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Nota di contenuto	Frontmatter -- Contents -- Preface -- CHAPTER ONE. A Bottom-Up Approach to the Primate Mind / de Waal, Frans B. M. / Ferrari, Pier Francesco -- SECTION ONE. From Understanding of the Actions of Others to Culture -- CHAPTER TWO. The Mirror Neuron System in Monkeys and Its Implications for Social Cognitive Functions / Ferrari, Pier Francesco / Fogassi, Leonardo -- CHAPTER THREE. The Human Mirror Neuron System and Its Role in Imitation and Empathy / Iacoboni, Marco -- CHAPTER FOUR. Social Rules and Body Scheme / Fujii, Naotaka / Iriki, Atsushi -- CHAPTER FIVE. What, Whom, and How: Selectivity in Social Learning / Huber, Ludwig -- CHAPTER SIX. Learning How to Forage: Socially Biased Individual Learning and "Niche Construction" in Wild Capuchin Monkeys / Visalberghi, Elisabetta / Frigaszy, Dorothy -- CHAPTER SEVEN. Social Learning and Culture in Child and Chimpanzee / Hopper, Lydia M. / Marshall-Pescini, Sarah / Whiten, Andrew -- SECTION TWO. Empathy, Perspective Taking, and Cooperation -- CHAPTER EIGHT. A Bottom-Up View of Empathy / de

Waal, Frans B. M. -- CHAPTER NINE. What Does the Primate Mind Know about Other Minds? A Review of Primates' Understanding of Visual Attention / Ruiz, April M. / Santos, Laurie R. -- CHAPTER TEN. Human Empathy through the Lens of Psychology and Social Neuroscience / Singer, Tania / Hein, Grit -- CHAPTER ELEVEN. How Much of Our Cooperative Behavior Is Human? / Hare, Brian / Tan, Jingzhi -- CHAPTER TWELVE. Fetal Testosterone in Mind: Human Sex Differences and Autism / Auyeung, Bonnie / Baron-Cohen, Simon -- SECTION THREE. Memory, Emotions, and Communication -- CHAPTER THIRTEEN. The Role of Broca's Area in Socio- Communicative Processes of Chimpanzees / Hopkins, William D. / Taglialatela, Jared P. -- CHAPTER FOURTEEN. Emotional Engagement: How Chimpanzee Minds Develop / Bard, Kim A. -- CHAPTER FIFTEEN. Distress Alleviation in Monkeys and Apes: A Window into the Primate Mind? / Aureli, Filippo / Fraser, Orlaith N. -- CHAPTER SIXTEEN. Enquiries Concerning Chimpanzee Understanding / Menzel, Charles R. / Menzel, Emil W. -- CHAPTER SEVENTEEN. What Is Uniquely Human? A View from Comparative Cognitive Development in Humans and Chimpanzees / Matsuzawa, Tetsuro -- References -- Contributors -- Index

Sommario/riassunto

"Monkey see, monkey do" may sound simple, but how an individual perceives and processes the behavior of another is one of the most complex and fascinating questions related to the social life of humans and other primates. In *The Primate Mind*, experts from around the world take a bottom-up approach to primate social behavior by investigating how the primate mind connects with other minds and exploring the shared neurological basis for imitation, joint action, cooperative behavior, and empathy. In the past, there has been a tendency to ask all-or-nothing questions, such as whether primates possess a theory of mind, have self-awareness, or have culture. A bottom-up approach asks, rather, what are the underlying cognitive processes of such capacities, some of which may be rather basic and widespread. Prominent neuroscientists, psychologists, ethologists, and primatologists use methods ranging from developmental psychology to neurophysiology and neuroimaging to explore these evolutionary foundations. A good example is mirror neurons, first discovered in monkeys but also assumed to be present in humans, that enable a fusing between one's own motor system and the perceived actions of others. This allows individuals to read body language and respond to the emotions of others, interpret their actions and intentions, synchronize and coordinate activities, anticipate the behavior of others, and learn from them. The remarkable social sophistication of primates rests on these basic processes, which are extensively discussed in the pages of this volume.

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