Duddington and Our Awareness of Others' Minds[1]

I. The Problem

General scepticism raises a philosophical worry about everything: tables, chairs, seas, pebbles, and other people. How can we know that they are, and how they are?

My focus here is on the problem of others' minds, specifically. I will assume that I am a subject in a material world that exists, and which I can stand in a knowing relation to. There are tables and chairs, seas and pebbles, and I can know them, know that they are, and know what properties they have. My question is a question about my being in a world with other subjects. How do I know them, know that they are, and know how they are?

Scepticism about others is a nightmarish *cul de sac* for philosophical reflection to take us: it is heart wrenching, and, horrific to think that one's family could be not real. Even if we can be assured that we are in a world of objects, that we are not alone in that world matters to us more than anything else matters to us. There is a particular kind of anxiety we experience when the sceptic about other minds specifically – the solipsist about persons – induces a worry that our acceptance that we live our lives along with others is unfounded, or is inexplicable.

When the solipsist says: 'You know you exist, and know your own thoughts and feelings, I do not dispute that. However, no grounds are available to you for thinking that those moving bodies of others you can only perceive – what you call your children, for example – are subjects with minds, any more than other objects you perceive. For all you know you are all alone, and they are merely moving lumps of matter...' their challenge comes not only as a theoretical one, but as a form of emotional anxiety, or disturbance. We feel unwilling to countenance the possibility, and are disturbed by being asked to. The problem of other minds strikes us with a kind of emotional weight not characteristic of philosophical problems in general.[2]

Before turning to how we might address our problem, however, let me note that my focus is also not on the mere possibility of error or deception. Anil Gomes (2018) helpfully sets out the distinction between two distinct ways that the sceptic might motivate their scepticism. The first is to raise a worry about the possibility of error, and the second is to raise a worry concerning the sources: what is the nature of the knowing relation to the other? He argues that it is the latter worry that is particularly troubling. I agree. Raising the possibility of error as part of a sceptical challenge that has to some extent been contained by moves in epistemology that make room for error and illusion alongside knowledge within a given domain. Knowledge does not imply certainty, or knowing that one knows. Bad cases can be disjoined from good cases. Not all possibilities are relevant to whether or not I know. The argument from illusion not a slam dunk. I do not take the solipsist's challenge to be constituted by the mere logical possibility that my two children be replaced by sophisticated cybernauts. If that were all it was, I could assure myself that a logical possibility does not by itself undermine my ability to know that my children have minds, are sad or unconvinced, as I relate to them, now.

[1] Sophie Archer, Matt Boyle, Naomi Eilan, and Dick Moran, read this paper, and related material, and gave me incredibly useful comments, very quickly, when I had got a bit stuck. I am incredibly grateful to them. It was something of a proof of the power of other minds to co-constitute one's own.

[2] Eilan (2025) calls something like this challenge 'The Friends and Family Challenge', drawing on Reid's plaintive complaint that if 'what I call a father, a brother or a friend is only a parcel of ideas in my own mind . . . I am left alone, as the only creature of God in the universe, in that forlorn state of Egoism' (Reid , Essay II, Chapter 5)

My concern is a concern with what sort of knowledge knowledge of others could be? What resources do I have for knowing that there are others at all? What is it to stand in a knowing relation to a mind that is not mine? Is my actual relation to others is in fact no different from the way I would relate to a world of merely moving matter?[1] It is when we turn to the question 'how do we know?' that one gets a bit queasy, and the sense that we may not know creeps in.

Fortunately, given the occasion, I want to use a paper of Natalie Duddington's from the Aristotelian Society Proceedings 1918-1919 to guide my discussion. Duddington's paper has not been altogether neglected, but those who have written about it have tended take her discussion to be merely an exemplar of a perceptual approach to other minds.[3] My central motive for taking up Duddington's paper is that offers two distinctive, and underexplored, insights into how we relate to others. She presents a forthright, and compelling, case for a perceptual approach – but it is a particular version of the perceptual approach that focusses on the action of animate beings. The idea that we know each other as animate beings is one that barely figures in discussions of other minds, and is one I want to explore. However, Duddington's discussion also shows a striking sensitivity to the kind of stakes at issue, bringing out ways in which we stand to be affected by others in knowing them, and what we lose in not.

I will argue that the ways we stand to be affected by others directs us to ways of relating to another that takes us beyond the perceptual approach, and that constitute a powerful antidote to the solipsist. I will argue, much as Sartre did in his discussion of the nature of intersubjectivity in 'the Look', that there are fundamental forms of affective experience that any reflective subject capable of knowing her own self-consciousness would find unintelligible without a commitment to the other. The possibility of there being no others is not a 'real possibility' for her – she could not retain her mind, or sanity, and accept it.

Duddington frames her discussion of our knowledge of other minds with a distinction between knowing the existence of another mind, and knowing what that mind is thinking or feeling:

> The recognition of the existence of another mental life could be expressed by the judgment, "This is a living being"…But even in mature experience our direct acquaintance with other minds is often limited to the bare recognition of their existence. We immediately perceive the presence of a mind, but we often fail to discern anything further with regard to it; we are directly aware that the fellow creatures we meet in the street are human beings and not walking mannekins, but we hardly see more than this. (p.176)

Duddington states that her "object…is to maintain that our knowledge of other minds is as direct and immediate as our knowledge of physical things." (p.147) but in something of a reversal from the usual way of proceeding in contemporary debates she emphasises the centrality of recognising the existence of another person, another mental life, in contrast to the task of discerning what that person is thinking or feeling. She emphasises the extent to which we can stand in a knowing relation to another while being largely ignorant of what is going on in their minds.

> Perceiving a mind certainly does not lay bare before us all its thoughts, feelings, wishes, and so on, but neither does perceiving a table reveal to us the atoms and molecules that compose it. (p.170)

[3] See Avramides 2019, Gomes 2019, and McNeill 2012.

According to her we come to know the existence of others directly, and very early on in our development. The way we are presented with other *animated* bodies already reveals the existence of a mental life in other human beings – in contrast to inanimate objects:

> We do not first know bodies and then infer that they are animated bodies; the presence of mental life is revealed to us along with the qualities of shape, colour, movement, and so on that characterise the body. This does not imply anything so absurd as the assertion that a six-months-old baby knows its mother's mind as distinct from her body; but it does imply that in so far as it is aware of its mother at all, it is aware of her as qualitatively different from the perambulator she is pushing. (p.164)

Following Duddington, we can ask both about the existence of others, and about what others are thinking and feeling:

> (i) How do we know that there are minded others at all?
> (ii) How do we know the mental states and occurrences that constitute the mental life of another?

My focus will be on the first question, albeit with consequences for the second. Also, following Duddington I am going to argue that our knowledge of the existence of others is direct and immediate. The mental life of the other is revealed to me as independent and given. Duddington's story leaves somewhat unexplained why, in particular, in seeing animated bodies we see minds. I am going to seek to develop an account of why that might be, by clarifying what it is we are seeing when we see the actions and responses of animated bodies.

However, I am also going to adapt Duddington in another direction, by suggesting that her treatment of our relation to others in fact points us to vital non-perceptual resources for knowing others' minds. Moreover, these resources both help us make sense of the kind of knowledge of others we care so much about, and are of a kind that show that introspection can after all play a role in helping diffuse solipistically induced disturbance.

Although I do not deny the value of perceptual resources in our capacity to know others[4], my further aim in the paper is to shift our focus to our affective relations to each other. Doing so will bring the significance of emotion in characterising our knowing relations to each other into view. Such emotional resources enable us to make sense of, both, the nature of the solipsists challenge, and how by introspecting on our own condition we might resist it. I want to argue that re-instituting an appeal introspection, and the subject's relation to her own self-consciousness, provides her with resources that have a distinctive dialectical force in her engagement with the solipsist.

II. Perception of Others

Attempts to argue that others' minds are known through introspection, and some form of probable inference, are rarely convincing. Few think that Mill's question: "By what evidence do I know, or by what considerations am I led to believe… that the walking and speaking figures which I see and hear, have sensations and thoughts, or in other words, possess Minds?" is well answered by Mill's answer: "they have bodies like mine, that exhibit 'acts, and outwards signs'

[4] In fact, I think, that the idea of 'purely perceptual relations to others' may prove a problematic one. However, saying more about how to understand seeing other's actions and facial expressions would require consideration of how to think about perception in general, and will have to await future work.

that 'in my own case I know to be caused by feelings"'. (1865 [1872: 243]) Duddington declares it a 'ridiculous' supposition:

> A child of two attaches intelligible meaning to the phrases, "mother is angry" or "mother is pleased," and correctly interprets her expressive behaviour. Are we to assume, then, that at that tender age the child has already observed its own feelings of anger and pleasure, its own expression of these feelings, and has compared the angry tone of its mother's voice, or her smile, with the sound of its own little voice when angry, and the look in its own face when pleased? This is such a ridiculous supposition, that no wonder psychologists do not like being questioned too closely as to the age at which we are supposed to make the momentous inference that saves us from being solipsists.

Apart from her decisive dismissal of the idea that we could possibly come to know others minds by standing as observers to our own 'little voices' and 'look in' our own faces, she makes a connection between how we know others, and what enables us to care about them. If we stood to other minds in the way suggested by Mill the affective nature of our connection to others would be unintelligible:

> [H]uman affections would not be there to frustrate the demands of if it were true that other minds were for us merely inferred entities. How could one love or hate "in uncertain supposition of we know not what"? (p.162)

How then do we know that the other is minded in a way that makes human affection intelligible, if not by introspection and probable inference? Our direct perceptual acquaintance with animated others enables us, according to Duddington, to know that there are others.

> When we are confronted with the complex reality that we call a human being, we may be as directly and immediately aware of the mental as of the physical aspect of it. (p.165)

And how, for Duddington, does our perceptual relation to the other get taken up by the perceiver?:

> The look of misery in a fellow-creature's face wrings my heart with pity just because it is his suffering that is revealed to me, and no amount of sophistication will hide it from me. The pain of someone you love seems to blot out the rest of the world from your view; it will not allow you to forget its existence for a moment, and your cognitive attitude to it is exactly the same as to an obtrusive object of sense perception.

The experience of the perceiver and her world can be utterly transformed by the experience of the other – it can wring her body, and occlude her world. The affective response in the perceiver is moreover introspectable in way that it is known by the subject as a response to another's mentality, and not just an occasioning of her own:

> The characteristic feature of the experience is that you are all the while conscious of the pain, not as your own, but as somebody else's; in technical language the pain is not "enjoyed" but "contemplated." As a rule, of course, the contemplation of another's pain will cause you suffering too, yet it possible to distinguish by introspection between one's awareness of somebody else's pain and the pain which one feels oneself because of it. (p.171)

Duddington's account of knowledge of others is largely in keeping with how she thinks of knowledge in general. For her, knowledge involves that which is known "standing over against" the knower, "recognized as independent of the knowing mind, as 'given' to it-as something from which, so to speak, there is no running away " (p.151), allowing for a process of revelation of the features of that which is known through active contemplation and discrimination:

> The very nature of the knowing process is to seize upon some feature of the real and, through comparing it with other elements in the given whole, to obtain a more or less clear view of it….Although the mind, then, in knowing is essentially active, yet its relation to the object which it knows is one of contemplation, of "looking on,", of accepting it as "given." (p.148)

Duddington's discussion raises, at least, the following questions:

First, how should we make sense of our capacity to recognise the existence of another, to recognise "this is a living being"? What enables perception to ground such knowledge? I want to suggest that we can provide an answer if we explicitly include the overt actions – speakings, walkings, lookings, as well as other facial and bodily movings – of humans as perceivable mental phenomena.

Second, why, if the mental is perceivable is it so commonly thought that perception leaves something out, and cannot be the whole story about the way we know the minds of others?

Third, how might Duddington make sense of the fact that perception of others "enables one to love or hate them" when inference to "an uncertain supposition of we know not what" cannot?

Let me start with the first question. As we saw, according to Duddington, we perceptually recognise animate bodies. For her, in such perception, "the presence of mental life is revealed to us along with the qualities of shape, colour, movement, and so on that characterise the body". What is it to perceive something as an animated body in a way reveals to us the "presence of mental life"? The obvious answer is that in perceiving an animated body we perceive overt mental phenomena.

What mental phenomena might we include in the category of perceivable mental phenomena? Suppose that overt human actions, activities, and expressions are psychological occurrences taking place in the life a human mind.[5] An epistemologically straightforward way of securing direct knowledge of others' minds would be to argue that we see – and indeed hear and feel – others' actions, activities, and expressions as such. If actions, activities, and expressions, are mental phenomena, and if we directly perceive actions, activities, and expressions as such, we can conclude that we directly perceive minds in action. And we do perceive actions, activities, and expressions as such: most of the visible movements of a human animal are recognised as actions of the other by perceivers. A human animal's capacity for self-generated self-movement is exercised in occurrences that are recognisable through perception by their conspecifics, and other animals.[6]

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[5] See O'Brien (2024).

[6] Notice that the focus here on perceiving activity gets round the worry expressed Parrott (2017) and Gomes (2019), that we cannot have perceptual knowledge of mental occurrences because what is perceptible is an *expression* of the mental occurrence. Actions, are not, on the suggested view, mere expressions of anything, they are themselves acts of mind that are perceptible. They may be expressions of desires, intentions, and so on, as well as being acts of mind. Moreover, expressions of a mental occurrences can themselves be mental occurrences – if they are voluntary responses of agents – that we can perceive. According to Gomes (2019) we have 'expressive knowledge' of other

On this way of looking at things when Mill asks 'By what evidence do I know, or by what considerations am I led to believe… that the walking and speaking figures which I see and hear, have sensations and thoughts, or in other words, possess Minds? (1865 [1872: 243] he has already, to some extent, answered his own question – seeing and hearing the walking and the speaking of figures is already to perceive their minds. We may still ask how we know that they have covert unexpressed thoughts and feelings, but our answer to the question as to how we know that they are minded is already given in our seeing and hearing their walkings and speakings.

Duddington emphasises two aspects of our basic awareness of the existence of others: that they are human beings, and that they are animated. This is summarised in her claim that "the recognition of the existence of another mental life could be expressed by the judgment, 'This is a living being'"(p.176). For her "the differentia of responsive or animate objects as compared with inanimate is just the presence of psychical life." (p.163-4)

If part of what we are seeing when recognise an animated human being is seeing its actions, then the capacity for the recognition of the existence of another mental life involves a capacity for perceiving humans in action. If we take it that we *what* are seeing when we see the actions of an animated human are occurrences that are constituents of its mental life we are able see why seeing animated humans enables us directly to see minds, we are able to make headway with what Duddington refers to as the "difficulty of accounting for our recognition of the fact that human bodies are animate."

So, the view of human action, activity, and expression, as mental would, if justified, enable us to meet the demands of the existence question. If many observable human movements are recognisable *as* human actions, activity, and expression, and if human actions, activity, and expression are mental occurrences, then we can know that others are minded through seeing them move. When see an animated being we see their mind in action.

On the metaphysics of mind suggested, much of our mental lives is perceivable, and a perceptual approach to the problem of others' minds provides a robust response to the question of how we can know other minds. It also, importantly, provides an explanation of our ignorance of other minds. We very often do not know to what is going on in the covert life of another, beyond that they are standing or walking. Sometimes we know that a person thinks something – they say it out loud. for example.[7] But we wonder why, and wonder what they were doing in telling us, and wonder how they feel about this thing they think. To make further progress on such inquiries we will need to make inferences, try to get them to say more, or do more, so that we either have direct knowledge or have more to base our inferences and conjectures.

I take the solipsist about persons to be wrong when they suggest that perceiving animated others cannot give direct grounds to believe that they are minded, rather than mere moving matter. However, this is not in the end the strategy I want to focus on. I think the solipsists challenge, and the difficulty it imposes, brings out a way in which appeals only to perception do leave something out, and leave out materials that enable us to resist it. Moreover, to say no more than that we can perceive others' minds does not naturally give us materials with which to tackle the two further questions we posed above when trying to understand Duddington's view: why might

minds, which is neither perceptual nor evidential, and which have when we perceive the expression of mentality. I am happy with the idea that we have both perceptual and expressive knowledge of other minds.

[7] And note that once we accept that communicative acts such as speakings are mental acts of the person we can come to know also on the basis of testimony, which I take to be non-evidential and non-perceptual.

it be so commonly thought that perception *does* leave something out? And, how should we make sense of perception of others playing a role in "enabl[ing] one to love or hate" them?

A common way of spelling out the 'mere perception leaves something out' thought is as a failure of sufficiency claim. It can seem that the very possibility that the sceptic can sow doubt about our knowledge of others while leaving in place our capacities to know and perceive the rest of the material world – the chairs, tables, seas, pebbles – indicates that perceiving others is not sufficient to know them to be minded. The sceptic seems to ask us to consider a world that is just like our one in all perceivable aspects – the same kinds of bodies, moving in the same kinds of ways, with the same appearances – but without those bodies being persons with a point of view, with affection, consciousness, freedom, subjectivity. On this reading of their argument they rely on the possibility that if, in fact, your children, and all other humans, were merely moving lumps of matter your *perceptual* life would be the same? This possibility can make Elian's claim that "no amount of perception, on its own, implicates awareness of another first-person perspective, another 'I'" (2025, p.299) seem unavoidable. However, on the way of thinking about perception and its objects I have been working with we have no reason to take the perceptual life of a subject in a sole subject universe to be the same as ours are, in ours. Holding such a view enables to us take perception to be sufficient to know others' minds, and to take the sceptic is wrong, but it involves theoretical commitments to a view of perception of others as a relation to mental occurrences such as actions that is not dialectically very helpful in the context of the solipsist's challenge. It does not offer the sceptic much if he does not agree with those commitments.

However, there is another way of spelling out the 'mere perception leaves something out' thought. On this way, we might say that although perception can enable us to know the minds of others, there are fundamental ways of knowing others that are non-perceptual: when we appeal only to perception as a way of relating to others something has been left out. Indeed, it is what has been left out makes the thought of them not existing disturbing, and in the end unthinkable.[8]

Moran (2024) says, in his discussion of Sartre, on 'the Look':

> A solution to the problem of other minds that tells me that, contrary to first appearances, the behavioral evidence I encounter in the outside world really is sufficient for an extremely probable inference to the sentience of others, could still seem unsatisfying for at least two reasons. It seems a distortion of my actual relations to other people to characterize them as based on a very probable inference to their sentience. Rather, I experience my relations to other people as somehow more 'immediate' or more 'engaged' than that, and I normally hope that their own relations to me are similarly 'immediate' or 'engaged'. Secondly, the idea that a form of inference to the best explanation could be a satisfying response to solipsism loses touch with the Cartesian starting point that set the terms of the problem. We began with a sense of disparity between the indubitability that I am presented with in the cogito and what I can be presented with in the experience of other creatures around me. (p.3?)

The perceptual account offered inspired by Duddington does not involve an inference to the best explanation account, and the other is not only 'extremely probable'. I am directly and immediately aware of the other and their mental states: they are revealed to me in perception. Moreover, Duddington takes the kind of perceptual acquaintance involved to offer engagement.

[8] An analogy: it would be similar if we appealed only to hearing sounds in trying to characterise how we know a piece of music, without mentioning that hearing music is not only a perceptual experience, but also an emotional one.

Our acquaintance with others is described by Duddington in terms of an emotional connection: the look of misery in another's face "wrings my heart with pity just because it is his suffering that is revealed to me.", and "the pain of someone you love seems to blot out the rest of the world from your view". It is hard not to read Duddington as committed to the thought that one way in which the subject knows the other as 'obtrusively' standing over and against her, is that in perceiving the other she is liable to undergo an affective response – the heart wringing pity, the blotting out of rest of the world when she recognises the pain of a loved one – and that these are experiences from which there is no 'running away'. There is no retreat into the sureness of her own existence that does not stand to be matched by a sureness of the other's. Finally, the affective experiences of the subject are such that they are experienced as experiences of another's mind, and distinguishable by introspection from similar experiences of their own mind:

> The characteristic feature of the experience is that you are all the while conscious of the pain, not as your own, but as somebody else's; in technical language the pain is not "enjoyed" but "contemplated." As a rule, of course, the contemplation of another's pain will cause you suffering too, yet it possible to distinguish by introspection between one's awareness of somebody else's pain and the pain which one feels oneself because of it. (p.17)

However, Duddington appeals only to perception. She does not unpack the relation between perception and our emotional liabilities, and offers no explicit role to our affective capacities, in her account of our capacity to know others. I want to take her account where, I think it leads, and suggest that we should consider also our affective capacities, and relations to others, as central to what it is to know another.

Duddington's main concern in her paper is with responding to the view that we cannot directly perceive the minds of others. She, therefore, emphasises the similar way in which others and objects directly impose themselves on a perceiving subject. She makes less effort underlining the *contrasting* ways in which others intervene in my mental life, and the ways other objects do. Obviously, she takes our capacity to perceive a body as animated as a differentia of 'psychical life'. She also describes the perceivers response to perceiving the mindedness of other in emotional terms, and emphasises our capacity to distinguish within introspection between our own mentality and our experience of another's. However, we might wonder whether Duddington takes the emotional responses she describes to play no direct role in our knowledge of others, and whether she takes perceptual knowledge of others as a kind of knowledge that one could have with no affective engagement with the other.

In the film *The Lives of Others* the character Captain Gerd Weisler spies on his downstairs neighbours – he has perceptual access to them, and their doings. They do not even know of his existence, and, at the start, he has no interest in theirs.[9] We can ask would a perceiver stuck in a people watching 'hide' with the other ignorant of their existence, perceiving with a detached disinterested attitude to the other, stand in the same knowing relation as we do to others?

3. Non-perceptual sources: Feeling self-conscious before another

As I said at the start, I want in this paper to take Duddington's discussion in two directions.

[9] Note that Weisler does not – maybe *cannot* – remain disinterested and forensic in his observations, continuing to track them as he might have a drone or land mine. He becomes emotionally engaged with them and their lives. My concern in this is to identify the perceptual and affective elements – it is the job of further work to clarify the relations between them.

First, I wanted to clarify why we might think that perceiving animated bodies involves us perceiving minds. I take myself to have done that in the claim that the actions and responses of others we perceive, when we perceive another as animated, are themselves occurrences in the psychological life of the animal that we have the capacity to recognise in perception as the types of occurrence they are: walkings, talkings, cryings, frownings, and so on.

Second, I wanted to suggest that Duddington's treatment of our relation to others directs us to appeal to affective non-perceptual resources for knowing others' minds, and that these resources provide the kind of knowledge of others we care about, are able to help the reflective subject diffuse solipistically induced disturbance.

Eilan (2025) quotes a wonderful passage from Broad on our belief in the existence of other minds.

> It would seem then that we have a stronger belief in the existence of other minds than in the existence of material things. No one in his senses doubts either proposition in practice; but the philosopher can and does doubt the latter in his study, whilst, even in that chaste seclusion, he seems to be unable or unwilling to doubt the former. I do not think that this difference can be ascribed either to the fact that the evidence for the existence of other minds is more cogent than the evidence for the existence of matter, or to the fact that we have a stronger instinctive belief in the former than in the latter. I think that the real explanation is that certain strong emotions are bound up with the belief in other minds, and that no very strong emotions are bound up with the belief in matter. The position of a philosopher with no-one but himself to lecture to, and no hope of an audience, would be so tragic that the human mind naturally shrinks from contemplating such a possibility. It is our business, however, to stifle our emotions for the present, and to follow the argument whithersoever it may lead. (Broad 1925, 317– 18)

Broad's characterisation reflects our earlier remarks that doubt about the existence of others seems particularly hard, both in the respect that we are 'unable or unwilling' to do it, and in the respect that such doubt is emotionally disturbing.

Broad is obviously right when he says that emotions are bound up with taking ourselves to be in a world of other minds, and that the way in which others figure in emotional relations to us makes a difference to whether we are able to doubt their existence. He is also on to something when he takes it to be important that in a world without others it is not only that there would be no-one for me to know, but there would be no-one to whom I would be known. To contemplate a world without others is to contemplate a world in which our concern and interest in the other is a kind of absurd humiliating delusive activity. There is no-one there to take up my concern and interest for them.

Broad enjoins us, however, to stifle our emotions and follow the argument 'whithersoever it may lead'. But what if we do not stifle our emotions, but rather reflect upon them and consider them rather as a rational resource by means of which we stand in relations to others? What if we argue, picking up from Duddington, that "human affections would not be there to frustrate the demands of logic" if other minds were not revealed in them.

Two things have been notably missing from most contemporary analytical discussions of the problem of others' minds.[10] One, the affective relations between human beings have largely been ignored as potential epistemic resources. If the human capacity for emotion is a rational resource capable of revealing salient features of her world, then we should not ignore it. Two, the way in which others' minds figure in a person's consciousness of *themselves* have played little role in making sense of the sources by which we know others.

Let us take different tack in making headway with our problem. The solipsist drives us back into our own self-consciousness, making us worry that the perceptual resources that he freely grants us, do not reach all the way to other minds, they just give us more knowledge of mere matter. Consider what happens if we stay firmly in the first-person introspective perspective, and ask not 'how can I reach into the others' minds?' but rather 'how does the other reach into my mind in a way that makes their mindedness palpable to me?

One can sometimes get the impression, from the philosophical treatment of it, that the starting point for human beings in the task of coming to know the minds of others is an exercise in observational scrutiny and discrimination – of all the material objects in the world we have to develop ways of detecting those relatively few that are minded, and learn to distinguish them from the rest. We need to sort our parents and siblings from the perambulators, cots, and bottles. However, things are quite the other way around – it is in being the object of the observational scrutiny, and practical attention, that the mind of the other is first, and centrally, impressed upon us. We do not seek out minds, they seek us out – others' minds probe us with their attention through eye contact, verbal address, and touch, and in so doing transform our experience of ourselves. I do not need to get out of my mind, into another's, to make contact with the mind of the other, the other already shows up in my experience of myself.

We saw this in Duddington's description of our perception of suffering and pain. Part of directly experiencing the other's mind involves experiencing what is happening with me: my heart wrings and my world is blotted out. These are experiences of herself that the subject undergoes, and knows through introspection, and which are imposed on her in her experience of the other.[11] Introspection can reveal that my own mind is run through with forms of experience that relate us to others. Human capacities to relate one to the other are realised in a way that introspection can reveal.

We may worry that the kind of cases Duddington appeals to rely on there *already* being affective relations place between perceiver and subject. She says, after all, that it is love that means the pain of the loved one blots out one's world. Apart from a question about whether these perceptual relations are proceeded by, and may, depend on existing affectual ones we might think that appeal to love, pity, and empathy involve us in an attentive focus on the other of a kind that in the grip of solipsistic doubt we may fear we have lost the grounds for. In the midst of our disturbance we may be thought of somewhat like a philosophical Capgras sufferer who asks themselves whether they have been left alone, scrutinising other bodies – seeing, hearing, touching – looking for proof that they are persons, not realising that it is the precisely our

[10] An important exception is Eilan who asks whether joint attention and the thought of another as 'you' gives us the materials with which to tackle the problem of other minds.

[11] Consider also Edith Stein's appeal to empathy as a *sui generis* direct non-perceptual source of knowledge of other minds: When it [the other's affective or mental experience] arises before me all at once, it faces me as an object (such as the sadness I "read" in another's face). But when I inquire into its implied tendencies (try to bring another's mood to clear givenness to myself), the content, having pulled me into it, is no longer really an object. I am no longer turned to the content but to the object of it, am at the subject of the content in the original subject's place. And only after successfully executed clarification does the content again face me as an object. (Stein 1964, p. 10)

capacity for affective resonance with others, and which has been set aside in the inquiry, that grounds our relations to each other.

However, here is a minimal kind case in which the mind of another can be thought to impact on almost anyone capable of raising the solipsists worry, and focussing on herself. It is also one that presupposes no partial and prior relations of love, pity, empathy.

Suppose you are sitting on a tube train reading your book. Suppose you notice someone looking at you, a quizzical expression on their face. You check that they are actually looking at you – you follow their gaze. But, no, it is definitely you they are looking at. When you try to look back – to catch their eye – they swerve a little, only to come back to looking at you when they see your eyes go back to your book. You come to feel awkwardly self-conscious. You come to feel looked at.

The human gaze produces an affective form of self-consciousness in you.[12] You come to be conscious of yourself in a particular way; the person on the tube makes you feel self-conscious in your apprehension of the fact that you were the object of their attention, their looking. When you come to feel conscious of yourself as the object of consciousness of the person looking at you, you may come to feel awkward, or troubled, as above. Or perhaps, you come to feel self-conscious in a pleasurable way. In any case it has a phenomenological character. You come to be conscious of yourself as a material, voluminous thing – a thing with a front and a back. You come to be aware of having an outside: there may be a heightened awareness of your skin, clothes, your 'externalities'. If you speak, or otherwise act, your experience of these productions tends to be duplex: you will experience them as their agent, and also as events in the world being observed by another. That these elements characterise such self-consciousness shows the extent to which it involves us taking two perspectives on ourselves at once. However, it is important to see that these perspectives come together as part of a unity – we do not oscillate between them. The case, as described, has you oscillating between an engaged, absorbed, 'non-self-conscious' reading of your book, and a self-conscious awareness of being observed. The consciousness of being observed however does not involve me shifting in serial between my perspective and my projection into his perspective on me. What we have is two perspectives – observed and observer – held at once in a single self-conscious structure, where the observer's perspective comes to be embedded with the perspective of the observed.

In short, noticing another's attentive look directed towards tends to transform my experience of myself – to produce a self-conscious affective response that I have both interoceptive and introspective access to. In provoking a response to a look in that way, the other has immediately, and thereby, differentiated themselves from other objects in my consciousness – by attending to me they draw my attention to their attending. The perambulator does not, and cannot, impinge upon me in that way. The transaction that takes place between human beings when one falls under the attentive, often evaluative, gaze of another involves a transformation of what it is like to be the gazed at person.

We should not be surprised that this kind of self-consciousness is one core non-perceptual resource for knowing others. Affective forms of social self-consciousness, such as feeling self-conscious, feeling shame, pride, embarrassment, are precisely modes of experience fitted to incorporate the view of another into the experience a subject has of herself. The form of the subject's self-consciousnesses is unintelligible in a world without others, who are capable to

[12] I call the most basic form of such self-consciousness, ordinary self-consciousness. See O'Brien (2011).

taking her to be one way or another. The subject feeling self-conscious under the gaze of another could not at the same time think that she is, and has always been, on her own in the world.

Suppose it is agreed that others produce affective forms of self-consciousness in us in this way. How does it help with our problem?

First, we have identified a minimal way we have of standing in a relation of awareness to the other that goes beyond perception, and that anyone capable of worrying about our problem can appeal to. The affective forms of social self-consciousness, such as feeling self-conscious, embarrassment, feeling shame, pride, offer a source of awareness of the other with a particular character. They are apt for incorporating the fact of another into my experience of myself even when I have been brought back to myself, feeling alone in the world. They subvert a natural bifurcation of domains: the subject relating to herself only through introspection and a public world, including others, knowable only through perception and inference. Through such forms of self-consciousness, the other, as we put it earlier 'reaches into my mind in a way that makes their mindedness palpable to me' and it does so in way that not detach me from my introspective connection to myself. In the midst of such self-consciousness, the existence of the other, as they insert themselves into my sense of myself, is not at question, it is undeniable. It allows for, as Sartre thinks it must if we are to know of the Other's existence, a kind of social cogito.

> If the Other's existence is not a vain conjecture, or pure fiction, it is because there is something like a cogito that applies to it. (p.345) [13]

A self-conscious subject, capable of reflection, asks herself whether she is able to doubt her own existence. She is unable. Why? She might re-construct things understanding them to go as follows:

> Engagement in (1) A particular act of conscious thinking;
> Judgment: (2) I am thinking
> Judgment, by inference: (3) I exist

A socially self-conscious subject who feels self-conscious - or shame, or pride - and is capable of reflection, asks herself whether she can doubt the existence of others. She is unable. Why? She might re-construct things understanding them to go as follows:

> Engagement in: (1) Seeing human eyes extendedly directed at me.
> Engagement in (2) A feeling of self-consciousness (or shame, pride, embarrassment…)
> Judgment: (3) The other is looking at me and has made me feel self-conscious.
> Judgment, by inference: (4) Other minds exist.

We might object to this way of trying to settle our doubts in a number of ways.

First, we may think that while it really is impossible to doubt one's own existence, we can doubt the existence of others. After all, is that not what our capacity to follow the solipsist's challenge showed us? However, we may also follow Lichtenberg's challenge that my thinking does not secure my existence, only to consider further what we think thinking is. If thinking is mode of being, then if there is thinking the thinker must be. What we do when we think about the solipsists challenge is to think about my self-conscious life, and think about what such self-consciousness is. If the nature of my self-consciousness implicates the existence of the other, the

[13] Sartre (2018).

other must be. It is true that I am not independent of myself, but am independent of any particular other and can exist without them - as death so miserably establishes. And I may in my self-consciousness be in error about any particular other, but if I am not, I can directly experience the other, and, vitally, the form of the experience implies others exist.

Moran in his discussion of Sartre and the problem of other minds captures beautifully a suggestion about the kind of relation we have to the problem:

> [T]he 'problem of solipsism' cannot be understood by the philosopher himself either as a debate with an ordinary philosophical opponent or as an encounter with a madman, but rather as some kind of trouble with himself. The philosopher has to take himself to understand the path to solipsism well enough to get the problem started, and he has to have the 'reef' in view well enough to make sure to avoid it, but at the same time he will not be satisfied simply to avoid it. Rather his disquiet will not be relieved unless he can also say and show that the reef was never there to begin with, because after all he was never really tempted by madness. (p.2?)

What a forced return, by the look of the other, to ordinary forms of self-consciousness that are unintelligible without a commitment to the other, give us is a sense of the dissolution of self – of madness – that it would take to sustain the solipsists concern. And we are not mad after all.

Second, we may object that while it may be psychologically difficult, or impossible, for a reflective socially self-conscious subject to doubt the existence of others, we have shown it only to be a psychological impediment and not an epistemic one. Perhaps, it remains true that we should implement Broad's injunction to stifle our emotions and go back to the argument. This is I think to understate the situation. The impediment is not like that of drinking nasty tasting medicine, or injecting oneself – very hard, even psychologically impossible. The problem is rather that for a reflective subject capable of knowing her own mind the forms of self-consciousness are unintelligible without a commitment to the other. The very structure of her self-consciousness, her understanding of the purpose of the emotional capacities she is exercising, builds in the possibility of being conditioned by the other. The possibility of there being no others is not a 'real possibility' for her – she could not retain her understanding of her own mind and accept it. It is true that she may feel self-conscious without there being this particular other – she may be in error, or perhaps she is only imagining someone looking – but the nature of her capacity to feel self-conscious implies that the commitment to existence of others has already been made.

Third, it might objected (a) that we cannot not argue our way to knowledge of either our existence, or that of others, and (b) that if we try any argument will question begging. As Moran puts it "Descartes' cogito is not a proof if that means an inference from premises that do not themselves presuppose the conclusion", taking himself to agree with Sartre's claim that "Descartes did not prove his existence. Because in fact I have always known that I existed, I have never ceased to practice the cogito. Similarly, my resistance to solipsism – a resistance that is as lively as that which an attempt to doubt the cogito would arouse – proves that I have always known that the Other existed" (Sartre, 2018, p.345)

It is an old complaint that the cogito 'inference', if understand as an inference, is question begging. The argument for the existence of others might be thought question begging at two points. First, in line with Nagel's question, "why doesn't the experience of the Look depend on a

logically prior grasp of the Other, rather than providing it without presuppositions?" (p.167).[14] Two, we might argue that the judgment that 'The other is looking at me and has made me feel self-conscious' is only warranted if I understand the feeling of self-consciousness as due to another.

My response to this objection is to some extent to agree: the arguments are not supposed to provide evidentially based proofs of my mind, or other minds. They are rather exercises in the articulation of the structure of human self-consciousness, grounded in being self-conscious in the relevant way. They are able to remind the knower of the conditions his self-consciousness that leaves them, as they are in that condition, no remaining question of whether there are other minds. It would be madness to doubt that there are.

However, I do want briefly, before ending, to say a little bit about experiencing 'a Look'. I phrased things in the re-constructed argument in way that might allow that my seeing human eyes extendedly directed at me to not already involve my seeing the mind of anything in action. The eruption of self-consciousness as a result was treated as if it were the first contact with the mind of the other in the scenario. However, when presenting the scenario I said "I then notice that someone is looking at me". What we take to be assumed, or not assumed here, will depend on the matters discussed in the second section of this paper – whether seeing a looking is seeing a mental occurrence. Could we see mere moving matter look? Do I see minds in action when I see looking, or is 'looking' is a mind neutral activity?

How one frames one's response to the solipsist about persons, how one settles 'a kind of trouble with oneself' will depend how one thinks about lookings, talkings, frownings, and indeed looks of misery, cries of pain. If the solipsist has given us a capacious capacity for perception, and a rich world of perceivables, with a certain kind of metaphysics, we can already know that there are minds when we see a look. The connection with affective forms of self-consciousness in so perceiving will enable us to understand why we care.

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[14] Nagel (2010) asks the question urging us to not understand of the role of the experience of Sartre's 'look' in knowing others in inferential terms.

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