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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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