

Lublin School of Philosophy

A Comparative Perspective



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Other Minds and Other Bodies: The Phenomenological Idea of Direct Cognition

No, this is but a mask, a decorative snare,
Poor visage lighted by a delicate grimace!
And look! contracted here, in raw and hideous troubles,
The genuine head and the authentic, candid face

(Ch. Baudelaire, "The Mask"¹)

1. MAPPING OF THE PROBLEM

The problem which shall be discussed in this chapter in the context of the milieu gathered around Antoni B. Stępień is the question of cognizing the mental states of other people (the psyche of the other, the other I, other minds or alter ego). The problem of the other "I" concerns the existence of other persons beyond the cognizing subject as well as the possibility of cognizing their mental states. It seems that the point of departure in the considerations concerning this topic, initiated by Stępień and his colleagues, was an attempt to undermine the conviction that cognition of the Other is always indirect, involving either inferencing (cf. argument from analogy), or transposing one's own mental perspective into the horizon of the mind of

¹ Charles Baudelaire, "The Mask", in *Flowers of Evil*, trans. Jacques LeClercq, (Mt Vernon, NY: Peter Pauper Press, 1958).

another subject.² The critique of the argument from analogy itself – which constitutes the essential core of the argumentation developed in the Lublin School – was rather a consequence of that attempt. It is worth noting that phenomenologists also related negatively, though for different reasons, to the theory of imitation and association.³ Therefore, what was crucial in the work that consisted of discussions during seminars rather than notes and publications, was a change of the purpose – from the strengthening of the argument from analogy to indicating that direct cognition of the psyche of another person is possible.⁴ Stępień in his works refers to the phenomenological tradition (Husserl and Scheler) and the critique (which may be found in Ingarden's works) of the argument of cognizing other minds by analogy, which stems from Descartes and was emphatically formulated in the writings of John S. Mill.⁵

Let us start from the problem itself as it is apprehended by phenomenologists. It seems that fundamentally its source is the conviction that knowledge about the psyche of another person is a unique knowledge for which we do not have a separate *sui generis* experience. This would mean that the knowledge about the mental states and experiences of other people is exclusively built upon other types of knowledge or connected with them. In the epistemological layer – which is of particular interest for us here – the following heuristic was used: knowledge about the psyche of another person is a distinct knowledge which at first glance is devoid of its own separate experience and it is formed by means of inferencing based on experiences of a different kind. Thus, it was most often emphasized that knowledge about the psyche of another person generates a problem of justifying convictions about other people in the categories of knowledge acquired by other cognitive channels than those dedicated to cognizing the

² Antoni B. Stępień, "Rodzaje bezpośredniego poznania," *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 19, no. 1 (1971): 95-126; Stanisław Judycki, *Intersubiektywność i czas: Przyczynek do dyskusji nad późną fazą poglądów Edmunda Husserla* (Lublin: RW KUL, 1990), 247-273.

³ Roman Ingarden, "O poznawaniu cudzych stanów psychicznych," in *U podstaw teorii poznania* (Warszawa: PWN, 1971), 414-417.

⁴ Antoni B. Stępień, *Dwa wykłady: Zagadnienie punktu wyjścia w filozofii. Teorie relacji: filozoficzne i logiczne. Przyczynek do zagadnienia stosunku między teorii bytu (przedmiotu) a logiki* (Lublin: TN KUL, 2005).

⁵ Ingarden, "O poznawaniu cudzych stanów psychicznych," 414-417; Max Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, trans. Peter Heath (London, New York: Routledge, 2017); Mieczysław Wallis, *Przeżycie i wartość* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Literackie, 1968).

psyche of other people.⁶ On the other hand, the conviction that knowledge about oneself, about one's own psyche, was unquestionable, privileged and credible directly and was wide-spread by its nature. Internal experience was dedicated to both of them. This state of affairs was well described by Max Scheler, when he wrote:

It is a fundamental weakness of theories which seek to derive our knowledge of other minds from inferences or processes of empathy, that they have an inveterate tendency to underestimate the difficulty of self-knowledge, just as they overestimate the difficulty of knowing other people.⁷

Admittedly, it was most often stated that the first source of knowledge about the psyche in general is experiencing our own experiences (our psyche), and the second one – the perception of other peoples' behaviors and that of oneself. It was, therefore, stated as follows: although we do not have at our disposal experience the proper object of which – as Aristotle would say – is the psyche of another person, the mental states or the "I" of the other; nonetheless, we are not helpless, because with the help of using source information (e.g. the internal experience of oneself, introspection and internal experience) and the ability to infer we can acquire such knowledge.

It is worth drawing attention to this assumption of the strong basis of one's knowledge about one's own mind, which shall also be a point of reference for phenomenologists. They shall most critically evaluate the acceptance of the so-called epistemological asymmetry which claims that knowledge about one's own mental states has a radically different level of certainty and a radically different source than knowledge about the mental states of others. This asymmetry, articulated by Augustine, became popular in philosophical, but also ordinary thinking.⁸ Let us also remember that at its basis lies a conceptual asymmetry which was probably most clearly formulated and popularized by Descartes:

Of these ideas I have—apart from the one that represents me to myself, about which there can be no difficulty here— one represents God, others bodily and inanimate things, others angels, others animals, and others, finally, other human beings like myself. As regards the ideas

⁶ Cf. Arkadiusz Gut, Przemysław Gut, "Inne umysły," *Roczniki Filozoficzne* 60, no. 4 (2012): 123-145.

⁷ Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 251.

⁸ John R. Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992).

that represent other human beings, or animals, or angels, I can easily see that they might have been put together from the ideas I have of myself, and bodily things, and God, even if there were no other human beings, or animals, or angels in the world.⁹

From the conceptual perspective, Descartes's idea of oneself has a different status than the idea of other persons. When I consider the idea of myself (more precisely: my mind), I neither have difficulties in describing its content, nor resolving whether something corresponds to it. In the case of the idea of other people (or more precisely: other minds), I do not have access to its content, nor do I know whether something corresponds to that idea. In other words, I may have – according to Descartes – a fully formulated idea of myself without the idea of “the other.” From the epistemological perspective this assumption was supposed to justify the thought that our access to the minds of other people is immensely limited, and speaking of some form of direct access to them is a typical example of wishful thinking:

From this I would have immediately concluded that I therefore knew the wax by the sight of my eyes, not by the inspection of the mind alone—if I had not happened to glance out of the window at people walking along the street. Using the customary expression, I say that I ‘see’ them, just as I ‘see’ the wax. But what do I actually see other than hats and coats, which could be covering automata? But I judge that they are people. And therefore what I thought I saw with my eyes, I in fact grasp only by the faculty of judging that is in my mind.¹⁰

Descartes clearly implies that our knowledge about other minds is contained in judgements (beliefs) which are inferences derived from a prior validated theory and observation. In Descartes's case, let us add, this is not exclusively the specificity of knowledge about other minds, but of something more – the entirety of knowledge about the external world, excluding the knowledge of God. It is important that Descartes agrees that knowledge about the existence of other minds and their essential states does not have a source or observable character, but a conceptual (amodal) one. Roman Ingarden explains that the sense and consequences of the aforementioned asymmetry may be presented in the following way:

⁹ René Descartes, *Meditations on First Philosophy: With Selections from the Objections and Replies*, trans. Michael Moriarty (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008), Med. III, 30-31.

¹⁰ *Ibidem*, 23.

[W]e notice only their (other people's – AG, JKT) bodies and, at that, solely in those of their properties for the perception of which we have a separate sensual organ. That, in turn, which constitutes the properties or mental activities of another human being is inaccessible to our experience, we can only indirectly guess or infer it from other facts, accessible to our experience, but we can never notice it outright.¹¹

Therefore, more generally, in the epistemological layer the following image is outlined: knowledge of the psyche of the other is a distinct knowledge, at first glance it is devoid of its own experience, and formed – as it is often put – with the aid of inferencing based on experiences of a different type. Actually, we are dealing here with a multi-aspectual asymmetry, which consists of the following: (a) that our own mental states are directly given to us, while those of others – indirectly; (b) that there are different conditions of identifying mental states ascribed to oneself and to others: in the former, based on that which is provided to us in internal experience, and in the latter, on the basis of that which is given in external sensual experience; (c) that two different types of justifying the conviction about someone's being in a particular mental state, connected with varying indicators and criteria – in the case of one's mental states justification appeals to inner experience and in the case of other people's mental states – to observation of their behavior; (d) that there are two sorts of modal status in which our mental states are given to us – most often our own mental states are given to us in a modal status of certainty, whereas mental states of other people are surmised with a large portion of uncertainty.¹²

Although phenomenologists, such as Max Scheler or Ingarden, as well as Stępień in his remarks, do not directly cover as a separate epistemological problem the issue described in contemporary literature as the conceptual problem of other minds, they, nonetheless – as we believe – indirectly attempt to also include this problem. Its source is the primacy of the first person perspective, in the sense that the contents of mental notions would have only one, first person criterion of identification, and thus these notions would relate to one (i.e. one's own) case. In other words, extending these notions to others – that is to different cases – would require either adding

¹¹ Ingarden, "O poznawaniu cudzych stanów psychicznych," 410.

¹² Cf. Gut, Gut, "Inne umysły," 123-145; Ingarden, "O poznawaniu cudzych stanów psychicznych," 407-427; Alec Hyslop, *Other Minds* (Dordrecht: Kluwer, 1995).

new conditions of identification of these notions or justifying the similarity of the cases to which these notions are subjected.¹³

Phenomenologists want to show that relating mental concepts to other people must be source-wise connected with the real experience of these people. They believe that mental concepts which we relate to other people are neither devoid, in the language of phenomenology, of their own intuition (*Anschauung*, *naoczność*), nor of their own essence (therefore they are not artificially filled in with borrowed content).¹⁴ Such a framing of the issue is not only supposed to prevent acknowledging in the next step that in the case of cognizing the psyche of the other we do not have any choice but must improve the argument from analogy or empathy, but also to undermine the assumption that with regard to other persons we can use exclusively notions with modality from another cognitive source or radically amodal notions (i.e. constructed exclusively in a definitional way).

Already at the beginning of describing his own concept of cognizing the psyche of the other Stępień writes:

We call this 'alter ego' intuition noticing the psyche of the other. We notice, e.g., the anger of the other, the disorientation of the other – as an individual, pre-existing, current (in short: really existing) object which is the mental state or act assigned to the 'alter-ego,' the Foreign or the Other. That, which is given, in this observation, manifests itself directly ... with a certain intuitiveness. ...

Noticing the psyche of the other – according to this concept – is the informer's "source" (not in Husserl's sense) about other consciousnesses, psyches and persons.¹⁵

Noticing others – as it is forcefully emphasized – is saturated by source content given in the experience of the Other. There is no transfer of one's own case to other ones. Replying to Scheler's question: "In what way and by what means are we first acquainted with the reality of the mental and spiritual center in others generally, apart from a merely discursive knowledge of the other's conscious self and its contents?"¹⁶, it is said that it is

¹³ Cf. Anita Avramides, *Other Minds* (London: Routledge, 2001); Peter Frederic Strawson, "Persons" in *Individuals: An Essay in Descriptive Metaphysics* (London, New York: Routledge, 1987), 87-116.

¹⁴ Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*; Maurice Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, trans. Colin Smith (London: Routledge, 1981).

¹⁵ Stępień, "Rodzaje bezpośredniego poznania," 109.

¹⁶ Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 217.

not given in our own experience, not in a form of a general theory, but according to the source. Of course, it is necessary to explain what is this source-ness and directness, but one can clearly notice here an attempt to avoid that which in analytical discussions was described as “private enclosure.” This “private enclosure” is well described by Peter F. Strawson: “[t] here is no sense in the idea of ascribing states of consciousness to oneself, or at all, unless the ascriber already knows how to ascribe at least some states of consciousness to others.”¹⁷ It is emphasized here, that in the attributions of mental states, the subject cannot move “from the case of oneself,” and not only because that will end up as a projection or “transferring” of one’s own mental states into the heads of other people or recognizing what other people think and feel, based on what I myself think (in the epistemic dimension), but also because mental notions would have a first-person identification (in the conceptual dimension). Additionally, if we notice that Strawson’s thought expresses the logical or else conceptual impossibility of having mental concepts without prior knowledge of how it is to be a subject corresponding to a given notion, then it is easier to understand Scheler’s and his followers’ efforts to demonstrate that our access to the others is primal. Consequently, the knowledge of that which is supposed to refer to a particular notion is attained without the support of inferencing. Obviously in this case the strategy of thinking is different – even radically different, as it is based on focusing the discourse on the epistemological level, not conceptual, nevertheless one can also notice this conceptual strain in the phenomenological discourse; phenomenologists believed that one has to construe epistemology based to a lesser extent on introspection, and more on a third-person experience.

2. DIRECT COGNITION

In this situation the issue when we cognize directly becomes crucial, because the later description of cognizing the psyche of the other depends on it. For this reason one must first construe a dichotomy direct–indirect, and in the further sequence one must discern cognition through a sign

¹⁷ Strawson, “Persons,” 106.

(with a sign as an intermediary) from cognition through an expression (in the expression).

In the initial characterization, direct cognition is considered to be “cognition which apprehends its object directly, without an intermediary, without a *medium quod*, as-if in person.”¹⁸ Indirect cognition as such, in turn, apprehends its object via an intermediary: *medium quod* which may be an effect, symptom, effigy or symbol of that object.¹⁹ Indirect cognition may also include judging, reasoning as well as justification connected with it and cognizing via a sign. In turn, when speaking of direct cognition, one most often mentions: external sensual observation, internal sensual observation, internal observation, currently given first-person mental states and cognizing the mental life of another subject. It is worth adding that according to Stępień, in this sort of cognition there may be a so-called *medium quo* intermediary – it is, however, a sort of transparent intermediary, i.e. such a one which does not draw to itself the cognitive attention of the subject. In order to clarify the issue of the difference between intermediaries Stępień writes:

It is enough to explain that “medium quod” is such an intermediary which – in order to function as an intermediary in cognition – must first itself become the object of our cognition; “medium quo,” in turn, functions as an intermediary, without being an object (theme) of the cognizer’s attention or the limit of his intention.²⁰

The concept of a transparent intermediary allows us to interpret the human body as such an intermediary in the cognition of the mental states of others; consequently, the human body becomes the key ingredient of direct cognition.

What then, according to Stępień, excludes the possibility of talking about direct cognition? Certainly, in the cognitive act considered by us, it is excluded by a referral to other cognitive acts – particularly of another kind, and even more so to prior accepted judgments. The directness of cognition is excluded also when we deal with instrumental cognition – nowadays we could say: with the use of, for instance, fMRI which examines the neural reactions of our brains. The directness of cognition becomes questionable also when intellectual factors dominate in the structure of this cognition.

¹⁸ Stępień, “Rodzaje bezpośredniego poznania,” 99.

¹⁹ Antoni B. Stępień, *Wstęp do filozofii* (Lublin: TN KUL, 1995), 116.

²⁰ Stępień, “Rodzaje bezpośredniego poznania,” 100.

Direct cognition cannot be conditioned by intellectual knowledge, a sort of deliberation or realization at the conceptual level. The so-called content filler of this sort of cognition must be the essence provided in a direct mode, and not in a conceptual one. In other words, the act of direct cognition cannot be realized in a schema which in terms of structure would have a propositional form, in a schema in which the attribution would be comprehended as a particular object being subject to a specific concept. What is given cannot be comprehended as subject to particular predicates. Directness of cognition would be questionable also when that what is given in this cognition would be fragmentary, not given in its entirety.

Since the directness of cognition is not annulled by the occurrence of the *quo* intermediary, the key issue is to discern this intermediary from the category of signs which often occur in our cognition and exclude its directness. In his considerations Stępień recognizes the sign as “any object that in any way refers its user to something that is transcendent in relation to the object, which constitutes the *medium* (intermediary) in reaching, sharing or summoning something else (in the broad meaning of the term “referent”).”²¹ In the narrow sense “sign” is an iconic (image) or conventional (language expressions, railway signal) sign. In the Polish literature on the topic it was a subject of vivid discussions. We find a similar definition of the sign (i.e. to Stępień’s definition) in Izydora Dąmbska’s study “O konwencjach semiotycznych” [On semiotic conventions]. In her view “a sign,” most generally put, is “every object which while perceived by somebody, is capable of making present in the face of someone who notices it, other objects with which it remains in a relation of indicating or denoting.”²² She further states that a “sign” is always a product of conventions, culturally and environmentally constructed. According to other authors, one may distinguish conventional and nonconventional signs. The latter category would include signs which are mentioned in Mieczysław Wallis’s remarks concerning “signs” and “symptoms.” He states that “certain physical objects are more or less matched with certain mental objects – ‘correspond to them,’ ‘accompany them,’ ‘follow them.’”²³ Often between the symptom and the object expressed by it, a certain distinct sort of relation occurs which can be comprehended as matching, correspondence and the causal relation. The participation of the sign in cognition excludes the directness of that cognition.

²¹ Stępień, *Wstęp do filozofii*, 161.

²² Izydora Dąmbska, “O konwencjach semiotycznych,” *Studia Semiotyczne* 4 (1973): 44.

²³ Wallis, *Przeżycie i wartość*, 108.

We are now moving on to the crucial issue of why cognizing the psyche of the other person can be treated as direct cognition. Stępień recalls an entire series of indicators which are supposed to prove this, and at the same time, he enumerates the components that are absent from the cognition of the psyche of the other, and which would exclude direct cognition:

What is given in this perception [i.e. of the psyche of the other] directly manifests itself (without any "medium quod") with certain intuition (*Anschauung, naoczność*). The expressing factor (which in this case functions as a medium quo) is a specific state of (behavior of) a living human body: a certain facial expression or gesture. However, this is not the subject of the perceiving consciousness ..., but the expression of the mental life of the other, e.g., sadness or the effort of understanding something visible on someone else's face (at the same time the object of the perception is that manifested sadness, and not the manifestation of sadness per se). Therefore, we are not dealing here with "medium quod," inferencing, referring to some judgments or to the direct cognition of another sort.²⁴

3. COGNITION IN EXPRESSION AND THE HUMAN BODY

In the passage quoted above one can see that according to Stępień the expressive factor – that which functions as the *medium quo* – is a specific behavior of a living body. We shall later return to the issue of the body and embodiment of mental states; what is particularly important for us now is that all that is present in observation, i.e. behavior, gesture or facial expression, is not the theme, i.e. that which we apprehend. In Stępień's view, a behavior or gesture is not a "theme of observation, consciousness (we may even not know what corporeal behavior conditions noticing such and not another state of the psyche of the other person)."²⁵ What is more, "the object of the approach is that manifested sadness, and not the manifestation of sadness per se."²⁶

In this manner Stępień introduces the concept of cognition which is called cognition via expression or in expression. In this sort of cognition,

²⁴ Stępień, "Rodzaje bezpośredniego poznania," 109.

²⁵ Ibidem.

²⁶ Ibidem.

as he stresses further on, “we deal with three sections of the relation of expressing (cognizing in expression) and these are: (a) the expressing factor, (b) the expression and (c) that what is expressed.”²⁷ (By the way, in the same study Stępień also states that “the body is ... an expression (or expressive factor) of someone else’s mental life,”²⁸ as if the elements (a) and (b) listed above were identical). To prevent the risk of construing cognition through an expression or in expression as a sort of cognition through a sign, he underlines that in this sort of observation we are not dealing with *medium quod*, nor with any inferencing or reference to cognition of another sort.

In his book *The Nature of Sympathy*, Scheler, differently than Stępień, does not concentrate on the issue of differentiating the expression from the sign, but on demonstrating the primacy of cognition in the expression. Most of all, Scheler draws attention to the fact that knowledge about the expression (*Ausdruck*) of living creatures is preceded by the knowledge about the inanimate world and that knowledge about the expression has a fundamentally primal character. He also emphasizes that “the primitive, like the child, has no general acquaintance with ‘deadness’ in things: all his experience is presented as one vast field of expression, in which particular expressive unities stand out against the background.”²⁹ Initially in the experience of the Other we have a certain entirety of a *minded body*. The division into that which belongs to the body in the physical sense and that which belongs to the internal world, is secondary and preceded by reflective activity of the cognizing subject.

Incidentally, one can note that Scheler’s remarks about children, that “in the early stages of infancy, our mental pattern corresponds to that which must also be ascribed to the herd,” and that the child from the very beginning reacts differently to various expressive units in the face which are connected with separate mental states, can find their confirmation in current research. Nowadays it is indicated that infants instinctively imitate facial expressions of adults.³⁰ It is also underlined that infants treat the human face and voice in a radically different way than all the other objects and sounds in the world.³¹ The different reaction of the child to the human face and

²⁷ Ibidem.

²⁸ Ibidem.

²⁹ Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 248.

³⁰ Cf. Alison Gopnik, Andrew N. Meltzoff, *Words, Thoughts, and Theories* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1996).

³¹ Paul Bloom, *Descartes’ Baby: How the Science of Child Development Explains What Makes Us Human* (New York: Basic Books, 2004).

human voice can be explained by the fact that from the very beginning the child treats them as means of expressing intentions, stances and emotions. A lot of research indicates that the latter (intentions, attitudes, emotions) are, indeed, the essential object of children's interest, although they are not given or visible as clearly as the grimace on a face.³²

In order to more emphatically underline the primacy of cognition in the expression, Scheler recalls Kurt Koffka's assertion that such phenomena as friendliness and unfriendliness (which we sense in the other person) are primary in reference to the physical qualities (the expression of the eyebrows, eyes, etc.) that correspond to them. With regard to that, Scheler writes that "from these facts and others like them, we conclude that 'expression' is indeed the very *first* thing that man apprehends of what lies outside him, and that he only goes to apprehend sensory appearances of any kind, inasmuch and insofar as they can be construed as *expressions* of mind."³³ This obviously will be one of the reasons why the theory of inferencing by analogy, to which we shall move onto next, encounters such an opposition.

Stanisław Judycki in his book *Intersubiektywność i czas* [Intersubjectivity and time], while juxtaposing Scheler's remarks with Edmund Husserl's position, claims that Scheler, in the assertions we cited above, points out an error in Husserl's thinking, for "he considered the sphere of inanimate spatial objects to be a sphere which founds other ontological spheres."³⁴ As we could see, living beings endowed with mental life are a primal reference for Scheler, most probably also in the ontological dimension. Following this trail, Judycki introduces a new thought that according to Scheler, the phenomenon of *expression* is not only primary, but also irreducible. It seems that Judycki accurately notices that Scheler accepted "as a so-called cognitive-eidological assumption – the sphere of expression as the primary sphere presenting itself in the face of the facts of this sphere and only asked about the beginning of the funding of these acts, through which one reaches to a presentation – whether they are prior to the acts presenting other spheres or not."³⁵ There is a clear interpretative suggestion here about giving the mental sphere the priority in the cognition of the other person through the direct indication of expressional sources. Con-

³² Ibidem.

³³ Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 239.

³⁴ Judycki, *Intersubiektywność i czas*, 261.

³⁵ Ibidem, 262; cf. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, trans. Doris Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960).

sequently, in this move one can notice an attempt at severing ties with the understanding of the human body in the categories of first of all a physical object, i.e. comprehending it as *Körper*, and not as *Leib-Seele* (we shall return to this issue).

It is worth noting that on account of the primal character of apprehending human psyche in its expression we may not know what sort of corporeal behavior conditions the perception of a given mental state, as argued by Stępień. It is worth citing the key fragment from Scheler's considerations:

[H]ence it is not just isolated experiences that I apprehend in another, but always the individual's mental character *as a whole* in its total expression. ... I can tell from the expressive 'look' of a person whether he is well disposed towards me, long before I can tell what color his eyes may be.³⁶

One can probably say that in general the idea of directness of cognition is linked with the concept of cognition in expression, and in particular with the apprehension of the live human body as an expressive unit. When speaking of cognition in expression, Scheler (and Stępień after him) wants to also say that in relation to the Other, we are not dealing with conceptual knowledge which, in a way, would mediate between my comprehension of someone as experiencing a specific mental state, and my comprehension of his/her state as corresponding to a specific concept. According to phenomenologists, cognition of the psyche of the other is not an attribution of a mental state, a form of predicative knowledge. In this sense, this is an approach which is completely different from the one proposed by the supporters of the analytical tradition, e.g. Strawson (2001). One may also say that the thus defined position of the phenomenologists is akin to what was written by Martin Buber, that if the reference to the other is supposed to be direct, then "between I and You no conceptuality (*keine Begrifflichkeit*), no pre-knowledge (*kein Vorwissen*) nor any phantasy (*keine Phantasie*) can occur."³⁷ The thesis about the primary character of the perception of expressive components of the human psyche may epistemically support assertions on the existential and ontic necessity of the presence of the I among the We, pointing to the fundamental inclination of the I to the other. As Schel-

³⁶ Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 243-244.

³⁷ Martin Buber, *Das dialogische Prinzip* (Heidelberg: L. Schneider, 1965).

er claims: "not only is the 'I' a member of the 'We', but also... the 'We' is a necessary member of the 'I'."³⁸

Finally, it is worth noting that phenomenologists notice certain limitations to direct cognition. According to Scheler, direct cognition does not cover either thoughts, or desires, or sensual experiences.³⁹ Moreover, a close contact with one's own body prevents the cognition of the mental states of oneself and those of others.⁴⁰ Ingarden, in turn, states that the scope of the cognoscibility of the mental states of the other is changeable and depends, among others, on my relation with that human being, mine and his/her openness – for a human being can conceal his/her states or simulate states which differ from those that he/she actually experiences.⁴¹

4. THE CRITIQUE OF THE ARGUMENT OF COGNITION BY ANALOGY

The theory which became an essential reference point for phenomenologists and in relation to which they formulated objections when elaborating their own approach, claims that cognizing mental states of others' occurs via inferencing *per analogiam*. Although it was present already in the works of Augustine and Descartes, it found its full formulation in Mill's writings:

I conclude that other human beings have feelings like me, because, first, they have bodies like me, which I know, in my own case, to be the antecedent condition of feelings; and because secondly, they exhibit the acts, and other outward signs, which in my own case I know by experience to be caused by feelings. I am conscious in myself of a series of facts connected by a uniform sequence, of which the beginning is modifications of my body, the middle is feelings, the end is outward demeanor. In the case of other human beings I have the evidence of my senses for the first and the last links of the series, but not for the intermediate link. I find, however, the link between the first and last is as regular and constant in those and other cases as it is as regular

³⁸ Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 230.

³⁹ Adam Węgrzecki, *O poznawaniu drugiego człowieka* (Kraków: Wydawnictwo Naukowe PAT, 1992), 65-73.

⁴⁰ Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 255.

⁴¹ Ingarden, "O poznawaniu cudzych stanów psychicznych," 424-427.

and constant in those and other cases as it is in mine. In my own case I know that the first link produces the last through the intermediate link, and could not produce it without. Experience, therefore, obliges me to conclude that there must be an intermediate link; which must either be the same in others as myself, or a different one: I must either believe them to be alive, or to be automatons: and by believing them to be alive, that is by supposing the link to be of the same nature as in the case of which I have experience, and which is in all other respects similar, I bring other human beings as phenomena, under the same generalizations which I know by experience to be the true theory of my own existence. ... We know the existence of other beings by generalization from the knowledge of our own: the generalization merely postulates that what experience shows to be a mark of the existence of something within the sphere of our consciousness, may be concluded to be a mark of the same thing beyond that sphere.⁴²

When analyzing this argument, Ingarden indicates that the entire justification begins from the following premise: “we ascertain that the experiences of our own conscious life are causatively conditioned by certain modifications or processes occurring in our body, and at the same time, they invoke within it certain effects.”⁴³ Thus, in Mill’s argument my mental states are taken as a mediating factor responsible for the manifestation of a given behavior. Ingarden does not mention that in that argumentation it is also silently assumed that we ourselves have direct access to them. What is more, Mill assumes that this access indisputably reveals the previously mentioned causative conditionings of my mental states through physical states in my body and physical states by mental states. We know that such causation is not obvious in the light of contemporary research and remains a contentious issue.⁴⁴ However, this issue is not raised by critics of Mill’s arguments for obvious reasons: they themselves assume in some sense the transparency of one’s own mind and the *prima facie* presence of data in this experience which can irrefutably confirm that our mental states are conditioned by our body.

⁴² John Stuart Mill, *An Examination of Sir William Hamilton’s Philosophy* [1865] Sixth Edition (London: Longmans, Green, and co.), 1889, 243-244.

⁴³ Ingarden, “O poznawaniu cudzych stanów psychicznych,” 410.

⁴⁴ Cf. Sydney Shoemaker, *Self-Knowledge and Self-Identity* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1963); Arkadiusz Gut, Robert Mirski, “In Search of a Theory: The Interpretative Challenge of Empirical Findings on Cultural Variance in Mindreading,” *Studies in Logic and Grammar and Rhetoric* 48/61 (2016); John R. Searle, *The Rediscovery of the Mind* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1992).

The second premise of the discussed argument – according to Ingarden – is the assertion that the bodies of others are similar to mine. Obviously, what he means is the behavior of people (i.e. another person) which is reminiscent of my own behavior. The experience of that similarity, as Mill claims, “obliges me to conclude that there must be an intermediate link; which must either be the same in others as myself, or a different one.” Based on this, Mill reaches a dilemma: “I must either believe them to be alive, or to be automatons.” Obviously, he does not refer here to the argument on the logical possibility of zombies.⁴⁵ Mill rather states hypothetically that: “by believing them to be alive, that is by supposing the link to be of the same nature as in the case of which I have experience, and which is in all other respects similar, I bring other human beings as phenomena, under the same generalizations which I know by experience to be the true theory of my own existence.” The essential issue again is the argument of my own truth, i.e. my experience of mental states as intermediaries causing the functioning of my body. However, there is something more here – Mill’s not too frequently noticed thesis that the generalizations of our own mental states are also true. Mill tells us that I may not only infer that other bodies are connected with mental states, but also identify these mental states as those which I know from my own experience. He as if implicitly accepts the validity of the generalization; i.e. he assumes that if a particular body manifests behavior which is reminiscent of my own body’s behavior, then I can use the same sort of predicate to describe the reasons for both of these phenomena.⁴⁶

The principle of generality provides a basis for introducing a third premise which Ingarden presents as follows: “in the bodies of other people occur physical changes similar to those which in our bodies causally condition our experiences, as well as physical changes similar to those which in us are the result of our experiences.”⁴⁷ The category of generality is applied here and it is claimed that behaviors of others correspond to the same sorts of behaviors that we know from our experience. The type of generalization applied here suggests that Mill operates exclusively with a sort of knowledge based on judgments, propositional knowledge in the

⁴⁵ Jaegwon Kim, *Philosophy of Mind* (London: Routledge, 2011).

⁴⁶ Cf. Gareth Evans, *The Varieties of Reference* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1982); Arkadiusz Gut, *O relacji między myślą a językiem: Studium krytyczne stanowisk utożsamiających myśl z językiem* (Lublin: TN KUL, 2009).

⁴⁷ Ingarden, “O poznawaniu cudzych stanów psychicznych,” 410.

following form: if the body manifests a certain behavior, then it is evoked by a certain experience. One may interpret this as an exclusion of other types of knowledge with regard to mental states of other people, and first of all the direct ones, including phenomenally implemented experiences referring to those states. According to Mill, the human being experiences phenomena repeatedly occurring in a certain sequence and this experience of co-occurrence leads him to the idea of a certain connection and enables deriving certain generalizations. These generalizations allow Mill to infer that “the same intermediary component must occur among other people as the one which in our case relies on a particular conscious experience.”⁴⁸

The opponents of Mill’s theory try to show that such a solution defies the power and the weight of experiencing intuitive (*Anschauung*, *naoczność*) phenomena in their thematic concreteness and definiteness, which is fundamental for phenomenological theories.⁴⁹ Stępień states outright that the theory of inferencing by analogy “erroneously assumes that the knowledge about the psyche of the other has a purely mental character and depends solely on having a set of judgements – conclusions from the conducted experiments.”⁵⁰ Ingarden also believes that following the theory of inferencing by analogy, we would have to assume that knowledge about the experiences of other people is non-intuitive (*Anschauung*, *naoczność*).⁵¹ What is important, he emphasizes that in such a case we would have to agree that our thoughts about the mental experiences of other people are “rather indefinite, often unable to precisely define the individual properties of the mental fact.”⁵²

At this point it is worth addressing yet another issue. Phenomenologists object to the suggestion of the proponents of the argument by analogy that the experience of the mental states of others has a radically amodal character. It seems that the critics of the theory of inferencing by analogy believe that it is not so much the directness of the cognition of the other I (although that too), as its individuality that can be defended only if we have an experience of a specific modality. This is, obviously, linked with the idea

⁴⁸ Ibidem.

⁴⁹ Cf. Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*; Edith Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, trans. Waltraut Stein (Washington, DC: ICS Publications, 1989), 27; Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1993).

⁵⁰ Stępień, “Rodzaje bezpośredniego poznania,” 110.

⁵¹ Ingarden, “O poznawaniu cudzych stanów psychicznych,” 412.

⁵² Ibidem, 412-414.

of cognition in expression, as well as – with some form of embodiment of mental states, of which neither Ingarden nor Stępień were aware. This point – as we shall show soon – is well understood by Scheler. It seems that Ingarden and his successors believe that the epistemological idea of cognition through expression is sufficient. Ingarden stated:

[M]eanwhile – regardless of what kind of cognition of the mental facts of others is involved and of its cognitive value – when in our direct relationship with somebody, we learn something, e.g., about his/her feeling, then in a close connection with the perception of his/her body, facial expression etc., there appears the concrete and intuitive phenomenon of the specific quality of the emotion felt by the person with whom we are in contact.⁵³

The experience of the body captured in the category of “expression” is supposed to guarantee the occurrence of the desired intuition (*Anschauung*, *naoczność*) and thus a substantively determined individuality of a given experience. However, let us add that the expression itself is not equated with an experience, because an experience and its expression are treated as two ontic spheres.

Scheler sees the problem we confront when we want to create an alternative for the theory of inferring by analogy in a broader perspective. We already mentioned the crucial aspects of the understanding of the human body. Let us draw attention to some additional issues. Scheler stated that: “[t]he (traditional) argument from analogy is merely an epistemological tailpiece tacked on to one particular system of metaphysics, namely the Cartesian and Lotzean dualism of interacting substances.”⁵⁴ He was convinced that metaphysical theories (the concept of two substances mutually affecting each other or the theory of two separate substances which with the aid of some additional intermediary could affect each other, or else theories of psychophysical parallelism) result on the one hand in underestimating the difficulty of self-perception, and overrating the difficulty of experiencing others, and on the other hand in failure to notice that “[t]his relationship is due to the fact that all changes in the body are accompanied by two other sets of changes: (1) nervous processes in the physical body, (2) changes in the bodily consciousness, which serve to determine which

⁵³ Ibidem, 413.

⁵⁴ Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 226.

part of the totality of inner life is to enter internal awareness."⁵⁵ Scheler clearly emphasized here that modifications present in the body – contrary to the Cartesian model – should not be comprehended strictly mechanistically, or treated in the way in which they are treated in the non-human world. In his view, they are one-of-a-kind for only in the human body the nervous system and its various modifications lead to generating sensations, and through these sensations further to the occurrence of a psychic experience unique for our species.

By more closely explaining what happens in the body when mental states appear, Scheler notices that “[w]e only pay special attention to an experience of our own in so far as it discharges itself in intended movements, or at least in expressive tendencies.”⁵⁶ On account of that he considers that hitherto one erroneously separated the physical from the mental, suggesting that “the ‘mental’ is what can only be given to ‘one’ person at a time.”⁵⁷ Taking into consideration the connection of sensations with the body itself, Scheler is convinced that “[he]nce an identical sorrow can be keenly felt (though in one’s own individual fashion), but never an identical sensation of pain, for here there are always two separate sensations.”⁵⁸ The embodiment of that experiencing is individual and different in every case. While refining the question of the relation of mental experiences with the human body, Scheler indirectly indicates that Ingarden’s argument which states that, after all, I do not fully know what my face looks like when I am happy or sad – “I do not know, because in general I do not notice it” – is not devised well, and can even be misleading. The problem does not consist in that I only know my face thanks to using a mirror, and therefore I do not see the features of my face in each situation and I cannot observe my bodily reaction, which as “known” I am supposed to use in the second premise when reasoning by analogy; the problem consists in that my manner of experiencing is so individualized that in principle cannot be transposed to other cases. Scheler, therefore, proposes a radical abandonment of this manner of thinking which lay at the foundations of the theory proposed by Mill. Scheler discredits the argument from analogy, trying to show that Mill’s sensualism is completely erroneous, because assuming common sensations at the point of departure leads us astray. Directness and the possibility to

⁵⁵ Ibidem, 255.

⁵⁶ Por. Ibidem, 251; Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*.

⁵⁷ Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 255.

⁵⁸ Ibidem.

cognize the psyche of the other is not based on the fact that our bodies, and thus sensations, are similar. Obviously, this approach involves the idea that a perception (no matter of what kind) is not merely a complex of sensual impressions, and therefore the pursuit for the impression of the psyche of the other is a path leading to nowhere. However, having introduced into the discourse the distinction between feeling (which does not engage the body) and experiencing (which engages the body), Scheler stated:

To be sure, we can never experience the same (physically localized) sensory pleasure or pain. These states are confined to the individual in whom they occur, and can only be like one another, never identical. But two people may very well feel the same sorrow; a strictly identical, not just a similar one, even though the experience may be differently colored in each case by differing organic sensations.⁵⁹

Generally speaking, Scheler notices that the fundamental error in the theory of inferring by analogy consists in the assumption that “our own I” is given to us and thus our basic knowledge about the psyche and mental states is based on dependable sources of knowledge. Another error, rarely raised by Stępień and Ingarden, is connected with the understanding of the human body. Scheler believes that the mistake of all sorts of theories of inferencing by analogy is the assumption “that what is primarily given in the case of others is merely the appearance of the body.”⁶⁰ One can see in Scheler’s case the radical break with the Cartesian tradition which treats the human body mechanistically and exclusively as a physical space inside which the mind exists. It should be noted that Scheler’s critique of Mill may result from abandoning this way of thinking. Currently Scheler’s ideas are being developed in the works by Shaun Gallagher, Dan Zahavi and others. In this context it is worth referring to a fragment of Søren Overgaard’s chapter “The Problem of Other Minds” from *The Handbook of Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*:

A useful point of departure for understanding the phenomenologists’ take on the problem of other minds is the observation that there is a sense in which the revisionist responses that we have considered do not take their revision of the Cartesian view far enough (the last step of the neutral monist account excepted). For the aim of the behaviorist

⁵⁹ Ibidem, 325.

⁶⁰ Ibidem, 244.

reduction that they attempt is to show that the phenomena that Cartesians and other conservatives think are essentially different from, and somehow hidden behind, mere physical movements and noises, really are nothing but such movements and noises, or can at least be adequately accounted for in terms of the latter. But that means they accept one half of the Cartesian picture – the picture of the body as a mere *res extensa* – and simply erase or ignore the other half. This, all the major phenomenologists would insist, is not a sufficiently radical revision. For it leaves the reductive revisionists in agreement with the conservatives on the following, crucial point: all we ever really see are the properties of a mere physical object – the body. In contrast to this, all the phenomenologists attempt to articulate what might be called a non-reductive revisionist account; and they do so primarily, though not exclusively, by attempting a radical reinterpretation of the body.⁶¹

However, even if one rejects the theory of the human being which lies at the foundations of Mill's argument, one can appreciate its value in relation to certain situations in everyday life, as it was done by Edith Stein:

Even so, we cannot deny that inferences by analogy do occur in knowledge of foreign experience. It is easily possible for another's expression to remind me of one of my own so that I ascribe to his expression its usual meaning for me. Only then can we assume the comprehension of another "I" with bodily expression as a psychic expression. The inference by analogy replaces the empathy perhaps denied. It does not yield perception but a more or less probable knowledge of the foreign experience.⁶²

5. PHENOMENA: SHAME – WHEN SOMEONE WATCHES ME – CONCLUSION

Arguments for directness of experiencing the psyche of the other gain support in the analyses of the experience of bemusement or shame, when erroneously convinced that we are alone, we realize that in fact we have been observed. Let us try to elaborate on these issues and connect them

⁶¹ Søren Overgaard, "The Problem of Other Minds" in *The Handbook of Phenomenology and Cognitive Science*, eds. Shaun Gallagher and Daniel Schmicking, (Dordrecht: Springer, 2010), 261.

⁶² Stein, *On the Problem of Empathy*, 27.

with the question of the understanding of the the human body and the concept of the embodiment of the human psyche.

Scheler, criticizing other approaches to the issue of cognizing the psyche of the other, claims that when we, for instance, see somebody, we are given something that cannot be reduced to simple observations of something physical:

Thus I do not merely see the other person's eyes, for example; I also see that 'he is looking at me' and even that 'he is looking at me as though he wished to avoid my seeing that he is looking at me'. So too do I perceive that he is only pretending to feel what he does not feel at all, that he is severing the familiar bond between his experience and its natural expression, and is substituting another expressive movement in place of the particular phenomenon implied by his experience.⁶³

The feeling of being observed irrefutably confirms the presence of the other, not as a presence of "something," as Descartes would put it, dressed in a cloak and hat, but as a presence of somebody who observes me and reveals his/her perspective from which he/she gazes at me. Just how the discovery of being seen by another becomes an overbearing reason for recognizing the existence of the other, is clearly described by Sartre in his work *Being and Nothingness*: "'Being-seen-by-the-Other' is the truth of 'seeing-the-Other.'"⁶⁴ It is certainly some attempt to show that knowledge about the presence of others is not a conclusion, as the theory of thinking by analogy claims, nor a projection from my point of view, as it figures in the theory of empathy. The presence of the other is not something proven, but it is something experienced in an existential fashion. However, one must stipulate that it is hard to assess whether the existentiality of this experience completely excludes in the epistemic dimension the moment of implicit inferencing.

Sartre strengthens the interpretation of the experience of being seen through the analysis of another experience – shame. His idea is more or less such that shame is what experience-wise confirms being observed. It is shame that clearly reveals to me the gaze of the Other. This is a sort of experience which, for instance, does not occur in the observation of oneself in the mirror. Shame is being ashamed of oneself, yet in the face of the other, in reference to the other: "the two structures are inseparable"; in ef-

⁶³ Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 261.

⁶⁴ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 257.

fect, as Sartre stated: "at the same time I need the Other in order to realize fully all the structures of my being. The For-itself refers to the For-others."⁶⁵

In order to say that it is not in any case a theoretical conclusion, but an irremovable data, present in our experience, Sartre adds that "[s]hame is an immediate shudder which runs through me from head to foot without any discursive preparation."⁶⁶ Hence this experience itself is characterized, in his view, by some primacy which in its basic layer is not a result of a deliberate experience or intellectual inclination.

When speaking of a piercing experience or shame which enters my body, Sartre points to the role of the body in the entire process of experience. This fits into Scheler's ontic condition, according to which in the direct cognition of the mental states of others it is important that "my body should be subject to effects whose causes are located in, or proceed from, the other's body."⁶⁷ As Scheler explains, corporeal sensations are crucial in relation to both the cognition of one's own experiences and those of others:

[I]n this respect, therefore, there is, at bottom, no very crucial difference between self-awareness and the perception of mind in others. Such perception occurs, in both cases, only so far as the state of the body is modified in some way and so far as the mental state to be perceived is translated into some sort of expression or other physical modification.⁶⁸

The embodiment of experience on the part of the experiencing and the experienced is, therefore, the assumption of the epistemological theory of cognition based on the lived, expressive body (*Leib*). As Stępień emphasizes, deception when lying is often immediately revealed, due to phenomena present in this experience.⁶⁹ We could add that the epistemological reflection on cognition in expression and its radicalization in Scheler's writings, and partly in those by Sartre, suggest that our mental states are more transparent than we usually think. Let us add that the idea of embodiment in the phenomenological movement was considerably refined in the works of Maurice Merleau-Ponty. The following fragment aptly illustrates this:

If the subject is in a situation, even if he is no more than a possibility of situations, this is because he forces his ipseity into reality only by

⁶⁵ Ibidem, 222.

⁶⁶ Ibidem, 223.

⁶⁷ Scheler, *The Nature of Sympathy*, 249.

⁶⁸ Ibidem, 251.

⁶⁹ Cf. Stępień, "Rodzaje bezpośredniego poznania," 95-126.

actually being a body, and entering the world through that body. In so far as, when I reflect on the essence of subjectivity, I find it bound up with that of the body and that of the world, this is because my existence as subjectivity is merely one with my existence as a body and with the existence of the world, and because the subject that I am, when taken concretely, is inseparable from this body and this world. The ontological world and body which we find at the core of the subject are not the world or body as idea, but on the one hand the world itself contracted into a comprehensive grasp, and on the other the body itself as a knowing-body.⁷⁰

To put it in the broader perspective of the discussions that have taken place, it is worth noting that the reflection on cognition on the lived, expressive body (*Leib*) has become a part of contemporary phenomenological discussions. Overgaard stated in "The Problems of Other Minds," clearly drawing on the phenomenological tradition, that: "another person's body is generally not perceived as a physical thing – as a *Körper*, to use a German expression invoked by some of the phenomenologists. Rather, it is perceived as a lived, expressive, or "animate" body – a *Leib*."⁷¹ Let us return to Sartre's remarks: "although certain complex forms derived from shame can appear on the reflective plane, shame is not originally a phenomenon of reflection."⁷² According to Sartre, in its primal structure "shame is shame of oneself before the Other."⁷³ For Sartre, the pre-reflective character of shame is crucial, because it demonstrates that experiencing the Other is immensely primal – it makes itself felt before we arouse in ourselves acts of reflection, and all the more so of thinking in the format suggested by the theory of analogy (if it indeed assumes consciously controlled thinking). The radicality of the assertion describing the pre-reflective experience of shame, and simultaneously the experience of the Other, was noticed by Stanisław Judycki:

The search for a sphere in which the relation to the Others would be the most primal and would precede the relation subject–object as an intentional-cognitive relation, was most emphatically expressed in French phenomenology, in the theories of Merleau-Ponty and Sartre. Both philosophers – despite differences between them regarding concepts of

⁷⁰ Merleau-Ponty, *Phenomenology of Perception*, 475.

⁷¹ Overgaard, "The Problems of Other Minds," 264.

⁷² Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 221.

⁷³ *Ibidem*, 222.

philosophy and concepts of reality – shared the conviction that a truly direct and primal relationship to the Others is located in the realm of pre-reflective consciousness.⁷⁴

The sense of the presence of the other and the experience of shame, by the traditional model, are frequently taken not yet as cognition as such, although in further cognitive activity they constitute an irrefutable testimony of the presence and the existence of Others. Therefore, we think that in the end it is worth relating these issues to the emotional reaction to the other. We believe that the experiential character of cognizing mental experiences underlined, for instance, by Scheler, explains in an even deeper way why, in his view, the encounter with the Other is an embodied experience which founds and enables a direct contact with the Others.

Now, in the final section of our paper we would like to approach the propositions of phenomenologists in a somewhat critical manner. Although their attempt to indicate the possibility of directly cognition of the other's mental states via the body seems to be valuable, which is confirmed by the fact that it finds its continuation in contemporary cognitive science (cf. Gallagher 2008), it is not devoid of flaws, and the critique of Mill's proposal seems to be at times insufficiently justified or undermined by contemporary research.

As far as the latter issue is concerned Stępień enumerates the following arguments in favor of the fallacy of the theory of inferencing by analogy. According to him that theory "does not take into account the fact that during a cognitive contact with others we are not aware of conducting inferences by analogy."⁷⁵ This argument is valid only in so far as the reasonings that we conduct are essentially performed on an explicit level and steered by our mind. In the light of contemporary findings it does not seem to be the case. The theory of inferencing by analogy refers to the so-called ordinary cognitive system, the components of which work spontaneously without control (the existence of such a system is confirmed by contemporary research); therefore, the lack of awareness of such reasonings does not exclude the possibility that the cognitive system is conducting them. Analogically, one must admit that Stępień's argument stating that the knowledge of the psyche of other people occurs among young children "who cannot conduct

⁷⁴ Judycki, *Intersubiektywność i czas*, 259

⁷⁵ Stępień, "Rodzaje bezpośredniego poznania," 110.

an inference by analogy (of a proper type)⁷⁶ is a questionable argument because children, as contemporary developmental research indicates, conduct immensely complicated reasonings on the implicit level.

To do justice to Mill's argument, it is worth noting that the critique presented by the phenomenologists does not prove that we do not apply reasoning from analogy in any situations (it seems that contrary to the intuitions of the phenomenologists, direct cognition and cognition by inferencing do not have to be mutually exclusive). One can also defend Mill's concept, when one notices that its basic purpose is to explain the fact that we know that other people have minds, and not to explain how we can read them. What remains Mill's mistake is the dogmatic assumption that our mental states have agency. Also the conviction that we have an unquestionable and direct access to our own mental states, which is why our knowledge about these states is certain and independent from external factors (such as language or emotional cultural patterns) seems to be false. The second mistake, as we have already mentioned, is repeated by most phenomenologists discussed in this chapter.

Last but not least, Scheler's argument that the individuality of human experience prevents its generalization (postulated in a way by Mill) may be weakened by arguing that people belong to the same species and that their nature shaped in the process of evolution makes them similar to each other to a certain degree, also in how they experience the world.

In reference to the proposals of the phenomenologists, in turn, one can observe that their conviction about the possibility of reading mental states from the body of the other person is weakened by the fact that humans are able to control their body language. It is enough to think of actors whose acting cannot be differentiated from honest behavior. They are able to mask their own actual experiences, or arouse in themselves experiences with which they do not really identify. Not all people have adequate acting skills, but we can assume that everyone to a certain degree makes use of them, protecting for various reasons the privacy of one's own experiences. Hence in many situations, the so-called transparent intermediary in the cognition of the psyche of other people may become an opaque intermediary.

Both Stępień's systematics of the types of indirect cognitions (though this issue could easily be improved) and the idea of a transparent intermediary in direct cognition, about which the cognizing subject does not know, may

⁷⁶ Ibidem.

raise doubts. Either we are dealing with an intermediary, or not – calling it transparent does not solve the problem. The theory of the embodied mind might be a solution, however, neither Stępień nor Ingarden knew it.

It is also worth reflecting upon the consequence of Scheler's, perhaps, accurate observation, that the analysis of the mental state of a child and of primitive peoples demonstrates that initially it is the community which is given in experience, and only then I; initially, the human being lives in others, and then in him/herself. At first the child experiences the feelings and the thoughts of others (although it treats them as its own) because of the language which they have in common.⁷⁷ If that is really the case, then as children we are not ourselves, but we only shape ourselves on the basis of the experience of being other people, i.e. according to this approach our first mental experiences are not ours, but originate from our social surroundings. Deciphering mental states of children from the expressions of their bodies would be problematic in this context.

Also the argument from being observed and experiencing shame can be weakened. First, the feeling of uncertainty and shame that we experience when we become aware that somebody has been observing us without our knowledge seems to mean above all that when we are in the company of other people, we try to control our body language to convey ideas we want to convey, not necessarily the truth. Second, Sartre's remarks on the primacy of the experience of shame seem to be accurate in reference to all emotions. Admittedly, emotions are more primal than thinking or reasoning, they appear very fast – but this does not mean that behind these emotions there are no complex cognitive processes which have been formed in the process of a long-lasting enculturation or evolution. As far as the experience of shame in a social situation is concerned, one should consider the possibility that what we are ashamed of is transmitted in the process of both species and individual development; shame may be a learned experience and culturally specific.

To sum up, perhaps, as Stępień and Ingarden suggest, we actually have a certain capacity to directly decipher mental states of other people. This would include most of all mental states of people close to us, those who are not aware that they are being observed or those who under the influence of very strong stimuli are not able to control their own bodies. This would also apply to children, who do not try to conceal their experiences. Howev-

⁷⁷ Ibidem, 369-372.

er, intuitive experience is certainly not the only way of deciphering mental states of other people. Our knowledge about mental states of others is based, as it seems, mainly on verbal messages that we receive from other people. Without them we would not be able to not know what another person is thinking, dreaming about or what mathematical calculations he/she is conducting. Numerous mental states which people experience thanks to their language skills, could not be communicated in any other way but verbally.

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