

“Ethical Responsibility and the Knowledge of Other Minds,” in process. Targeted Journal: *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*. Anticipated submission date: May 1st, 2010.

Abstract

This paper challenges traditional solutions of how we come to knowledge of other minds, particularly, Theory Theory and Simulation Theory. Following the lead of Ratcliffe (*Rethinking Commonsense Psychology*, 2007), Hutto (*Folk Psychological Narratives*, 2008) and Gallagher (*How the Body Shapes the Mind*, 2005), who find sufficient “scaffolding” in our interactive experience with others to understand their minds without having to lapse into “mind reading,” I argue that our sense of the agency of the other is partially grounded phenomenologically in our awareness of our own obligations to the other. Furthermore, this sense of agency and responsibility is not based on the predictability of the other’s behavior, but rather on its irregularity and unpredictability. The fact that we are often surprised by the behavior of others is an indication of their autonomy and hence at the basis of the distinction between persons and things that powers the debate about folk psychology and makes other persons the possible recipients of our moral regard.

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