answers to these questions must hang together. According to one family of responses to the first question—taken up recently by Sebastian Rödl (2007), Michael Thompson (2012), José Luis Bermúdez (2005) and Guy Longworth (2013, 2014), among others—the kind of thought canonically expressed by our uses of 'you' is not distinct from the kind of thought canonically expressed by uses of 'I'. For Longworth, for instance, these two ways of thinking are two faces of

the same cognitive capacity. For Rödl, the words 'I' and 'you' are two possible modes of expression of one and the same thought; he writes, '"You …" said by me to you and "I …" said by you in taking up the address, express the same act of thinking, they express the same thought. Therefore it is wrong to oppose second-person thought to first-person thought. This is a difference in the means of expression, not in the thought expressed' (Rödl 2007, p. 197). To answer the first question in this sort of way brings a response to the second in its train. If there is a single thought expressed from different perspectives by 'I' and 'you', or if those are different expressions of the manifestation of a single cognitive capacity, then it is really no surprise that understanding a second-person utterance involves entertaining a first-person thought.

In so far as these views tie second- to first-person thought, we might say that these are *anti-distinctivist* views of second- (and first-) person thought; there is no single distinctive kind of thought or thought-capacity associated with our uses of 'you'. But tying second-person thought to first-person thought is not the only way to press such a denial. Others reject strict constraints on the kinds of thought express-ible by 'you', but take such utterances to be typically expressive of a demonstrative way of thinking (Heck 2002), or reduce apparent uses of a second-person concept in thought to complexes of first- and third-person thought (Peacocke 2014). The aim of this paper is to argue against anti-distinctivists of all stripes that there *is* such thing as a distinctive second-person concept. I set out to make space for a rule of reference determination for this concept, and to provide an account of the conditions a thinker must find herself in if she is to be in a position to make use of it. In this, I take on the first but not the second of the above questions—I address the question whether there is a distinctive kind of thought canonically expressed by our uses of 'you'; a complementing account of the relation between first- and second-person thought is a topic for another time.

First some bookkeeping. I will assume a broadly neo-Fregean com-positional conception of thought and concepts, under which I sign up to the following principles. (1) Thoughts are the contents of psycho-logical attitudes, individuable by considerations of cognitive signifi-cance; two thoughts differ if it is possible for a single competent thinker to take conflicting attitudes towards them at a time without thereby violating any norms of rationality (see Evans 1982, pp. 18–19). (2) The constituents of thoughts are concepts. (3) Concepts are related to the referents of their uses many-to-one, and reference is determined by the contribution that a use of the concept makes to the truth-value

of the thought in which it occurs. (4) A concept can be characterized either by rules stating the fundamental condition for something to be the referent of a use of it or by its conceptual role, given by the canonical patterns of a use that a thinker must be disposed to make of it in order to be counted as a minimally competent user. A difference in either conceptual role or in reference rule will correspond to a difference in concept, though I take no stand on which of these, if either, should be taken as fundamentally individuative of concepts.

In §1, I set out an argument from Richard Heck for anti-distinctivism about second-person thought. I present and motivate my distinctivist account of second-person thought in §2. In §3, I return to the argument from §1, and argue that it need not undermine the distinctivist account of second-person thought just given. I end by considering three apparent counterexamples to the proposed distinctivist account of second-person thought in §4.

1. An argument for anti-distinctivism

What kinds of consideration have moved theorists of second-person thought to the view that there is no distinctive kind of thought canonically expressed by uses of 'you'? One sort of argument comes into view in some brief but compelling remarks from Heck:

> [A]n utterance of 'you' refers to the person addressed in that utterance. … 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.) (Heck 2002, p. 12)

The second-person pronoun, the idea is, is a linguistic device used to refer to the addressee of an utterance. Addressing someone, however, is a purely linguistic phenomenon; it is something that happens, as Michael Thompson (2012) puts it, only 'in language, in the noise, in the outward show of things', and not 'in the secret depths of the soul'.

There is a superficial sense in which the claim that addressing is a purely linguistic phenomenon is manifestly false. Upon observing a fellow shopper choose a neighbouring queue, I might, somewhat smugly, savour the thought *I'm going to beat you.* Isn't this a way of addressing someone in thought? It is, but not in the sense targeted by Heck. Plausibly, in this case I am treating the other person as an

imagined interlocutor—we might even say that I am enacting a kind of (very quiet) way of talking to her that takes place entirely in my head. In characterizing the notion of addressing as a purely linguistic phenomenon, Heck is not denying the possibility of internal articulations of second-personal utterances. What he is denying is that there is an autonomous non-derivative correlate in thought of the linguistic act of addressing someone.

There is an obvious reason to think that Heck is right. Successfully addressing someone seems, at least at first pass, to require that they notice that the utterance is directed towards them. Without that, one would be doing something more like talking in their direction, or talking *at* them, acts both falling short of addressing them. But for that, of course, there must be some outwardly recognizable signal associated with the utterance to indicate that it is directed towards them. There could be no analogue of this in the private domain of thought—at least, not for the non-telephathic creatures that we are. If second-person thought is to march in step with its mode of linguistic expression, however, then its full characterization would likewise need to advert to the notion of addressing. If it's right that a full characterization of second-person thought would need to advert to the notion of addressing, and if it's also right that there is no notion of addressing properly applicable at the level of thought, then it seems to follow that there could be no such thing as distinctive second-person thought.

This short argument seems to provide a strong prima facie consideration against a distinctivist picture of second-person thought. Before dealing with it, it will be helpful to have an idea of what such a picture of *you*-thought might look like and why one might be moved to accept it.

2. A distinctivist picture of second-person thought

The argument from addressing is striking. It is striking because prior to encountering it (and, perhaps, other arguments for anti-distinctivism about second-person thought), it is naively compelling to think that one's second-person utterances are expressive of a distinctive kind of second-person thought—that 'you'-talk tracks *you*-thought. This isn't to say that there aren't features of language that don't reflect features at the level of thought. Case distinctions and concept-neutral differences in Fregean tone are examples that very plausibly belong

only in the domain of language. But surely tone and case differences are features of a kind that make up the special case. For the most part it is much more natural to think that differences in our ways of talking track differences in our ways of thinking. Why should second-person speech be any different? In so far as anti-distinctivism about second-person thought says that it is, we have reason to consider carefully the case on the other side.

The appeal of distinctivism about second-person thought begins from the idea that there is a reason that I use 'you' to refer to you, when I do. My use of the second-person pronoun signals a special set of awareness relations holding between us. Establishing this connection between the use of second-person language and these awareness relations—as I try to do in what follows—won't get us all the way to distinctivism about second-person thought. Later I will argue that the distinctivist can do a better job of accounting for that connection than the anti-distinctivist.

To see what these awareness relations are, consider the differences in context that must hold in order for it to be appropriate to use the word 'you' to talk about you, on the one hand, and to use 'that person', on the other. First, in both cases I (the speaker) must be aware of you (my referent). This is hardly surprising—these are both context-dependent expressions whose reference on any given occasion of use at least partly depends on facts about who I am attending to in the context of utterance.

Beyond this point, however, things start to look rather different. In order for it to be appropriate to express a thought about you using 'you', but not 'that person', it seems that there also has to be awareness going in the other direction: *you* also have to be aware of *me*. This kind of reciprocity was part of what was involved in the notion of addressing drawn on in the last section—you cannot notice that my utterance is directed towards you without also being aware of me. If the appropriateness of using 'you' (but not 'that person') is bound up with the notion of addressing, then we can at least say that the felicity conditions for 'you' (but not 'that person') minimally involve the hearer's awareness of the speaker, as well as the speaker's awareness of the hearer.

Even this, however, seems not yet to fully capture the awareness relations signalled by my use of 'you'. To see this, imagine that you and I are interested in, but a little shy of, one another. I am attending to you out of the corner of my eye, all the while making great pretence of being engaged in conversation with someone else, and you are

doing likewise. We are, here, engaged in a state of mutual awareness—we are each attending to the other. But neither is aware of this fact. This does not yet seem like a context in which my thought about you will be apt for expression using a second-person pronoun. For notice that as far as I (the speaker) am concerned it is just as if we are still in 'that person' terrain, as if there is only awareness going in one direction. What this case brings out is that not only must I be aware of you, and you of me, but I must also be aware of featuring in your awareness if I am to appropriately express the thought I have about you using 'you'.

Still, we might think, we have not gone far enough. Consider the following case, used by Lucy O'Brien to illustrate a slightly different, but neighbouring phenomenon she calls 'ordinary self-consciousness':

> Consider Hermione in Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*. She stands, at the end of the play, taken to be a statue by those around her. Leontes, who falsely accused her of infidelity years before, comments on the statue saying 'Hermione was not so much wrinkled, not so aged as this seems' (Act V, Scene 3). Hermione might surely feel self-conscious at his perusal, and embarrassed by his remark. (O'Brien 2011, p. 120)

The conditions listed so far have all been met. Hermione is aware of Leontes, Leontes is aware of Hermione, and Hermione is aware of Leontes' awareness of her. The scene, however, lacks symmetry; Leontes is not likewise conscious of Hermione's awareness of him. The question now is, do the described circumstances suffice for Hermione to think a thought about Leontes that she could appropriately express using a second-person pronoun? If the answer is yes, then the appropriateness conditions for using a second-person pronoun to express one's other-directed thought would seem to involve three levels of awareness: the thinker's awareness of the referent, the referent's awareness of the thinker, and the thinker's awareness of the referent's awareness of the thinker.

At first blush it might seem evident that the asymmetrical conditions described here do suffice for Hermione to think thoughts it would be appropriate to express using second-person language. It does not take much to imagine Hermione luxuriating in the entertainment of thoughts she might express as 'You're one to talk; *you* were the one who gave me these wrinkles'. Clearly, her thoughts here would be most straightforwardly expressed—if express them she could—using sentences containing uses of the second-person pronoun. Is this enough to show that the asymmetrical conditions in

this scene suffice for appropriate use of second-person language for the expression of Hermione's thoughts? Despite first appearances, I think it is not.

The reason is that, far from insisting that the appropriate expression of these thoughts would take some shape other than second-person speech, it seems that these thoughts are peculiarly tied to their (second-personal form of) linguistic expression. Hermione, we might think, is imaginatively addressing her husband—perhaps she is gratifying herself by resentfully turning over in her mind the things she would say to him if only she could. But the closeness of these thoughts to their imagined expression is precisely what raises problems for appealing to them to demonstrate that the present conditions suffice for the entertaining of a thought appropriately expressed with 'you'. That is because what we have here, if this is the right reading of the case, is not really an autonomously entertained thought of a kind appropriately expressible through the use of a second-person pronoun. Rather, it is a phonetically repressed articulation of an imagined second-person utterance, in the scope of which imagining the conditions might well look rather different. Hermione, the idea is, is *imagining* herself saying these things aloud to an attentive Leontes, a Leontes who is aware of Hermione's awareness of him. Put another way, there is no easy way to isolate the conditions in a case of this kind to ensure that a fourth layer of awareness—the referent's awareness of the thinker's awareness of the referent—isn't being imaginatively hypothesized. We do not yet have a clear case showing the first three conditions of awareness to be enough.[1]

It might be objected that this argument is too quick. Even if there is no easy way of ruling out that the entertaining of thoughts of this kind is only enabled by the imagined positing of an extra fourth condition, we should not then rule that reading in. There might be another way of understanding Hermione's thought here that does not appeal to an imaginative context, and so that *would* show these first three conditions by themselves to be enough for Hermione to think a thought

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[1] We might retrospectively note that similar narrative embellishments might be worked out for the shy thinker mentioned above; perhaps she is able to imagine herself as being in circumstances in which there is mutual awareness of mutual awareness between her and the object of her thought, in which case it might seem possible for her to think a thought about that person whose canonical expression would involve the use of a second-person pronoun. Cases of this kind—and the question of whether they amount to genuine second-person thought—are taken up again in §4.2.

that would be appropriately expressed with the use of a second-person pronoun, if expressed at all.

There are interesting difficulties involved in the assessment of this counterfactual. In the closest possible world in which Hermione did express these thoughts, it seems likely that other facts about the situation would also be changed such that the case would be importantly different from the one we are now considering. The very act of addressing Leontes aloud would create what François Recanati has called *communication-specific facts*, facts that do not exist independently of a speech situation—the fact, say, that x is speaking, or that y is the intended audience of x's utterance (see Recanati 2012, p. 218; 1995, p. 6). In this case the newly created communication-specific fact would be that Leontes would now be aware of featuring in Hermione's awareness. This change is obviously significant for our purposes. It would now be a situation in which all four layers of awareness are present.

Perhaps this difficulty can be circumvented by imagining a case in which Hermione expresses her thought, but not very loudly. Perhaps she just mutters the relevant sentence under her breath. We might think that the case so imagined now reveals the above asymmetrical situation as one in which Hermione is able to think a thought appropriately expressed with 'you', and so shows that the first three layers of awareness suffice to capture the appropriateness conditions on expressive uses of 'you', without the (imagined) addition of the fourth. It's not clear, however, that even this newly worked version of the case provides us with a clean example of a thought appropriately expressible with 'you' in isolated conditions from a fourth imaginatively posited layer of awareness. That's because it's not clear that Hermione is not once again building Leontes' imagined awareness of her awareness of him into the episode. After all, plausibly she is only muttering under her breath what she would say aloud to him, if only she dared.

One way of urging this last reading of the case is to press on the intuition that her second-personal mutterings could be felicitously substituted with a third-personal utterance ('He's one to talk; *he's* the one who gave me these wrinkles') with only a slight change in tone. By contrast, and tellingly, the felicity of this substitutability seems to dissipate immediately once Hermione really does pluck up the courage to address her utterance aloud to Leontes. This difference is, in a way, quite remarkable. Why should the interchangeability of felicitous modes of expression differ between a case in which a

sentence is muttered under the speaker's breath, and one in which the same sentence, in the same context, is spoken aloud at an audible volume? What could be the difference that makes the difference? An obvious candidate is the newly created communication-specific fact in the latter case, the fact that Leontes is now aware of Hermione's awareness of him. What this shows, at the very least, is that there is a difference between the canonical modes of expression of the thoughts available to Hermione in the case before and after Leontes' awareness is drawn to her awareness of him. Even if it is possible for Hermione to imaginatively project herself into the latter case before it actually obtains, it is only after Leontes' awareness has been so drawn that her thought is expressively confined to second-person speech— she is now thinking a thought whose canonical expression is apparently limited to uses of 'you'.

Adding a further layer of awareness on the part of Leontes to the scene, then, seems to make available to Hermione thoughts appropriately expressible with 'you' that differ in important respects from those she has been in a position to entertain until now. Imagine, for instance, that she reveals herself to Leontes by a wink of the eye. Leontes' crashing realization, we may imagine, will bring with it a wave of shame and horror. But the change brought about is not only in him. Introduced onto the scene is now a mutual recognition of mutual awareness, and with it a new restriction on the felicitous modes of expression available to Hermione for the articulation of her thoughts about her husband. Once the two are interlocked in this reciprocal conscious interaction, her thought is no longer appropriately expressible with a third-personal utterance, even if that utterance is too soft to be audible. What we have here is a thought clearly appropriately expressible by—indeed, whose expression is apparently restricted to—a use of a second-person pronoun, a thought whose availability depends on the obtaining of (or, perhaps, imagined enactment of) the set of awareness relations exemplified by this final version of the case of Hermione and Leontes.[2]

Hermione's capacity for thought of this final kind—which is to say, of a kind that is appropriately expressed with second-person language—calls for four levels of awareness. She must be aware of him, and he of her. She, moreover, must be aware of his awareness of her, and he her awareness of him. Taken altogether, this involves a phenomenon that Peacocke has discussed under the label *interpersonal*

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[2] More on the possibility of the imaginative enactment of these conditions in §4.2.

self-consciousness, 'a particular form of awareness that one features, oneself, in another person's consciousness, as a conscious subject' (Peacocke 2014, p. 236). In sincere and successful uses of the second-person pronoun I am aware that I feature, myself, in your consciousness as a conscious subject, because I am aware that you are aware of me being aware of you. My use of the second-person pronoun signals my interpersonal self-consciousness with respect to you.

The route from here to a commitment to a distinctive kind of second-person thought is not direct. That this is so is demonstrated by Peacocke himself, who agrees that interpersonal self-consciousness is essentially involved in the use and understanding of second-person utterances:

> In a case of your successful communication with me in which you use the second person, I as audience know that you, the speaker, are aware that I know that you are saying that I am F. This is, in more than one way, an instance of ascriptive interpersonal self-consciousness on my part. (Peacocke 2014, p. 245)

In elaborating the nature of the states underlying such communication, however, he denies that we need appeal to a distinctively second-personal kind of thought, 'only third person and first person singular concepts, and concepts of those concepts' (Peacocke 2014, p. 245).[3] We can characterize second-personal linguistic communication as interpersonally self-conscious, the idea is, without positing a distinctive layer of second-person thought.

While Peacocke is fully explicit about the negative claim that there is no such thing as distinctively second-person thought—'This description of what is involved in using and understanding the second person does not invoke a special second person concept or way of thinking' (2014, p. 245)—he says relatively little about how alternatively to construe the thoughts underlying sincere second-person utterances. Assessment of the appeal of holding together the views that second-person utterances involve interpersonal self-consciousness and that there is no such thing as distinctive second-person thought, then, calls for some ampliative interpretation. There are at least two things that Peacocke—or, as we might more safely call him, Peacocke*— might say.

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[3] Slightly disorientatingly, Peacocke's above statement of the conditions on second-person communication does take a second-personal form. His point, presumably, is that the same condition can be formulated in third- and first-personal form without loss. Thanks to an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out.

The first is that apparent uses of *you* in thought are uniformly replaceable, without loss, with uses of *that person*. The thought underlying an utterance of 'You look nice', for example, would be the perceptual demonstrative thought, *That person looks nice*. Notice, though, that this way of putting things has Peacocke* accepting a radical separation between second-person language and the thoughts underlying it. If there is really no conceptual difference between linguistically articulating a given thought with 'you' or 'that person', then the interpersonal self-consciousness indicated by a use of 'you' in language must be a purely linguistic phenomenon, a feature that is in no way reflected in the thoughts it expresses.[4]

There is no denying that this is a theoretical option. There are other features of language we take to be like this—case distinctions, for instance, or conventional politeness markers, or differences in Fregean tone. At no point, however, does Peacocke himself suggest such a gap. Indeed, what he *does* say by way of positive characterization of the thoughts underlying interpersonally self-conscious second-person linguistic communication seems to suggest a more moderate separation between thought and language. Rather than posit a distinctive second-person concept, he says, we need 'only third person and first person singular concepts, and concepts of those concepts (and further concepts thereof, up the Fregean hierarchy)' (Peacocke 2014, p. 245). Though somewhat programmatic, this remark is suggestive of a positive view that goes beyond a reduction of all apparent uses of *you* in thought to uses of third-person demonstrative concepts. What it suggests is a replacement of apparent uses of *you* in the formulation of thoughts underlying second-person utterances, not with a perceptual demonstrative concept, but with a rather more elaborate complex demonstrative or descriptive concept directly reflecting the conditions on the interpersonal self-consciousness that he takes to be involved in comprehending second-personal linguistic exchanges. This is Peacocke*'s second option. An utterer of the sentence 'You look nice', on this view, would be ascribed in full the thought that *the/that person I'm conscious of as being conscious of me being conscious of them looks nice.* This would leave Peacocke* with the resources to say that the interpersonal self-consciousness involved in the use and understanding of second-person utterances also has reverberations at the level of thought.

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[4] See also Martin (2014) for an argument against the conceptual equivalence of 'you' and 'that person'.

It would also, however, demand far too much of ordinary thinkers. Children are typically able to use the second-person pronoun in both possessive and non-possessive forms by the age of three, and seemingly to comprehend its use by others even earlier (Loveland 1984). It would be hard to make sense of this early use and understanding of second-person language by the lights of Peacocke*'s second view, on which the awareness relations involved in states of interpersonal self-consciousness are introduced into the very content represented by thinkers of thoughts appropriately expressed with 'you'. After all, it's difficult enough as theorists to keep track of the iterating layers of first- and third-person thought entering into the complex demonstrative or descriptive concept proposed on Peacocke*'s behalf; to ascribe such capacities to ordinary thinkers—let alone infants—must surely lose any initial plausibility. Peacocke*'s second way of filling out the thoughts underlying our uses of 'you' maintains a connection between the interpersonal self-consciousness of second-personal linguistic interactions with the thoughts underlying them only at the cost of glaring over-intellectualization.

A distinctivist account of second-person thought, by contrast, can easily avoid this charge by making the state of interpersonal self-consciousness part of the enabling conditions on second-person thought rather than any part of the thought ascribed, where enabling conditions are understood as the necessary background conditions on such thought that make uses of the concept available to a thinker. Even on this account, a *you*-thinker must be *in* this network of awareness relations (or at least, something very like them; see §§4.1–2); that is important, because that is what allows the distinctivist to capture the interpersonal self-consciousness involved in the use and understanding of second-person language. But the thinker need not—nor even need they be able to—conceptualize them. The only thought ascribed is a conceptually simple *you*-thought. To see the point, consider an analogy with perceptual demonstrative thought. To think a *that*-thought about something, a thinker must perceive her referent in a suitably attentive way; plausibly, it is only by the holding of such a perceptual-attentional relation that *that* becomes available to the thinker as a way of thinking about the object in the first place. Notice, though, that none of this requires the thinker to represent that relation in the content of her thought, nor even that she have the conceptual capacities to do so. The perceptual-attentional relation is a necessary enabling condition on *that*-thought, not part of the thought ascribed. Likewise for *you*. It is a necessary enabling condition on *you*-thought that the thinker is

interpersonally self-consciously related to another. But that relation is no part of the thought ascribed.

This way of construing the enabling conditions on *you*-thought allows the distinctivist to avoid the over-intellectualization charge facing Peacocke*. It also allows the distinctivist to do something else—to tell a story about the role that the atomic concept *you* plays in our cognitive lives. Consider again the concept *that*. Or rather, consider the inputs and outputs canonically associated with our uses of *that* making up its conceptual role. The input side is distinctively perceptual. Feeling, smelling, hearing, tasting or seeing an object all put one in a position to think an immediate *that*-thought about it. They put one in a position, that is to say, to think a *that*-thought about the object without first drawing on any further information or identificatory beliefs about it. On the output side are a range of actions rendered newly appropriate upon the thinking of a *that*-thought. Having had such a thought about something I might now move to touch it, or move my foot to avoid it, or turn to run from it, or … (the list is, of course, endless, but we know how to go on). The important point about this example is that given the enabling condition we have identified for *that*-thought, it does not seem especially mysterious why this profile of inputs and outputs is the way that it is: it is no surprise that perceiving an object features as an immediate input to a *that*-thought about it, since perceptual attention is what makes a *that*-thought about it available in the first place. And it is no surprise that the actions on the output side can be grouped together as actions made available by the subject's being in a position from which it is possible to directly perceive the object. It was only by being in such a position that the subject was able to think the thought at all, so thinking the thought guarantees her standing in such a position. In short, both ends of the conceptual role for *that* seem to be constrained (at least in part) by the perceptual-attentional relation that makes available our uses of *that* in the first place.

Likewise for *you*, identifying interpersonal self-consciousness as an enabling condition on uses of the concept allows us to say something about both sides of its conceptual role. On the input side, it is only when a thinker seems to be in this network of conscious relations with another that she will be in a position to think about them directly, without drawing on any further identificatory beliefs about them, as *you*. Being, or seeming to be, so related to them is what makes a *you*-thought about the referent available in the first place—no surprise, then, that being in such a position obviates any need to draw on

further identificatory beliefs about them before thinking about them in that way. On the output side will be a range of actions made newly appropriate upon thinking a *you*-thought. These will be many and varied, but they share at their core an element of coordinated action. Perhaps thinker and referent will begin a conversation, or signal their state of mutual awareness with a wave or a nod—actions that are all rendered appropriate by their standing in this relation of interpersonal self-consciousness with one another. Of course, this is little more than a gesture towards a full specification of the conceptual role for *you*. Even so, it is enough to make the point that both ends of this conceptual role for *you* seem to be constrained by what it takes for *you* to be available as a way of thinking about another in the first place: if being interpersonally related to another is what makes *you* available as a way of thinking of them, then it is only to be expected that being so related to them will put one in a position so to think about them without drawing on any identificatory beliefs about them. And if being so related to another is what puts one in a position to think a *you*-thought about them, then it is no surprise that thinking a *you*-thought about them triggers the propriety of actions that are only appropriate when two people are so related.

The aim of this section was to present and motivate a view on which there is a distinctive kind of thought expressed by our second-person utterances. The case offered issues from the twin desires to account for the interpersonal self-consciousness of second-personal linguistic exchanges, and to avoid an implausible inflation of the cognitive capacities required for thinking the thoughts underlying them. Along the way, we saw that this distinctivist account of second-person thought also has the resources to give at least a partial account of the canonical patterns of inputs and outputs associated with this second-person concept, or its conceptual role. We are also left with the side profit that this view allows us to default to the intuition with which this section started: we can rest easy with the idea that our second-personal ways of talking track a distinctive second-personal way of thinking.

3. The argument from addressing (again)

Heck's challenge from §1 nevertheless remains. Second-person thought, if it is to be understood as a proper coordinate of the second-person pronoun, would seem to need to be characterized using the notion of addressing. Addressing, however, is an apparently

purely linguistic phenomenon. Could there really be such thing as addressing someone in thought for the non-telepathic creatures that we are? This question calls for careful consideration of what is involved in addressing another. Until now we have been working with a rough notion of it as a speech act in which the other notices that the utterance is directed towards them. I now want to suggest, however, that this working characterization has been too conservative; what it takes to address someone is not as tightly bound to the use of language as this way of putting things suggests.

A natural way to proceed here is to ask what we care about when we care whether or not we have succeeded in addressing another. A plausible-looking answer is that we care whether or not the other is receptive to us, whether they are suitably sensitive to our attempts to engage their attention, whether we have made our attempts at contact sufficiently salient to them. In the standard case of verbal communication, we care whether they have noticed that our utterance is directed towards them, but the phenomenon is just as familiar in cases of nonverbal interpersonal contact. In non-verbal cases, it's just that we care whether we have succeeded in reaching out to them in other ways.

Jane Heal has recently gestured along similar lines that what is at issue is whether one's thought is suitably *open* to the other. She writes,

> It is not true … that one person's cognitive stances are all private, hidden from others, unless and until they get linguistic expression. Something may be common knowledge between agents, where the thought of each is open to the other, not in virtue of their speech but in virtue of their situation and/or their non-linguistic actions. And also it is not obviously true that, in such a situation of common knowledge, one agent cannot have a thought which is 'addressed' to the other, in some sense of 'address' appropriate to the thought having a second-person character. (Heal 2014, pp. 320–1)

'So, for anything we have yet seen', she concludes, 'perhaps one person can "address" another … without engaging in speech at all' (p. 321). At the core of the notion of addressing—or, at least, of the notion of it bound up with discussions of the second person—is a kind of openness on the part of the agent, together with its recognition or receptivity on the part of the other.

Let me introduce a few examples to bring out the point. (1) My classmate and I have an ongoing private joke about a particular professor's habitual tardiness. We are in class together one day when, eventually, the professor in question turns up to his own lecture twenty minutes late. We deliberately catch each other's eye to share

a smile. (2) Waiting on the train platform, I sit side-by-side with a loved one thinking about our imminent separation. He presses my hand and I press his back. (3) My bedroom is immediately adjacent to my flatmate's. Between us we have devised a system of communication using wall-knocks to ascertain whether the other would like a cup of tea: three knocks for an offer, two knocks for yes, one for no. I hear three knocks on the wall, and respond with a double tap. (4) My sister calls to me from across the room, 'Do you want to come over tonight?'

It is, I suggest, initially intuitive to think that there is addressing going on in each of these four cases. In only the last, however, is the interaction recognizably verbal. If that's right, what it suggests is that the verbal form of addressing has received an undeserved level of attention in discussions of second-person reference. We should think of it, rather, as just *one way* of performing an act of addressing; a hand-squeeze or a wall tap will do just as well. Such considerations bring along with them pressure to revise our understanding of addressing. Consider the following:

> *Addressing*: To address someone is to act with an intention to bring it about that (i) they notice (or sustain notice of) one's attention directed towards them, and (ii) they do so partly in virtue of recognizing that very intention

This is a formulation of two clauses. The first says that addressing is a phenomenon of attention, not of language per se. In addressing you, I try to get you to realize that I am attending to you. I can do this with words, but I can also do it with a hand-squeeze. That's to say, *how* one attracts the other's attention is now inessential to what makes something an act of addressing.[5]

The second clause is in place to rule out counterexamples to the sufficiency of the formulation of the following kind. Imagine that you and I are at a conference dinner, seated only a few places away from a famous keynote speaker. In a shared attempt at flattery, we begin a loud discussion about the keynote's work while darting quick admiring glances in her direction. We are, here, acting with the intention that she notice that we are attending to her, but it does not yet seem like a case of addressing. For that, there must be no 'sneaky intentions' of the kind built into this case: to address her, we must intend that the

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[5] The cases I have given all involve perceptual attention, but I leave open whether there could be cases of addressing—and so also *you*-thought—involving intellectual, rather than perceptual, attention instead (for example, a case where we have a standing intention to think about about each other every night at the stroke of midnight).

keynote recognize that our attention is directed towards her, but we must also intend that she does so partly by recognizing that we have that addressive intention.

Under this revised characterization, there is no obstacle to the verdict that cases (1)–(3) involve addressing somebody, just as much as (4). It also removes any obstacle to the claim that second-person thought refers, just like its linguistic counterpart, to its addressee. With this enlarged characterization of addressing in place, that's just to say that second-person thought refers to the person one is both attending to and intending that they notice that one is attending to (in virtue of recognizing that very intention). No telepathy required.[6]

At the end of the last section we saw that the distinctivist has the resources to fill in and account for some of the central aspects of the conceptual role for the second-person concept. Space has now been created also to give an account of the distinctive rule of reference determination for that concept. So long as we are happy to relax the conditions on addressing in the way rendered plausible by cases (1)– (4), we can give the rule that uses of *you* refer to their addressees. With both a distinctive rule of reference and a distinctive conceptual role in hand, the Fregean principles of the introduction mandate the presence of a distinctive concept.

4. Some counterexamples

There are at least three kinds of apparent counterexample to the account of second-person thought just given.

4.1 Error cases

The first involves cases in which I take myself to have induced a state of interpersonal self-consciousness with respect to another, but am mistaken. Suppose that my classmate in (1) is aiming her smile at another friend behind me, so there is, in fact, no state of interpersonal self-consciousness holding between us. Suppose further that I now

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[6] The issue of whether there is addressing going on in these cases shouldn't be mistaken for a verbal dispute. The important claim is that there is a certain sort of mind-to-mind inter-action brought about in each of the pairs involved in these cases (and others like them) of a kind that makes second-person thought available. If this seems to stretch the term 'addressing' too far, then an alternative framing of the same point would be to say that (verbal) addressing is merely one version of the interpersonal stance characteristic of second-person interactions; these cases demonstrate that there are others.

essay a second-person thought about her. Are we forced to the view that—despite how things seem to me—I am not really thinking a second-person thought here at all?

At first pass this needn't be an unwanted result. In other areas of philosophy of mind we have become familiar with the idea that the availability of thoughts of certain kinds depends on the cooperation of worldly facts. An object's existence or non-existence, for instance, might seem to make a difference to the availability of object-depend-ent singular thought about it. Likewise, it might seem to be no great stretch to say that the availability of genuine *you*-thought depends on the cooperation of worldly facts too—only that in this case it depends on a special kind of fact, namely, facts about the mental activities of another. Just as the existence or non-existence of an object is partly determinative of the availability of object-dependent singular thought, the idea would be, the participation or non-participation of another in a state of interpersonal self-consciousness partly determines the avail-ability of second-person thought about them. Moreover, this might be just the kind of result we're after. It seems right, after all, that there is something defective about these cases. Biting the bullet this way is one way to accommodate this intuition.

There is, however, an important respect in which the point about object-dependent singular thought differs from the case of *you*-thought. Facts about whether or not one's object of thought exists might seem to pack a weightier punch with regard to the thoughts one can have about it than mere facts about how things are with it. Pressure in the case of singular thought to say that where there is no existing referent there is no thought of this kind at all can be seen to come from the idea that there is, in such cases, no way of saying what it would be for the thought to be true. For any truth-conditional theory of thought this will lead to difficulties in specifying the thought's content. But things don't seem to be like that in the case of the second person. Surely we know perfectly well what it would be for my thought of the form *you are F* to be true—we know who needs to be *F* for it to be true. Whatever it is that is defective about my thought, it's not that it has no specifiable truth conditions. So there doesn't seem to be any corresponding pressure to concede that a dif-ference in how things are mentally with one's object of thought will affect whether or not one can have a genuine second-person thought about them.

One option at this point would be to retreat from the claim that a difference in how things are with another's mental life bears on the

question whether the thought one is essaying about them is possible, to the claim that it can affect whether or not it is really a second-person thought one is having. Indeed, we might want to make a similar move in the case of object-dependent singular thought too—it's not that there is no thought where there is no object, it's just that there is no thought of the specified kind. What these cases illustrate, if we take this line, is that we are much more fallible about our own thoughts than we might at first have supposed. Another look at the revised characterization of addressing, however, shows that we needn't even go that far. We need only notice that under the proposed revision, addressing does not depend on one's success in drawing the other's attention; one addresses someone by merely *intending* that they notice that one is attending to them. One might well fail in that intention, but nevertheless still be counted as addressing them. The case above seems to be one of just this kind. I am intending that my friend notice that I am attending to her, and indeed (erroneously) take myself to have succeeded in carrying out this intention. I manage to address her, even if I fail to draw her notice.

We are now in the much happier position of saying both that I have a thought about my friend and that it's just the kind of thought that I take it to be—a second-person thought. Still, we will want to account for the sense that I have nevertheless gone wrong in some way. And on this way of responding to the case, we can: I have failed to pull off the intention at the very heart of the kind of thought I am having and, what's more, I am ignorant of my failure. My thought is a second-person thought all right, but there is also a sense in which it is a kind of secondary or derivative second-person thought, one that falls short of the central cases in which all goes well. In the next section we will see that this is not the only way to think a second-person thought of this secondary kind.

4.2 'As if' cases

A second kind of counterexample is much more deliberate on the part of the thinker. I might knowingly and intentionally seem to address someone (or something) in a circumstance in which a state of interpersonal self-consciousness is manifestly impossible. This is a familiar phenomenon. I might, for instance, think *I'm so proud of you* as I behold my sleeping child, or mentally execute a triumphant cry of *There you are!* upon finding my keys. Plausibly, this is something we do all the time—for comic effect, or as a way of testing one's emotional stance about something, or to stave off loneliness, or to give

vent to otherwise pent-up feelings. Clearly, there is no attempt to induce a state of interpersonal self-consciousness here, and so, on the present account, no second-person thought.

One way to respond to these cases would be to give them a similar treatment to the earlier example in which I internally articulated a second-person utterance to a fellow shopper. They should be treated, the idea would be, as cases of inner speech, in which I act *as if* I was engaging in a second-personal linguistic exchange with the other. This is an option set out by M. G. F. Martin, who writes,

> In ordinary linguistic communication a certain psychological structure is present: speaker and audience are related in terms of mutual awareness. … In other situations, … the thinker treats their actual situation as if it were like that present in a core case of linguistic communication. (Martin 2014, p. 33)

Suppose we go along with Martin's suggestion in making room for 'as if' cases. Should we count them as episodes of second-person thought? It is not immediately obvious how to settle this question. On the one hand, the thinkers in these cases clearly fall short of the conditions set out in §§2–3 for distinctive second-person thought. There can be no question of their standing in a relation of interpersonal self-consciousness with their objects of thought, and neither can we write this off (as with the error cases above) as a matter of failed intentions. On the other hand, what those error cases showed is that even where the enabling conditions on central cases of second-person thought are not met—even where there is, in fact, no state of interpersonal self-consciousness holding between thinker and object—there is room on the account for a secondary kind of case of second-person thought in which the thinker's position is merely sufficiently subjectively similar to a case in which the conditions are met. Even if, unbeknownst to her, the thinker's addressive intention is unfulfilled, we saw that the intention by itself is enough put her in the right frame of mind to think a *you*-thought. The question now is whether we can say the same of these 'as if' cases. Can we imaginatively play-act our way into the right state of mind for a *you*-thought?

We have already confronted a question of this kind in §2 with the case of Hermione and Leontes. Hermione's mere imagining of the obtaining of the fourth condition involved in a state of interpersonal self-consciousness, we saw, was seemingly enough to trigger her capacity to think thoughts of a kind that she could not think before. Cases like this make it very natural to think that an imagined enactment of a

state of interpersonal self-consciousness with another is enough to provide a thinker with the right psychological structures for genuine second-person thought. The cases described here are, as we might put it, the more deliberate cousins of the error cases above—second-person thoughts all, even if both these and the error cases are also in some sense derivative or secondary to a case in which the conditions on a state of interpersonal self-consciousness really are all met.

Another sort of reaction to cases of this kind is given by Peacocke. Upon seeing the erratic behaviour of another driver, he imagines entertaining the thought 'If you go on driving like that, you will be involved in an accident' (Peacocke 2014, p. 248). This thought, according to Peacocke, loses nothing by a reformulation as a *that-person* thought, or as a thought had under a perceptually based mode of presentation. Is this a better explanation of the phenomenon at hand? There is, I think, much to be said for a liberal stance here: we are perfectly free to allow that there can be cases and cases.

That said, there is at least one prima facie advantage to making the 'as if' response available for at least some of these cases. For notice the temptation to describe Peacocke's thinker here as engaging in what we might think of as playful thinking or, at the very least, as doing something a bit theatrical. Much the same seems true of the examples above. There is something faintly staged about thinking *There you are!* to lost keys, or *I'm so proud of you* to a sleeping child, or even the earlier *I'm going to beat you* to a fellow shopper. The 'as if' reading of these cases provides a ready-made explanation—on that reading these thinkers really are, for whatever reason, occupied in an imaginative project of acting out a state of interpersonal self-consciousness with respect to an inanimate or oblivious other. Peacocke, by contrast, cannot fall back on the same explanatory resources. If these really are just perceptual demonstrative thoughts differently expressed, then Peacocke will have to find another way to explain the seeming theatricality of cases of this kind.

4.3 Calling someone's attention

The third kind of case is one in which I give voice to a second-person utterance in order to attract someone's attention, 'Hey you!'. Given the attempt to attract the other's attention here, the use of the second-person pronoun cannot be expressive of a prior state of interpersonal self-consciousness. It cannot be correct to say that I have met the enabling conditions on second-person thought. Neither can this case be explained—as with the error cases and 'as if' cases above—as one

in which I am in a position subjectively similar to one in which those conditions are met. What, then, should we make of cases like this?

The first thing to say is that according to the proposal of this paper, it seems right that this use of the second-person pronoun cannot be expressive of an underlying second-person thought. It seems equally clear, however, that this verdict does nothing to undermine that account. Indeed, it seems *right* to say that this use of the second-person pronoun is not expressive of a second-person thought, or of any thought at all—rather, it is quite natural to think that the word is being used merely for its acoustic properties. The speaker is using the sound of the utterance to attract the attention of the hearer, not to express an underlying thought.

If this is the right way to read the case then there might even be a way to trade in its status as counterexample for one of support for the present view. If the word is being used merely for its acoustic properties, then any word (or sound) would do. Why, then, the convention of reaching for a second-person pronoun? One explanation is that in attracting the other's attention I am attempting to induce the very state manifested in full second-person thought. The use of the pronoun 'you' is anticipatory; it is used in expectation of the thought that will become available once the state of interpersonal self-consciousness has been established. Far from undermining the present account, then, there is a natural reading of this case under which it adds to its supporting evidence.

5. Conclusion

This paper set out to make a case for the view that there is a distinctive way that I have of thinking of you as *you*. The case divides into a positive and a defensive part. In §2 I urged that the positing of a distinctive second-person concept is the best way to accommodate the interpersonal self-consciousness of second-personal linguistic exchanges without falling to the charge of over-intellectualization. In the second part of the paper I defended this distinctivist view of second-person thought against two apparent objections: first, that the notion of addressing, in terms of which second-person thought (if such thought there could be) would be characterized, is a purely linguistic phenomenon (§3); and second, that there are seeming cases of second-person thought in the absence of interpersonal self-consciousness (§4). We are left with a picture of distinctive second-person thought

that refers *de jure* to its addressee, and which is made possible in its central form—when the addressive intention is sincere and fulfilled—by a state of interpersonal self-consciousness holding between the thinker and the object of her thought. In the last section we saw that there is also room on the account for secondary forms of *you*-thought, where error or imagination serves to furnish the thinker with psychological structures mirroring those of thinkers in the central cases.

   The aim has been to bring into focus the idea that just as no third-person concept could capture the self-consciousness of first-person thought, no third- or first-person concept (or combination of the two) could serve to capture the interpersonal self-consciousness of second-person thought. And, moreover, that accepting this idea requires the least manipulation of the basic Fregean principles set out in the introduction—that thoughts are the contents of psychological attitudes composed of concepts individuably characterizable either by their distinctive conceptual roles or by their fundamental rules of reference determination. I have argued for both a distinctive rule of reference and a distinctive conceptual role for *you*. For a Fregean holding to those principles, this is to argue against anti-distinctivists of all orientations that *you* is a distinctive way that I have of thinking of you.[7]

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