Mind-making practices: the social infrastructure of self-knowing agency and responsibility

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Published online: 11 Jun 2015.

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This paper is divided into two parts. In Section 1, I explore and defend a "regulative view" of folk-psychology as against the "standard view" (encompassing both theory-theory and simulation theory, as well as hybrid variations). On the regulative view, folk-psychology is conceptualized in fundamentally interpersonal terms as a "mind-making" practice through which we come to form and regulate our minds in accordance with a rich array of socially shared and socially maintained sense-making norms. It is not, as the standard view maintains, simply an epistemic capacity for coming to know about the mental states and dispositions already there. Importantly, the regulative view can meet and beat the standard at its own epistemic game. But it also does more. In Section 2, I show how the regulative view makes progress on two other problems that remain puzzling on the standard view: (1) the problem of "first-person authority" – accounting for the special features of self-knowledge; and (2) the problem of "reactive responsiveness" – accounting for our deep concern with calling one another to account for normatively untoward behaviour, both generally and in the moral domain.

Keywords: folk-psychology; norms; self-knowledge; first-person authority; self-regulation; reactive attitudes; responsibility; social practice; know-how; capacities

A focal project in philosophy of mind and related cognitive disciplines has been to investigate our remarkable human capacity to see other creatures, and especially one another, as "minded"; as (more or less) richly endowed with a variety of cognitive, affective and perceptual states that apparently guide behaviour. So, for instance, we might readily conclude:

- The squirrel runs up a tree because it fears the barking dog.
- Tommy toddler smiles and holds up his arms because he sees his mother coming and wants a cuddle.
- Dr Jones darts into her office because she does not *want* to talk to her *scheming* colleague about why she should support him at the upcoming departmental meeting.

This capacity for mentalistic attribution and explanation has travelled under various names in the literature: "folk-psychology", "the intentional stance", "theory of mind", "mentalizing", "mindreading", "mind-simulating", "psycho-practice".[1] But in this paper, I will generally use the term "folk-psychology", in part because of its historical prominence, and in

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part because it evokes a dominant way of thinking about our mentalizing proclivities (here-after, "the standard view") that I here wish to highlight in order to resist.

On this standard view, folk-psychology is conceptualized in fundamentally epistemic and individualistic terms. As we navigate about the social world, we are presented as engaged in a quasi-scientific enterprise, seeking to explain and predict one another's behav-iour by way of making reasonable hypotheses about the underlying mental causes of that behaviour. Notably, the standard view encompasses two well-known approaches to accounting for our mentalizing capacity so conceived: the so-called *theory-theory view*, according to which our mentalizing capacity is straightforwardly understood as a kind of (folk) theorizing about the underlying causes of behaviour; and the so-called *simulation view*, according to which we make suppositions about the underlying causes of others' be-haviour by way of mental simulation – that is, by way of putting ourselves in other people's shoes, mentally speaking, and using our own cognitive system "offline" to generate what-ever mental states we would experience if we were actually in their situation.[2] Note, then, that the fundamental difference between these rival approaches concerns the underlying cognitive mechanisms that subserve our mentalizing capacity; it does not concern the question of whether this capacity is rightly viewed in an essentially epistemic and quasi-scientific light, where the primary goal is one of explaining and predicting one another's behaviour.

Why such widespread agreement on this epistemic conception of folk-psychology? The reason is not hard to find. As noted above, human beings *do* have a remarkable facility for explaining and predicting behaviour by way of attributing underlying mental states.[3] Indeed, human beings are not only active mentalizers, they are *inveterate* mentalizers, finding it natural to perceive a variety of creatures – and even creature-like stimuli – as animated by mental states. A particularly vivid illustration of this is found in Heider and Simmel's now classic study of the reaction of typical viewers to an animated film of simple geometric figures (two triangles and a circle) moving in and around a rectangular enclosure (Heider and Simmel 1944). With nothing but the pattern of movement and inter-action amongst the figures to go on, typical viewers find it natural to provide mentalistic, and surprisingly convergent, explanations of the unfolding scene – that is, explanations that involve references to what these figures are thinking and feeling, as well as their under-lying traits and apparent goals.[4] Thus, while mentalistic explanation (and prediction) may seem a relatively sophisticated capacity, it comes naturally and fluidly to (typically devel-oping) human beings: it often takes little or no effort to deploy; and it is often deployed with robust success in many naturalistic settings, allowing us to get some genuine explanatory/predictive grip on otherwise complex patterns of behaviour (Dennett 1987). All of this cries out for explanation.

Still, however reasonable this epistemic conception of folk-psychology may seem, a growing chorus of critics have catalogued significant problem with the standard view in both of its main variations (theory-theory and simulation theory), as well as in various hybrid accounts. This has led to a fruitful investigation of distinctively alternative ways of thinking about our mentalizing talents.[5] And though I find much of this work inspiring and congenial, I here focus on one strand of this dissenting chorus which develops what I will call a "regulative view" of folk-psychology (McGeer 2001, 2007; see too, Zawidzki 2008, 2013). In a nutshell, the regulative view rejects the standard idea that folk-psychology involves a primary capacity for discovering or detecting (pre-existing) mental states; rather it argues that folk-psychology involves a primary capacity for forming and regulating our mental states in accordance with a rich array of socially shared and socially maintained sense-making norms. In other words, the regulative view conceptualizes folk-psychology as

a fundamentally *interpersonal* (versus individualistic) *mind-making* (versus mind-detecting) enterprise.[6]

My aim in this paper is two-fold: first, it is to explain and then rehearse the attractions of the regulative view insofar as it gives a richer and more satisfying account of our mentalizing skills, even as these are deployed to epistemic ends. Second, my aim is to deepen the appeal of the regulative view by showing how it gives us resources for addressing two further philosophical problems that remain puzzling and problematic on the standard view. The first is the problem of "first-person authority". While the standard view makes room for coming to know our own mental states, none of the proposed accounts easily makes sense of the notable features of self-knowledge; in particular, why we are able to speak in a putatively privileged and authoritative way about those states. The second is the problem of "reactive responsiveness".[7] The standard view offers nothing to explain a central feature of our practice as minded subjects – namely, our deep concern with calling one another to account both generally and in the moral domain, and – importantly for moral philosophers – why we should think such practices can be normatively fitting or fair. The regulative view not only explains this feature of our interpersonal lives, it shows why it is, or should be, of central concern in the philosophy of mind.

My paper will be divided into two sections. In Section 1, I explain what the regulative view entails and why it has the resources to meet and beat the standard view at its own epistemic game. In Section 2, I briefly show how the regulative view is apt for addressing the problem of first-person authority and the problem of reactive responsiveness. Since the point of this paper is to display the explanatory reach of the regulative view, I will need to be somewhat sketchy in Section 2. Some of the required detail work is already done in other papers.

1. The regulative view of folk-psychology

A major claim of this paper is that the regulative view conceptualizes "folk-psychology", not as an individualistic capacity for explaining and predicting behaviour, but as an interpersonal norm-governed enterprise wherein we come to form and regulate our mental states and dispositions in socially recognizable ways. To help get a grip on this picture and to illustrate some of its key features, I begin in Section 1.1 with a simple model of an interpersonal norm-governed practice: playing chess. In Section 1.2, I then apply this model to the more elaborate and complex practice of folk-psychology.

1.1. *Playing chess: a simple model of a norm-governed practice*

Assuming rank ignorance, consider what it would take to become a "well-regulated" chess-player, someone who is reasonably able to play the game of chess. As a novice chess-player, you must naturally come to learn the basic, or "constitutive", rules of chess – that is, what counts as a move in chess, what counts as winning, and so forth. But more than that, you must come to appreciate the various strategies that will help you win the game. Some of this involves propositional knowledge to be sure: a novice chess-player can be told the basic rules and what it takes to win. But learning how to apply these rules and, even more, learning how to think and act strategically in chess-relevant ways involves practice and a lot of corrective feedback, direct or indirect, from other players. It involves developing some chess *know-how* or *expertise* – that is, you must come to shape or regulate your own thought and action in accordance with the rules and strategies of chess.

Some fundamental differences between grasping the rules in a propositional sense and developing chess-playing know-how or expertise are worth emphasizing. First and most obviously, know-how is something that comes in degrees: despite having full propositional knowledge of the rules of chess, you can be more or less skilled in the practice, developing your chess-playing capacity to a greater or lesser degree. Second and relatedly, chess-playing know-how is an embodied skill or capacity: You must develop a rich array of subsidiary competencies involving, for instance, visualization, imagination, higher order pattern recognition, and well-tuned expectancy formation, that together translate into fluid bodily movement and perception as you engage with chessboard and pieces. In this way, you come literally to shape your thought and action in chess-compliant ways. Third and most importantly, such know-how is characteristically marked by a "practice-dependent" epistemic gain: as you develop your skill, you will be able to understand and even predict what other chess-players are up to in a way that simply escapes the unskilled player.

The idea of a practice-dependent epistemic gain deserves special emphasis, since it has certain notable features in itself. First, it is characteristically direct: as a skilled chess-player, you will simply perceive other chess-players' thoughts and intentions directly *in* their chess-playing behaviour – no (conscious) inferential activity is generally required. Second, this gain is essentially reciprocal: just as *you* perceive others' chess-playing thought and action in their chess-playing behaviour, so too *they* will perceive your chess-playing thought and action in your chess-playing behaviour. As chess-players, you make yourselves mutually intelligible to one another by conforming to the (shared) rules and strategies of chess. But such practice-dependent epistemic gains are also vulnerable to non-conforming thought and action: you will have difficulty understanding what your opponent is up to – and vice versa – if either one of you fails to conform to the rules and strategies of chess. So, thirdly, in a truly norm-governed practice, this difficulty is overcome by cultivating a disposition for corrigibility. To wit: if you find your opponent doing something unintelligible or even just nonsensical in chess terms, you do not think, "I need to work out what rules and strategies they are following in order to explain/predict their behaviour." You think, "one or other of us is failing to follow the rules and strategies of our shared chess-playing practice. So one or other of us stands in need or correction."

And, given the shared nature of this practice, you will need to negotiate with one another about who has gone astray, and who ought to adjust their thought and action accordingly.[8]

Drawing on these observations, this simple model of an inter-subjective norm-governed enterprise teaches three important lessons (I will draw on these lessons again in Section 2):

(i) *The regulative lesson*: To become a chess-player, the capacity you need to develop is primarily a self-regulating one: a capacity to shape your *own* thought and action as the rules and strategies of chess require. (Importantly, this brings with it significant practice-dependent epistemic benefits – that is, benefits with regard to predicting/explaining the thought and action of other normatively regulated chess-players.)

(ii) *The corrigibility lesson:* Competence in the practice requires some minimal or threshold capacity to operate on your own; but more importantly, you must have a disposition to learn from the corrective interventions of others and to correct them, where appropriate.

(iii) *The social infrastructure lesson:* Even as the capacity to operate on your own increases, you will continue to depend on the regulative interventions of others as they comment on your performance, keeping you up to par and pushing you to improve. And, in like manner, they will continue to depend on you.

1.2. *Applying the simple model to the practice of folk-psychology*

The regulative view argues that we can apply this simple model to the practice of folk-psychology. Naturally, this means relinquishing the standard view that folk-psychology is first and foremost an individually realized epistemic capacity. Rather, it is first and foremost a socially shared practice consisting of myriad norms that together constitute what it is to be a well-behaved folk-psychological agent – an agent whose ways of thinking and acting are made explicable in terms of the norms of a shared practice. Just as in chess, human beings become well-behaved folk-psychological agents by developing a capacity to regulate, and thereby shape, their own thought and action in accord with these norms. Just as in chess, they become well-behaved folk-psychological agents by developing folk-psychological know-how or expertise.

Of course, the norms of folk-psychology will be far more numerous and complex than the rules and strategies of chess. To some extent, they will also be culturally, or even role, specific – governing how different types of agents may be expected to think, feel and act in particular contexts (for instance, often according to their social status).[9] But however these norms are locally elaborated, they will certainly include norms that are broadly characteristic of rational agency (Dennett 1987). In other words, they will include at their foundational core: (1) *Evidential norms*, governing what it is appropriate to believe, whether in particular or general terms, on the basis of this or that body of evidence (direct experience, the testimony of others, etc.); (2) *Evaluative norms*, governing what it is appropriate to desire, as a creature characterized by a range of more or less immediate personal needs, an open future in which those needs may change, and social interdependence (inflecting one's personal needs in one way or another); and finally (3) *Executive norms*, governing what it is appropriate to prefer and do in light of one's beliefs and desires.

Specifying such norms, at least in a rough and ready way, would be a relatively tedious and platitudinous exercise, as many philosophers have long recognized (Dennett 1987; Fodor 1985, 1987; Jackson and Pettit 1990; Lewis 1966, 1972). This speaks to the fact that such norms are largely shared – to some extent written into our nature as rational beings, but also critically shaping our nature as socially enculturated experts in our shared folk-psychological practice. Furthermore, given these norms are largely shared, it is no surprise on the regulative view why developing folk-psychological know-how oneself would bring substantial (practice-dependent) epistemic benefits in its train. For as the chess-playing analogy makes clear, in becoming the kind of agent whose thought and action is regulated by these very norms, one becomes able to understand, explain and even predict what others are up to when they regulate their thought and action likewise. As a competent folk-psychological agent, one is epistemically empowered in the company of other such agents.

Of course, a critic may protest that this is precisely the point at which the analogy between chess and folk-psychology breaks down. After all, according to that analogy, children would have to learn to be competent folk-psychological agents just as they must learn to become competent chess-players. But, as already conceded, human beings are by nature rational agents; hence, *contra* the regulative view, they need no such training in the basic (folk-psychological) norms of rationality. Furthermore, the critic may continue, if the regulative account were on the right track, it would imply that competent folk-psychologists are epistemically empowered only with respect to other trained and competent folk-psychological agents. But this is surely not the case. As noted in my introduction, human folk-psychologists have a more general epistemic capacity insofar as their mentalizing competence buys them significant predictive/explanatory powers even with respect to non-human

creatures – that is, creatures that *in no sense* learn to regulate themselves according to the sense-making norms of our shared folk-psychology. This is readily explained on the standard view, especially in its theory-theory variation.[10] But it is seemingly quite mysterious on the regulative view.

These two challenges certainly call for some response, and I consider them in reverse order. The second challenge, once again, is to explain how our mentalizing competence is epistemically empowering outside the human domain. This is no problem of the regulative view: it can simply embrace – in fact, it relies on – a salient observation emphasized by Daniel Dennett, among many others. To wit: *any* behaviourally flexible creature that is to survive in the world – and survive at least well enough to satisfy certain creaturely needs – will have to display the profile of an "intentional system". It will have to conform in its operations (more or less, and within its perceptual and cognitive limits) to the core norms of folk-psychology – the norms of rationality I mentioned above: evidential, evaluative and executive. That is to say, it will have to be *representable* as rationally forming and acting on certain beliefs and desires. And because of this, a competent folk-psychologist will be able to explain and/or predict its behaviour by identifying the beliefs the creature ought to form (given its epistemic situation), identifying the desires it ought to have given its (creature-specific) needs, and identifying the actions it ought to perform given those beliefs and desires (Dennett 1987). But here is the crucial point: to say a creature can be represented in this way – as an intentional system that conforms to certain rational norms (roughly speaking) – is not to say that it *regulates itself* according to those norms; it need only blindly comply with what they require.[11]

But, now, how do human beings fit into this picture? – this relates to the first critical challenge raised above, which questions the extent to which we human beings learn to shape our mental states and processes according to shared folk-psychological norms. In concessionary spirit, the regulative view agrees that we are intentional systems; and, by the reasoning just rehearsed, this entails that our survival surely depends on having some natural tendency to comply willy-nilly with the norms of rational agency. Indeed, the regulative view capitalizes on this to explain why such norms are foundational for folk-psychology. But here is the crucial point: this natural disposition is significantly enhanced – indeed, transformed – by the fact that human beings are able to explicitly represent such norms, discuss and elaborate amongst ourselves what they demand of us, and regulate our thought and action accordingly (McGeer and Pettit 2002; Pettit 1996, 2007).

To take one example of this in the evaluative domain: consider a distinction emphasized by moral philosophers between having desires and having values. This distinction is important, on one line of thought, because it provides a substantive and appropriate way of demarcating "persons", who have values, from other intentional agents, who merely have desires. But, now, what exactly *are* values, in the estimation of these philosophers? While accounts vary, it is generally thought that they are a special kind of conative state, something like a desire but often motivationally less powerful despite being privileged in some sense by the agent herself (Frankfurt 1971; Scheffler 2012; Watson 1975). The regulative view provides a natural way of making sense of this. It suggests that values really are just desires, but they are desires towards which we take a certain judgemental and regulative stance: they are desires that we think we *ought* to have, that we think it is rational or otherwise important to have, and that we try and regulate ourselves in light of. In other words, as self-regulating creatures, we are able to work on making our motivationally strongest desires comport with our judgements as to what it is normatively appropriate to desire in the circumstances in which we find ourselves. More generally, "having values" is just one of the ways we

self-regulating agents can enhance our natural disposition to comply with rational norms, broadly conceived.

Grant, then, that we human beings have some regulative control, not only over the actions we take, but also over the attitudes we form. If we assume that this enterprise is guided by shared folk-psychological norms, including those norms most explicitly associated with rational agency, this will have three salient consequences for how theorists should think about the practice of folk-psychology.

First, as in the case of chess, folk-psychologists should have a *much better* explanatory/ predictive grip on the behaviour of other (locally) competent folk-psychologists – that is, human beings who have learnt to regulate their own thought and action in accord with shared folk-psychological norms. This just emphasizes the point made earlier that the epistemic gains in question are practice-dependent – a point that is surely borne out in everyday experience. While we do have some explanatory/predictive grip on the behaviour of other creatures (e.g. why a squirrel runs up a tree when it hears the barking dog), this pales in comparison to the ways in which we can understand one another (why Dr Jones darts into her office when she spies her approaching colleague) – and this despite the fact that human thought and action are certainly far more flexible and complex than that of other creatures. Of course, our linguistic competence will account for some of the predictive/ explanatory success we have with one another. After all, unlike other creatures, we can simply tell each other what is in or on our minds (more about this in Section 2.1). Nevertheless, the regulative view predicts that our capacity to understand one another will be enhanced to the extent that we regulate ourselves in accord with shared folk-psychological norms, and diminished to the extent that we do not.

This prediction is surely borne out in everyday experience. Take, for example, our more limited success in understanding the thought and action of people from quite alien cultures (e.g. when they nod or bow or wave their hands in a certain way). They, of course, are competent folk-psychological agents, but not competent in regulating their thought and action in accord with our culturally specific norms (or we in theirs). To lean on the chess-laying analogy, they play a game that is not quite like the game of chess. Or for a more dramatic example, consider those human beings who are substantially lacking in any native folk-psychological competence – for instance, individuals with autism. Philosophers and cognitive psychologists have long been interested in the fact that such individuals are dramatically impaired in their understanding and/or detection of others' mental states (and possibly even their own – e.g. see, Frith and Happé 1999). Yet, despite all the theoretical attention devoted to autism, it is rarely observed that typically developing human beings (also known as "neurotypicals") have just as much trouble making sense of the thought and action of individuals with autism, as individuals with autism have making sense of neurotypicals (for discussion, see Hacking 2009; McGeer 2001, 2005, 2009).[12] In other words, despite a dramatic difference in mentalizing skills, the problem of non-comprehension is tellingly symmetrical. This is difficult to explain on the standard view: why cannot neurotypical folk-psychologists simply explain and predict the behaviour of individuals with autism?[13] By contrast, the regulative view can easily account for this: so far as individuals with autism do not develop the capacity to think and act in ways commensurate with the recognizable norms of our shared folk-psychology, they are not in our game and will hence remain fairly incomprehensible to us, so far as comprehension relies on anticipated conformity to folk-psychological norms (for discussion and elaboration of this view, see McGeer 2001, 2004, 2009).[14]

The second salient consequence may be of deeper theoretical significance. On the regulative view, despite the practice-dependent epistemic benefits of becoming a competent

folk-psychologist, explanation and prediction generally remain a secondary concern when we interact with one another (as against when we interact with other creatures).[15] Rather, our primary concern is with making sense of one another, where making sense often involves challenging one another to adjust our thought and action so as to comply with shared folk-psychological norms. Thus, as ordinary experience attests, when other people say or do things that seem puzzling or peculiar, our reaction to them – especially so far as they are members of our own (cultural) community – is generally not to treat them as objects of scientific inquiry. It is generally not to be "led by the data", adjusting our theory or simulation routines so as to better predict and/or explain their untoward behaviour. Rather, it is to demand some explanation or excuse from them for their normatively deviant thought and action (e.g. "how *could* you believe that p, given that all the evidence points towards ∼p?"); and where such explanations or excuses are found inadequate, to demand conformity to accepted norms of thought and action going forward (e.g. "I can't talk to you any more about this unless you put your biases to one side and really consider the evidence") (for further discussion, see McGeer 2007; Zawidzki 2008).

Of course, making such demands of one another will often generate discussion about who is *really* failing to conform to the norms of folk-psychology; indeed, it may generate discussion of what the norms really are – or should be. However, this just reinforces the point I am making here: that, in our everyday encounters, explanation and prediction are generally not our chief concern. What we really care about is remaining comprehensible to one another in terms of a shared set of well-elaborated norms. Thus, competent folk-psychologists not only know how to regulate their thought and action in accord with such norms – at least to some reasonable degree of expertise; they also know how to enter into negotiations about normatively untoward behaviour and to offer excuses, explanations, apologies and adjustments when these are seen on all sides to be merited.

A third and final consequence of the regulative view deserves special mention, though I have already gestured towards it at various points in the preceding discussion. The sense-making norms of folk-psychology can be expected to extend well beyond the core norms of rationality identified above, countenancing arational – and even irrational – thought and action from the perspective of individual survival or well-being. Indeed, such norms may even be counterproductive at the communal level. Consider, for example, many gender-inflected norms – or norms that support and reinforce unproductive and unjust race relations. But, typically, they will be norms that at the very least support our social nature: that is, they will be norms that resonate with us because of the kinds of creature we are – creatures that do not just need to survive, but that need to bond and coordinate with one another in the particular environments in which we find ourselves. Thus, the norms of folk-psychology will certainly cover a range of attitudes over and above belief and desire: for instance, fear, hope, empathy, love, jealousy, resentment, gratitude, loyalty, pride, and so on. Such norms will govern when it is "fitting" or "appropriate" to *experience* such attitudes, how and when such attitudes should be *expressed* (linguistically or via other bodily expressive acts), and how otherwise to behave in light of them. And here, we should expect significant cultural (and historical) variability. Hence, different bodily movements, facial expressions, deportment, and even ways of dressing, not to mention characteristic actions (e.g. acting "post office" in the post office (Garfinkel 1967)), will come to have particular meanings for us that are specific to our cultural milieu (see too Bar-On 2015).

To emphasize how subtle, though significant, such normative variability may be, consider the simple act of "looking someone in the eye". Depending on a person's cultural context, and indeed relative standing in that culture, this might express a number of different attitudes: respect, disrespect, interest (sexual or nonsexual), aggression, honesty,

assertiveness, boldness, friendliness, and so on. Indeed, a particular person may convey a range of these things simply by virtue of modulating how long, or how often, they make eye contact with particular others.[16] This familiar example should make two things clear: First, there are myriad, often mutually reinforcing ways in which we make and express – indeed, *directly* express – how we are minded (Bar-On 2004, 2015; see too, McGeer 2005. I also return to this point in Section 2.1). Often we do it in words, using "mental state" terminology acquired for this purpose; but often, we do it in a range of bodily ways, whether consciously or unconsciously. Second, it may seem as if words are a conventional tool for expressing our minds, whereas bodily expressions are not. But this is clearly false. Bodily expressions of what we think and feel can be more of less "natural", of course, in the sense of biologically basic or unlearned. But, as the example of eye-contact makes clear, many of our bodily expressions are normatively shaped within our cultural milieu to express very particular states of mind – states of mind that are themselves shaped by the cultural milieu in which we develop. Of course, expressing our minds in these bodily ways will seem "natural" to us – that is, they will seem a "natural" *direct* expression of how people think and feel. But this is the kind of "natural" that comes with any developed skill. Producing or interpreting such bodily expressions may be fluid, automatic and even involuntary. Yet, these expressions reflect an embodied, practice-dependent "know how" or "expertise"; they reflect what might well be called an acquired "second nature" (cf. McDowell 1996).

1.3. *Interim summary*

My aim in Section 1 has been to elaborate and commend the regulative view of folk-psychology, against what I have called the standard view. The standard view conceptualizes folk-psychology in primarily epistemic terms, as an individually realized method or mechanism for explaining and predicting behaviour by way of detecting the underlying mental causes of that behaviour. By contrast, the regulative view conceptualizes folk-psychology in fundamentally interpersonal terms, as a shared "mind-making" practice. It presents folk-psychological competence as primarily involving a capacity to form and regulate our minds in accordance with a rich array of socially shared, and socially maintained, sense-making norms – a capacity that delivers real epistemic benefits, at least with agents that are likewise norm-conforming.

Why endorse the regulative view? As I argued above, one of its virtues is that it meets – and beats – the standard view at its own epistemic game. By showing how our epistemic capacity for making sense of others' behaviour by way of detecting or determining their underlying mental states is importantly practice-dependent, it accounts for our substantial virtuosity in this regard. Yet, unlike the standard view, it goes further in explaining why such virtuosity is nevertheless limited in ways that are demonstrable in ordinary experience. But this is not all to be said in its favour. The regulative view has additional explanatory virtues that become salient once we move beyond a narrow theoretical concern with folk-psychological "explanation and prediction". In Section 2, I aim to strengthen the case for the regulative view by showing how it speaks in a novel way to two persistent philosophical problems that remain puzzling or unaddressed on the standard view.

2. Transcending the narrow confines of the standard view: two further problems addressed

The philosophical problems addressed in this section are: (1) the problem of "first-person authority", why we are able to speak in a putatively privileged and authoritative way

about our own mental states; and (2) the problem of "reactive responsiveness", why we care so deeply about calling one another to account for normatively inappropriate behaviour; and why such activities should be considered fitting or fair. Yet, before turning to these problems, it is worth recalling the three lessons I rehearsed in Section 1.1 in connection with becoming a competent chess player. Only here I draw the very same lessons, as the regulative view would have it, in connection with becoming a competent folk-psychologist:

(i) *The regulative lesson*: To become a competent folk-psychologist, the capacity you need to develop is primarily a self-regulative one: a capacity to shape your own thought and action as the norms of folk-psychology require.

(ii) *The corrigibility lesson:* Competence in the practice requires some minimal or threshold capacity to operate on your own; but, more importantly, since competence comes in degrees, you must have a disposition to learn from the corrective interventions of others, as well as a disposition to correct them, where appropriate.

(iii) *The social infrastructure lesson:* Even as the capacity to operate on your own increases, you will continue to depend on the regulative interventions of others as they comment on your performance, keeping you up to par and pushing you to improve. And in like manner, they will continue to depend on you.

I turn now to the problems of this section where these lessons can be directly applied.

2.1.   *The problem of first-person authority*

Just as there is a standard view of folk-psychology, so too there is a standard view of the problem of first-person authority. According to this standard view, knowing the contents of your own minds – your own thoughts, beliefs, desires and a range of other consciously experienced states (including emotions and other propositional attitudes) – is conceptualized primarily as an epistemic problem. Specifically, it is conceptualized as a problem of how you yourself detect the underlying states that cause and explain your behaviour, but without relying on any behavioural evidence, as external observers must surely do. Moreover, however this epistemic feat is accomplished, it must be such as to vindicate the judgement that your testimony is peculiarly authoritative – normally, it is inappropriate to doubt the claims that you make; normally, it is inappropriate to suppose that you have got yourself wrong. The standard view attempts to explain these two features of self-knowledge by appeal to some version of a privileged access thesis: you have some form of privileged epistemic access to the (consciously accessible) contents of your own mind.

Of course, the standard view comes in a number of variations, differing principally along the following dimensions: the scope of people's authoritative self-knowledge, the degree of fallibility that may be allowed, and the nature of the self-accessing mechanisms or means by which it is achieved.[17] But despite a rich diversity amongst competing alternatives, all versions of the standard view cleave to a shared assumption. It is that the problem of first-person authority has nothing to do with how our first-order mental states come and go; rather, the problem concerns how we come to know about the states "already present" – that is to say, it is about how we come to form (epistemically privileged) *second-order beliefs* about (at least some) pre-existing first-order states. And, as the standard view supposes, it is these second-order beliefs that we sometimes express in self-reports: "I think that p"; "I hope that q"; "I'm feeling kind of blue today".

In order to take a fresh look at this problem, we should begin by noting that even the standard view presupposes that some mental states are *directly expressed* in self-report –

viz. our second-order beliefs concerning our first-order states. That is to say, the standard view does not imply that we normally form third-order beliefs about our second-order beliefs in order to engage in (putatively authoritative) self-report – and rightly so, on pain of regress. Hence, the standard view owes us some account of how linguistically competent human beings come to be able to directly express their second-order mental states in a way that knowingly represents the nature and content of those states, yet without forming higher order beliefs about them.[18] That being said, why not suppose linguistically competent human beings are able to directly (and knowingly) express many of their first-order states of minds as well (i.e. without forming second-order beliefs about them) – their (world-directed) beliefs and desires; their hopes and fears; the way they are feeling, physically and emotionally; the way things smell, taste, sound, look to them; and so on? Indeed, the standard view must surely hold that they do. It is only when people engage in a peculiar form of self-reflective activity that it may seem as if something else is going on – something that is exclusively directed at their own mental states as such. But this may be disputed.

To begin, it should be noted that when people engage in this self-reflective activity, it is usually in response to some particular question or challenge about what they are thinking – *do you really believe that p?; are you still feeling blue?; do you feel like going to the movies?* While such questions may certainly prompt some reflective consideration, it is typically only with regard to the world-involving content of their first-order states – that is, their *reasons* for believing that p, or feeling blue, or going to the movies (a phenomenon known as "transparency" (Dretske 1999; Evans 1982)). Of course, especially with affective states, this reflective consideration may involve some bodily scanning (or interoception) as well. But such activities feed into how we *make up* or *form* our minds on various questions. Hence, it seems reasonable to conclude that much "self-reflective" activity is really just this: the activity of revisiting how we have made up or formed our minds (perhaps affectively) on some matter, and *re*-making – either in active confirmation or disconfirmation – what we earlier thought or felt. In other words, in making self-reports, especially as a consequence of consciously undertaken reflective activity, we are still just expressing – directly expressing – our first-order states. As no scanning or detecting of first-order states is required or implied, there is no special problem of forming epistemically reliable second-order beliefs about them. First-person authority is therefore not the authority of a privileged epistemic relationship we bear to our own minds. Rather, it is the authority of authorship and ownership; it is the authority of directly expressing (or avowing) those states that we are actively engaged in forming, sometimes through (externally prompted) deliberate or conscious reflection.[19]

Given this alternative picture of what our first-person authority consists in, we are now in a position to ask: how does the regulative view of folk-psychological competence support or enhance this "neo-expressivist"/"constitutivist" take on authoritative self-report?[20] Begin with the observation that first-person authority is a developed skill: not all human beings have it, especially in early childhood, and some human beings never fully develop it (at least by the standards of ordinary folk-psychology). On the standard approach, such individuals are either linguistically challenged, or, more radically, they lack whatever it takes to have privileged epistemic access to presumptively "ordinary" first-order states and processes – that is, states and processes such as you and I (qua authoritative agents) might share. So, for instance, on one influential account, individuals with autism are hypothesized to have precisely this difficulty – ordinary first-order states and processes, but radically imperfect self-knowledge of those states and processes, resulting in dramatically atypical and/or limited self-reports (Frith and Happé 1999).[21] But, once again, this proposal is hard to square with the fact that such individuals remain puzzling or difficult to understand

from the third-person (folk-psychological) point of view, even discounting their first-person reports. And this implies that having first-person authority – knowing one's own mind in a putatively privileged and authoritative way – is intimately associated with the kind of (first-order) mental functioning that is associated with reasonable and recognizable agency, at least in the normatively loaded estimation of ordinary folk-psychologists (McGeer 1996, 2008; Moran 2001). The standard epistemic picture of first-person authority has no ready explanation of this association. But it makes perfect sense once the regulative view of folk-psychology is put in place.

To see this, assume that you are a competent folk-psychologist. On the regulative view, this implies, in accordance with lesson (i) above, that you will know how to form your mind under your current conditions – that is, form appropriate first-order mental states, according to shared folk-psychological norms. So, for instance, on pain of being irrational, you will self-ascribe the beliefs and desires you judge it is appropriate to have given your current situation; these are the beliefs and desires you will claim for yourself.[22] As a competent folk-psychologist, you will also know what actions it is appropriate to perform insofar as you maintain those beliefs and desires (again, according to shared folk-psychological norms). And, again, on pain of being irrational, you will strive to regulate yourself so as to act as your self-ascribed attitudes make it appropriate to act.[23] Now here is the important thing: as a competent folk-psychological agent – one who is judged to be competent by others – you will (often enough) succeed in both self-ascribing psychological states and acting upon them in ways that are commensurate with shared folk-psychological norms; otherwise you would be judged odd, irrational, or perhaps just incompetent due to immaturity. But notice that this is just to say that being a competent folk-psychological agent entails authoritative self-knowledge: it consists in having a capacity (as ordinary folk-psychologists see it) to bring your self-ascribed (or expressed) psychological states into line with your deeds, and your deeds into line with your self-ascribed (or expressed) psychological states (McGeer 1996; McGeer and Pettit 2002).

Consider, now, how you might fail to be "self-knowing" in the psychological states you attribute to yourself. Barring linguistic misapprehensions, the regulative view holds that such failures will happen so far as you fail to remain faithful to the norms of folk-psychology. That is, you present yourself as someone who words and deeds are not intelligibly commensurable with one another. But, the remedy for this failure will not consist in trying to be epistemically more accurate in tracking your first-order states and processes; it will consist in adjusting your thought and behaviour to conform more nearly to the norms of folk-psychology.

There is, however, one notable consequence of taking the regulative approach to the problem of self-knowledge. In contrast with the standard view, to fail to be "self-knowing" in the psychological states you attribute to yourself is not *ipso facto* to fail in first-person authority. As emphasized in lessons (ii) and (iii) above, this is because folk psychological competence is always a work in progress. Hence, on the regulative view, it is always possible for you to fail to conform to the norms of folk-psychology out of ignorance or laziness or some other (perfectly normal) psychological weakness. What really matters to your maintaining your folk-psychological competence – and thus your first-person authority – is your capacity to adjust your thought and action as the norms of folk-psychology demand, and as these are impressed on you by other people, by other competent folk-psychologists. That is to say, your first-person authority is based on your *continuing* disposition to understand and live up to shared folk-psychological norms, even when you have failed in the past. Hence, in some respects, the regulative view defends a more liberal and expansive account of first-person authority: one that is focussed not so much on whether there can be

particular infelicities in self-attribution (i.e. failures of "self-knowledge" in the local and specific sense), but on how the agent responds to such infelicities, both in word and in deed. To my mind, this represents another virtue of the regulative view of first-person authority: it explains why everyday judgements of authoritative agency are, and should be, resilient even in the face of considerable infelicity in psychological self-ascription.

2.2. *The problem of reactive responsiveness*

I turn now to the problem of reactive responsiveness, which I characterize as having two dimensions. The first is to explain why we human creatures are so naturally prone to engage in regulative practices with one another in a variety of contexts – why we are so prone to correct and censure, to praise and blame one another for our thinkings and doings – and oftentimes with a great deal of emotional investment. The second is to explain how such practices can be justified, especially as directed towards other autonomous mature human beings: why is it normatively acceptable to praise and blame, reward and punish one another for our various thinkings and doings?

This problem, especially in its second dimension, has been of particular concern to moral philosophers – indeed, it is usually seen as a problem that is confined to the moral domain. But I think that the problem is a more general one: we human beings are deeply invested, both practically and emotionally, in regulating one another's thought and action even outside the moral domain.[24] Consider, for instance, how hot under the collar we can get about people who profess certain beliefs and yet do things that are completely at odds with such beliefs – that is, individuals who we disdain as "hypocrites", notwithstanding the fact that we often instantiate that property ourselves. Yet, the ubiquitous phenomenon of *blaming* people for their hypocrisies should seem quite puzzling on the standard view, so far as its conception of folk-psychological social interaction is (simply) one of predicting and explaining behaviour. Why not simply adjust our interpretations to capture what others "really believe" from a predictive/explanatory perspective? In any case, the standard view says nothing about why we minded creatures are naturally given to censure and blame one another for various failures to live up to the norms of folk-psychology, and especially the core norms (evidential, executive and evaluative) of rational agency. And it says nothing about why such regulative attitudes and practices are normatively acceptable.

By contrast, the regulative view suffers no such deficit. Insofar as our own agential capacities are capacities that enable us to think and act as recognizable participants in our richly norm-governed interpersonal activities, developing and sustaining such capacities will critically depend on the regulative interventions of others (and vice versa). To see why this is so, consider again the three lessons of the regulative view rehearsed above.

In keeping with (i) *the regulative lesson*: the capacity we need to develop as competent folk-psychologists is primarily a self-regulative capacity – that is, a capacity to shape our thought and action as the norms of folk-psychology require. In developing this capacity, we become well-behaved folk-psychological agents, skilled in conforming to its norms and skilled in recognizing when others are operating that way as well. Nevertheless, though competence in the practice requires some minimal or threshold capacity to operate independently as the norms require, the regulative view takes on board a platitude we all accept: that competence comes in degrees.

Hence, in keeping with (ii) *the corrigibility lesson*, the regulative views hold that we will always be in a position to learn from one another in the pursuit of any norm-governed practice. Earlier I used the example of chess to illustrate this point; but the practice of folk-psychology is even more pertinent for driving the lesson home. For, the phenomenon of

corrigibility will assume more importance when, as in the case of folk-psychology, the norms that constitute the practice are myriad and complex – and, beyond that, when they are under constant pressure to change or evolve. Therefore, what counts as norm-compliant behaviour in a complex practice like folk-psychology will often be a matter of discussion and negotiation. In any case, the bottom line in this: On the regulative view, competence in a practice does not require a "fully realized" capacity to operate in norm-governed ways (whatever that might mean). It requires instead a somewhat vaguely specified threshold capacity to operate in norm-governed ways – *plus*, most importantly, a disposition to learn from the regulative interventions of others, and to regulate them where appropriate.

This brings us to the final, and here most important, lesson rehearsed above, (iii) *the social infrastructure lesson.* In order to develop and maintain our competence in a practice, we must depend in an on-going way on the regulative intervention of others; and they will depend on us in equal measure. In Section 1, we saw how this lesson applied in the case of chess, where even competent chess-players learn from one another as they continue to hone their chess-playing skills (few ever attain grand master status, after all). But this on-going dependence on others will be even more pronounced as we hone and develop our folk-psychological skills.

I have already mentioned a few reasons why this should be the case: first, the norms of folk-psychology are far more complex than the rules and strategies of chess; and, second, these norms are under constant evolutionary pressure as a result of changing cultural and environmental circumstances. Hence, what counts as appropriate norm-governed thought and action will be subject to ongoing negotiation. But now let me stress a third and more critical reason for why our dependence on others for stabilizing our adherence to folk-psychological norms will be more pronounced in the context of day-to-day social life. It is because these norms of reasonable and responsible agency willy-nilly encompass evaluative norms – in particular, evaluative norms of a moral kind stipulating which desires are motivationally acceptable so far as they govern how we conduct ourselves in community with others. But, of course, such norms are often challenging to abide by. Some of our failures in this regard may be due to ignorance; others due to (legitimate or illegitimate) protest or rejection. But often, such failures are due to *akrasia*, irresolution and other such maladies, which are all too familiar to us. And, yet, as we generally agree, it is particularly important that people not fail in their adherence to moral norms. So this suggests that we should have a particularly rich practice of calling one another to account in the moral domain in order to support, or scaffold, what would otherwise be a highly vulnerable capacity for morally guided thought and action.

And indeed we do. It is just the practice that P.F. Strawson celebrates in his famously influential article, "On Freedom and Resentment" (Strawson 1974). Of course, Strawson's aim in the paper is to defend a philosophically revisionary view of agency and responsibility: to wit, that we are entitled to treat one another as (genuinely) responsible agents because, and insofar as, we are *reactively responsive* to one another.[25] That is to say, we are disposed by nature and nurture to experience what Strawson called "reactive attitudes" when we take others to fail or to succeed in living up to what moral norms require of them – attitudes like resentment and indignation, gratitude and approval. And we are equally disposed to be *responsive* to those reactive attitudes when others display them to us – not simply by experiencing self-reactive attitudes in turn (e.g. guilt, shame, remorse, pride, self-satisfaction, etc.), but also by acting in ways those attitudes make appropriate. So, for instance, in the face of others' resentment or indignation, we are not only inclined to feel badly, we spontaneously offer excuses, justifications, explanations, and sometimes
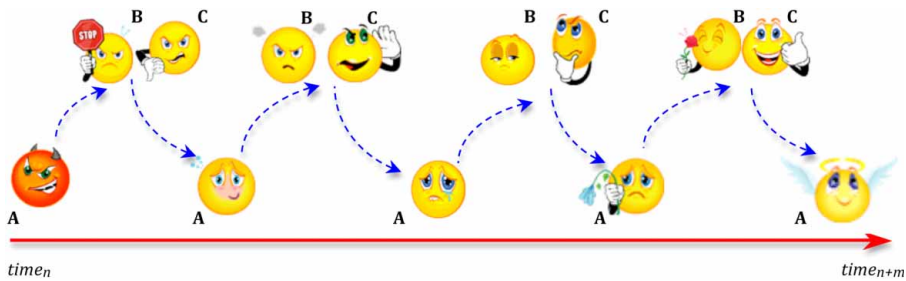
Figure 1.   A sample trajectory of reactive exchange: *the forgiveness trajectory.*

even apologies when we take our action to be unjustified (though of course it may take some discussion and negotiation before we come to such a view). Moreover, such reactive responses will tend to elicit fresh reactive attitudes from others in turn, where their attitudes are now calibrated to how we have responded to their earlier (reactively expressed) complaints. So, for instance, sincere remorse and genuine apology will often pave the way to mollification and "forgiveness", where forgiveness should be understood (at least in part) as a reactive attitude acknowledging the offender's understanding of what our shared norms require and (re)commitment to respecting them. In short, as represented in Figure 1, this give and take of reactive responses often take the form of normatively satisfying "trajectories" of reactive exchange that play an essential role in re-animating trust in, and thereby stabilizing, the normative power of shared norms (for further discussion, see McGeer 2012, from which this figure is reprinted; see too, McGeer 2014).

In sum, on the regulative view, the value of our reactive sensitivities can be understood as follows: they play a vital role in scaffolding our capacities to think and act in norm-com-plaint ways; and, in addition to that, they enable the kind of social interactions in which the norms themselves are subject to continual negotiation and review under the guise of sorting-out what really counts as (appropriate) norm-compliant thought and action. This speaks to the first dimension of the problem of reactive responsiveness: why creatures that live in a richly complex norm-governed world should be so naturally prone to engage in regulative interactions with one another, interactions that involve praise and blame, punishment and reward. Such activities are essential if we are to develop and sustain the very capacities on which successful norm-governed thought and action depends.

But what about the second dimension of this problem: why should it be *normatively* fitting or fair to target one another with our reactive attitudes? For philosophers preoccupied with this problem, a foundational worry has been one of explaining why it is right or reason-able to suppose we are *genuinely* responsible agents – hence, *truly deserving* of praise and blame, punishment and reward. As indicated above, Strawson himself seems to take our reactive sensitivities as telling proof that we possess the kind of capacities that suffice for responsible agency. But Strawson is often faulted for not providing any real defence and/or explanation of the apparent conceptual connection between being reactively sensi-tive to one another and possessing the requisite capacities. This, in my view, is where the regulative view of folk-psychology has something substantial to contribute: it can direct us towards a satisfying response to this moral philosophical challenge. And here, I present that response in five summary steps:

(i)   By the tenets of the regulative view, competent moral agency does not require (*per impossibile*) having a "fully realized" capacity to produce norm-compliant thought

and action; it merely requires having a threshold capacity *plus* a disposition to learn from the regulative interventions of others (this premise is defended at greater length in, McGeer and Pettit 2015)

(ii) Our sensitivity to reactive attitudes shows that we have a disposition to be regulated by others in producing morally norm-compliant thought and action

(iii) So reactively sensitive agents are competent moral agents

(iv) But competent moral agents *are* genuinely responsible agents, at least on any reasonable philosophical view of responsibility

(v) Hence, reactively sensitive agents are fair or appropriate targets of reactive attitudes and practices.

3.   A final word

Of course, more needs to be to flesh out the connection between the regulative view of folk-psychology and the problem raised by moral philosophers in regard to agency and responsibility. Indeed, more needs to be said in defence of its application to the problem of first-person authority. But I hope I have said enough in this overview paper to explain and to advertise the multiple attractions of the regulative view. Briefly summarized, I claim that it can meet and beat the standard view at its own epistemic game. Better yet, it shows considerable promise in making some headway on the philosophical problems discussed in this section. Both of these problems remain puzzling on the standard view; and though proponents of the view may insist that a philosophical account of our mentalizing capacities can afford to be more modest in its explanatory ambitions, I think we should prefer a view that is significantly more comprehensive in scope than current alternatives.

Notes

1. The term "psycho-practice" or "normal psychological knowing" was my own attempt to rebrand this capacity in a way that represents my particular theoretical take on the problem (McGeer 2001). In this paper, I revisit my earlier proposal, but without the terminological innovation. Many of these other terms likewise reflect particular theorists' views of what the capacity amounts to: compare, for instance, "theory of mind" with "mind-simulating". It is hard to find a theoretically neutral term for referring to the capacity in question – perhaps "mentalizing" comes closest to the mark.

2. These two approaches have been exhaustively discussed in the literature, generating a number of variations in each view. Prominent defenders on the "theory-theory" side (though not always under that name) include: Sellars (1997), Lewis (1972), Dennett (1969, 1987), Fodor (1968, 1987), Churchland (1979), Carruthers (1996), Premack and Woodruff (1978), Wellman (1990), Meltzoff and Gopnik (1993), Gopnik and Wellman (1995), Gopnik and Meltzoff (1997), Gopnik, Meltzoff, and Kuhl (1999), Gopnik, Capps, and Meltzoff (2000), Wimmer and Perner (1983), Perner et al. (1989, 1991), and Saxe (2005). Prominent defenders of the simulation theory include: Currie (1996, 2008), Goldman (1989, 1992, 2006), Gordon (1986, 1992), Heal (1994, 1998), Harris (1992); Gallese and Goldman (1998), and Gallese (2006, 2007). Hybrid theories have also been proposed, with exponents including: Heal (2003), Currie and Ravenscroft (2003), Mitchell (2005), Stich and Nichols (1992, 1995), Nichols and Stich (1998, 2003), Perner and Kühberger (2005). For some comprehensive discussions, see Carruthers and Smith (1996) and Davies and Stone (1995a, 1995b).

3. Some critics of the standard view dispute even this, especially in the context of human social interactions – for example, Zawidzki (2008). I certainly agree there has been an overemphasis on explanation and prediction amongst advocates of the standard view, as I will shortly discuss; but I do not think that the phenomenon itself should be underestimated or denied. But see too Morton (1996) for a nuanced discussion of the difference between prediction and expectation in relation to folk-psychology.

4. This finding has been replicated for typically developing human beings using a wide range of similarly impoverished stimuli and movements (for overviews, see Kassin 1981; Scholl and Tremoulet 2000). By contrast, Klin (2000) has used this paradigm to reveal a pronounced absence of *spontaneous* mentalizing in high-functioning individuals with autism – those who otherwise show some capacity for mental state attribution insofar as they are able to "pass" first-order and even second-order "false belief" tasks. I discuss some implications of this in McGeer (2009).

5. Many of these are inspired by thinking more deeply about how the mind is embodied and/or socially constituted and embedded. See, for instance: De Jaegher (2009), De Jaegher, Di Paolo, and Gallagher (2010), Gallagher (2001, 2005, 2008a, 2008b), Gallagher and Hutto (2008), Gallagher and Zahavi (2007), Hutto (2004, 2007, 2008, 2009), Hutto and Ratcliffe (2007), Kiverstein (2011), Morton (1980, 1996, 2003, 2007), Ratcliffe (2007), Ratcliffe and Gallagher (2008), Thompson (2001), Zahavi (2001), and Zawidzki (2008, 2013).

6. In synoptically characterizing the difference between these approaches, I particularly stress the notion of a "primary" capacity. The regulative view does not preclude our notable capacities for "explanation and prediction", as will be seen below. By contrast, the epistemic view does not *in any way* recognize the mind-shaping role of folk-psychology, a notable defect in my view.

7. I call this the problem of "reactive responsiveness" to resonate with P.F. Strawson's account of our "reactive attitudes" (attitudes like resentment, indignation, gratitude, forgiveness) and the critical role they play in giving a philosophically adequate account of moral responsibility (Strawson 1974).

8. With beginners, corrigibility will naturally manifest itself in demanding conformity to the more basic rules and strategies of stress. But even relative experts may continue to improve as they engage with other skilled players; and here "corrigibility" manifests itself as the disposition/capacity to adjust one's strategic options as one learns from others' tricks and tendencies. Note that if chess were not continually challenging in this way, it would be a much less engaging kind of game (cf. checkers).

9. On the regulative view, it comes as no surprise that various socio-political considerations are relevant to human cognition so far as they influence how the norms of folk-psychology limit or extend the agential possibilities of the individuals so regulated. But the relevance of these considerations is not so readily explained on the standard view, which I take to be a strike against it. For one recently studied example of how folk-psychological norms can and do bear on our cognitive possibilities, see Leslie et al. (2015). For further discussion of the more general point, see Zawidzki (2008, 2013); see too Cash (2010).

10. The simulation view is somewhat hampered by the fact that we purportedly use our own cognitive system to model what other creatures would believe and desire in their situation; hence, for simulationists, explanatory/predictive success is presumably limited by the degree of similarity between model and target cognitive systems. Simulationists finesse this problem by allowing we can make adjustments for differences in cognitive systems, but theory-theorists suggest

that such "adjustments" must surely be theory-driven – hence, the simulationist view will col-
lapse, to some extent, into its theory-theory rival. Alternatively, simulationists might simply
bite the bullet and suggest that there is enough similarity in cognitive systems to allow for success-
ful, though limited, explanation/prediction outside the human domain. I take something like this
approach myself.

11. There is continuing debate about whether such creatures are *really* endowed with the mental
states in question simply in virtue of being representable as such. I take no stand on this
issue here. My point is simply this: so far as such creatures are considered to be genuine
"psychological agents" by whatever criteria we favour (e.g. sentience, appropriate
"wetware", cognitive complexity . . .), they are not candidates for shaping their own mental
states by way of normatively guided self-regulation so far as they lack any understanding of
themselves (or others) as "minded".

12. Interestingly, this gap in mutual understanding has not gone unnoticed by people with autism.
For instance, one 28-year-old high-functioning individual reports finding it incredible that,
"someone who has much better inherent communication abilities than I do but who has not
even taken a close look at my perspective to notice the enormity of the chasm between us
tells me that my failure to understand is because I lack empathy" (Cesaroni and Garber 1991,
p. 311). Similarly, another individual with autism, Therese Joliffe, writes: "If only people
could experience what autism is like just for a few minutes, they might then know how to
help!" (Jolliffe, Lansdown, and Robinson 1992).

13. This is difficult to explain on standard view because it is assumed that individuals with autism
are merely impaired in their meta-representational capacities (however these are characterized);
they are not assumed to function atypically at the first-order level of mental state operation.
Hence, so far as *we* have a capacity to detect these underlying states, we (neurotypicals)
should be able to explain and/or predict their behaviour.

14. This does not mean that understanding is completely precluded, of course. But it does mean that
extraordinary interpretive measures will have to be taken to begin to understand such alien ways
of being.

15. – or with other human beings who do not have the cognitive wherewithal to engage in such
regulative practices (but, of course, this will typically not be a black and white matter).

16. For instance, it is considered rude or aggressive to make sustained eye contact with others in
Japan, especially if they have higher social status. Quick saccades to and from the eye are nor-
matively more appropriate for conveying respect. Of course, to those from Western cultures
such "shifty-eyed" behaviour will seem suspicious or odd, causing folk-psychological alarm
bells to ring – *is this person dishonest, mad, pathologically shy, physically impaired?* With
the right sort of cues, they might even suppose the person is simply from an alien culture,
but this may presuppose too much by way of empathy, background knowledge, or interpretive
sophistication to be likely for average folk-psychologists.

17. For instance, simulation theorists and theory-theorists have quite different views about how we
arrive at first-person knowledge of our own mental states, with many theory-theorists denying
that knowledge of our own minds is peculiarly unlike our knowledge of other people's. This in
turn leads at least some theory-theorists to deny any special ground for attributing first-person
authority to self-ascriptions (for discussion, see: Carruthers 1996, 2011; Carruthers and Smith
1996; Goldman 2005; Gopnik 1993; Gordon 1992).

18. This is surely puzzling on the standard view, as it seems to presuppose a kind of authoritative
self-knowledge that in no way depends on the entire apparatus of higher order belief formation.
For how else can agents choose words that accurately represent their own states of mind (in this
case, their second-order beliefs about their first-order states) without (in some sense) knowing
what they believe about their first-order states? The fact that such "reports" are not normally
challenged (or taken to be challengeable) qua expressions of (genuine) second-order beliefs
shows that first-person knowledge of such beliefs exhibits the same putative authority as
first-person knowledge of the first-order states such beliefs are purportedly about.

19. For views that are generally congenial to the ideas expressed here, see McGeer (1996, 2004,
2005, 2008), Bar-On (2000, 2004), and Moran (1997, 2001). This is not to say that there is com-
plete agreement amongst these authors; indeed, there are important differences. But I brush over
these in order to highlight what I take to be a critical common thread.

20. The term "neo-expressivism" comes from Bar-On (2004). Importantly, she argues that it is
crucial to understand how semantic descriptions of states of minds can both express and

report the states of mind we are in. Hence, she distinguishes her "neo-expressivism" from a more simple-minded expressivism that denies the reporting function of semantically informative expressive acts (see too Bar-On and Long 2001). The term "constitutivist" is often applied to Moran's view, which has a more non-naturalistic/reflectivist flavour that Bar-On would accept (see her contribution to this volume in 2015). Though McGeer is certainly unhappy with the non-naturalistic aspects of Moran's view, she nevertheless defends a (naturalistically inspired) constitutivist line (see, in particular, McGeer 2008, for a comparative discussion of her view and Moran's).

21. For a more detailed critical discussion of this hypothesis in keeping with the regulative view of folk-psychology developed here, see McGeer (2004, 2005).

22. For simplicity's sake, I stick to beliefs and desires, though of course this claim can easily be extended to other propositional attitudes and affective states.

23. Such "striving", as I call it, may be relatively unselfconscious and effortless; or it may be quite self-conscious and effortful. For instance, under certain circumstances, I may judge that "p" is what is to be desired (what it is appropriate to desire) and thereby ascribe that desire to myself; but thanks to weakness of will, I may find it hard to resist certain contrary impulses without conscious and effortful self-regulation. Some may be tempted to say that, under these conditions, I do not *really* desire p; but then it is hard to explain why I make such effortful attempts to regulate my conative impulses in the ways that I do. For much more detailed elaboration and defence of this view, see McGeer and Pettit (2002) and McGeer (2008).

24. This may partly explain why we sometimes have trouble categorizing what counts as a moral infraction – an infraction of a moral norm – as against an infraction of some putatively non-moral (sometimes called merely "conventional") norm – for example, dressing in a "modest" or "respectful" way in various settings, or on various occasions. For further discussion of the moral/conventional distinction and its possible cultural variability, see Turiel (1983), Turiel, Killen, and Helwig (1987), Nucci (1986), Shweder et al. (1997), Nucci and Turiel (2000), Sripada and Stich (2006), Southwood (2011), Kelly and Stich (2012), and Fraser (2012).

25. For further defence and clarification of this reading of Strawson, see McGeer (2012, 2014).

Notes on contributor

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