Even if mirror neurons do nothing more than enable us to pick up the basic motor intentions of others, they will have taken over part of the territory that formerly was thought to be the province of our everyday "theory of mind." Their existence shifts the problem of understanding others from the interpretation of bare motor behavior to the disambiguation of motor intentions, i.e., fitting them to broader intentions.

Further, if what is to be disambiguated are the resonant motor intentions produced in the interpreter’s own brain, the nature of the disambiguation process is constrained in a significant way. The application of a belief-desire theory would not be appropriate for fitting internalized motor intentions to broader intentions; for theory application would merely predict, rather than produce, a motor intention. The most plausible procedure for disambiguating internalized motor intentions would be analysis by synthesis, by means of vicarious decision-making. Some consequences of using such a procedure will be explored.