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### 3 Empathy, Embodiment, and the Unity of Expression

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7 **Abstract** This paper presents an account of empathy as  
8 the form of experience directed at embodied unities of  
9 expressive movement. After outlining the key differences  
10 between simulation theory and the phenomenological  
11 approach to empathy, the paper argues that while the  
12 phenomenological approach is closer to respecting a nec-  
13 essary constitutional asymmetry between first-personal and  
14 second-personal senses of embodiment, it still presupposes  
15 a general concept of embodiment that ends up being  
16 problematic. A different account is proposed that is neutral  
17 on the explanatory role of the first-person sense of  
18 embodiment, which leads to an emphasis on the transfor-  
19 mative nature of empathy and a broadening of the scope of  
20 possible targets of empathic awareness.

21  
22 **Keywords** Empathy · Embodiment · Expression ·  
23 Phenomenology · Simulation theory · Resonance

#### 24 1 Introduction: The Problem of Direct Social Cognition

25 The concepts of empathy and embodiment intertwine to  
26 form the core of a conceptual framework for under-  
27 standing social cognition. Within this framework, our  
28 ability to understand and navigate the social world is not  
29 mediated by a theoretical apparatus that yields inferential  
30 knowledge of the intentions and mental states of others.  
31 Rather, there is growing support for the idea that we  
32 possess a basic capacity to grasp the expressive behavior

of others in a direct way, prior to engaging in more  
conceptually rich forms of theorizing and interpretation  
(Gallese 2001, 2003, 2005; Gallagher 2008; Gallagher  
and Zahavi 2008; Goldman and Gallese 1998; Overgaard  
2005, 2007; Zahavi 2007, 2010, 2011a, 2011b). Simu-  
lation theory (ST) holds that we have a pre-theoretical  
understanding of the mindedness of others through  
physiological “mirroring” or “resonance” mechanisms  
that are responsive to the other’s bodily movement  
(Goldman and Gallese 1998). The simulation that  
underlies this form of understanding is an automatic,  
sub-personal, “off-line tokening” of the target’s inten-  
tional state. Phenomenological theories of social cogni-  
tion are sympathetic to ST’s emphasis on the embodied  
and pre-theoretical nature of our understanding of other  
minds, but critical of the idea that our understanding of  
others takes the form of an isomorphism between the  
observer’s mental state and the target’s mental state  
(Zahavi and Overgaard 2012). Furthermore, it is unclear  
how simulation could provide one with an understanding  
of the *other’s* mental state without an additional act of  
projecting one’s own simulation onto the perceived  
behavioral data. The *phenomenological proposal* (PP) is  
the claim that our understanding of other subjects takes  
the form of *direct social perception* that does not rely on  
embodied simulation, let alone any sort of theorizing  
(Zahavi 2011a).

According to PP, empathy depends on embodiment, but  
in a way that is much less straightforward than for ST.  
Whereas ST accounts for social cognition in terms of  
simulation or “resonance” mechanisms, phenomenological  
approaches rely on the concept of *expression* in their  
explanations of how empathy and embodiment are related.  
How this concept of expression performs the explanatory  
work needed here, however, is unclear. Zahavi (2007,  
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68 2011a, 2011b) and Overgaard (2005) are the most explicit  
 69 in their reliance on the concept of expression, therefore I  
 70 will make frequent reference to their work in this paper.  
 71 My aim is to build on their work while critically assessing  
 72 their use of the concept of expression. I agree with the  
 73 claim that empathy is a form of experience that targets  
 74 expressive behavior. I am critical, however, of the idea that  
 75 one can recognize the movement of the other *as expressive*  
 76 in virtue of her first-person bodily awareness. Two  
 77 interesting upshots of my analysis are that empathy is not  
 78 easily classified as perceptual insofar as it has a transfor-  
 79 mative effect on the empathizer (cf. Thompson 2001), and  
 80 that the class of entities with which we may empathize may  
 81 be broader than we commonly think. The account of  
 82 empathy presented here seeks to make sense of Zahavi's  
 83 claim, following Husserl, that empathy is a *sui generis*  
 84 form of intentionality, with "its own kind of originality, its  
 85 own kind of fulfillment and corroboration and its own  
 86 criteria of success and failure" (Zahavi 2011b, 230). In  
 87 other words, the nature of empathy is constituted by an  
 88 awareness of a class of objects that elicit a response whose  
 89 validity is dependent on a different set of principles than  
 90 those underlying the validity of both perception and first-  
 91 personal givenness. A proper theory of empathy should  
 92 provide such a set of principles while remaining faithful  
 93 to the original phenomenological desiderata—i.e., that  
 94 empathy depends on neither isomorphic simulation nor an  
 95 act of projection. Perhaps it is intuitive that empathy has a  
 96 unique proprietary phenomenal character, distinct from  
 97 both self-awareness and object-awareness; but this unique  
 98 phenomenal character is the datum of experience we seek  
 99 to explain.

## 100 2 The Phenomenological Framework

101 At times, ST sounds very amenable to phenomenology  
 102 (e.g., Gallese et al. 2004, 396). Both reject conceptually  
 103 loaded theorizing and conscious interpreting as the primary  
 104 means of understanding the mental lives of others. Both  
 105 characterize our understanding of others as somehow  
 106 "direct" or "quasi-perceptual" in nature. How, then, does  
 107 phenomenology differ in approach?

108 The first thing to keep in mind here is that phenomenol-  
 109 ogy seeks to preserve the first-personal nature of its expla-  
 110 nanda: different types of experience *as* experienced from the  
 111 first-person perspective. This does not mean that phenom-  
 112 enology completely eschews analyses that break experience  
 113 down into simpler components. In fact, Husserl was a master  
 114 of such analyses. His accounts of perceptual objectivity,  
 115 communicative action, and empathy all involve pars-  
 116 ing structures, identifying necessary constituents and rela-  
 117 tions, and constructing conceptual strata via a foundational

analysis.<sup>1</sup> Where Husserl differs from—e.g., Descartes—is  
 his insistence that the fine-grained results of his analyses are  
*dependent parts* or "moments" of a "precise [*prägnant*]  
 whole" (Husserl 2001, Investigation III; cf. Smith 2007, 6).  
 The esplanade of phenomenological analysis are experien-  
 tial wholes that can be conceptually understood in terms of  
 the meanings through which we grasp the structure of our  
 experiences. But this structure is ultimately derivative and  
 must be understood as the product of an interpretive activity.  
 Thus while the targets of phenomenological analysis may be  
 broken down into parts and relations holding between those  
 parts, the experiential unity or *phenomenal character* of that  
 which we are analyzing remains logically prior.

Considering the differences and similarities between  
 Husserl and Descartes helps throw the ST-PP debate into  
 historical relief. Similar to Descartes, Husserl sought to  
 account for empathy in *some* law-like fashion, rather than  
 simply assert that first-person experience does not admit of  
 analysis. Husserl, however, does not share Descartes'  
 mechanistic framework.<sup>2</sup> Descartes' analyses of emotion,  
 for example, start with first-person experience and then  
 seek to explain how such experiences are built up through a  
 series of mental operations.<sup>3</sup> In the Cartesian framework,  
 we need not deny that upon encountering a bear in the  
 woods we *see it as frightening*. What is going on in one's  
 mind here, however, is actually a rapid sequence of sensa-  
 tion (seeing the bear), judgment (that this thing before  
 me is threatening), and emotional response (feelings of fear  
 to prepare the body for fight or flight). Descartes was  
 committed to a framework in which the experiential unity  
 of these mental acts is constituted by a fixed mind–body  
 union operating according to mechanistic laws.<sup>4</sup> Thus,  
 when Descartes looked out his window at the crowds of  
 people walking below, all that he *really saw* was a bunch of  
 coats and hats. Only through the work of judgment are  
 these sensations transformed into perceptions of people.

This detour through early modern philosophy helps  
 identify the explanandum at hand (empathy) and its pecu-  
 liarity amidst our mental economy. Descartes recognized  
 that the phenomenal character of many experiences implies  
 a blend of sensation and judgment. Empathy seems related

<sup>1</sup> On perceptual objectivity, see Husserl (2001, vol. 2) Investigation VI (viz. §10); on communicative action, see Husserl (2001, vol. 1) Investigation I (viz. §7); on empathy, see Husserl (1989) §56ff.

<sup>2</sup> For example, see Descartes' analysis of perception in the Sixth Replies (1984, vol 2, 294–296).

<sup>3</sup> See Descartes' (1989, §§35–36).

<sup>4</sup> See Descartes (1989), §§35–36. There is a lively debate regarding the reach of judgment in perceptual life in Descartes. See Hatfield (2007) for an account of why Descartes must be understood as keeping judgment and sensation distinct from one another. See Shapiro for a compelling reading of Descartes along more phenomenological lines.

159 to perception, but it also seems related to judgment.  
 160 Empathy is perception-like in that the body of the other is  
 161 given directly to us, just as other physical objects taking up  
 162 space. And yet, we must admit that the way others are  
 163 given to us is quite different than the way inanimate objects  
 164 appear. While the bodies of others are directly available to  
 165 our gaze, something about the other remains essentially  
 166 hidden. To use phenomenological language, the other  
 167 always transcends our gaze. The transcendence of the other  
 168 permits an ineliminable possibility of skepticism regarding  
 169 other minds. Thus, it also seems plausible that empathy  
 170 involves a kind of judgment, since many aspects of the  
 171 other are not obviously determined by perception.

172 Thus, on the common sense picture that emerges, the  
 173 perceptual correlate of empathy is the other's physical  
 174 body and the judgment-based or "predicative" correlate of  
 175 empathy is the other's mental state. Indeed, the other  
 176 appears *as* minded, but our common sense analysis tells us  
 177 that this "as" structure is a product of discreet mental acts  
 178 that combine in a certain sequence. We see other bodies  
 179 and judge of their mental nature. We do this very fast, and  
 180 we probably do this by habit, but the steps seem necessary  
 181 given our competing intuitions about the explanandum.

182 As I implied above, Husserl would appreciate Descartes'  
 183 zeal for parsing the building blocks of experience. The  
 184 phenomenological framework that Husserl instituted,  
 185 however, differs drastically from Descartes' mechanistic  
 186 one. Whereas Descartes took the results of his analysis to  
 187 reveal the literal building blocks of the mind, Husserl  
 188 insisted that such analyses were abstractions from what is  
 189 actually given in first-person experience. Thus, in the  
 190 phenomenological framework, when one is seeking to  
 191 understand a certain mental state or experience, one may  
 192 reconstruct it via an atomistic building-block structure, but  
 193 one must be aware that the nature of the resulting combi-  
 194 nation is akin to a chemical reaction and not a Lego-block  
 195 assemblage. The parts combine and form something wholly  
 196 different in kind. A mechanistic analysis such as Descartes'  
 197 may give us a nice interpretation of how a certain sensory/  
 198 bodily apparatus works, but it does not give us the phe-  
 199 nomenon that we set out to explain in its first-personal  
 200 givenness. Within the phenomenological framework, the  
 201 building blocks of experience constitute a *lived through*  
 202 unity with a unique phenomenal character, distinct from  
 203 the phenomenal characters of the individual dependent  
 204 parts.

205 In order to emphasize this lived through experiential  
 206 unity, Husserl appropriated the concept of apperception  
 207 from Wilhelm Wundt in order to characterize how the *acts*  
 208 of consciousness are "overlaid with various additional  
 209 characters" (Hua XIX/1, 566; cited in Dwyer 2007, 95) that  
 210 make them different in kind from the purely sensory  
 211 contents that constitute those acts in the stream of

consciousness. Every intentional act of consciousness, for  
 Husserl, includes an *apperceptive surplus* that carries more  
 significance than the concatenation of sensory parts that  
 make up the act (Husserl 2001 vol. 2, Investigation VI,  
 §14b).<sup>5</sup> A phenomenological theory of empathy, thus, is a  
 specific occasion for working out the nature of the apper-  
 ceptive surplus unique to those acts of consciousness that  
 present us with others *qua* minded subjects. Recall that our  
 Cartesian inspired common sense picture of empathy was  
 aware of this surplus of content, and accounted for it by  
 appealing to the faculty of judgment. On this view there is a  
 perceptual given (the other's body), followed by a judgment  
 aimed at what is not given (the other's mind). The concept  
 of apperception accounts for the surplus in a radically dif-  
 ferent way. For Husserl, "what we have here is not a surplus  
 which would be posited on top of the physical," (1989,  
 251). The mindedness of the other is not a surplus that is  
 "tacked on," in a *partes extra partes* fashion, to a purely  
 sensory awareness of the other's physical body. The phys-  
 ical and mental aspects of the other are discernible parts of  
 empathic experience *upon reflection*; however, they are not  
 included as parts in "the way one physical thing is a part of  
 another" (*ibid.*). Hence the need to heed the importance of  
 Husserl's distinction between the naturalistic and person-  
 alistic attitudes (Husserl 1989, 183ff.). We cannot seek to  
 understand that which we experience as motivated and  
 expressive with the notion of causality we employ when  
 investigating natural phenomena.

In contemporary terms, accounting for what Husserl  
 called the unique apperceptive surplus characteristic of  
 empathic experience is an exercise in working out the  
*scope of proprietary phenomenal character*.<sup>6</sup> The phe-  
 nomenal character of an experience is what it is like to live  
 through it from the first person perspective. At any given  
 moment one's experiential state is constituted by a com-  
 plex concatenation of a myriad of phenomenal characters.  
 My current experiential state includes the visual phenom-  
 enal character constituting what it is like to see the colors  
 and shapes of the computer on the desk before me; the  
 tactile phenomenal character that constitutes the feel of the  
 keys on my hands, the pressure of the chair on my body,  
 and the feeling of my feet on the floor; the auditory phe-  
 nomenal character of the noise out in the hallway and the  
 humming of the ventilation system, and so on. Phenomenal  
 character is *proprietary* if it cannot be reduced to other  
 more basic phenomenal characters. Thus, in my current  
 experiential state, we could say, loosely, that there is

<sup>5</sup> See Dwyer (2007) for an excellent account of the role of  
 apperception in Husserl's philosophy and his appropriation of it from  
 the apperceptive psychology of Wundt.

<sup>6</sup> See Pitt 2004, 2011 and Siewert 2011 for in-depth explications of  
 this notion.

259 *something that it is like* to be writing an essay on a laptop.  
 260 But the phenomenal character of laptop-essay-writing is  
 261 not proprietary precisely because it admits of further ana-  
 262 lysis into the visual, tactile, and auditory (and no doubt  
 263 several more subtle) phenomenal characters constituting  
 264 my current experience. The various sensory modalities are  
 265 the most obvious examples of distinct proprietary phe-  
 266 nomenal character.<sup>7</sup> What it is like to see red differs from  
 267 what it is like to see blue, thus *qua* unique colors, there is a  
 268 proprietary red phenomenal character and a proprietary  
 269 blue phenomenal character. However, *qua* visual experi-  
 270 ence, what it is like to see red and what it is like to see blue  
 271 have something in common insofar as both fall under the  
 272 scope of proprietary visual phenomenal character. What it  
 273 is like to taste cinnamon is simply different in kind from  
 274 what it is like to see red, and this is due to the fact that there  
 275 is a proprietary gustatory phenomenal character.

276 Does empathy, as a conscious act-type, have a proprie-  
 277 tary phenomenal character? Or can it be reduced into a  
 278 concatenation of simpler phenomenal characters? The  
 279 difference between ST and the phenomenological approach  
 280 is now clear: phenomenologists, following Husserl, argue  
 281 for empathy as a *sui generis* intentional act-type with a  
 282 proprietary phenomenal character. The problem with ST is  
 283 that it runs the same risk as the Cartesian framework, albeit  
 284 in a different way. When seeking to understand empathy,  
 285 ST does not preserve the explanandum. The results of its  
 286 analysis are shaped by prior commitments to a certain  
 287 framework informed by cognitive neuroscience such that  
 288 we end up with something different from the phenomenon  
 289 we started with. For sure, cognitive neuroscience can  
 290 provide important, interesting, and insightful leading clues  
 291 for phenomenology. It may provide clues for us to refine  
 292 our phenomenological descriptions. If research on recog-  
 293 nition of conspecifics shows that very specific brain regions  
 294 respond in law-like ways to, e.g., goal-directed action and  
 295 faces, then we ought to seriously consider these two  
 296 domains as targets of phenomenological analysis. The  
 297 phenomenologist ought not presuppose that we are trans-  
 298 parent to ourselves, and that some sort of basic introspec-  
 299 tion will easily reveal the nature of the phenomena to be  
 300 explained. When wondering about the nature of empathy,  
 301 we should not simply ask ourselves, “What is it like to see  
 302 another person?” This question may be too general and not  
 303 very useful for guiding our introspective gaze. Phenome-  
 304 nology is interpretive in that it must have a basic sense of  
 305 what it is looking for before it begins looking. Thus, we  
 306 may realize that empathy necessarily presupposes both  
 307 visual and proprioceptive phenomenology, and that without  
 308 these aspects we would no longer be explaining what we

sought to explain. But we may also validly conclude that  
 the resultant phenomenology does not easily separate into a  
 neat visual and proprioceptive category scheme. Otherwise  
 we end up with very forced explanations like Descartes’,  
 where we are told to believe that were we to come across a  
 bear in the woods we would make a judgment as of its  
 danger.

### 3 Two Concepts of Embodiment

Claiming that our understanding of others as minded sub-  
 jects like ourselves is achieved through empathy is not an  
 explanation of this understanding. Zahavi rightly points  
 this out; empathy is an achievement and a theory of  
 empathy seeks to explain how this achievement is possible  
 (2011b, 234–235). ST unpacks the achievement of empathy  
 by interpreting the mirror neuron system as a “resonance”  
 mechanism. Empirical studies have shown that a network  
 of neurons in the premotor cortex is active when one  
 executes goal directed actions, *as well as* when one  
 observes others performing similar actions (Gallese 2001,  
 35). Thus, in the presence of other bodies like one’s own,  
 and more specifically the gestures of those bodies, one’s  
 own body “resonates” with the other in a direct, measur-  
 able, physiological way. When one performs an action, say,  
 grasping a coffee mug, a certain motor representation in the  
 cortex is “online”. When one observes coffee mug grasp-  
 ing, the same motor representation is tokened, but is  
 “offline”.

The problem with this account, as Zahavi points out, is  
 that if we think of empathy in terms of the “offline” or  
 “dim” tokening of a (neurally encoded) representation, we  
 are left with the conclusion that we must be a little bit angry  
 every time we recognize an angry expression, or somehow  
 feel ourselves grabbing every time we observe grabbing  
 behavior (2011a, 2011b). This is improbable. Therefore, the  
 ST position seems to lead to a notion of empathy that is hard  
 to discern from a kind of contagion. In order to avoid this  
 path, ST needs to posit an additional act of projection or  
 attribution of the resonating mental state to the empathic  
 target. But now it seems that we are back in the mechanistic  
 framework of Descartes, whereby we *must* posit a sequence  
 of discreet mental acts in order to preserve the difference  
 between self-awareness and other-awareness.

However, ST seems to have something right. Following  
 Husserl, Zahavi explains how the appeal to embodiment  
 captures something about our experiential grasp of others  
 as minded subjects (2011b). Upon encountering others we  
 are somehow in touch with their mental states through our  
 direct perception of their bodies. The metaphors of “res-  
 onance” and “mirroring” may prove accurate for some  
 forms of social cognition—consider the feelings of

7FL01 <sup>7</sup> Cf. Siewert (2011) pp. 243–247 on how to interpret the phrase  
 7FL02 “what it’s like”.

359 discomfort that arise when watching a big needle about to  
 360 puncture someone's eyeball—but it seems that the scope of  
 361 empathy is broader than this. Unless we limit our concept  
 362 of empathy to the resonance response and the similarity  
 363 principle underlying it, then “the plausibility of the mirror  
 364 neuron hypothesis increases in reverse proportion to its  
 365 alleged explanatory scope” (2011b, 247). Thus, the way  
 366 empathy depends on embodiment must be different than  
 367 the way resonance depends on embodiment. Zahavi and  
 368 others working within the phenomenological framework  
 369 have unpacked this peculiar intertwining of empathy and  
 370 embodiment through the concept of *expression* (Zahavi  
 371 2007, 2011b; Overgaard 2005).

372 For the phenomenologist, the concept of expression  
 373 provides a connection between mind and body that is  
 374 stronger than causal contingency but weaker than logical  
 375 entailment (Overgaard 2005, 256). The body of the other  
 376 does not *necessarily* reveal what is on her mind, but the  
 377 other's bodily behavior is more than an accidental co-  
 378 occurrence alongside her mental state. Citing Gurwitsch,  
 379 Zahavi claims that the expressive field of the other's body  
 380 is the target domain of empathic awareness (2011b, 223;  
 381 see also Zahavi 2007). Gurwitsch originally characterized  
 382 the notion of a “field” of consciousness as the “totality of  
 383 co-present data” through his field theory of consciousness,  
 384 which sought to investigate “the articulation of the total  
 385 field of consciousness and to bring out the patterns and  
 386 forms in which co-present data are organized with respect  
 387 to each other” (Gurwitsch 1964, 2; cf. Depraz 2004).

388 But in virtue of what do we recognize certain spatially  
 389 extended objects in motion as expressive phenomena?<sup>8</sup>  
 390 Here is where embodiment takes an explanatory role in PP:  
 391 it is in virtue of one's own bodily awareness that one is able  
 392 to recognize other bodies as *lived bodies* like one's own,  
 393 expressive of various thoughts, intentions, emotions, etc.  
 394 The problem with this account, however, is that by claiming  
 395 that it is through an acquaintance with our own body that we  
 396 are able to recognize other bodies as expressive, PP runs  
 397 into a conceptual problem. As I shall now detail, there are  
 398 two concepts of embodiment at work in this explanation;  
 399 thus, the possibility of recognizing the movement of the  
 400 other as expressive must be explained while maintaining the  
 401 crucial distinction between these two concepts.

### 402 3.1 The Double Life of the Concept of Embodiment

403 Both the analytic and phenomenological traditions have  
 404 analyzed what I here refer to as the “double life” of the

405 concept of embodiment. This double life is revealed  
 406 through analyses of self-consciousness or self-awareness.  
 407 Wittgenstein (1958), for example, distinguished “I-as-  
 408 object” from “I-as-subject” in order to contrast radically  
 409 different forms of self-reference. Perry (1993) and Cas-  
 410 taneda (1966) have stressed the essential indexicality of the  
 411 pronoun “I” in order to argue that there is a sense of self  
 412 that cannot be exhausted by a definite description. In the  
 413 phenomenological tradition, Husserl, Stein, Merleau-Ponty  
 414 and several contemporary interpreters have all emphasized  
 415 the difference between reflective or “thetic” self-con-  
 416 sciousness and pre-reflective or “non-thetic” self-con-  
 417 sciousness.<sup>9</sup> In the case of reflective or thetic self-  
 418 consciousness, one is conscious of oneself in a manner akin  
 419 to one's consciousness of objects in the world. In this mode  
 420 of awareness, one's self is the intentional object of expe-  
 421 rience. In pre-reflective or non-thetic awareness one is  
 422 aware of herself as an experiencing subject, and not as an  
 423 object of experience.

424 This can be made more precise by focusing specifically  
 425 on self-consciousness *qua* embodiment. Both forms of self-  
 426 awareness are packed into every (non-pathological) expe-  
 427 rience of one's own body. When I look down at my arms  
 428 and legs, or when I grab my left arm with my right hand,  
 429 my body is the intentional object of my experience. And  
 430 yet, simultaneously I experience my body as the organ of  
 431 my will, as the sensing subject of the very same experi-  
 432 ences that are visually or tactilely regarding my own body  
 433 *qua* object. In such auto-affective experiences, one's body  
 434 is simultaneously *what is experienced* and *that which*  
 435 *experiences*. If I run my fingers over one of my arms, I can  
 436 shift my attention back and forth between the sensation of  
 437 being touched and the sensations of touching. Zahavi,  
 438 following Husserl, characterizes this as the “remarkable  
 439 interplay between *ipseity* and *alterity*” originating in bodily  
 440 self-consciousness (2011b, 239).

441 Thus we may distinguish between the concept of  
 442 embodiment that designates the bodily unity that we  
 443 encounter as an object of experience, and the concept of  
 444 embodiment that designates the bodily modality through  
 445 which we experience the world. For convenience, call the  
 446 former the “external body image” and the latter the  
 447 “internal body image”. The external body image is con-  
 448 stituted by experiences *directed at* bodies, whether one's  
 449 own or an other's. The external body image is thus pri-  
 450 marily comprised of visual and tactile meaning—i.e., how  
 451 bodies look and feel. The internal body image is consti-  
 452 tuted by complex system of proprioceptive and kinesthetic  
 453 sensation that one has of one's own body, which typically  
 454 is not the focus of one's attention. At any given moment of,  
 455 e.g., visual experience, one's attention is directed at the

8FL01 <sup>8</sup> At this point I want to make clear that “expression” should be  
 8FL02 understood as expressive bodily movement and not linguistic  
 8FL03 expression. Unpacking the relation between these two senses of  
 8FL04 expression is a task for another day.

<sup>9</sup> See Gallagher and Zahavi (2008).

456 object before him while remaining only peripherally aware  
457 of his internal body image. One can always shift attention  
458 and make his current proprioceptive or kinesthetic states  
459 the object of consciousness, but we typically do not do this.  
460 We remain immersed in the world.<sup>10</sup>

461 The picture is complicated when another body is the  
462 intentional object of our awareness—i.e., when we address  
463 empathic awareness. Empathic awareness occurs in the  
464 context of our own first person embodiment—characterized  
465 above as our internal body image—and the object of  
466 empathic awareness is another embodied context. In the  
467 case of auto-affection, my internal body image interacts  
468 with my external body image, and a system or order of  
469 functional dependencies is established. In the case of  
470 empathy, however, my internal body image is not corre-  
471 lated with the external body image that is presented to me.  
472 In other words, in non-pathological first-person experience,  
473 when I see my right hand running along my left arm the  
474 visual information correlates in a regular way with the  
475 kinesthetic and proprioceptive information that constitutes  
476 my feeling of moving and controlling my right hand. In  
477 empathic experience, the visual information that presents  
478 the moving body of another person does not correlate in the  
479 same way with my internal body image since my current  
480 kinesthetic-propriceptive state is one of, e.g., standing still  
481 and turning my head to watch the other.

482 Thus, the question becomes: in virtue of what do I  
483 recognize other bodies as other *lived* bodies, with their own  
484 internal body image? ST answers this question through the  
485 concept of resonance. The visual data I gain from the  
486 external body image before me “triggers” or “resonates”  
487 with my own internal body image in such a way that I  
488 “simulate” or “mirror” the internal state of the other. But  
489 as we have already seen, this is a problematic view of  
490 empathy because it seems to entail that I must somehow  
491 “dimly” or “faintly” token the experiences of others if I  
492 am to recognize them at all as foreign experiences. In short,  
493 ST seems to blur the distinction between our two concepts  
494 of embodiment by claiming that certain external body  
495 images always systematically correlate with certain inter-  
496 nal body images. This allows ST a general concept of  
497 embodiment that explains how one’s own embodiment is  
498 connected to foreign embodiment. Furthermore, it is hard  
499 to see how PP fares any better. It is not clear how shifting  
500 the discussion to “expression” solves the problem, since  
501 expression is then cashed out in terms of recognizing other  
502 lived bodies in virtue of acquaintance with one’s own body.

Zahavi (2011b) provides the most detailed discussion of  
this issue. He is careful to point out that Husserl seems to  
vacillate on this issue. On the one hand, there are several  
places throughout Husserl’s corpus where he claims that  
the ability to recognize the body of the other as expressive  
is based on a subject’s primordial acquaintance with her  
own phenomenal body (*ibid.*, 237–238, 240). On the other  
hand, Husserl also insists that empathic awareness does not  
function through an act of projecting one’s first-personal  
bodily acquaintance onto the expressive movement of the  
other on the basis of a perceived similarity (Zahavi 2011b,  
238). Zahavi attempts to reconcile these competing Hus-  
serlian insights in the following manner:

Another possibility, however, is to see the self-  
experience in question as a necessary contrast foil on  
the basis of which others can be experienced as  
others. To put it differently, the other might be a self  
in his/her own right, but the other can only appear as  
another for me in relation to and contrast to my own  
self-experience. But in this case, my self-experience  
doesn’t constitute the model; rather it is that against  
which the other’s difference can reveal itself (Zahavi  
2011b, 240).

I am not sure, however, to what extent this subtle attempt  
really does overcome the difficulty. On what basis would  
self-experience serve as the “foil” or basis of comparison  
for other-experience? In virtue of what do I situate my  
experience of the other in relation to self-experience?  
Zahavi’s answer seems to be Husserl’s (and Merleau-  
Ponty’s) claim that there is an “intersubjectivity of the  
body” (239) that is the precondition for sociality. It is the  
interplay between *ipseity* and *alterity* that characterizes  
one’s awareness of her own body, and this is the  
precondition for recognizing other bodies as expressive.  
But as I explained above, the interplay between *ipseity* and  
*alterity* in auto-affection establishes an order of functional  
correlations between one’s *own* internal body image and  
external body image. In the case of empathy, however, this  
order of correlations would not be operant, otherwise we  
are back in the realm of resonance or simulation. In other  
words, even though there may be a two-sided form of first-  
personal awareness of one’s own body, this still does not  
explain why or how the appearance of the other’s body  
would be automatically integrated into this system.

### 3.2 Constitutional Asymmetry

We need distinct concepts of embodiment in order to make  
sense of empathy. But rather than view this as a short-  
coming or puzzle to be solved, those working within the  
phenomenological tradition claim that this is as it should  
be. After all, if the concept of embodiment through which

10FL01 <sup>10</sup> Cf. Legrand (2006)’s discussion of the “body image” and “body  
10FL02 schema”. Legrand cites Gallagher (1995) in distinguishing the “body  
10FL03 image”, which is a phenomenally conscious representation of one’s  
10FL04 body, from the “body schema”, which is an organizing principle of  
10FL05 the sub-personal body and is not phenomenally conscious. Here my  
10FL06 focus is on the body image, not the body schema.

553 we recognize others were the same concept through which  
554 we are aware of our own bodily states, then self-awareness  
555 and other-awareness would run together. But clearly there  
556 is a difference between the way I am aware of my own  
557 body and the way I am aware of other bodies. Proponents  
558 of PP favorably quote Wittgenstein to drive the point  
559 home:

560 “But you can’t recognize pain with *certainty* just  
561 from externals.”—The *only* way of recognizing it is  
562 by externals, and the uncertainty is constitutional. It  
563 is not a shortcoming. (Wittgenstein 1980, §657; cf.  
564 1980a, §141; as quoted in Overgaard 2005).

565 Views that assume that the criterion for the knowability of  
566 other minds is the form of first-person access one has to her  
567 own mind confuses “a crucial distinction between *degree*  
568 of certainty, evidence, etc. and *kind* of access” (Overgaard  
569 2005, 267). Husserl makes the point succinctly:

570 ...if what belongs to the other’s own essence were  
571 directly accessible, it would be merely a moment of  
572 my own essence, and ultimately he himself and I  
573 myself would be the same (Husserl 1973, 109).

574 The constitutional asymmetry between the internal body  
575 image and the external body image is thus a necessary  
576 condition for preserving what we set out to explain:  
577 empathy understood as the direct awareness of the *other’s*  
578 experience.

### 579 3.3 Summing Up the Problem

580 Where does this leave us? Recall that both ST and PP rely  
581 on the concept of embodiment to explain the direct, non-  
582 inferential, quasi-perceptual form of access we have to the  
583 experiential lives of others. For ST, we recognize other  
584 bodies as unities of expressive behavior in virtue of reso-  
585 nance with the first-person acquaintance we have of our  
586 own expressive behavior. For PP, this explanation violates  
587 a key principle of our notion of empathy by cancelling out  
588 the constitutional asymmetry between first-person and  
589 second-person forms of access. PP recognizes the role of  
590 the concept of embodiment in explaining empathy by  
591 positing the expressive field of the other’s body as the  
592 target of empathic awareness. But at this crucial juncture  
593 PP seems to come up short. By relying on the interplay  
594 between *ipseity* and *alterity* in first-personal experience, it  
595 is still unclear how proponents of PP can account for the  
596 external body image of the *other* to appear as expressive.  
597 My awareness of the other’s body as expressive must be  
598 based on something other than the order of functional  
599 correlations between my own internal and external body  
600 images, otherwise PP begins to sound like a theory of  
601 “triggering” or “resonance”.

The question thus becomes: how does the concept of  
embodiment function in a theory of our ability to recognize  
foreign embodiment as a field of expressive behavior  
*without* violating the necessary constitutional asymmetry?  
Phenomenology may be correct to criticize ST’s failure to  
distinguish the two senses of embodiment, but it needs a  
positive account of how there could be a *general* or *sin-*  
*gular* concept of embodiment that allows us to recognize  
foreign bodily movement as expressive at all. Otherwise, it  
needs to account for our ability to recognize expressive  
behavior without resorting to such a singular concept.  
Davidson captures the difficulty clearly:

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

In other words, when it comes to recognizing the expres-  
sive behavior of others, just as the concept of embodiment  
lives a double life—as both the context of empathic  
awareness and the target of empathic awareness—so do all  
of our other psychological predicates. If the constitutional  
asymmetry is to be maintained, it seems that we would end  
up with two distinct sets of mental state concepts, one set  
for those mental states I am acquainted with in first-person  
experience, and another set for those mental states I grasp  
in the expressive behavior of others. If I am motivated to  
take the embodied expressivity of others *as expressive* in  
virtue of my own sense of embodiment, then one must  
explain how this works without violating the constitutional  
asymmetry. Otherwise, one might seek an independent  
account of how the bodily movement of the other appears  
as expressive—an account that explains the appearance of  
embodied unities of expressivity without reference to first-  
person bodily awareness.

## 4 The Unity of Expression

Can we account for our experiential grasp of embodied  
unities of expressivity without violating the necessary  
constitutional asymmetry? In order to answer this question  
I will explain the organizational principles that underlie the  
appearance of expressive movement in the other, and then  
consider whether these principles could be based on our  
own sense of embodiment. Rather than assume from the  
outset that we recognize other bodies as expressive on the  
basis of our own sense of embodiment, we must remain  
neutral and see if our account leads to such a conclusion.

Consider some examples of recognizing expressive  
movement that make the isomorphism condition implied  
by ST seem implausible:

- 651 – Citing Heider and Simmel (1944) and Michotte (1963),  
 652 Gallagher and Miyahara (2012) point out that we “tend  
 653 to see intentionality even in geometric figures if they  
 654 make particular kinds of movements” (Gallagher and  
 655 Miyahara 2012, 125).  
 656 – As Edith Stein originally pointed out, empathy seems to  
 657 be a scalar notion. “The type “human physical body”  
 658 does not define the limits of the range of my empathic  
 659 objects” (Stein 1989, 59). The “fulfillment” of  
 660 empathic experience is “very extensive” when the  
 661 target of the experience is of the type “human physical  
 662 body”, yet we are also able to recognize basic levels of  
 663 expressivity in those whose bodies are unlike our own,  
 664 including animals. Thus, while the chimp’s smiling  
 665 face appears to us as mocking, even the movement of a  
 666 scurrying ant can appear to us as intentional.  
 667 – Moving further afield, one may recognize the behavior  
 668 of collectives as unified expressive states. From a  
 669 spectator’s vantage point, a school of fish may be seen  
 670 as a single instance of fleeing. Witnessing the behavior  
 671 of crowds, one may recognize approval or disapproval.

672 These examples are meant to indicate a basic form of  
 673 social cognition whereby we recognize embodied unities of  
 674 expressivity. Some may balk at designating this form of  
 675 experience as empathy, but I believe the designation is  
 676 appropriate. Recall that which we set out to explain: our basic  
 677 capacity to grasp the expressive behavior of others. Some  
 678 might argue that the ST-inspired notions of resonance and/or  
 679 mirroring get us the basic form of experience in question,  
 680 with empathy designating a more sophisticated level of  
 681 understanding the thoughts, motives, and intentions of oth-  
 682 ers. Of course, people may define terms however they like,  
 683 but the problem with this picture is that we have already seen  
 684 that the notions of resonance or mirroring do not respect the  
 685 constitutional asymmetry that is necessary for preserving the  
 686 explanandum. What we seek is something akin to resonance  
 687 insofar as it is *basic*—i.e., a form of experience that directly  
 688 grasps expressive behavior without inferential or theoretical  
 689 baggage. Thus, we may understand empathy as this basic  
 690 form of experience while keeping it distinct from resonance.

691 Furthermore, understanding empathy as this basic form  
 692 of expression recognition is compatible with some of the  
 693 more traditional notions of empathy, which treat it as a  
 694 deeper form of understanding what it is currently like for the  
 695 other. On the view presented here, empathy is the form of  
 696 experience that affectively motivates taking the intentional  
 697 stance (Dennett 1987). Dennett introduced this idea in the  
 698 context of a eliminativist theory of intentionality. We can  
 699 remain neutral on that here while recognizing the intuitive  
 700 appeal of the idea: there are contexts in which we are  
 701 motivated to understand what stands before us in experience  
 702 as intentional behavior rather than mechanical movement. I

703 say “affectively” here to emphasize that this form of  
 704 experience does not involve choosing or deciding to inter-  
 705 pret certain movements as expressive, but rather that one is  
 706 affected by it in such a way to treat it as expressive. The  
 707 examples above were meant not only to explode the iso-  
 708 morphism condition, but also to show that empathy can be  
 709 understood as having a variety of targets. On this account,  
 710 empathy is the *phenomenal taking* of movement as  
 711 expressive. The phenomenal character indicated here can be  
 712 motivated through examples and pointed at through contrast  
 713 cases, but this still does not get us a theory of empathy. Now  
 714 the question becomes: what principles govern this inten-  
 715 tional-stance-motivating form of experience?

716 If empathy so defined targets the expressive movement  
 717 of the other, then we must determine the principles that  
 718 differentiate expressive movement from other kinds of  
 719 movement. Keep in mind that at this point we are no longer  
 720 discussing the phenomenal character of empathy. We take  
 721 that as datum of experience to be accounted for. Now we  
 722 seek the organizational principles of the target of empathic  
 723 experience, as opposed to what is phenomenally conscious  
 724 within such experience. To put it differently, the question  
 725 has become: what is the essence of expressive movement  
 726 as it appears to an observer?

727 Within the phenomenological tradition, a classic way to  
 728 differentiate forms of experience at the conceptual level is  
 729 by articulating differing intentional horizons. The inten-  
 730 tional horizon of an experience is the range of expectations  
 731 motivated by one’s current perspective or view of the  
 732 world. Importantly, the horizon of an experience is *not* a set  
 733 of possibilities that one consciously entertains as he regards  
 734 something. As I look at the table whose legs are occluded  
 735 from my view, I experience it as a table rather than a flat  
 736 surface hovering above the floor. I do not consciously think  
 737 “There must be four legs to that table”. Rather, horizon  
 738 expectations “correspond to a kind of counter-factual or  
 739 dispositional relationship between possible actions, per-  
 740 ceptions, and degrees of fulfillment or frustration...All my  
 741 tacit expectation amounts to is a relationship between what  
 742 happens and the degree to which I am surprised or not”  
 743 (Yoshimi 2009, 124–125).

744 Applying this structure to empathy yields the first obvious  
 745 distinction between empathy and other forms of experience.  
 746 There is a quantitative difference between the horizon of  
 747 possibility delineated by my expectations regarding the other  
 748 and that of perceptual experience of inanimate objects. In the  
 749 case of empathy, so many more anticipations are “live” or  
 750 “open” in relation to the occurrent expressive movement of  
 751 the target. We recognize others as embodied expressive uni-  
 752 ties insofar as our understanding of their gestures and move-  
 753 ments is situated in a very broad horizon of possibilities for the  
 754 continuation and variability of those movements. This horizon  
 755 is necessarily broader than our horizon of expectations for the



756 continuation and variability of the movement of inanimate  
757 objects. Simply put, the range of expectations that character-  
758 izes my awareness of a bag blowing around in the wind or a  
759 rock rolling down a hill is much narrower than it is when I see a  
760 person walking down the street or a student sitting at desk.  
761 Granted, there are certainly some very central sedimented  
762 expectations here; I expect the pedestrian to walk along, I  
763 expect the student to go about reading or writing, and so on.  
764 But I am not surprised in the least when the student suddenly  
765 reels backward to stretch her arms, nor am I surprised when the  
766 pedestrian changes direction abruptly and stops at a news-  
767 stand. I would, however, be quite shocked to see a tumbling  
768 rock suddenly cease tumbling, or a blowing bag suddenly  
769 begin jerking about at right angles. Were I to see such strange  
770 behavior, I would be instantly motivated to understand it as  
771 expressive (“Is someone remotely controlling that rock?” “Is  
772 that plastic bag alive?”).

773 Consider Husserl’s famous example of seeing a wax  
774 figure and momentarily taking it to be a person (Husserl  
775 2001 vol. 2, Investigation V, §27). What changes when one  
776 undergoes the interpretive switch and suddenly realizes it’s  
777 not alive? In the quantitative characterization of the hori-  
778 zon structure sketched above, what accounts for the shift is  
779 the sudden closing off of anticipations. One’s expectations  
780 regarding the figure are suddenly downsized considerably,  
781 and the correlated feeling of this interpretive switch points  
782 at the phenomenal character of empathy by way of con-  
783 trast. There must be more, however, to the difference  
784 between expressive and non-expressive movement. In  
785 addition to the quantitative difference in horizon expecta-  
786 tions just discussed, there is a qualitative difference as well.  
787 It is not simply the fact that the set of if–then conditionals  
788 that constitute my horizon of expectations is much bigger  
789 for expressive phenomena than it is for non-expressive  
790 ones. This would only account for a difference in degree  
791 and not in kind. We may simply assert that the qualitative  
792 difference is a datum of experience and end our account  
793 there, but perhaps we may account for the qualitative dif-  
794 ference through further analysis of the organizational  
795 principles of the appearance of expressive movement.

796 Overgaard (2005) accounts for the qualitative difference  
797 between the experience of expressive and non-expressive  
798 movement with the help of Wittgenstein and Levinas:

799 When the other person expresses herself, she attends  
800 her own manifestation. An object does nothing of the  
801 kind. There is no one there to attend its manifestation;  
802 it lies passively open to view. But precisely because  
803 the other person, through expressing herself, is per-  
804 sonally present at her own manifestation, as the  
805 dynamic source of that manifestation, the whole  
806 range of indicators of an essential inaccessibility  
807 presents itself to me (268).

The emphasis here on the other “attending” her own  
manifestation and being “personally present” as the  
“dynamic” source is provocative, albeit slightly vague. I  
believe that Overgaard’s emphasis on the “dynamic”  
nature of expression is important. Expression “unfolds in a  
certain dynamic that does not have me as its source”  
(Overgaard 2005, 262). I think this point can be further  
clarified and understood as a continuation of the task laid  
out in this section, clarifying the organizational principles  
of the appearance of expressive movement.

We may understand the “certain dynamic” that  
Overgaard speaks of with some help from Merleau-Ponty.  
In a striking analogy, Merleau-Ponty claims that the unity  
of the body is akin to the unity of the work of art (2002,  
174–175). The idea is that like a work of art, the unity of  
the expressive body cannot be captured by a general law in  
the way that, e.g., geometric figures can be:

A novel, poem, picture or musical work are individ-  
uals, that is, beings in which the expression is  
indistinguishable from the thing expressed, their  
meaning, accessible only through direct contact,  
being radiated with no change of their temporal and  
spatial situation. It is in this sense that our body is  
comparable to a work of art. It is a nexus of living  
meanings, not the law for a certain number of  
covariant terms (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 175).

This comparison can help us understand Overgaard’s  
account of expressive movement as a “dynamic unfolding”.  
Like a work of art, the parts or “moments” of expressive  
movement are uniquely interdependent. Slightly altering  
the slant of one’s eyebrows, for example, may effect an  
entirely new facial expression even if the other parts of the  
face remain fixed. More important, however, is the fact that  
the rest of one’s face would change along with the tilt of the  
eyebrows in the dynamic unfolding of an expression. We  
can recognize an even more dynamic interdependence by  
considering examples of expressive movement that are  
more noticeably temporally extended. One misses some-  
thing essential if she only hears a certain temporal phase of  
a song or if she starts reading a poem two-thirds of the way  
through. Likewise, the temporal parts that constitute the  
dynamic unfolding of expressive movement all depend on  
one another in such a way that the meaning or significance  
of the movement would be altered if any of the parts were  
rearranged or removed.<sup>11</sup> The expressive movement of the  
other is experienced as a *precise whole*, to use Husserl’s  
term. This does not preclude the possibility of experiencing

<sup>11</sup> Perhaps this is why it is usually very obvious to the TV viewer  
when soccer or basketball players “flop” or “dive” in an attempt to  
have a foul called. Their movement appears intentional, whereas the  
movement of the body of one who is actually fouled appears as  
externally caused (from being pushed, tripped, etc.).

855 the expressive movement of the other as a part of a larger  
856 whole. One may see the other waving her arms and  
857 momentarily wonder if she is greeting someone or waving  
858 for help. Nonetheless, the arm waving has its own unity  
859 even if its inclusion in a more encompassing unity sheds  
860 new meaning on it. One is prompted to wonder what *this*  
861 expressive unity indicates or belongs to. One takes the arm  
862 waving as *an* instance of something, even if one is not sure  
863 what that something is. Recall that the account of empathy  
864 being given here does not necessitate personal understand-  
865 ing—i.e., understanding the reasons or motives behind the  
866 other's actions. This basic form of empathy does not get us  
867 what the other is up to. It just gets us the other.<sup>12</sup> Empathy  
868 so defined is the experiential ground that motivates taking  
869 the intentional stance.

870 To summarize, empathy is the form of experience that  
871 takes expressive movement as its target. I have identified  
872 two organizational principles that differentiate the  
873 appearance of expressive movement from non-expressive  
874 movement: the horizon of expectations associated with the  
875 appearance of expressive movement is necessarily more  
876 vast than that associated with non-expressive movement;  
877 furthermore, the spatiotemporally extended parts of an  
878 instance of the appearance of expressive movement are  
879 uniquely interdependent such that an alteration of any of  
880 them would result in an alteration of the meaning or sig-  
881 nificance of the movement. These principles provide a way  
882 to delineate a class of intentional objects of experience that  
883 elicit a common response—recognizing movement as  
884 expressive—rather than accounting for empathy in terms of  
885 the other's embodiment and my own embodiment being  
886 related in a certain way. That is, these principles identify  
887 the target of empathic experience without equivocating on  
888 the concept of embodiment.

889 At this point one might object by asking, "I see that you  
890 have formulated some organizational principles underlying  
891 the appearance of expressive movement that remain inde-  
892 pendent of a concept of embodiment, but *why would the*  
893 *appearance of this sort of movement be seen as expressive,*  
894 *as mental, at all?* If such a class of movements is recog-  
895 nized "as expressive", then it appears that they must do so  
896 in virtue of *some* form of self-acquaintance, and thus this  
897 fares no better than ST or PP". It may be the case that I  
898 have identified some interesting ways to categorize the  
899 appearance of various kinds of movement, but it seems that  
900 Davidson's challenge remains forceful. Why should *this*  
901 class of movement count as expressive?<sup>13</sup>

902 In response to this objection I would say that, in short,  
903 Davidson's challenge remains so long as it is formulated as a  
904 *conceptual* problem of other minds. My account of the  
905 principles underlying expressive movement sought to  
906 account for the uniqueness of that movement without refer-  
907 ence to a concept of first-personal awareness or embodi-  
908 ment. Thus, my account does not get us *mindedness* or  
909 *expressiveness* at the foundational level of the class of  
910 movement in question. However, I do not see this as a  
911 problem. In fact, it could be a virtue of the account. It could  
912 provide a way to account for intersubjectivity that avoids the  
913 *conceptual* problem of other minds by focusing instead on  
914 the *pragmatic* problem of other minds. Rather than seeking a  
915 way to get expressivity or mindedness built into the orga-  
916 nizational principles of a certain class of movement, this  
917 account offers a minimal set of criteria for differentiating  
918 kinds of movement in general. These kinds of movement  
919 may then *come to be understood* as expressive in virtue of a  
920 continuous, complex, and rich history of interaction with  
921 one's environment. Throughout this developmental process,  
922 one would come to understand the appearance of this class of  
923 movement as affording various forms of interaction. This  
924 process would be facilitated by constant dynamic feedback  
925 in the form of further articulations of movement and further  
926 opportunities for interaction, and so on. On such an account,  
927 the problem of other minds is solved via a set of organiza-  
928 tional principles that make a certain class of movement show  
929 up in *some unique way* (though not "essentially" expressive)  
930 combined with a developmental process whereby one con-  
931 tinuously acquires a vast and complex array of ways to cope  
932 with such movements.

933 Construed in this way, empathy is a matter of coming to  
934 understand movements as expressive, where "expressive"  
935 means "affording various forms of interaction". One  
936 understands the other in virtue of having a more or less  
937 robust sense of how one may interact with him, and not in  
938 virtue of figuring out what is going on in his mind. I believe  
939 much work remains to be done to fully flesh out these  
940 ideas, however for the time being I am content to provide  
941 an account that lets us differentiate the appearance of  
942 expressive movement from non-expressive movement  
943 without relying on a private sense of one's inner life.

944 Furthermore, one might still wonder how this account  
945 differs from previous phenomenological accounts. As I  
946 have said above, Zahavi's careful treatment of Husserl  
947 shows that Husserl vacillated on the issue of whether  
948 empathy depends on a first-personal grasp of embodiment.  
949 Thus, while I am an overall sympathetic reader of Husserl,  
950 I believe the account provided here helps us avoid some of  
951 the confusion that can be born of reading only certain texts  
952 in Husserl. *Ideas II*, for instance, Husserl begins his dis-  
953 cussion of empathy in a way that could easily lead one to  
954 think of him as a simulation or resonance theorist: "the  
955

12FL01 <sup>12</sup> Cf. Schutz (1967) for further phenomenological analyses distin-  
12FL02 guishing the basic recognition of expressive behavior from the fuller  
12FL03 understanding that comes with grasping the other's motives.

13FL01 <sup>13</sup> I am grateful to two anonymous reviewers for pushing me on this  
13FL02 point.

955 other's touching hand, which I see, appresents to me his  
956 solipsistic view of this hand and then also everything that  
957 must belong to it in presentified co-presence" (Husserl  
958 1989, 174). As Zahavi points out, Husserl hedges on such  
959 characterizations in other places, and insists that his  
960 account is not one of "introjection". Nonetheless, by  
961 focusing on the organizational principles of expressive  
962 movement, my account aims to describe empathy without  
963 resorting to any talk of "appresenting" the inner life of the  
964 other.

965 I take my account to be a continuation of Merleau-  
966 Ponty's ideas, which, however, can also be unfortunately  
967 vague at times. For instance, sometimes Merleau-Ponty  
968 seems to speak of something like resonance: "it is precisely  
969 my body which perceives the body of another, and dis-  
970 covers in that other body a...familiar way of dealing with  
971 the world" (Merleau-Ponty 2002, 412). Yet in other places  
972 his imagery is not so much of resonance or mirroring, but  
973 of complementarity: "as the parts of my body together  
974 compromise a system, so my body and the other's are one  
975 whole, two sides of one and the same phenomenon" (*ibid.*,  
976 412). Gallagher and Miyahara (2012) have suggested that  
977 Merleau-Ponty's concept of "intercorporeity" involves an  
978 understanding of empathic awareness in terms similar to  
979 those I outlined above: the embodied expressive unity of  
980 the other's movement solicits interaction rather than rep-  
981 resentation (Gallagher and Miyahara 2012, 134). The  
982 additional value of the account offered here is a precise  
983 focus on the organizational principles underlying the  
984 appearance of the class of movement that we may subse-  
985 quently discuss in terms of "social affordances".<sup>14</sup>

## 986 5 Conclusion: Empathy's Transformative Power 987 and Broad Scope

988 Recall the question at hand: for PP, how do we recognize  
989 movement as expressive in virtue of our own bodily  
990 awareness while simultaneously respecting the necessary  
991 constitutional asymmetry between the internal and external  
992 body images? The previous section characterized the  
993 unique nature of how expressive movement appears to us  
994 by considering both its vast horizon structure and the  
995 unique form of interdependence amongst its spatiotemporal  
996 parts. Thus, at this point it seems that the organizational  
997 principles that differentiate the appearance of expressive  
998 movement from the appearance of non-expressive move-  
999 ment can remain independent of the principles that define  
1000 our own sense of embodiment. Therefore, perhaps both ST  
1001 and PP have been too quick to assume that empathy

depends on a "making the other like me" structure. That  
1002 is, simply overlaying my own internal body image onto  
1003 some visual input does not constitute empathic awareness.  
1004 Perhaps what has been overlooked by both approaches is  
1005 the affective and transformative power of empathy, based  
1006 in a "making me like the other" structure. In other words,  
1007 my understanding of my own sense of selfhood and  
1008 embodiment is transformed and enriched throughout my  
1009 history of encountering the embodied expressive unity of  
1010 the other.<sup>15</sup> Among his prodigious work on empathy and  
1011 self-awareness, Husserl noted that "the grasping of one's  
1012 own psyche in the subjective level would remain quite  
1013 rudimentary without the grasping of the alien one" (Hus-  
1014 serl 1980, 98). I take the implications of this to be that we  
1015 can *not* treat "embodiment" as a primitive term in our  
1016 explanations of empathy, or of interpersonal understanding  
1017 in general. A singular or general concept of embodiment  
1018 only becomes possible on the basis of empathic experi-  
1019 ence—i.e., a univocal concept of embodiment is *achieved*,  
1020 not innate.  
1021

1022 Furthermore, as has been hinted at above, the account of  
1023 empathy given here does not preclude non-humans from  
1024 being the objects of empathic experience. By recognizing  
1025 that a univocal concept of embodiment has a genesis that  
1026 includes empathic awareness, we may admit a wider  
1027 variety of forms of embodied expressive unity into the  
1028 class of empathic targets. Collectivities can be seen as  
1029 embodying single instances of  $\Phi$ -ing, where  $\Phi$  stands for a  
1030 psychological predicate.<sup>16</sup> This opens interesting possibil-  
1031 ities for further research, namely how we should think of  
1032 the resonance or mirroring phenomenon in light of these  
1033 findings. For example, empathy may be a necessary  
1034 background capacity for group members to recognize each  
1035 other and proceed to constitute plural subjects, while  
1036 something like resonance accounts for the proliferation and  
1037 adoption of the collective's mental state by the individuals  
1038 who comprise it.<sup>17</sup> Thus, this reconception of empathy as  
1039 the recognition of embodied unities of expressivity may  
1040 shed light not only on the transformative nature of empa-  
1041 thy, but also allow us to extend our understanding of  
1042 affiliated concepts like resonance or mirroring.<sup>18</sup>  
1043

<sup>15</sup> This process, no doubt, would be most affective and transforma- 15FL01  
tional during one's early developmental years. 15FL02

<sup>16</sup> See Margaret Gilbert's canonical (1989) account of *plural* 16FL01  
*subjects*, which she characterizes in terms of group members being 16FL02  
"jointly committed to  $\Phi$  as a body" (433). 16FL03

<sup>17</sup> See Mathiesen (2005), who argues that collective consciousness is 17FL01  
achieved through the individual's simulation of the group's collective 17FL02  
mental state. 17FL03

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14FL01 <sup>14</sup> Cf. Gallagher and Miyahara 2012; Carassa and Colombetti 2011;  
14FL02 Rietveld 2012.

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