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BEING WITH

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ABSTRACT: What is it for two or more people to be with one another or together? And what role do empathic psychological processes play, either as essential constituents or as typical elements? As I define it, to be genuinely with each other, persons must be jointly aware of their mutual openness to mutual relating. This means, I argue, that being with is a second-personal phenomenon in the sense I discuss in *The Second-Person Standpoint*. People who are with each other are in one another's presence, where the latter is a matter of second-personal standing or authority, as in the divine presence or in the king's presence. To be with someone is, therefore, to give the other second-personal standing, implicitly, to claim it for oneself and, thus, to enter into a relation of mutual accountability. Second-personal relating, I argue, requires a distinctive form of empathy, projective empathy, through which we imaginatively occupy others' perspectives and view ourselves as if from their point of view. Projective empathy is thus an essential constituent of "being with." But it is not the only form of empathy that being with typically involves. Further, I discuss ways in which emotional contagion, affect attunement, as well as projective empathy typically enter into the complex psychological (and ethical) phenomenon of being with another person.

> *What could be better than this? Tucked up here with you. If I died right now it would be OK.*—Tom Ford and David Scearce, *A Single Man* (2009)

> *The kind of being which belongs to the Dasein of Others, as we encounter it within the world, differs from readiness-to-hand [of "things" or "equipment"] or presence-at-hand [of "Nature"]. . . . ["Others"] are neither present-at-hand nor ready-to-hand. . . .* [T]hey are there too, and there with [us] *[Heidegger writes "with it," meaning our distinctive form of being (Dasein)].*—Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time* (1962, 154)

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Heidegger does not look on the highest level as an isolation, but as resolution to co-existence with others. . . . [H]owever . . . this resolution . . . knows nothing of any essential relation with others or any real I-Thou with them which could breach the barriers of the self.—Martin Buber, *Between Man and Man* (2002, 206)

Empathy, in its various forms, has figured prominently in recent philosophy, especially in ethics. One important strand, much influenced by feminist approaches as well as in recent work by Michael Slote, has dealt with empathy's role in sympathetic concern or care (Gilligan 1982; Noddings 1984; Slote 2010a). A second strand has focused on the way empathic projection into others' standpoints enters into respect, especially mutual respect for one another as free and equal moral persons (Nagel 1978; Darwall 2006). Yet a third strand, drawing on the rich eighteenth-century British (more exactly, Scottish) sentimentalist tradition exemplified by Francis Hutcheson, David Hume, and Adam Smith, has argued that empathy is centrally involved in moral judgment, as well, perhaps, as in normative judgments of the fittingness (or "propriety," as Smith would have said) of attitudes and emotions more generally (D'Arms and Jacobson 2000; Slote 2010a).

Nor have these been the only ways empathy has figured in recent philosophical writing. In philosophy of mind, empathic "simulation" has been a conspicuous feature of discussions of attitude attribution or "mindreading" (Goldman 1992, 1993), and empathic "pretense" has played an important role in theories of representation in aesthetics (Walton 1993) as well as in fictionalist approaches in metaphysics (Kalderon 2005). In what follows, however, I want to explore an area in which empathy's role has been, to my eye, anyway, less explored, namely, in understanding what it is to *be with* another person in the sense of being *together* with that person.

What I have in mind by "being with" someone in this sense is different from mere spatial co-location. When Jim tells his partner George in the film based on Christopher Isherwood's novel, *A Single Man*, that he could die without regret, "tucked up here with you," he is not referring just to their proximal spatial positions. He and George are not simply in the same place; they are in that place together. Their proximity is not just physical and spatial but emotional and, we might even say, spiritual. They share the moment not just in the sense of being aware, perceptually and emotionally, of the same things, or even, indeed, in that they are mutually aware of their common awarenesses of these things. Two people might be in the same place, be simultaneously aware of and responding to the same things, be simultaneously aware that each is responding as he or she is, and these responses might be as similar as we please, without it yet being true that they are sharing the moment or these experiences *together* and so without their being *with* one

another in the sense I have mind. What does it mean to be with someone in this sense, sharing moments or even lives together with that person? What form or forms of empathy are involved? And what role or roles do these forms of empathy play?

To be clear, I do not mean to restrict my focus to committed personal relationships, although it is suggestive that we say that someone is no longer with someone, or that they are no longer together, when such a relationship has ended. It would be closer to what I am after to say that it involves a personal relationship of any kind, but that also is too narrow. Closer yet would be any mutual *relating*, whether one we might term "personal" or not, including conversations and nonverbal exchanges, however short or extended. People who speak *to* one another, and not just *at* each other, speak together and *with* one another, and so for this time, they are with each other in our sense, at least, they are if their relating is in one another's company or presence. However, even circumscribing my target as any mutual relating may be too narrow, since although that is sufficient for being with, it may not be necessary. Two people might be rightly said to be with one another even if they are not yet relating to each other if they are mutually aware of their mutual willingness to relate, at least, again, if this is in one another's company or presence.

Perhaps, then, this can serve as an initial approximation of the sense I am after. Two people are with one another or together in the relevant sense, when, in one another's company or presence, they relate to each other or sense their mutual willingness to do so along with their mutual awareness of this mutual willingness. People who are thus together or with one another are *open* to one another and mutually aware of their mutual openness.

Whatever being with someone in this sense involves more precisely, it seems clear that part of what is shared with the other is access to oneself. This is perhaps clearest in personal relationships. In the scene I am referring to, Jim and George are open to one another; nothing stands between them. They are present to each other in the sense that neither is emotionally distant nor experiences any feeling, like irritation, annoyance, grudge, or resentment, or other self-protective feeling that impedes their mutual receptivity and responsiveness.

I shall be arguing that some degree of mutual access characterizes any genuine sense of being with or together. The failure to appreciate this aspect is the substance of Buber's (2002) critique of Heidegger's account of "being with." Buber acknowledges Heidegger's appreciation of the human significance of our existing *alongside* others like us who are not instruments to be used for our aims and ends. By Buber's lights, however the "resolution to co-existence" that Heidegger calls "solicitude," though capturing part of what

is involved in recognition of others as beings "among whom one is too" (Heidegger 1962, 154), nonetheless leaves out an element of genuinely being with others, namely, any "relation with others . . . which could breach the barriers of the self" (Buber 2002, 206).

Now it simply follows from my stipulated sense of 'being with' or 'together' as involving openness to mutual relating, that Buber is right about "being with" in this sense. What matters, of course, is the relative significance of this sense for human life. I will proceed in the hope that you agree that this is an important kind of being with, perhaps, the kind of greatest significance for us. My objective is to consider empathy's various roles in a shared openness to mutual relating, including in "breach[ing] the barriers of the self."[1]

I do not mean to deny that there are senses of 'being with' that do not require anything like joint openness. A private eye shadowing someone can speak truthfully if he says, "I was with her all afternoon though she didn't realize it." And there may also be a sense in which mere spatial co-location is sufficient. "There we were, together in the same Wal-Mart without realizing it because we were in different parts of the store." No doubt also, matters of context and degree figure as well, even to the sense of 'being with' with which we are concerned. Whether an encounter counts as genuinely being with, or whether two people count as being together, likely must be judged against some comparison class or by some context-relative standard. Of course, the degree of mutual openness that characterizes close personal relationships is quite different from that of two people involved in a casual conversation. However, I shall be arguing that some degree of sincerity, receptivity, and honesty is necessary for genuine mutual relating of any kind and hence really required to be with someone in the sense with which we are concerned. This does not mean that being with someone cannot involve irony, indirection, and even, indeed, some degree of mendacity and prevarication. Still, you cannot really speak with someone who lies about everything or with a bullshitter who is utterly uninterested in the truth (Frankfurt 2005). And if someone is completely unwilling to be open or accessible, you cannot really be together with that person either.

[1] As central as relating is to being with others, however, we should bear in mind that responsiveness to the other, especially in close personal relationships, also includes sensitivity to the other's needs for space and emotional distance. Indeed, part of what I want to bring out are ways in which the incipient relation to another person that is essential to being with her invariably is committed to a kind of respect for her as an independent person and therefore to her personal boundaries. Moreover, although intimate relations are the closest by definition, their very closeness can create complementary needs for the space and distance necessary to flourish and grow as independent persons. For a criticism of "fusion" views of love and a discussion of the centrality of acknowledgment of independence, see Westlund 2008.

I should stress that I intend my remarks to be tentative and preliminary. I make them not in the spirit of putting forward anything like a full-blown account or even observations with full-throated confidence. My aim is to persuade you that there is an interesting area here that has relevance both for ethics and for understanding empathy's role in human life.

Before we can turn to considering how empathy in its various forms enters into being with, we need to be clear about the different things to which the term 'empathy' can refer. Much of this will be old news, but it is nonetheless important in setting the stage.

1. EMPATHY IN ITS DIFFERENT FORMS

Philosophers and psychologists use 'empathy' to refer to a welter of distinct phenomena involving some relation to another person's or sentient being's mental states, and its use is far from regimented.[2] What these phenomena share is that they all involve the production in the empathizing person of states that are "congruent with the other's emotional state or condition" (Eisenberg 1991, 129). In one way or another, all forms of empathy involve some kind of copying of another's mental state or some imaginative entering into the other's situation to produce a feeling, even if "off-line," "in the other's shoes." It is a source of potential confusion that many of the phenomena currently termed "empathy" were first called "sympathy" by David Hume and Adam Smith in the classic texts from which much contemporary discussion derives. These days, however, 'sympathy' more frequently refers to a different feeling of caring or concern for the other person in light of her condition or mental state, perhaps produced by empathy (see, e.g., Darwall 2002).

The difference, roughly, is that through empathy, we feel *as* the other feels, or as if in (what we imagine to be) the other's situation, whereas sympathy involves concern felt *for her*. Through empathy we somehow enter into the other's perspective or feel some version of what we imagine she feels, whereas sympathy involves a concern we feel from our perspective *for her*. And though sympathy may be produced by empathy and even include it in certain instances, as when we sympathize *with* others in their distress, it need not involve empathy at all. Sympathy for someone who is bored with life need not involve any tendency to feel bored, or even to imagine feeling bored, oneself.

1.1 *Emotional Contagion*

Though all forms of empathy are united by their contrast with sympathy, there are nonetheless important differences between them. The most primi-

[2] I draw in this section from Darwall 2002.

tive form of empathy is "emotional contagion," where one person "catches" another's feeling but not necessarily "in his shoes" or from his perspective. The phenomenon is perfectly familiar. Walking among happy families and children in a piazza in Italy, one feels happy (and not just because one is in Italy). Coming into a room where everyone is downcast, one has some tendency to feel down also. This is the form of empathy that children develop earliest, which seems to involve mimicry, perhaps caused by "mirror neurons," and perhaps facial feedback of some kind also. The ancients identified the phenomenon, though they did not, of course, understand the underlying mechanisms. "The human countenance . . . borrows smiles or tears from the human countenance," Hume quotes Horace as saying (Hume 1975, 220).

Contagion is what Hume means by sympathy: "the propensity we have to receive by communication [the] inclinations and sentiments" of others (1978, 316). Hume's own view of how we thus receive others' feelings is notoriously complicated, but an important feature is that it works through our *ideas* of others' feelings rather than being caused more directly by the feelings (or their associated bodily expressions) themselves. Even in Hume's theory of moral judgment, the way sympathy enters is to transform the judge's ideas of the pleasurable or painful mental states that are the usual consequences of the motives she is judging into pleasurable or painful feelings in her, thereby constituting the moral sentiments that her moral judgments express.

There are two especially noteworthy aspects of contagion for our purposes. One is that when the "caught" feeling has an object, that object need neither be nor be thought to be the same as the object of the feeling from which it is caught. If A is angry at B and approaches B with an angry face, B may well catch A's anger. But so far as the mechanisms of contagion are concerned, B's anger need not have the same object as A's. Contagion simply induces anger in B, and something else must supply anger's object. In pure contagion cases, B's induced anger is as likely, if not more likely, to find its object in A and his angry face as it is to find it in B (who is the object of A's anger). Emotional contagion involves no tendency to feel others' feelings from their perspective. We feel them from our own and tend to supply objects that make sense from our own point view.

Second, and contrary to Hume's official theory, contagion need involve no conscious awareness of the contagious feeling—either that the other is feeling it *or* that one is. A's anxiety may make B anxious without B (or A, for that matter) being aware that either A or B is anxious. Being aware of ("in touch with") one's feelings requires self-awareness and being aware of others' requires being aware of them as beings who have feelings too. This will be important when we discuss the role of contagion in being with, since it shows

that even if being with involves some degree of mutual resonance by contagion, something else must provide the shared sense that the parties are responding *to* one another and to one another's feelings.

I shall be arguing, as I mentioned, that being with someone presupposes some acknowledgment of the other as an independent person. This makes it a second-personal phenomenon in the sense I discuss in *The Second-Person Standpoint*. The distinctive form of empathy that is invariably in play in second-personal relating is not emotional contagion but one through which we assume one another's perspectives, what I shall call "projective empathy." Even so, I also want to suggest that being with *typically* involves, not just projective empathy, but contagion also, as well as yet additional empathic phenomena that depend on contagion but are nonetheless distinct, for example, those the psychiatrist Daniel Stern (1985) collects under the expression 'affect attunement'. As I see it, being with usually involves some combination of these different empathic phenomena.

1.2 *Projective Empathy*

Projective empathy is what enables us to gain the perspective on others' feelings necessary to have the same objects in view that they do, or at least that we imagine they do. I call empathy of this form "projective" because it involves an imaginative projection into another person's point of view. Whereas the earliest form of contagion is neonate "reactive crying," the precursor of projective empathy is "joint visual attention" or "social referencing," as when six-month-old babies begin to look at and identify what they see their mothers look at (Butterworth 2004). By attending to the object of their mothers' attention, babies take a first step in acquiring the capacity to do something similar internally: imagine the objects of others' mental states, including beliefs, affective attitudes, and feelings, in short, imagining themselves into others' perspectives on situations as others confront them or, as we say, "into others' shoes."

If the form of empathy that Hume calls sympathy is a kind of contagion, the form most closely related to what Adam Smith calls sympathy is projective. Smith defines sympathy as "our fellow-feeling with any passion whatever" (Smith 1982, 10). Although he here speaks of fellow-feeling "with a passion," Smith generally reserves the term for sharing a feeling that has the same *object*.[3] We feel sympathy or fellow-feeling for another's passion when we "chang[e] places in the fancy" with him and "come to conceive or be affected by what he feels" toward the same objects to which we take him to be

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[3] Sometimes Smith even speaks of fellow-feeling "with" or "for" the objects themselves: for example, "fellow-feeling for . . . misfortunes," "with injuries," etc. (1982, 21, 34).

responding (ibid., 10). Only if we can bring the other's situation "home" to us and *thereby* "enter into" his passion do we have genuine "fellow-feeling" with it and so share his feeling in the requisite way, namely, as from his perspective.

Projective empathy actually has two distinct functions in Smith's thought. First, Smith thinks that putting ourselves in other's positions is usually necessary even to attribute mental states to them. "We can form no idea of what other men feel but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation. . . . By the imagination, we place ourselves in [the other's] situation" and attribute the feeling we imagine feeling in that situation to the other (1982, 9).

This is not yet fellow-feeling or "sympathy" with the other's feeling, since it just makes us aware of what that feeling is. Fellow-feeling comes only with a second projection through which we judge what Smith calls the "propriety," or as philosophers these days tend to call it, the "fittingness" of the feeling (D'Arms and Jacobson 2000). "To approve of the passions of another, therefore, as suitable to their objects, is the same thing as to observe that we entirely sympathize with them; and not to approve of them as such, is the same thing as to observe that we do not entirely sympathize with them" (Smith 1982, 16). But if this sympathy or fellow-feeling is also the result of an imaginative projection into the other's point of view, it cannot result from the same projection that makes us aware of what the other's passion is. It must involve some further act of the imagination through which we somehow *second* or endorse what we take the other's passion to be. Only then do we judge the passion "proper," that is "suitable" or fitting to its object.

This is obviously not the occasion to try to work out the details of Smith's theory. As I see it, the best reconstruction of Smith's idea makes use of his notion of the "impartial spectator" in the following way. In assessing what the other's passion actually is, we imaginatively take on as many features of the individual as we can: "In imagination we become the very person" (Smith 1982, 75). More realistically: we ignore or abstract from none of his or her individual features. So it is a little misleading for Smith to say that we imagine "what we ourselves should feel in the like situation" (ibid., 9). It is more like we imagine what we would feel if we were *the other* in her situation.

When, however, we judge whether the other's feeling or passion in that situation is proper, there can be features of the other that, though relevant to what she actually feels, are irrelevant to what she should feel in the situation confronting her. The question of what someone actually feels is irreducibly particular; it is about *her*, the particular individual she is. So to judge it, we have to imaginatively "become the very person." The question of whether her passion or feeling is proper is not, however, irreducibly particular; it concerns what it would be proper for someone relevantly like her to feel in the situation

she confronts.[4] So to judge it, we do not imaginatively "become the very person"; neither do we imaginatively "play" ourselves in the person's situation (that would be relevant to judging what *we* would feel, not what either of us *should* feel, in the normative sense). Rather, and this is where Smith's idea of the "impartial spectator" comes in, we imagine being *someone* in the other's situation and deliberate about what *to feel* from that perspective. If the passion or feeling that results seconds what we take to be the other's in fact, with the latter knowledge perhaps coming from an imaginative projection of the first sort, then this constitutes sympathy or fellow-feeling with the other's feeling, and we judge her feeling to be proper. If not, we judge it to be improper.[5]

I shall be arguing that both functions of projective empathy, or, if you like, both kinds, are important to *being with*. The first, more usually termed 'simulation', features prominently in the theories of mental state attribution or "mindreading" of Alvin Goldman and Robert Gordon.[6] The kind of being with which we are concerned is when two people are open, and recognize their mutual openness, to relating *to* one another. But people cannot genuinely relate to one another unless they keep track of how the other responds to their attempts to relate to them. This requires each to take the other's perspective and assess how their address would have seemed from the other's point of view. People who lack the ability to simulate another person and view themselves from the other's perspective are incapable of genuinely being with others in the sense that I have in mind.

But what Smith calls "fellow-feeling" is also important. Although it may not be necessary in all cases, surely an important part of what we usually seek in being with others is some seconding or affirming of our feelings and passions and so ourselves. "Nothing pleases us more," Smith writes, "than to observe in other men a fellow-feeling with all the emotions of our own breast"

[4] We can assume that not every aspect of her, as the particular individual she is, is relevant.

[5] Of course, a person's situation can be defined in more or less fine-grained ways, and some fine-grained ways will include features of the individual person. But that just means that there are different normative questions of propriety for situations defined in these different ways.

[6] Goldman 1992, 1993, 2009; Gordon 1986. The force of Goldman's and Gordon's Smithian idea is well illustrated by a famous experiment by Tversky and Kahneman in which subjects were told a story of two individuals, A and B, who are traveling together in a cab to the airport to catch two different flights that are scheduled to leave at the same time (Kahneman and Tversky 1982). They encounter traffic and arrive thirty minutes late. Upon arrival, A goes to his gate and is told that his flight left on time—thirty minutes ago. B is also told that her flight has left—but only a few minutes ago. When asked who is more upset, A or B, 96 percent of the subjects answer B, as I assume you would also. How do we come to that conclusion? It seems implausible to suppose that we survey past similar situations and hazard an inductive generalization. You probably thought more or less instantly that B would be more upset. The only way you could have come to this judgment so quickly, it seems, is by simulating A and B in their respective situations (which you might have done implicitly while hearing the story anyway) and then reporting the result of your imaginative projection.

(1982, 13). So I shall suggest that projective empathy of the second kind has an important role to play in being with also.

1.3 *Proto-Sympathetic Empathy*

When we project into others' perspectives to determine what they are thinking and feeling, we primarily concern ourselves with the objects of their mental states from their point of view. What is she upset about? What does she think I did? And similarly, when we project in order to determine whether we can "enter into" others' passions in the sense Smith holds to be relevant to judging their "propriety" or "fittingness," what is in question is whether the person's passion responds appropriately to what she has in view from her perspective. In both cases, our focus is not on the person with whom we empathize but on her situation *as she sees it*.[7]

But we can also imagine what someone, as we say, is "going through," that is, what *it is like to be* him in his situation. This changes our focus. To take an example I have used in this context before, imagine someone whose young child has recently died (Darwall 2002). Simulating the parent to determine what he is likely thinking or feeling, we imagine having thoughts like "He was so young," "Why couldn't it have been me?" and so on. Similarly, we project ourselves impartially, as anyone, into the parent's shoes to assess the propriety of his responses. To imagine what someone is going through, however, we have to imagine what it is like to have those very thoughts and feelings. So our focus is no longer on the objects of the other's mental states but on what it is like to live with such painful thoughts and feelings.

This, I have argued before, is the form of empathy that is closest to sympathy. Emotional contagion produces an "imitating" feeling but without giving it any particular object. And the objects that are supplied by other forms of projective empathy are the same as those of the other person's feelings. When we imagine what it is like to *have* those feelings, however, the feelings themselves and the person having them, come to the fore. It would not be unexpected, therefore, that empathy of this proto-sympathetic kind might give rise to sympathetic concern for the person himself. Feeling something of what it is like to go through the misery of a child's death, our hearts might go out to the parent. It is significant in this connection that subjects in Daniel Batson's famous experiment concerning the "empathy–altruism hypothesis" were told to imagine how a fellow student in need *feels* (Batson 1991). They were not asked to imagine being in that person's situation (in a

[7] More accurately, there two different kinds of judgment possible here: what we might call "objective" and "subjective" propriety. Is her response to the object objectively fitting? And is it subjectively fitting in the sense of being a reasonable response, given her evidence and experience?

way that might induce the same feelings in them). Rather, they were asked to imagine the feelings themselves in a way that would make them aware of what it is like to *have* them. Unsurprisingly, it turned out that subjects who were asked to imagine how the needy person feels were likelier to help the person than subjects who were not.

2. BEING WITH AND PRESENCE

Having now canvassed these different kinds of empathy, we can now focus on empathy's role in being with. Recall that two people who are with each other in the sense we have in mind must be in one another's company or *presence*. But what is someone's presence? And what is it to be in it?

Reflection on the etymology and meaning of 'presence', the verb 'present', 'presentation', and 'present' (the presented offering or gift) is illuminating, extending also to 'being present to' someone, 'being fully present' in interaction, and even, perhaps, to temporal notions, like 'the present'. The first meaning of 'presence' given by the *Oxford English Dictionary* is: "The place or space in front of or around a person; the immediate vicinity of a person; the company or society of someone." And then it adds, "frequently with reference to ceremonial or formal attendance on a distinguished, especially royal, person."

The first thing to notice is that the concept of presence is tied to that of a person. To be in someone's presence is to be brought somehow into awareness of and to relate to him as a person, including awareness of his *personage*, if that is distinguished, like the king's.[8] In *The Second-Person Standpoint*, I argue that person in this sense is a "second-personal concept" since it can be understood only within a network of concepts that involve the idea of second-personal address: the authority or standing to address claims and demands to others, legitimate claims and demands and the distinctive kind of reasons for acting they create (second-personal reasons), and answerability for complying with valid claims and second-personal reasons (Darwall 2006). I take Locke to make the same point when he says that "'Person' is a Forensick Term" (Locke 1975, 346). And I have argued that this is P. F. Strawson's point as well in "Freedom and Resentment" when he distinguishes between the "interpersonal" (or, as I call it, "second-personal") perspective from which we regard, and implicitly relate *to*, one another as persons, holding ourselves answerable to each other through what Strawson calls "reactive attitudes" like resentment and moral blame, on the one hand, and an "objective" stance through

[8] Cf. Erving Goffman (2005, 1) on "co-presence" and "interaction rituals."

which we view beings, including perhaps persons, in ways that neither imply nor insinuate interpersonal relationships (Strawson 1968; Darwall 2006). I will say more on this presently.

The king's presence essentially involves his authority of command. If someone surreptitiously slips into the king's bedroom and sees the king sleeping, he is not "in the king's presence" in the relevant sense. Nor is he either, if he catches the king awake but dressing or doing his exercises. Someone comes into the king's presence when he is brought before the king in a way that acknowledges the king's standing and authority, bowing before him, and so on. It is not enough, even, that the king be given evidence that the person before him recognizes and respects his authority; some second-personal acknowledgment is required.

But though this awareness must be reciprocal and shared, it is obviously not part of the idea of the king's having his distinctive authoritative presence that *it* is shared. In the usual case, the dutiful subject is in the king's presence, but the king is not generally said to be in the subject's presence. Similarly, one has an "audience" with the Pope. Still, when subjects are brought into the presence of a sovereign, whether political or religious, the subjects are generally accorded *some* standing, and therefore *some* presence, if only, for example, to ask a boon.

"Presence" is thus a second-personal notion. A "presentation" is something made by someone with requisite standing or presence to another in her presence, that is, *to* someone with the standing to receive it and in a way that involves a mutual acknowledgment of the respective standings of both parties. When the presentation is an offering of some kind, it constitutes a "present." We answer "present,"when the roll is called, not just to register physical location. (A feeble joke: "Honey, are you there?" "Present.") Someone is said to be more or less present as she is more or less a "second person" to one—actively relating or open to it. And so on.

Thus, if "presence" is the "space around a person," it is not merely a physical space. It is a "forensic," that is, a normative, moral space of second-personal interaction, configured differently depending on the specific authorities or standings involved. And we are *present to* one another when we are open to relating to each other second personally in ways that acknowledge our second-personal standings.

In *The Second-Person Standpoint*, I argue that, despite any differences between persons and their personages, anyone capable of second-personal interaction (i.e., anyone with the psychic capacities necessary to enter into relations of mutual accountability) shares a common basic authority to make claims and demands of each other and to hold one another answerable, just by virtue of having the requisite capacities. Obviously, I cannot rehearse the argument

here, but the roots are found in Strawson's "Freedom and Resentment." The conclusion is much like the one Buber draws in the passage I quoted at the outset, namely, that regarding someone as a person is not a third-personal conviction but a second-personal attitude. It is not so much a belief *about* someone as it is an attitude *toward* that person that involves, at least implicitly, relating *to* him or her in a way that commits the bearer of the attitude to mutual answerability.

This is what is involved, I think, when someone says, in theological terms, that she senses the "divine presence," or, more colloquially, when we speak of feeling someone's presence. Something essentially personal, in fact, second personal, is involved. The thought is not just that we see evidence of mentality, like intelligent design, but rather that we experience something as "speaking to" us personally in a way that entails or presupposes our answerability.

3. RELATING TO, SECOND-PERSONALITY, RESPECT, AND PROJECTIVE EMPATHY

According to my stipulated sense, two people are with one another when they are mutually aware of their mutual openness to mutual relating. In this section, I wish to explore how relating to people in the requisite way, being present *to* them, acknowledges their second-personal presence and standing and, thereby, involves implicit respect for them as having this authority. That is why it is especially chilling when someone with whom one has had a close personal relation acts as though you are not there when it is common knowledge between you that you are, as though he is not in your presence or as though you are not in his.

Clearly, there are forms of addressing or expressing oneself to others without presupposing any such normative standing or authority. A robber who says "give me your wallet" might simply be trying to cause you to give it to him without seeking any acknowledgment of his "presence" or standing to claim it from you. Or he may just brandish his gun or give you a certain look. Obviously, one can vent and even express attitudes and feelings to someone without being committed to any common standing to relate reciprocally or any form of mutual answerability. Such expressions, indeed, may even be interactive in the yet further sense of involving, and being expressed to the other as involving, responses *to* the other.

Interactions of these forms are clearly second personal in a sense, since they are most naturally expressed in the grammatical second person. But, so far, anyway, they do not necessarily constitute being with someone. Two people who are screaming epithets at each other, responding to one another's calumny, are not necessarily together or with each other. To be mutually

open to one another in the way necessary for two people to be together, each must be open to the other's presence and be present to her, and that requires relating to her in a way that gives her second-personal standing.

Two people who are genuinely together do not simply have a pattern of mutual response. It can be common knowledge between two people, for example, that they are laughing at each other's overheard jokes, or that they are mutually attracted or repelled by these jokes, without the two really being together. By itself, mutual responsiveness is insufficient. Only if it is common knowledge between the two that both are open to relating *to* each other in mutually responsive ways are they really with one another. And that requires granting each other second-personal standing. Responses that help constitute being with come with an RSVP; they accord the other the standing to continue a conversation, affective or verbal, that reciprocally recognizes the other's presence.

Of course, most of what people together address to one another are not claims or demands. The currency of interpersonal interaction, especially in close relationships like Jim and George's, are responses of affective and emotional connection, sharing of experiences and feelings, and so on, that do not directly involve anything like mutual answerability. I nonetheless claim that unless some according of second-personal authority is somewhere in the background, the parties cannot really be in one another's presence and so together with one another.

An essential aspect of being together, then, is that both parties hold themselves answerable to one another in some way, and this brings projective empathy centrally into play. If Strawson is right, we hold people responsible, others *and* ourselves, through reactive attitudes that are essentially second personal: resentment, blame, guilt, and so on (Strawson 1968). People who are with each other make themselves mutually accountable through vulnerability to each other's reactive attitudes, not just by contagion, but also through projective empathy. The point is not, or at least, not just, that they make themselves vulnerable to the distinctive painful sanction that, for example, the other's resentment might impose, although they are especially likely, no doubt, to be pained by it. Rather, the projective empathy implicit in respecting the other takes them into the other's perspective so that they can see themselves in the resenting way the other sees them. If they can bring this reaction "home" and generate Smithian "fellow-feeling," they can then feel the feeling's propriety in a way that enables them to feel its reciprocal analogue, guilt, or regret for having caused the kind of hurt or harm that warrants apology. Even when they cannot share the other's critical response in this way, people who are really together nonetheless acknowledge that each is owed a hearing.

Although some second-personal element of mutual answerability is essential to being with, we should not lean on it too heavily.[9] For one thing, the rhetoric of accountability can mislead us into a defensive posture, so that we fail to listen to and hear the other in the way that genuine accountability involves. For another, people in personal relationships, at least, are concerned to respond to and take seriously each other's feelings, complaints, and concerns, whether these are interpersonally justifiable or not, just because the other has them.

Even so, acknowledgment of one another's second-personal authority is an essential element of even the most intimate personal relationships, as it is of being with in general. It is worth noticing, in this connection, some experimental evidence that reactive attitudes like resentment are far less corrosive in personal relationships than are third-personal feelings and attitudes, like contempt and disgust, that exclude the other from mutual answerability, rather than call him to it. As one researcher, John Gottman, puts it, "contempt is the sulphuric acid of love."[10] Once it enters a relationship's emotional repertoire, it is far more likely to lead to dissolution than are reactive attitudes, which, for all their negative tone, involve implicit reciprocal mutual relating (Giles 2004; Darwall 2006, 2010).

By making ourselves personally accountable to those we are with, we put ourselves in their hands, give them a special standing to hold us answerable, and make ourselves vulnerable, through projective empathy, to their feelings and attitudes, not just as the latter's targets, but as feelings we can bring home to ourselves and share. This, according to Buber, "breach[es] the barriers of the self."

4. FURTHER EMPATHIC INVOLVEMENT IN BEING WITH

I turn now from empathy's role in the mutual acknowledgment of second-personal standing, which I have been arguing is necessary to any genuine being with, to further involvement of empathic phenomena, which, though not strictly necessary for being with, frequently play important roles.

First, as I just mentioned, friends and lovers are usually less concerned with mutual accountability than they are with responding to one another's needs, feelings, and concerns, whether these are justifiable or not. Hearing and recognizing each others' feelings and concerns is *like* accountability in that it

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[9] For an excellent discussion of the way answerability figures in plural deliberation in personal relationships, see Westlund 2009.

[10] Giles 2004, n.p., as quoted from J. M. Gottman, James D. Murray, Catherine Swanson, Rebecca Tyson, and Kristin R. Swanson, *The mathematics of marriage: Dynamic nonlinear models* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003).

accords second-personal standing, but an attempt to justify oneself is often the last thing either party wants to hear, especially in intimate relationships. What we typically want in such relations is less an impartial accounting than some recognition of the importance of our concerns simply because they matter to us.[11] The form of empathy that is involved in listening to and recognizing the other's concerns, however, is nonetheless projective. We can adequately register them only by seeing his situation from his perspective and fully taking in the way things seem from his point of view. Only then do we really hear or "get" him.

There seem, indeed, to be at least five different ways in which projective empathic response can enter into personal relations. First, simply empathically registering the other and his feelings is already a kind of affirmation, since it shows that we care enough about *him* to want to know and acknowledge how he feels. Second, responding to *his concerns* in some way that takes account of them shows that they matter to us also. This might be by treating his feelings as reasons. Or it might be by some less deliberate, perhaps even involuntary, response that is "attuned to" his affect in a way that furthers emotional connection, as we shall explore further presently. Third, "fellow-feeling" with another's concerns and feelings "seconds" them, implying that the object of his concern matters to us as well; indeed, if the fellow-feeling is Smithian, it implies that our shared feeling is fitting and that the object of his concern matters. Fourth, even when we cannot share another's feelings in this way, we may nonetheless be able to see by projective empathy that they are reasonable or at least understandable from his point of view. This too is a kind of affirmation we seek from friends and loved ones. Finally, fifth, we can, through proto-sympathetic projective empathy, come to appreciate and feel *what it is like to be* the other person with his feelings and concerns and show the other that we understand and appreciate this.

Although projective empathy can play all these different roles, we should not downplay the role of emotional contagion. People who are with one another are especially apt to catch each other's feelings. Though this is not sufficient to constitute being with, it nonetheless can play an important role.

One reason it is not sufficient, recall, is that contagion transmits feelings without their intentional objects. Coming into a room of frightened people, you may feel frightened yourself, even if you have no idea what is making

[11] Indeed, when one partner is frustrated or angry with the other because the second has been insensitive to or has inadequately heard the first's concerns, and the frustration or anger is expressed in the language of accountability as a charge, it may be especially unhelpful for the second to answer for himself by defending his conduct in the same impartial or moral terms. To do that is to continue to ignore the first's personal concerns and so not to relate to her personally in the way we typically seek in friendships and intimate relations (Goleman 2006, 129–47).

them so frightened. You and they will then have the same feeling, but you will not thereby share their feeling in any way that is relevant to being with them. *Your* fright might even find its object in the people themselves, since their frightened looks might look so positively frightening as to make you wish to avoid them and their company entirely. For you to share their fright in any way that could constitute or give evidence of your being together with them, your and their fright would have to have the same object.

Still, contagion can figure significantly in the mutual responsiveness of people who are genuinely together. Often we sense the feelings of those we are with through contagion. Though contagion is not sufficient to be aware of what they are feeling, it is often necessary. I might never have sensed your discomfort in my presence unless, by contagion, I felt uncomfortable myself, noticed that, and then noticed, say, the uncomfortable expression on your face, which, though I was unawares, had made me uncomfortable through mimicry. It need not work this way, of course. Maybe my discomfort first made you uncomfortable by contagion, though you did not notice that, and I, seeing discomfort on your face, seek its cause and find it when I look inside and find my discomfort.

For contagion to contribute to the emotional currency of being with, however, it must be accompanied by other psychic competences, for example, by self-awareness, being in touch with one's own feelings, and other abilities collected under the term 'emotional intelligence' (Salovey and Mayer 1990; Goleman 2006). Only then do the parties really respond *to* each other as people who are genuinely with one another do, having the other and his responses appropriately represented as objects and not just causes of his own feelings.

Contagion can also be involved in sharing feelings in ways that those who are with one another distinctively do. Michael Slote has argued, indeed, that contagion can mediate respect. "The father who becomes 'infected' with his daughter's interest in and enthusiasm about stamp collecting," Slote writes, "is showing a kind of (unself-conscious) respect for his daughter" (Slote 2010b, 191). It seems clear that in the kind of case Slote has in mind, father and daughter do share their feelings and that being open to another's enthusiasms in this way is an important aspect of being with. We can even agree for present purposes that the father thereby shows respect for his daughter. Still, *merely* contagious enthusiasm is insufficient for either of these, for the reason we have already mentioned: contagion transmits feelings without supplying the feelings' objects. For the father to share his daughter's enthusiasm in a way that is relevant to being with her, certainly to respecting her, his acquired enthusiasm must be for the same thing she is enthusiastic about. Her enthusiasm cannot simply cause by contagion

an enthusiasm in him that finds its object in, say, watching pro football. By itself, contagion gives us no perspective either *on* the other or as *from* the other.

When, however, it is combined with projective empathy, self-awareness, or other forms of emotional intelligence, contagion can work in the way that Slote's (2010b) example illustrates to enable people to share feelings in the robust way characteristic of being with. The interests, concerns, and feelings of both parties can then be shaped and reshaped through mutual responsiveness in a way that penetrates the boundaries of both.

So far, these are cases where feeling is shared *between* two people, as when a father shares his daughter's enthusiasm for stamp collecting. But as Max Scheler points out, there are also cases where feelings are shared *collectively*, what Scheler calls "feeling-in-common."

> Two parents stand beside the dead body of a beloved child. They feel in common the 'same' sorrow, the 'same' anguish. It is not that A feels this sorrow and B feels it also, and moreover that they both know they are feeling it. No, it is a *feeling-in-common*. A's sorrow is in no way an 'external' matter for B here, as it is, e.g., for their friend C, who joins them, and commiserates 'with them' or 'upon their sorrow'. On the contrary, they feel it together, in the sense that they feel and experience in common. . . . (1970, 12–13)

Scheler's description is certainly recognizable. Exactly what must be in place for "feeling-in-common" is an interesting question, but it seems that some combination of contagion and projective empathy necessary to constitute a genuine "we" is essential (Gilbert 1990; Darwall 2006).

There are, no doubt, other ways that empathy is involved in being with others, and as I said earlier, my main goal here is to get people to think more about this topic rather than to say anything approaching a last word. I would like to conclude by mentioning a further empathic, or at least quasi-empathic, process that seems especially important to the kind of mutual responsiveness involved in being with others, namely, what Daniel Stern calls "affect attunement" (Stern 1985, 140). Stern's studies of mother–child relationships show that mothers frequently relate to young children by responding to their expressed feelings, not just by mimicking their expressions, but through a similar "echoing" response in another modality that has the same emotional tone, and frequently the same rhythmic structure, as the child's expression. Here is an example:

> A nine-month-old child becomes very excited about a toy and reaches for it. As she grabs it, she lets out an exuberant "aaaah!" and looks at her mother. Her mother looks back, scrunches up her shoulders, and performs a terrific shimmy with her upper body. . . . The shimmy lasts only about as long as her daughter's "aaaah!" but is equally excited, joyful, and intense. (Stern 1985, 140)

A moment's reflection may be all it takes to convince us both that much of the early parent–child interaction takes this "affect attuning" form *and* that this helps provide the basis for the mutual responsiveness that we frequently seek in personal relationships and being with others.

Several points seem especially relevant. First, as Stern emphasizes, parental affect attunement is central to the child's developing a sense that she and her feelings matter and, hence, central to developing the capacity for a healthy intersubjective relationship. Simple imitation or mimicry of a sort involved in contagion, Stern argues, cannot do this. By responding to the child's expressed feelings in different modalities, the child can in time be brought to see the mother's response as being, not to her bodily movements, but to her feelings and the child herself. Second, as we know (or should know), what one says often has less interpersonal significance than how one says it. However interesting or insightful what someone says is, it can be difficult to be together with him if he is tone deaf to the affect he expresses or out of tune with his auditors' affect. Third, the rhythm and timing of healthy parent–child attunement provides a foundation for the ebb and flow of interaction in healthy personal relationships. Even if someone is not emotionally tone deaf in the second way, he may be insufficiently attuned in this third way if he does not give others space to express themselves or if he is insufficiently responsive. People like that can be hard to be with also.[12]

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