

Don't read my mind

Re-evaluating Scheler's theories of perception and expressivity for the problem of intersubjectivity

Maria Chiara Bruttomesso

PhD student, University of Verona

Abstract

Grasping emotions and intentions in others has been and still is interpreted in the light of different theories, involving a long-lasting debate on the concept of intersubjectivity in the fields of philosophy, psychology, cognitive sciences and the very recent discoveries in neuroscience. My aim is to analyze the grounds of dualism in contrast to an embodied and impulse-based structure of our perception, which can be found in Scheler's phenomenology. As long as we practice the phenomenological reduction and don't abstract perception from its non-neutral character, not only we abandon the utopia of a pure and detached knowledge, but also the problem of "other minds" disappears. Scheler is effectively starting to be recognized as the pioneer of an embodied and direct way of perceiving others' emotions, above all thanks to his concepts of *Leib* and expressivity. Yet, most researchers look for the empathic process' roots in an inferential or simulative act, or, even when underlying importance of the *Fremdwahrnehmung* for the problem. Mostly limit their reference to one book - *The Nature of Sympathy*. Scheler's phenomenology presents more articulate roots and contains some strong anti-dualistic claims, which could respond to the growing need of changing our way to conceive perception itself.