

## **MIRROR COMPETENCE IMPLIES PERSON COMPETENCE.**

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The mirror competence (MC) of young chimpanzees is known since 1921 (Wolfgang Köhler) and 1969 (Gordon Gallup). Recently Daniel Povinelli questioned MC's sufficiency for a „theory of mind“. The human primate indeed has a further trait that may act as a catalyst. Happiness and bonding (laughter and smile) are virtually indistinguishable (J.A.R.A.M. van Hooff 1972). In her 1978 „Insights from the Blind“, Selma Fraiberg showed that children born blind (who see neither laughter nor smile) often remain „too harmless“ for life outside an institution. „Smile-blindness“ also often causes autism (lack of a theory of mind). A therapy was discussed with the late Gregory Bateson in 1975: Acoustic mimicry of the optical condition (i.e., tender noises made by the mother whenever she is happy). The same „interactional bifurcation“ should then occur, via MC, as in the sighted: At first, the toddler starts to feed mother because he mistakes her laughter for tenderness. When she feeds him next time, the exchange symmetry causes him to experience „benevolence“. For the very act just performed deliberately by himself feels good on the receiving end. Next time, he tests the good effect over there and is rewarded by a careful return of the arrived joy. Mutual benevolence is born in a positive feedback. Potentially benevolent agents are persons. Thus, personhood can be exported to smile-blind MC individuals. A „galactic export“ is possible, including all MC species on the planet. They must, therefore, be granted the person rights of Thomas Jefferson.

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