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PART I  
EMOTION, PERCEPTION, AND INTERACTION

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DAN ZAHAVI

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## 2. EXPRESSION AND EMPATHY

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08 The ongoing debate about the nature of social cognition has been dominated by two  
 09 competing positions, the theory–theory of mind and the simulation theory of mind.  
 10 Although these positions are regularly depicted as being quite divergent, I will  
 11 in the following discuss what I take to be a shared assumption, namely a certain  
 12 conception of the mind–body relation. I will criticize it and, drawing on thinkers  
 13 like Scheler, Merleau-Ponty and Wittgenstein, I will argue that our understanding  
 14 of others is crucially dependent on our understanding of their expressive behaviour.

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## 2.1. THE THEORY OF MIND DEBATE

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In recent years, much of the discussion of the nature of social cognition has taken place within the framework of the so-called theory of mind debate. The expression “theory of mind” is generally used as shorthand for our ability to attribute mental states to self and others and to interpret, predict, and explain behaviour in terms of mental states such as intentions, beliefs and desires (cf. Premack and Woodruff 1978, p. 515). Although it was originally assumed that it was the possession and use of a *theory* that provided the individual with the capacity to attribute mental states, the contemporary debate is split on the issue and is generally considered to be a dispute between two views. On one side, we find the *theory–theory of mind* and on the other the *simulation theory of mind*.

This neat division is an oversimplification, however. Not only because of the existence of several hybrid theories, but also because neither of the main positions are theoretical monoliths. Theory-theorists are basically split on the issue of whether the theory in question is innate and modularized (Carruthers, Baron-Cohen) or whether it is acquired in the same manner as ordinary scientific theories (Gopnik, Wellman). As for the simulationists, some claim that the simulation in question involves the exercise of conscious imagination and deliberative inference (Goldman), some insist that the simulation although explicit is non-inferential in nature (Gordon, 1996), and finally there are those who argue that the simulation rather than being explicit and conscious is implicit and subpersonal (Gallese) (cf. Gallagher 2006).

Generally speaking, however, the theory–theory holds that the understanding of minded beings (be it oneself or others) is theoretical, inferential and quasi-scientific in nature. It views the attribution of mental states as a question of an inference to the best explanation and prediction of behavioural data and argues that mental states are unobservable and theoretically postulated entities. It consequently denies that we have any direct experience of such states. Many philosophers (phenomenologists

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01 included) would claim that we need concepts in order to extract and comprehend  
 02 the informational richness of what is already given, already present to us (like the  
 03 connoisseur who is able to discern and differentiate aromas and flavours in the  
 04 wine to which others are not sensitive). Many would also endorse the idea that  
 05 our observations are influenced and enriched by former experiences. When the  
 06 theory–theory claims that the attribution of mental states is theoretically mediated,  
 07 it has something more radical in mind. The idea is basically that the employment  
 08 of theory allows us to transcend what is given in experience:

09 One of the most important powers of the human mind is to conceive of and think about itself and other  
 10 minds. Because the mental states of others (and indeed of ourselves) are completely hidden from the  
 11 senses, they can only ever be inferred. (Leslie 1987, p. 139)

12 Normal humans everywhere not only “paint” their world with color, they also “paint” beliefs, inten-  
 13 tions, feelings, hopes, desires, and pretenses onto agents in their social world. They do this despite  
 14 the fact that no human has ever seen a thought, a belief, or an intention. (Tooby and Cosmides in  
 15 Baron-Cohen 1995, p. xvii)

16 It should be noticed that the theory–theory of mind defends a double thesis. It  
 17 does not only claim that our understanding of others is inferential in nature, it also  
 18 argues that our own self-experience is theoretically mediated. After all, the basic  
 19 idea is that *any* reference to mental states involves a theoretical stance, involves the  
 20 application of a theory of mind.

21 Whereas the theory–theory argues that our understanding of others chiefly  
 22 engages detached intellectual processes, moving by inference from one belief to  
 23 the other, the simulation theory of mind argues that our understanding of others  
 24 exploits our own motivational and emotional resources. Thus, in contrast to the  
 25 theory-theorists, the simulationists would deny that what lies at the root of our  
 26 mentalizing abilities is a sort of theory. In their view, we possess no such theory, or  
 27 at least none complete enough to underpin all our competence with psychological  
 28 notions. This far, the different versions of the simulation theory agree. However,  
 29 when it comes to a more positive account of what the simulationist alternative  
 30 amounts to, the opinions differ. Given restrictions of space, I will in the following  
 31 focus on Goldman, and every time I refer to the simulation theory, I will have his  
 32 theory in mind. My reason for this focus is quite simple. I think Goldman’s version  
 33 of the simulation theory is the one that most unequivocally relies on and refers to  
 34 a routine that merits the name “simulation”.<sup>1</sup>

35 According to Goldman, we don’t need a theory in order to understand others.  
 36 Rather, we can simply use our own minds as a model. Our understanding of the  
 37 minds of others would be grounded in our introspective access to our own mind;  
 38 our capacity for self-ascription precedes the capacity for other-ascription. More  
 39 specifically, Goldman argues that my understanding of others is rooted in my ability  
 40 to project myself imaginatively into their situation. I literally use my imagination  
 41 to put myself in the target’s “mental shoes”. If I for instance witness an immigrant  
 42 being harassed by a desk clerk, I would be able to grasp the immigrant’s mental  
 43 state and predict his subsequent behaviour by means of the following procedure. By  
 44 means of an explicit simulation, I would imaginatively put myself in his situation,

01 I would imagine how I would feel and react under similar circumstances and on  
02 the basis of analogy I would then attribute or project similar states to the person I  
03 am simulating (cf. Goldman 2000).

04 In my view, both sides in the theory of mind debate are faced with difficulties.  
05 When it comes to the simulation theory of mind, one might initially question whether  
06 there is any experiential evidence in support of the claim that our understanding of  
07 others relies on conscious simulation routines. As Wittgenstein once remarked, “Do  
08 you look into *yourself* in order to recognize the fury in *his* face?” (Wittgenstein 1981,  
09 Sect. 220). Furthermore, one might ask whether it is really legitimate to cast our  
10 experience of others in terms of an imaginative exercise. When we project ourselves  
11 imaginatively into the perspective of the other, when we put ourselves in his or her  
12 shoes, will we then really attain an understanding of the other or will we merely be  
13 reiterating ourselves? To put it differently, will a process of simulation ever allow  
14 for a true understanding of the *other* or will it merely let me attain an understanding  
15 of myself in a different situation? As for the theory–theory of mind, one could for  
16 instance question some of its empirical claims and implications. If a theory of mind  
17 is required for the experience of minded beings, then any creature that lacks such  
18 a theory will also lack both self-experience and other experience. According to the  
19 standard view, however, children only gain possession of a theory of mind when  
20 they are around four-years old. Thus, a direct implication of the theory–theory of  
21 mind seems to be that young children will lack any understanding of self and other  
22 during the first three to four years of life. But is that really true? When pressed on  
23 the issue, some theory-theorists refer to various mechanisms that might be regarded  
24 as precursors to a theory of mind (cf. Baron-Cohen 1995) and will in fact concede  
25 that children do understand (experience) psychological states such as emotions,  
26 perceptions and desires in both self and other prior to the possession of a proper  
27 theory of mind. They then argue that what these children lack is an understanding  
28 of *representational* mental states (cf. Wellman et al. 2001, pp. 656, 677). However,  
29 since the term “representational mental state” is quite ambiguous, this admission  
30 doesn’t do much to clarify the situation. At times, the term is used inclusively to  
31 cover all intentional states, including perceptions; at other times, it is used much  
32 more restrictively to cover only proper beliefs (thoughts). This vacillation makes  
33 the theory–theory into something of a moving target. It also threatens to leave it  
34 with the uncomfortable choice between only two options. It can either defend a  
35 very strong, some would say extreme, claim, according to which the child has no  
36 first-person access to any of its own mental episodes and no experience of other  
37 minded creatures prior to the acquisition of a theory of mind. It can, alternately,  
38 defend a much weaker, some would say trivial, claim by defining representational  
39 mental states in such narrow terms that it is no wonder that it takes a relatively  
40 high level of cognitive sophistication to be able to understand and attribute them to  
41 self and other. To rephrase the criticism in slightly different terms: One can define  
42 a mental state as something purely interior and private, as something that is not  
43 visible in meaningful actions and expressive behaviour. Given such a concept of  
44 a mental state, there are good reasons to believe that children will only be able

01 to master the concept and ascribe it to others and self at a relatively late stage.  
 02 However, the obvious and crucial question is why one would want to operate with  
 03 such a narrow mentalistic understanding of the mind in the first place.<sup>2</sup>

04 My aim in the following will not to be to pursue and develop these lines of  
 05 criticism further. Rather I wish to focus on a slightly different issue. The theory–  
 06 theory of mind and the simulation theory of mind are frequently depicted as quite  
 07 opposed accounts of the basic nature of social cognition. However, both accounts  
 08 share certain presuppositions that underlie and shape the very theory of mind debate.  
 09 In particular, they both share certain assumptions about the mind–body relation.  
 10 I find these assumptions questionable, and what I intend to do in the following  
 11 is to suggest that an alternative and more satisfactory account can be found in  
 12 phenomenology.

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## 2.2. THE ARGUMENT FROM ANALOGY

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17 Let me take my point of departure in the classical attempt to come to grip with the  
 18 problem of other minds known as the *argument from analogy*. The argument runs  
 19 as follows: The only mind I have direct access to is my own. My access to the mind  
 20 of another is always mediated by his bodily behaviour. But how can the perception  
 21 of another person's body provide me with information about his mind? In my own  
 22 case, I can observe that I have experiences when my body is causally influenced,  
 23 and that these experiences frequently bring about certain actions. I observe that  
 24 other bodies are influenced and act in similar manners, and I therefore infer per  
 25 analogy that the behaviour of foreign bodies is associated with experiences similar  
 26 to those I have myself. In my own case, being scolded by hot water is associated  
 27 with the feeling of intense pain, this experience then gives rise to a quite distinct  
 28 behaviour: screaming. When I observe other bodies being scolded by hot water  
 29 and screaming, I infer that it is likely that they are also feeling pain. Thus, the  
 30 argument from analogy can be interpreted as an inference to the best explanation.  
 31 An inference bringing us from observed public behaviour to a hidden mental cause.  
 32 Although this inference does not provide me with indubitable knowledge about  
 33 others and although it does not allow me to actually experience other minds, at  
 34 least it gives me more reason to believe in their existence, than in denying it.

35 What is the relationship between the classical argument from analogy and the  
 36 contemporary theory of mind debate? More specifically, how does the argument  
 37 from analogy relate to the simulation theory and to the theory–theory respectively?  
 38 I think the argument straddles the difference between the two alternatives. It has  
 39 affinities with (one version of) the simulation theory in so far as it argues that we  
 40 have an immediate and direct access to the content of our own minds, and in so  
 41 far as it holds that this self-acquaintance serves as our point of departure when it  
 42 comes to an understanding of others, that is, in so far as it insists that we come  
 43 to know others in analogy with ourselves. On the other hand, by arguing that our  
 44 understanding of others is an inference to the best explanation, an inference bringing

01 us from observed public behaviour to a hidden mental cause, the argument from  
 02 analogy also shares fundamental claims with the theory–theory of mind.

03 Needless to say, since the theory of mind debate is a rather recent phenomenon,  
 04 none of the classical phenomenologists have criticized it *expressis verbis*. But  
 05 the phenomenologists have indeed questioned the validity of the argument from  
 06 analogy. In his book *Wesen und Formen der Sympathie*, for instance, Scheler  
 07 subjects the argument to a scathing criticism. As he points out, the argument  
 08 presupposes that which it is meant to explain. If I am to see a similarity between,  
 09 say, my laughing or screaming and the laughing or screaming of somebody else,  
 10 I need to understand the bodily gestures and behaviour as expressive phenomena,  
 11 as manifestations of joy or pain, and not simply as physical movements. If such  
 12 an understanding is required for the argument of analogy to proceed, however,  
 13 the argument presupposes that which it is supposed to establish. In other words,  
 14 we only employ analogical lines of reasoning when we are already convinced  
 15 that we are facing minded creatures but are simply unsure about precisely how  
 16 we are to interpret the expressive phenomena in question (Scheler 1973, p. 234;  
 17 cf. Gurwitsch 1979, pp. 14, 18). In addition, Scheler also questions two of the  
 18 crucial presuppositions that are made by the argument. First, the argument assumes  
 19 that my point of departure is my own consciousness. This is what is at first given  
 20 to me in a quite direct and unmediated fashion, and it is this purely mental self-  
 21 experience that is then taken to precede and make possible the recognition of others.  
 22 One is at home in oneself and one then has to project into the other, who one does  
 23 not know, what one already finds in oneself. Second, the argument also assumes  
 24 that we never have direct access to another person’s mind. We can never *experience*  
 25 her thoughts or feelings. We can only infer that they must exist based on that  
 26 which is actually given to us, namely her bodily appearance. Although both of  
 27 these two assumptions might seem perfectly obvious, Scheler rejects both. As he  
 28 puts it, the argument from analogy underestimates the difficulties involved in self-  
 29 experience and overestimates the difficulties involved in the experience of others  
 30 (Scheler 1973, pp. 244–246). We should not ignore what can be directly perceived  
 31 about others and we should not fail to acknowledge the embodied and embedded  
 32 nature of self-experience. Thus, Scheler denies that our initial self-acquaintance  
 33 is of a purely mental nature and that it takes place in isolation from others. But  
 34 he also denies that our basic acquaintance with others is inferential in nature.  
 35 Thus, as Scheler argues, there is something highly problematic about claiming  
 36 that intersubjective understanding is a two-stage process of which the first stage  
 37 is the perception of meaningless behaviour and the second an intellectually based  
 38 attribution of psychological meaning. In the majority of cases, it is quite hard (and  
 39 artificial) to divide a phenomenon neatly into its psychological and behavioural  
 40 aspect, think merely of a groan of pain, a handshake, an embrace, a leisurely stroll.  
 41 Scheler argues that we in the face-to-face encounter are neither confronted with a  
 42 mere body, nor with a hidden psyche, but with a unified whole. He speaks of an  
 43 “expressive unity” (*Ausdruckseinheit*). It is only subsequently, through a process of  
 44

01 abstraction, that this unity can be divided and our interest then proceeds “inwards”  
02 or “outwards” (Scheler 1973, p. 255).

03 Scheler opposes the view according to which our encounter with others is first  
04 and foremost an encounter with bodily and behavioural exteriorities devoid of  
05 any psychological properties. According to such a view, which has been defended  
06 by behaviourists and Cartesians alike, behaviour, considered in itself, is neither  
07 expressive nor significant. All that is *given* is physical qualities and their changes.  
08 Seeing a radiant face means seeing certain characteristic distortions of the facial  
09 muscles. But naturally, such a setup gives rise to the following sceptical question:  
10 How can we pass from a perception of the other as a “bag of skin moving over  
11 ground” (Gopnik and Meltzoff 1994, p. 166) to a full-blooded experience of the  
12 other as a minded creature?

13 However, as Scheler points out, this account presents us with a distorted picture,  
14 not only of behaviour but also of the mind. It is no coincidence that we use  
15 psychological terms to describe behaviour and that we would be hard pressed to  
16 describe the latter in terms of bare movements. In his view, affective and emotional  
17 states are not simply qualities of subjective experience, rather they are given *in*  
18 expressive phenomena, i.e. they are expressed in bodily gestures and actions, and  
19 they thereby become visible to others. This is, of course, not an idea to be found  
20 in Scheler alone:

21 We must reject the prejudice which makes ‘inner realities’ out of love, hate or anger, leaving them  
22 accessible to one single witness: the person who feels them. Anger, shame, hate and love are not psychic  
23 facts hidden at the bottom of another’s consciousness: they are types of behavior or styles of conduct  
24 which are visible from the outside. They exist *on* this face or *in* those gestures, not hidden behind them.  
(Merleau-Ponty 1996, p. 67 [1964, pp. 52–53])

25 We do not see facial contortions and *make the inference* that he is feeling joy, grief, boredom. We  
26 describe a face immediately as sad, radiant, bored, even when we are unable to give any other description  
27 of the features. (Wittgenstein 1980, Sect. 570)

28 Both Merleau-Ponty and Wittgenstein question the sceptic’s conception of what is  
29 given. In Wittgenstein’s view, the sceptics have displaced the human being with  
30 a philosophically generated concept of a human body, understood as a merely  
31 material object. Rather than attempting to solve the sceptical problem by somehow  
32 adding psychological meaning onto this impoverished object, he suggests that we  
33 instead simply restore the concept of a human being to its proper place, namely  
34 as a seamless whole of whose unity we should not have lost sight (cf. McDowell  
35 1998, p. 384). Scheler would concur. Instead of attempting to secure an access to  
36 the minded life of others through technical detours, we need a new understanding of  
37 the given (cf. Gurwitsch 1979, pp. 29–30). If the realm of expressive phenomena is  
38 accepted as the primary datum or primitive stratum of perception, the access to the  
39 mind of others will no longer present the same kind of problem. To quote Scheler:

40 For we certainly believe ourselves to be directly acquainted with another person’s joy in his laughter,  
41 with his sorrow and pain in his tears, with his shame in his blushing, with his entreaty in his outstretched  
42 hands, with his love in his look of affection, with his rage in the gnashing of his teeth, with his threats  
43 in the clenching of his fist, and with the tenor of his thoughts in the sound of his words. If anyone  
44 tells me that this is not ‘perception’, for it cannot be so, in view of the fact that a perception is simply

01 a 'complex of physical sensations', and that there is certainly no sensation of another person's mind  
 02 nor any stimulus from such a source, I would beg him to turn aside from such questionable theories  
 03 and address himself to the phenomenological facts. (Scheler 1973, p. 254 [1954, p. 260]; cf. Gurwitsch  
 04 1979, p. 56)

05 It should by now be clear that Scheler takes a solution to the problem of other  
 06 minds to require a correct understanding of the relation between mind and body.  
 07 And of course, the mind–body relation in question is not the mind–brain relation.  
 08 Scheler is not concerned with the search for the neural correlates of consciousness.  
 09 Rather he is interested in the relation between experience and expressive behaviour.  
 10

### 11 2.3. EXPERIENCE AND EXPRESSION

12  
 13 Despite their differences, the theory–theory of mind and the simulation theory  
 14 of mind both deny that it is possible to *experience* other minded creatures; this  
 15 is why we need to rely on and employ either theoretical inferences or internal  
 16 simulations. Both accounts consequently share the view that the minds of others  
 17 are hidden, and they consider one of the main challenges facing a theory of social  
 18 cognition to be the question of how and why we start ascribing such hidden  
 19 mental entities or processes to certain publicly observable bodies. As we have  
 20 seen, phenomenologists would question this very setup. They would argue that the  
 21 appeal to either theory or simulation is unwarranted since it is motivated by a too  
 22 impoverished conception of what is given, of what is experientially available. It  
 23 is occasionally assumed that a phenomenological account of intersubjectivity is  
 24 by and large opposed to the theory–theory of mind, whereas the relation between  
 25 phenomenology and the simulation theory is much more conciliatory. I think this  
 26 is only partially correct. In fact, by emphasizing the embodied nature of self-  
 27 experience, several of the phenomenologists have called attention to a problem  
 28 that in retrospect must seem particularly troublesome for Goldman's simulationist  
 29 account. Whereas theory-theorists such as Gopnik have traditionally emphasized  
 30 the parallelism between the ascription of mental states to self and other (Gopnik  
 31 1993), Goldman has stressed the asymmetry. But if we start out by accepting the  
 32 conceptual separation of the mental from the behavioural, and if my own self-  
 33 experience is of a purely mental nature, whereas my experience of others is purely  
 34 behavioural in nature, we need to understand why I should even so much as think  
 35 that there are other minded creatures. As Davidson has put it:

36 If the mental states of others are known only through their behavioral and other outward manifestation,  
 37 while this is not true of our own mental states, why should we think our own mental states are anything  
 38 like those of others? (Davidson 2001, p. 207)

39 If we adopt what McCulloch has recently called a behaviour-rejecting mentalism  
 40 (McCulloch 2003, p. 94), i.e. if we deny that embodiment and bodily behaviour have  
 41 any essential role to play in experience and cognition, if we deny that embodiment  
 42 and environmental embedding are essential to having a mind, we will have a  
 43 hard time escaping what is known as the *conceptual problem of other minds*  
 44 (cf. Avramides 2001).

01 The proper way to respond to this sceptical challenge is by abandoning the radical  
 02 divide between the subject's mind and body. This is where the notions of expression  
 03 and action become crucial. It could be argued, of course, that any account of the  
 04 mind has to take subjectivity and the first-person perspective seriously, and that a  
 05 focus on expression and action will consequently lose sight of what is essential  
 06 to the mind. However, this worry is misguided. There is nothing reductive in  
 07 the reference to expression and action, since subjectivity figures centrally in both  
 08 concepts.

09 The idea is not to reduce consciousness as such to intentional behaviour. But  
 10 we should recognize that the expressive relation between mental phenomena and  
 11 behaviour is stronger than that of a mere contingent causal connection, though  
 12 weaker than that of identity. The behaviour is neither necessary nor sufficient for  
 13 a whole range of mental phenomena, so one can occur without the other – which  
 14 is why deception and suppression is possible – but this is not to say that this  
 15 is generally the case or that it could conceivably always be the case. As a rule,  
 16 we do not come to know one independently of the other. In fact, as Rudd has  
 17 recently argued, intersubjective understanding is possible precisely because some  
 18 of our mental states find a natural expression in bodily behaviour, and because the  
 19 language we learn for our mental states is a language that we learn to apply to  
 20 others even as we learn to apply it to ourselves (Rudd 2003, p. 114).

21 Our understanding of affective and emotional states, such as sorrow, shame, love,  
 22 gratitude, hate, pity, disgust, fear, pride, etc., is informed and influenced by their  
 23 behavioural manifestations. The later is partly constitutive of the meaning of the  
 24 former. As Cassirer formulated it in his *Philosophie der symbolischen Formen*,  
 25 “Life cannot apprehend itself by *remaining* absolutely within itself. It must give  
 26 itself form; for it is precisely by this ‘otherness’ of form that it gains its ‘visibility,’  
 27 if not its reality” (Cassirer 1954, p. 46 [1957, p. 39]. Cf. Cassirer 1954, pp. 43–47).

28 Expression is more than simply a bridge supposed to close the gap between  
 29 inner mental states and external bodily behaviour. Some mental states are directly  
 30 apprehended in the bodily expressions of people whose mental states they are, or  
 31 as Hobson has recently put it: “We perceive bodies and bodily expressions, but  
 32 we do so in such a way that we perceive and react to the mental life that those  
 33 physical forms express” (Hobson 2002, p. 248). In seeing the actions and expressive  
 34 movements of other persons, one already sees their meaning. No inference to a  
 35 hidden set of mental states is necessary. Expressive behaviour is soaked with the  
 36 meaning of the mind; it reveals the mind to us. Certainly, it differs from the direct  
 37 manifestation available from the first-person perspective. We should respect and  
 38 maintain the asymmetry between the first-person and the second- (and third-) person  
 39 access to psychological states, but this is not a difference between an immediate  
 40 certainty on the one side and an insecure inference on the other. As Wittgenstein  
 41 writes, “My thoughts are not hidden from [the other], but are just open to him in a  
 42 different *way* than they are to me” (Wittgenstein 1992, pp. 34–35). Nor should we  
 43 make the mistake of confusing different kinds of access with different degrees of  
 44 certainty. As Wittgenstein also points out, even if I had no uncertainty with regard

01 to the mental state of an other (say, in the case where I observe the victim of a  
 02 car accident writhing in pain), that would not make it *my* state (Wittgenstein 1982,  
 03 Sect. 963). We should recognize that each type of access has its own strengths  
 04 and weaknesses. The second- (or third-) person access only “falls short” of the  
 05 first-person access, if it is assumed that the latter is privileged, and that it is the  
 06 internal aspiration of the former to approximate the latter as closely as possible  
 07 (Moran 2001, p. 157).

08 We should oppose the view that behaviour, considered in itself, is neither  
 09 expressive nor significant. We should oppose the view that behaviour is merely  
 10 the outwardly observable effects of mental states and goings-on. Such a view does  
 11 not merely fail to recognize the true nature of behaviour, it also presents us with  
 12 a misleading perspective on the mind, suggesting as it does that the mind is a  
 13 purely internal happening located and hidden in the head, thereby giving rise to  
 14 the sceptical conundrum (cf. McDowell 1998, p. 393). We should avoid construing  
 15 the mind as something visible to only one person and invisible to everyone else.  
 16 The mind is not something exclusively inner, something cut off from the body  
 17 and the surrounding world. As if psychological phenomena would remain exactly  
 18 the same, even without gestures, bodily expressions, etc. As Overgaard points out,  
 19 psychological phenomena stretch their arms in many directions – they play many  
 20 publicly observable roles – and to cut off all these public arms would leave us with  
 21 a severely distorted picture of the mental (Overgaard 2005).

22 Our ascription of conscious states to others is based on behavioural evidence. But  
 23 this is not to say that the ascription is hypothetical or assumptive and our under-  
 24 standing indirect or inferential. As Bennett and Hacker observe, when somebody  
 25 blushes because he is ashamed, the blush reveals and manifests the shame; it doesn’t  
 26 conceal it. When somebody screams in pain, while the dentist drills in his tooth, it  
 27 makes no sense to say that this is merely behaviour and that the real pain is still  
 28 concealed and inner. We can speak of indirect evidence or of knowing indirectly  
 29 only where it also makes sense to speak of a more direct evidence, but there is  
 30 no more direct way of knowing that somebody is in pain than seeing him writhe  
 31 in pain, that somebody sees something than by him showing what he sees and  
 32 knowing what he thinks than from his sincere confession. Knowing indirectly or  
 33 by way of inference that somebody is in pain might be a matter of noticing a bottle  
 34 of pain killers next to his bedside together with an empty glass of water (Bennett  
 35 and Hacker 2003, pp. 89, 93).

36 To repeat, this is not behaviourism. The idea is not to identify mental states with  
 37 or reduce them to behaviour, nor does it rule out that some experiential states are  
 38 covert, but not all experiences can lack a natural expression if intersubjectivity is  
 39 to get off the ground.<sup>3</sup> To suggest that the indirect means of verifying claims about  
 40 black holes or subatomic particles can “give us a model for verifying hypotheses  
 41 in the area of the study of human and animal subjectivity” (Searle 1999, p. 2074)  
 42 is deeply confused.

43 Whereas we in adult life occasionally make inferential attributions of mental  
 44 states to other people, such attributions cannot be considered the basis of the smooth

01 and immediate interpersonal interaction found in infants (Trevarthen 1979). A vivid  
02 example of the importance of facial expressions is provided by the famous “visual  
03 cliff” experiment. Infants aged 12 months are placed on one side of a “visual cliff”,  
04 i.e. an apparent sudden drop beneath a transparent surface. On the other side of  
05 the cliff, the infant’s mother and an attractive toy are placed. When the infant  
06 notices the drop-off, it will typically look spontaneously at the mother’s face. If  
07 the mother poses a happy face, most infants will cross to the other side; if the  
08 mother poses a fearful expression, the infants will freeze or even actively retreat. As  
09 Hobson points out, it is noteworthy that the mother’s mere presence is not enough,  
10 rather her emotional reaction, as perceived through her expressions and behaviour,  
11 has a decisive influence (Hobson 1991, p. 47). In other words, the infant appears  
12 to recognize that another person’s expression has meaning with reference to an  
13 environment common to both of them. The infant is not living in a solipsistic world,  
14 a world that has the meaning it has solely because of how it is taken by the infant.  
15 Rather, the world has also meaning for others, and the meaning it has for others  
16 affect the meaning it has for the infant. Thus, the gestures and utterances of the  
17 caretaker are perceived as being both emotionally expressive and as being directed  
18 to something in the infant’s world (Hobson 1993, pp. 38, 140–141, 2002, p. 73).  
19 This makes Hobson conclude that infants “have direct perception of and natural  
20 engagement with person-related meanings that are apprehended in the expressions  
21 and behaviour of other persons. It is only gradually, and with considerable input  
22 from adults, that they eventually come to conceive of ‘bodies’ on the one hand, and  
23 ‘minds’ on the other” (Hobson 1993, p. 117).

24 Tomasello has recently proposed that our social cognition takes three forms. We  
25 can understand others (1) as animate beings, (2) as intentional agents, and (3) as  
26 mental agents. In his view, the ontogenetic relevance of this tripartition is straight-  
27 forward. Whereas infants are able to distinguish animate beings from non-animate  
28 beings already from birth onwards, they are only able to detect intentionality, in  
29 the sense of goal-directed behaviour, from around 9–12 months of age (as evinced  
30 from phenomena such as joint attention, gaze following, joint engagement, imitative  
31 learning, etc.), and they only become aware of others as mental agents with beliefs  
32 that might differ from their own at around 4–5 years of age. Why does the last  
33 step take so much longer? The answer provided by Tomasello is twofold. On the  
34 one hand, he calls attention to the different role of expressive behaviour. Whereas  
35 the animacy of others is directly expressed in their behaviour, intentionality is  
36 also expressed in actions, but is at the same time somewhat divorced from them,  
37 since it on occasions may remain unexpressed or be expressed in different ways.  
38 Finally when it comes to thoughts and beliefs, these might lack natural behavioural  
39 expressions altogether (Tomasello 1999, p. 179), which is what makes them so  
40 much more difficult to grasp. On the other hand, Tomasello argues that the more  
41 advanced form of social cognition emerge as late as it does because it depends on  
42 prolonged real-life social interaction (Tomasello 1999, p. 198). More specifically,  
43 he argues that language use may play a crucial role in children’s coming to view  
44 other people as mental agents (Tomasello 1999, p. 176). In order to understand

01 that other persons have beliefs about the world that differ from their own, children  
 02 need to engage them in discourses in which these different perspectives are clearly  
 03 apparent, be it in disagreements, misunderstandings, requests for clarification or  
 04 reflective dialogues (Tomasello 1999, pp. 176, 182). Although I find it potentially  
 05 misleading to designate the difference between an understanding of the goal-directed  
 06 actions of others and an understanding of their false or divergent beliefs as a  
 07 difference between an understanding of others as intentional agents and as mental  
 08 agents – it might suggest both that there is nothing mindful about goal-directed  
 09 actions and no intentionality to thoughts and beliefs – Tomasello is certainly right  
 10 in pointing to the fact that our understanding of others gradually becomes more  
 11 sophisticated and that there are dimensions of the mind that are not as readily  
 12 accessible as others. Moreover, I also think he is right in pointing to the cultural  
 13 and social dimension of this developmental process. Rather than being the result of  
 14 an automatic maturation of certain innate cognitive modules, it seems plausible to  
 15 view these more sophisticated forms of social cognition as something that develop  
 16 in tandem with increasingly complex forms of social interaction.

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#### 2.4. THE ROLE OF EMPATHY

20 One reason why the problem of other minds seems so persisting is that we have  
 21 conflicting intuitions about the accessibility of the mental life of others. On the  
 22 one hand, there is something right about the claim that the feelings and thoughts of  
 23 others are manifest in their expressions and gestures. On the other hand, there also  
 24 seems to be something right in the idea that the mental life of another is in some  
 25 respect inaccessible. There are situations where we have no reason to doubt that the  
 26 other is angry, in pain, or bored. There are other situations where we have no clue  
 27 as to their precise state of mind. It seems wrong to claim that the mental life of  
 28 others is essentially inaccessible, but it also seems wrong to claim that everything  
 29 is open to view. The challenge is to reconcile both intuitions, rather than letting  
 30 one of them go (Overgaard 2005).

31 Most phenomenologists have argued that it makes no sense to speak of another  
 32 unless the other is in some way given and accessible. That I have an actual  
 33 experience of the other, and do not have to do with a mere inference or imaginative  
 34 simulation, does not imply, however, that I can experience the other in the same  
 35 way as she herself does, nor that the other's consciousness is accessible to me in the  
 36 same way as my own is. The second- (and third-) person access to psychological  
 37 states differs from the first-person access, but this difference is not an imperfection  
 38 or a shortcoming. Rather, the difference is constitutional. It is what makes the  
 39 experience in question an experience of another, rather than a self-experience. As  
 40 Husserl writes, "Had I had the same access to the consciousness of the other as  
 41 I have to my own, the other would have ceased being an other, and instead have  
 42 become a part of myself" (Husserl 1950, p. 139). To put it differently, the first-  
 43 personal givenness of the mind of the other is inaccessible to me, but it is exactly this  
 44 inaccessibility, this limit, which I can experience, and which makes the experience

01 in question, an experience of another (Husserl 1950, p. 144). We experience the  
 02 behaviour of others as expressive of mental states that *transcend* the behaviour  
 03 that expresses them. Thus, the givenness of the other is of a most peculiar kind.  
 04 The otherness of the other is exactly *manifest* in his elusiveness and inaccessibility.  
 05 As Lévinas observes, “the absence of the other is exactly his presence as other”  
 06 (Lévinas 1979, p. 89). To demand more, to claim that I would only have a real  
 07 experience of the other if I experienced her feelings or thoughts in the same way  
 08 as she herself does, is nonsensical. It would imply that I would only experience an  
 09 other if I experienced her in the same way that I experience myself, i.e. it would  
 10 lead to an abolition of the difference between self and other, to a negation of the  
 11 *alterity* of the other, of that which makes the other other.

12 What needs to be realized is that bodies of others differ radically from inanimate  
 13 objects, and that our perception of these minded bodies is unlike our ordinary  
 14 perception of objects. The relation between self and other is not first established by  
 15 way of an inference to the best explanation, nor is it a question of putting ourselves  
 16 in the shoes of the other. On the contrary, we should recognize the existence of  
 17 a distinctive mode of consciousness, different from perception, recollection and  
 18 fantasy, that permits us to understand others. The traditional name for this mode of  
 19 experience is *empathy*.

20 The use of the concept of empathy is not uncontroversial. In fact, in phenomeno-  
 21 logical circles, the notion has fallen into a certain disrepute because of Heidegger’s  
 22 well known criticism. As Heidegger argues, if one seeks to understand intersubjec-  
 23 tivity on the basis of empathy one will remain committed to a serious misconception  
 24 of the nature of the self:

25  
 26 If this word [empathy] is at all to retain a signification, then only because of the assumption that the “I”  
 27 is at first in its ego-sphere and must then subsequently enter the sphere of another. The “I” does not first  
 28 break out [...] since it already is outside, nor does it break into the other, since it already encounters the  
 29 other outside. (Heidegger 2001, p. 145)

30 According to this understanding of the concept, the notion of empathy is linked to  
 31 the problem of how one (isolated) subject can encounter and understand another  
 32 (isolated) subject. Even if the empathic approach does not commit the same mistakes  
 33 as the argument from analogy, it still misconstrues the nature of intersubjectivity  
 34 since it takes it to be first and foremost a thematic encounter between individuals,  
 35 where one is trying to grasp the emotions or experiences of the other (this  
 36 connotation is particularly obvious in the German word for empathy: *Einfühlung*).  
 37 However, as Heidegger also points out, the very attempt thematically to grasp the  
 38 experiences of others is the exception rather than the rule. Under normal circum-  
 39 stances, we understand each other well enough through our shared engagement in  
 40 the common world.

41 A similar criticism can be found in Gurwitsch. Gurwitsch readily acknowl-  
 42 edges the importance of expressive phenomena, but he criticizes Scheler for having  
 43 been too one-sided in his approach and then argues that the realm of expressive  
 44 phenomena is neither the only, nor the primary, dimension to be considered if we

01 wish to understand what it is that enables us to encounter other human beings as  
02 humans (Gurwitsch 1979, p. 33).

03 Ordinarily, we do not encounter others primarily as thematic objects of cognition.  
04 Rather we encounter them in the world in which our daily life occurs, or to be more  
05 precise, we encounter others in a worldly situation, and our way of being together  
06 and understanding each other is co-determined in its meaning by the situation at  
07 hand (Gurwitsch 1979, pp. 35–36, 95, 106). To exemplify, Gurwitsch analyses the  
08 situation where two workers are cobbling a street. In this work situation, one worker  
09 lays the stones while the other knocks them into place. Each worker is related  
10 to the other in his activity and comportment. When one worker understands the  
11 other, the understanding in question does not involve grasping some hidden mental  
12 occurrences. There is no problem of other minds. There is no problem of how one  
13 isolated ego gets access to another isolated ego. Rather both workers understand  
14 each other in virtue of the roles they play in the common situation (Gurwitsch 1979,  
15 pp. 104, 108, 112).

16 It is precisely within such common situations that expressive phenomena occur.  
17 When working or conversing with my partner, he might shake his head or wrinkle  
18 his brow. But these facial expressions and bodily gestures are not unambiguous.  
19 They do not reveal psychological states simply or uniformly. Each person has  
20 different countenances and facial habits. But this is rarely a problem, since  
21 we do not encounter expressions in isolation. They always occur in a given  
22 context, and our understanding of the context, of what comes before and after,  
23 helps us understand the expression. As Gurwitsch points out, the “same” shaking  
24 of the head can take on different meanings in different situations. What an  
25 expressive phenomenon is and signifies in a particular case becomes compre-  
26 hensible to me in the whole of the present situation (Gurwitsch 1979, p. 114;  
27 cf. Sartre 1943/1976, p. 396).

28 Heidegger and Gurwitsch would both deny that intersubjective understanding is  
29 primarily or even ordinarily a question of successfully ascribing causally efficacious  
30 inner mental states (mainly beliefs and desires) to others in order to facilitate our  
31 prediction and explanation of their behaviour. They would concur with Hutto’s  
32 recent claim that explanation and prediction of action from a third-person stance  
33 is far more infrequent and far less reliable than our normal intersubjective means  
34 of coming to understand others through dialogue and conversation and shared  
35 narratives (Hutto 2004). If somebody is acting in a puzzling way, by far the easiest  
36 and most reliable way to gain further information is not to engage in detached  
37 theorizing or internal simulation, it is to employ your conversational skills and ask  
38 the person for an explanation.

39 However, I think one can accept these critical points and still consider the  
40 notion of empathy to be useful. One should simply acknowledge that our typical  
41 understanding of others is contextual and realize that empathy, properly understood,  
42 is not a question of feelingly projecting oneself into the other, but rather an ability  
43 to experience behaviour as expressive of mind, i.e. an ability to access the life of  
44 the mind of others in their expressive behaviour and meaningful action.

01 We should respect the difference between the first-person and the second- and  
 02 third-person perspectives and we should recognize the difference between self-  
 03 experience and the experience of others. But too much focus on this difference or  
 04 asymmetry can lead to the mistaken view that only my own experiences are given  
 05 to me and that the behaviour of the other shields his experiences from me and  
 06 makes their very existence hypothetical (Avramides 2001, p. 187).

07 Our experience and understanding of others are not infallible. Other people can  
 08 fake or conceal their experiences. But there is a decisive difference between our  
 09 everyday uncertainty about what precisely others might be thinking about and  
 10 the nightmare vision of the solipsist. Although we might be uncertain about the  
 11 specific beliefs and intentions of others, this uncertainty does not make us question  
 12 their very existence. In fact, as Merleau-Ponty points out, our relation to others is  
 13 deeper than any specific uncertainty we might have regarding them (Merleau-Ponty  
 14 1945, p. 415).<sup>4</sup>

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## 18 2.5. CONCLUSION

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20 In contrast to the take favoured by simulationists and theory-theorists alike, the  
 21 crucial question is not whether we can predict and explain the behaviour of others,  
 22 and if so, how that happens, but rather whether such prediction and explanation  
 23 constitute the primary and ordinary form of intersubjectivity. There is a marked  
 24 difference between the way we engage with others in the second-person and the  
 25 third-person case. When we interact directly with another person, we do generally  
 26 not engage in some detached observation of what the person is doing. We do  
 27 in general not at first attempt to classify his or her actions under lawlike general-  
 28 izations; rather we seek to make sense of them. When you see somebody use  
 29 a hammer, feed a child or clean a table, you might not necessarily understand  
 30 every aspect of the action, but it is immediately given as a meaningful action (in  
 31 a common world). Under normal circumstances, we understand each other well  
 32 enough through our shared engagement in this common world, and it is only if  
 33 this pragmatic understanding for some reason breaks down, for instance if the other  
 34 behaves in an unexpected and puzzling way, that other options kick in and take over,  
 35 be it inferential reasoning or some kind of simulation. We develop both capacities,  
 36 but we only employ them in special circumstances. Neither establishes our primary  
 37 nor ordinary access to the embodied minds of others. They are the exceptions rather  
 38 than the rules. In most intersubjective situations, we have a direct understanding of  
 39 the other person's intentions, since these intentions are manifested in the person's  
 40 behaviour and embedded in a shared social context. Thus, as Gallagher remarks,  
 41 much is going on in our understanding of others that exceeds and precedes our  
 42 theoretical and simulation capabilities. At best, the theory-theory of mind and the  
 43 simulation theory of mind only explain a narrow and specialized set of cognitive  
 44 processes that we can employ when our usual way of understanding others fall  
 short (Gallagher 2005, p. 208).

01 The simulation theory of mind and the theory–theory of mind both operate with a  
 02 problematic dichotomy between inner and outer, between experience and behaviour.  
 03 But if we start with a radical division between a perceived body and an inferred  
 04 or simulated mind, we will never, to use Hobson’s phrase, be able to “put Humpty  
 05 Dumpty together again” (Hobson 1993, p. 104).

06  
 07  
 08 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

09 Thanks to Dan Hutto and Matthew Ratcliffe for some helpful comments. This study  
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 11

12  
 13 NOTES

14  
 15 <sup>1</sup> Let me add though that I actually have considerable more sympathy for some of the other “simula-  
 16 tionist” approaches. I think that Gordon’s reference to ascent routines and Gallese’s investigations of the  
 17 automatic, implicit and subpersonal activation and resonance of mirror neurons both contain important  
 18 insights. It is simply less clear to me what either has to do with simulation in the proper sense of  
 19 the word. Thus, I would for instance, agree with Gallagher, when he elsewhere in this volume argues  
 20 that mirroring rather than being a question of simulation is a question of perceptual elicitation, and  
 21 when he writes that it therefore makes better sense to consider it as a process that subserves our direct  
 22 understanding of the actions of others’ (Gallagher \*\*).

23 <sup>2</sup> In Zahavi (2004, 2005), I discuss this question in more detail.

24 <sup>3</sup> It might be worth mentioning that some empirical research suggests that the expression of a number of  
 25 basic emotions, such as anger, happiness, disgust, contempt, sadness, fear and surprise, are cross cultural  
 26 and universal, though there are, of course, culturally specific rules about how to manage expressions  
 27 in public (Ekman 2003, pp. 4, 10, 58). The suggestion that basic emotional expressions are innate is  
 28 further corroborated by the fact that even congenitally blind children normally exhibit the relevant facial  
 29 expressions.

30 <sup>4</sup> For a more extensive discussion of phenomenological accounts of intersubjectivity, cf. Zahavi  
 31 (2001a, b).

AQ2

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01 **QUERIES TO BE ANSWERED (SEE MARGINAL MARKS)**

02

03 **IMPORTANT NOTE: Please mark your corrections and answers to these**  
04 **queries directly onto the proof at the relevant place. Do NOT mark your**  
05 **corrections on this query sheet.**

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08 Chapter-02

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10 Query No.	Page No.	Line No.	Query
11 AQ1	25	36	Please check the inserted citation of
			'(Gardon 1996)'.
13 AQ2	39	20	Please provide year for the reference
			'(Gallagher **)' cited in footnote1.

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