

Conference Announcement and First Call for Papers

Joint Attention: Developments in Philosophy of Mind, Developmental and Comparative Psychology, and Cognitive Science

October 1 – 3, 2009

Bentley University, Greater Boston

The past two decades have seen an increasing interest in the topic of joint attention, the cognitive capacity of two or more subjects (human or nonhuman primates) to focus on the same object while being mutually aware of sharing this focus. The investigation of this capacity is of interest for philosophers of mind, developmental and comparative psychologists, and social neuroscientists alike. Questions that arise in the context of the study of joint attention include:

- What is the role of feelings and emotions in the acquisition of a joint perspective?
- What is the relation between episodes of mutual attention and the capacity to jointly attend to objects?
- What can we learn about joint attention from persons with autism?
- What relevance does the capacity to jointly attend to objects with others have for a subject's referential and communicative capacities?
- Is joint attention an acquired skill?
- What is the role of pointing in concept acquisition?
- What is the function of visuomotor representations in joint attention?
- What role do mirroring systems play in joint attention?

- Ought we to conceive of joint attention in the triadic terms of a representationalist account of perception?
- Do episodes of joint attention require the deployment of a theory of mind?
- Is self- and other- awareness a precondition of the capacity for joint attention?
- What can joint attention research tell us about collective action?
- Can one understand acts of pointing in terms of the construction of narrative?

The conference aims at discussing these and related questions in an interdisciplinary setting. We are honoured to have a number of distinguished invited speakers (in alphabetical order):

- Kim Bard, Director of the Centre for the Study of Emotion and Reader in Comparative Developmental Psychology, University of Portsmouth
- John Campbell, Willis S. and Marion Slusser Professor of Philosophy, University of California at Berkeley
- Shaun Gallagher, Chair and Professor of Philosophy, Director of Cognitive Sciences Program, University of Central Florida
- Peter Hobson, Professor of Developmental Psychopathology, University College London
- William Hopkins, Associate Professor of Psychology, Agnes Scott College, and Research Associate in the Division of Psychobiology, Yerkes National Primate Research Center
- Daniel Hutto, Professor of Philosophical Psychology, University of Hertfordshire
- David Leavens, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, University of Sussex
- Andrew Meltzoff, Professor of Psychology, University of Washington, and Co-director, UW Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences
- Elisabeth Pacherie, Senior Researcher in Philosophy at Institut Jean Nicod, affiliated with the Department of Cognitive Studies at Ecole Normale Supérieure, Paris
- Tim Racine, Assistant Professor of Psychology, Simon Fraser University
- Vasu Reddy, Professor of Psychology and Head of Department, University of Portsmouth
- Corrado Sinigaglia, Associate Professor of Philosophy of Science, University of Milan

- Karsten Stueber, Chair and Professor of Philosophy, College of the Holy Cross
- Colwyn Trevarthen, Professor (Emeritus) of Child Psychology and Psychobiology, University of Edinburgh

Call for Papers

There will be slots for approximately twenty contributed papers of thirty minutes each for presentation and discussion. Depending on the number and quality of submissions, there may also be a poster session. Please indicate in your submission whether, should your proposal not be chosen as a contributed paper, you would be interested in participating in a poster session (or both).

Please forward paper proposals of not more than 500 words in .doc format, and with the **email subject line** *Conference Proposal*, to aseemann@bentley.edu by **Sunday May 31st, 2009**. All applicants will be notified of a decision by early July.