



Edited by AMY COPLAN
and PETER GOLDIE

EMPATHY

Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives

Empathy

*Philosophical and Psychological
Perspectives*

EDITED BY

Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie

OXFORD
UNIVERSITY PRESS

OXFORD

UNIVERSITY PRESS

Great Clarendon Street, Oxford OX2 6DP

Oxford University Press is a department of the University of Oxford.
It furthers the University's objective of excellence in research, scholarship,
and education by publishing worldwide.

Oxford is a registered trade mark of Oxford University Press
in the UK and in certain other countries

© the several contributors 2011

The moral rights of the authors have been asserted

First published 2011

First published in paperback 2014

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced,
stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted, in any form or by any means,
without the prior permission in writing of Oxford University Press,
or as expressly permitted by law, by licence or under terms agreed with the
reprographics rights organization. Enquiries concerning reproduction
outside the scope of the above should be sent to the Rights Department,
Oxford University Press, at the address above

You must not circulate this work in any other form
and you must impose this same condition on any acquirer

Published in the United States of America by Oxford University Press
198 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10016, United States of America

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

Data available

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Data available

ISBN 978-0-19-953995-6 (Hbk)

ISBN 978-0-19-870642-7 (Pbk)

Contents

List of Figures/Images

Notes on Contributors

Introduction

Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie

Part I. Empathy and Mind

1. Understanding Empathy: Its Features and Effects

Amy Coplan

2. Empathy as a Route to Knowledge

Derek Matravers

3. Two Routes to Empathy: Insights from Cognitive Neuroscience

Alvin I. Goldman

4. Within Each Other: Neural Mechanisms for Empathy in the Primate

Marco Iacoboni

5. Empathy, Imitation, and the Social Brain

Jean Decety and Andrew N. Meltzoff

6. Empathy for Objects

Gregory Currie

Part II. Empathy and Aesthetics

7. Empathy, Expansionism, and the Extended Mind

Murray Smith

8. An Empathic Eye

Dominic McIver Lopes

9. Infectious Music: Music-Listener Emotional Contagion

Stephen Davies

10. Empathizing as Simulating

Susan L. Feagin

11. On Some Affective Relations between Audiences and the Characters in Popular Fictions

Noël Carroll

12. Empathy: Interpersonal vs Artistic?

Graham McFee

Part III. Empathy and Morality

13. Is Empathy Necessary for Morality?

Jesse J. Prinz

14. Empathy, Justice, and the Law

Martin L. Hoffman

15. Empathy and Trauma Culture: Imaging Catastrophe

E. Ann Kaplan

16. Is Empathy a Virtue?

Heather D. Battaly

17. Anti-Empathy

Peter Goldie

18. Empathy for the Devil

Adam Morton

Bibliography

Index

List of Figures/Images

- 5.1 The AIM model of imitation (Meltzoff & Moore (1997))
- 5.2 'Like Me' developmental framework: First steps for getting empathy and perspective-taking off the ground (Meltzoff (2007b))
- 5.3 Schematic representation of the mechanisms underpinning the experience of empathy (Decety (2006b); Decety & Lamm (2006); Decety & Meyer (2008))
- 5.4 Neuro-hemodynamic signal increase in neural regions belonging to the pain matrix
(adapted from Decety, Michalska, & Akitsuki (2008))
- 15.1 Vietnam 1972: Kim Phuc running after being Napalmed
(with permission of Nick Ut/Associated Press)
- 15.2 A mother gazes at her starved child
(courtesy of Sebastiao Salgado/Amazonas/Contact Press Images)
- 15.3 A Marine doctor holds an Iraqi girl whose mother has been killed
(with permission of Daniel Sagoli/Reuters)
- 15.4 Goya etching from "The Disasters of War," imaged on Susan Sontag's *Regarding the Pain of Others*
(courtesy of Farrar, Straus, & Giroux)
- 15.5 Katrina 2005: Outside the Superdome. Thousands of people waited for buses to take them away
(with permission of Nicole Bengiveno/The New York Times/Redux)
- 15.6 Katrina 2005: Inside the Superdome. People settling into the dome
(with permission of Vincent Laforet/The New York Times/Redux)
- 15.7 Katrina 2005: In the streets. After the floodwaters, silent streets tell tales
(with permission of Nicole Bengiveno/The New York Times/Redux)
- 15.8 *Entering Darkness*, by Jerome Witkin
(courtesy of Jack Rutberg Fine Arts Los Angeles)
- 15.9 *My Breath and Falling*, by Richard Harden
(courtesy of Richard Harden)

Notes on Contributors

HEATHER D. BATTALY is Professor of Philosophy, California State University-Fullerton.

NOËL CARROLL is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, City University of New York.

AMY COPLAN is Associate Professor of Philosophy, California State University-Fullerton.

GREGORY CURRIE is Professor of Philosophy, University of Nottingham.

STEPHEN DAVIES is Professor of Philosophy, University of Auckland.

JEAN DECEITY is Irving B. Harris Professor of Psychology and Psychiatry, University of Chicago.

SUSAN L. FEAGIN is Visiting Research Professor of Philosophy, Temple University.

PETER GOLDIE is Samuel Hall Professor of Philosophy, University of Manchester.

ALVIN I. GOLDMAN is Board of Governors Professor of Philosophy and Cognitive Science, Rutgers University.

MARTIN L. HOFFMAN is Emeritus Professor of Clinical and Developmental Psychology, New York University.

MARCO IACOBONI is Professor of Psychiatry and Biobehavioral Sciences, David Geffen School of Medicine, University of California-Los Angeles.

E. ANN KAPLAN is Distinguished Professor of English and Comparative Literary and Cultural Studies, Stony Brook University.

GRAHAM MCFEE is Professor of Philosophy, University of Brighton and California State University-Fullerton.

DOMINIC MCIVER LOPEZ is Distinguished University Scholar and Professor in Philosophy, University of British Columbia.

DEREK MATRAVERS is Professor of Philosophy, The Open University.

ANDREW N. MELTZOFF is Professor and Job and Gertrud Tamaki Endowed Chair in Psychology, University of Washington.

ADAM MORTON is Canada Research Chair, University of Alberta.

JESSE J. PRINZ is Distinguished Professor of Philosophy, City University of New York.

MURRAY SMITH is Professor of Film Studies, University of Kent.

Introduction

Amy Coplan and Peter Goldie

This collection, which draws together eighteen chapters on empathy, follows in a long tradition of work on empathy in philosophy and psychology. For empathy has, since at least the seminal work of David Hume and Adam Smith, been seen as centrally important in at least two respects. First, it has been seen as important in relation to our capacity to gain a grasp of the content of other people's minds, and to predict and explain what they will think, feel, and do. And secondly, it has been seen as important in relation to our capacity to respond to others ethically—enabling us not only to gain a grasp of the other's suffering, but also to respond in an ethically appropriate way. Both of these aspects have been to the fore in recent discussions, and Hume and Smith are often appealed to in these discussions. First, empathy has been prominent in relation to what is now called simulation as one of the ways in which we engage with other minds, often put forward as an alternative to the idea that we deploy some kind of theory about other minds in order to understand them.¹ And secondly, empathy has been prominent in the revival of moral sentimentalism, and in the idea that it is central to an ethics of caring, often put forward as an alternative to a more 'dispassionate' ethics.² A third respect in which empathy has been seen as important—one which owes less to the work of Hume and Smith—is in relation to our engagement with works of art. We will turn to this in detail later in this introduction.

In the first part of this introduction, we trace the history of the concept of empathy, highlighting its role in several areas of philosophy and psychology, including the Scottish sentimental tradition, early twentieth-century aesthetics, phenomenology

¹ For early discussions of the debate between simulation theory and 'theory theory', see Gopnik and Wellman (1994), and the essays in Davies and Stone (1995a, 1995b). More recent discussions can be found in Perner & Kühberger (2005), Hutto (2005), Fisher (2006), Biggs (2007), Hurley (2008), Gordon (2009), and Schulz (2009). For critiques formulations and defenses of simulation theory, see Goldman (2006a), Currie (2004), Goldman & Sripada (2005), and Currie & Ravenscroft (2002: 49–70). For critiques of simulation theory, see Nichols & Stich (2003: 131–42) and Saxe (2009). Bertram Malle (2004, 2005) provides excellent discussions of mindreading within the context of social cognition that go beyond this debate.

² See, for example, Slote (2003, 2004, 2007, 2010) and Held (2006a, 2006b).

and hermeneutics, clinical psychology (including psychoanalysis), developmental and social psychology, care ethics, and contemporary cognitive neuroscience. Although we do not attempt to be comprehensive in our account of empathy's development, we specify many of the ways in which the concept has been considered significant since its inception. This provides some background and a broader context for the essays in this collection, which address a range of current questions and controversies in the study of empathy. In the second part of the introduction, we review key arguments from each of the contributed essays and explain the organization of the collection into three sections—Empathy and Mind, Empathy and Aesthetics, and Empathy and Morality. These three sections provide a framework that helps to make salient the connections among the essays as well as significant implications of the various issues they discuss.

We will begin the discussion in this Introduction with David Hume and Adam Smith's accounts of what they called 'sympathy', and it will immediately become clear that these two philosophers, like so many that have succeeded them, have understood sympathy in more than one way, and have used sympathy for more than one purpose: in particular for understanding other minds, and as the basis of ethical action. It will be important, here and throughout this volume, to be clear on precisely what empathy and sympathy mean.

David Hume and Adam Smith

In *A Treatise of Human Nature* (1739) David Hume (1711–1776) invoked the concept of sympathy to explain a variety of psychological phenomena, including the transmission of emotion from one person to another (317, 319, 363, 592), the formation of moral responses (499, 500) and desires (577–91), and aesthetic responses (576–77).³ Since Hume used the concept in so many ways, it is difficult to say with any certainty how he defined it or whether his view remained consistent from the *Treatise* to the *Enquiry*.⁴ If we restrict ourselves, however, to Hume's primary discussion of sympathy in Book II of the *Treatise*, it is clear that he understood it as a principle of communication that is fundamental to human nature:

No quality of human nature is more remarkable, both in itself and in its consequences, than that propensity we have to sympathize with others, and to receive by communication their inclinations and sentiments, however different from, or even contrary to our own. (317)

Hume characterized sympathy as a natural and automatic process. When we encounter another person experiencing an emotion or passion, we initially know this through its effects, that is, 'those external signs in the countenance and conversation, which convey an idea of it' (317). The operation of sympathy then converts this idea into an impression, which then becomes the very passion itself (317).

³ See Bricke (1996) and Vitz (2004).

⁴ See Vitz (2004), Debes (2007a, 2007b), and Mercer (1972) for a discussion of this issue.

Although there are numerous interpretations of Hume's account of sympathy, what is important for our purposes in this introduction is that Hume seems to have been describing a psychological mechanism that enables the fast and instantaneous spread of emotion.⁵ And thus it seems that the process he referred to as sympathy is the same or at least very similar to what we will call low-level empathy or mirroring.

In *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759), Adam Smith (1723–1790) took up Hume's concept of sympathy, revised it, and made it the linchpin of his moral theory.⁶ Like Hume, Smith appealed to sympathy to explain how we come to experience others' emotions, but for Smith this involved imaginative perspective-taking:

By the imagination we place ourselves in his situation, we conceive ourselves enduring all the same torments, we enter as it were into his body, and become in some measure the same person with him, and thence form some idea of his sensations, and even feel something, which, though weaker in degree, is not altogether unlike them. (9)

Smith's discussions of sympathy, like Hume's, varied, seeking to get the concept to do multiple duty. Sometimes he describes an observer imagining what *she herself* would feel in the target individual's situation, and sometimes he describes an observer attempting to *imagine being the target in the target's situation*.⁷ Regardless of whether sympathy for Smith is self- or other-oriented, it is usually described as a high-level process involving an imaginative component.⁸ In this respect, Smith's concept differed from Hume's.⁹ Whereas Hume's notion of sympathy is akin to what we call low-level empathy or mirroring, Smith's primary use of the term refers to what we call high-level empathy, essentially involving imagination.¹⁰

Smith sometimes argues that in order to sympathize with a target individual, one must have knowledge of the context in which the target individual's emotion has arisen.¹¹ Hume, like Smith, considered sympathy to be easier and more likely with family and friends and with those to whom one was in closer proximity, but he did not discuss the need for an observer to have background knowledge of a target's situation.

⁵ Morrow (1923); Bricke (1996); and Vitz (2004).

⁶ Morrow (1923); Lamb (1974); and Griswold (1999, 2006).

⁷ For this distinction, see Goldie (this volume).

⁸ Fontaine (1997); and Mercer (1972).

⁹ For more on Smith's notion of sympathy and its role in his account of moral judgment and in his moral theory more generally, see Macfie (1959), Morrow (1923), Fontaine (1997), Mercer (1972), and Griswold (1999, 2006).

¹⁰ Smith occasionally appeals to examples of what arguably seem to be low-level empathy, where the immediacy of the response would suggest that the conscious use of imaginative perspective-shifting is not required. For example, in one passage he discussed how we recoil our own limb at the sight of a stroke aimed at another person's leg, and how the mob at the circus 'writhe and twist and balance' their bodies as they look at the dancer on the slack rope. However, Smith insists that conscious imaginative perspective-shifting is necessary for all cases of sympathy: 'it is by the imagination only that we can form any conception of what are his sensations' (Smith 2002: 11).

¹¹ Fontaine (1997).

Theodor Lipps

The term *Einfühlung* (from which the English word empathy originated in a way which we will discuss shortly) was developed in works in aesthetics and psychology in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century.¹² It was first used as a technical term in aesthetics by Robert Vischer (1873).¹³ Not long after this, Theodor Lipps (1851–1914) used the concept of *Einfühlung* to explain both how people experience aesthetic objects and how they come to know others' mental states (1903b). While he was almost certainly influenced by discussions in aesthetics, Lipps may also have been influenced by Hume's notion of sympathy, which he would have known well since he was the translator of the standard German translation of Hume's *A Treatise of Human Nature* and directed multiple dissertations on Hume's philosophy (Schuhmann and Smith (1987)). For Lipps, *Einfühlung*—which literally means 'feeling into'—referred to a process of inner imitation or inner resonance that is based on a natural instinct and causes us to imitate the movements and expressions we perceive in physical and social objects. We experience the other's feelings as our own because we project our own feelings onto the other. In a similar way, we experience the properties of aesthetic objects as our own because, according to Lipps, aesthetic objects elicit the same responses in us that are elicited by expressions and movements of the body, and we project these inner subjective qualities onto them.¹⁴

Though often criticized, Lipps's account of *Einfühlung* was enormously influential in psychology and philosophy, where it was much debated. Freud claimed to have been heavily influenced by Lipps, and philosophers in the phenomenological tradition embraced the notion of *Einfühlung* as an alternative to the 'inference from analogy' account of mental state ascription, which held that we ascribe mental states to others through a process of analogy with our own mental states.¹⁵

Using a transliteration of the Greek word *empatheia* to translate *Einfühlung*, Edward Titchener introduced the English term empathy in 1909 in his *Elementary Psychology of Thought Processes*. Titchener's definition of empathy changed over time, but when he first introduced it, he seemed to have in mind the same sort of process that Lipps described:

¹² It's worth noting that at this time, aesthetics and psychology were much more intimately connected than they were for the majority of the twentieth century. Psychologists took aesthetic questions very seriously and aestheticians often extended their treatments of questions regarding engagement with art to questions about human psychology more generally. See Currie (this collection) for a discussion of the relationship between aesthetics and psychology during this time.

¹³ Vischer developed his notion of empathy in his dissertation, *On the Optical Sense of Form: A Contribution to Aesthetics* (1873). See Mallgrave & Ikonomou (1994) for a discussion of this work.

¹⁴ For a more in depth discussion of Lipps's view, see Stueber (2006, 2008), Currie (this collection), Wispé (1986, 1987, 1991), Sawicki (1997), and Montag, Gallinat, & Heinz (2008).

¹⁵ Zahavi (2001) and Stueber (2006, 2008).

Not only do I see gravity and modesty and pride and courtesy and stateliness, but I feel or act them in the mind's muscle. That is, I suppose, a simple case of empathy, if we may coin that term as a rendering of *Einfühlung* (21).

By the time that Titchener began discussing empathy, *Einfühlung* was already a prominent concept in psychology, aesthetics, and philosophy of social science, where, arguably, it was regarded as the primary method of the human sciences.¹⁶

Phenomenology and Hermeneutics

By the beginning of the twentieth century, due in large part to the influence of Lipps's account, the concept of empathy or *Einfühlung* was often associated with the concept of *Verstehen* (understanding), especially in the phenomenological and hermeneutic traditions.¹⁷

The phenomenologists Edmund Husserl (1859–1938), Edith Stein (1891–1942), and Max Scheler (1874–1928) all discussed empathy at length. Husserl and Stein were both highly critical of Lipps's account of empathy, but rather than dismiss it altogether, they revised it, developing their own accounts and making it central to their respective philosophical projects in general and to the problem of intersubjectivity in particular.

In broad terms, the problem of intersubjectivity, which is sometimes referred to as the problem of other minds, concerns whether or not and how we can know others' mental states. The standard response to the problem when Husserl and Stein were writing was the 'argument from analogy', according to which I infer the existence of other minds by inferring that the other is the same in this respect as I am. I thus reason analogically.¹⁸

Husserl and Stein both reject this solution and offer an alternative by appealing to empathy. For them, empathy is a unique mode of consciousness through which we directly experience others' thoughts, emotions, and desires; it enables us to experience others as 'minded' (Husserl (1989); Stein (1989)).¹⁹ Stein argues that empathy is how we experience foreign consciousness, describing it as 'the basis of intersubjective experience' and as 'the condition of possible knowledge of the existing outer world' (Stein (1989): 60). Emphasizing the intersubjective and relational dimensions of empathy Stein argued that empathy enables us to understand others but also to understand ourselves as others experience us. Thus, through empathy I come to discern the other's

¹⁶ Stueber (2000, 2006, 2008); Kögler & Stueber (2000).

¹⁷ Several of Lipps's students began a discussion group in Munich called '*Akademische Verein für Psychologie*', which played an important role in the early phenomenological movement. Some of these students went on to collaborate with Husserl and to publish works of phenomenology. See Schuhmann and Smith (1987) and Spiegelberg and Schuhmann (1994) for more on the influence of Lipps on phenomenology, the work of his students, and students' relationship to Husserl.

¹⁸ See Zahavi (2001) on the problem of intersubjectivity and its treatment within phenomenology.

¹⁹ See Zahavi (2001), Miles (2003), Makkreel (1996, 2000), Throop (2008), and Stueber (2006, 2008) for more on Husserl and Stein and their analyses of empathy.

mental states while at the same time gaining self-knowledge by coming to know how the other experiences me. This self-knowledge is vital for our development.²⁰

Husserl and Stein regard their notion of empathy as departing radically from the notion described by Lipps. They interpret Lipps's notion of empathy as involving a type of fusion or 'oneness', which they consider deeply problematic. On their view, there is no loss of self during the process of empathy. As Rudolf Makkreel explains, the '*Ein*' in '*Einfühlung*' meant 'into', not 'one' and thus *Einfühlung* is best understood as a process of 'feeling into', not a process of 'feeling one with'. He argues that this is why Stein makes the point that *Einfühlung* shouldn't be confused with *Einsfühlung*.²¹

Husserl wrote a great deal about empathy, which he related to *Verstehen* (understanding). Makkreel explains that, in *Ideas II*, Husserl used the concept in two different senses. The first was a psychological or naturalistic sense, which Makkreel describes as a process that falls somewhere between a straightforward presentation (*Gegenwärtigung*) of one's own self and an imaginative representation (*Vorstellung*) of a possible self (1996: 201).²² Husserl's second sense of empathy refers to a more spiritual or cognitive process. He develops this sense of empathy after shifting his analysis from the naturalistic attitude to what he calls the personalistic attitude. Through this second type of empathy, we come to understand the spiritual meaning of what motivates the other (Makkreel (1996): 202).²³ Although this goes beyond empathy in the first sense, which reveals only the other's psychological states, the type of understanding yielded by the second sense of empathy is limited to those features or experiences of the other that are typically human.²⁴ According to Makkreel, empathy for Husserl and Stein is an active

²⁰ See Verducci (2000), Stueber (2006, 2008), Miles (2003), Throop (2008), Wispé (1987, 1991), and Zahavi (2001).

²¹ Makkreel (1996, 2000). Karsten Stueber (2006) claims that Stein's interpretation of Lipps is uncharitable. He acknowledges that Lipps describes empathy as resulting in identification with the object but insists that this does not mean there must be a total loss of self.

²² Makkreel explains: 'Husserl describes empathy as a process of presentification (*Vergegenwärtigung*) whereby I apprehend another body as belonging to another subject. The other's body is given to me in its originary presence (*Urpräsenz*), but the inner nature of its psychic life can only be appresented (*Appräsenz*)... The other is recognized as its own originary source, but apprehended in a non-originary way' (1996: 200).

²³ The notion of 'spiritual' here has a particular meaning for Husserl, which has to do with the difference between mere signs that indicate or point to something, and expressions, which are signs that mean something. Makkreel writes that, 'Empathy initially used the body as a mere sign or indication of subjective mental states whose existence can never be confirmed. The spiritual sense of empathy, by contrast, regards the body of the other as expressing human meaning. Here the body is not apprehended as an object in itself but as a medium for the articulation of typical human meaning' (Makkreel (1996): 202).

²⁴ Makkreel (1996: 200–3). Makreel reports that Husserl writes about empathy elsewhere as well, expanding and questioning some of his discussion in *Ideas II*. In the 3 volumes *Phänomenologie der Inter-subjektivität* (XII, XIV, XX), Husserl claims that we can sometimes empathize with those who surpass us in some way but only by imagining variations on our own experience: 'What I can re-understand (*nachverstehen*), to what extent I can empathize, is determined by the ideal variations of the archetypal human being: I, who am this human being, achieve normal empathy as the perception of the other; in so doing the other body that resembles mine is supplemented with the same supplementary meaning content (*Sinnesbestand*) that belongs to my body under corresponding circumstance and with the possible variations which belong to mine. My body as given to inwardly directed or solipsistic experience is thus the archetypal apperception and provides the necessary norm. Everything else is a variation of this norm.' (XIV: 126) Translated and quoted by Makkreel (1996: 209).

process, which is why it can contribute to understanding (1996, 2000).²⁵ As David Woodruff Smith puts it, 'In Husserl's analysis, empathy is the source of meaning whereby I experience a being as another 'I', another subject, another 'living body' acting by will, and so on' (Smith 2007: 65).

Max Scheler (1874–1928), who applied Husserl's phenomenology to issues in ethics, culture, and religion, focused less on empathy than on sympathy, a process that he claimed was extremely important and yet poorly understood.²⁶ In *The Nature of Sympathy*, Scheler criticizes sentimentalist theories that make sympathy the basis of morality and draws several distinctions between processes that are often confused with one another, including empathy, sympathy, and emotional contagion (1970/1979).²⁷

Around roughly the same time that theorists were exploring and popularizing empathy within phenomenology, it began to be linked to central projects and concepts within hermeneutics. Philosophers in the hermeneutic tradition (e.g. Friedrich Schleiermacher (1768–1834), Wilhelm Dilthey (1833–1911), Robin George Collingwood (1889–1943), and Hans Georg Gadamer (1900–2002)) focused on issues of interpretation and sought to determine the appropriate methods and criteria for historical knowledge and research in the human and social sciences. These thinkers held that knowledge exists in relation to a larger background and strongly disagreed with the view of the logical positivists that all knowledge can be understood in terms of semantic reduction and logical atoms.

Theorists in the hermeneutic tradition ended up distinguishing the human sciences from the natural sciences and articulating distinctive methods and goals for each. The natural sciences take physical events as a subject matter and scientific explanation as a goal and thus researchers in the natural sciences must adopt an external perspective in order to produce explanations of events based on external causes and effects. By subsuming discrete bits of information under general laws, researchers in the natural sciences are able to specify causal relations and correlations through ahistorical explanations.

In contrast, the human sciences take human actions and the phenomena of the social world as a subject matter and *Verstehen* or understanding—rather than *Erklären* or explanation—as a goal. Work in the human and social sciences attempts to determine the *meaning of human actions*, not the *explanation of events* and for this reason it requires an interpretive process that analyzes how the meaning of particular actions and expressions is tied to the context, history, and culture in which those actions and expressions occur. And yet while theorists must understand this larger background in order to complete the interpretive process, the background itself cannot be understood independently of the specific actions and expressions that comprise it, and thus there is an inherent

²⁵ For more on Husserl's and Stein's respective treatments of empathy, see Smith (2007), Moran (2004; 2000; especially 175–6), and Sawicki (1997).

²⁶ Zahavi (2001).

²⁷ See Goldie (2000), Zahavi (2001), and Throop (2008).

circularity in all understanding and interpretation in the human sciences. Referred to as the 'hermeneutic circle', this circularity leads to a relationship of continued reciprocity between the part (i.e. the particular action or event) and the whole (i.e. the contextual, historical, and cultural background) such that anything we come to understand about the part—some particular action—changes the meaning of the whole—the background knowledge against which the part is understood.²⁸ This change in our understanding of the whole then leads to a change in our understanding of the part since the meaning of the part is inextricably bound up with that of the whole. In short, every interpretation relies on another interpretation, making the project of interpretation dynamic and ongoing.

It is because of their specific aims and methodological commitments that many of those working in the tradition of hermeneutics came to regard empathy as an essential epistemological tool. The human sciences were thought by many to rely on a process identical or similar to empathy in order to reconstruct meaning from other agents' points of view.²⁹ The most common way that empathy was linked to hermeneutics was through association with the concept of *Verstehen* (understanding), which was developed at length by the German philosopher and historian Willhelm Dilthey.

Dilthey was a pivotal figure in hermeneutics and in the development of methods and goals appropriate to the human sciences. In his early work, he characterized the fundamental method of the human sciences as a psychological process of interpretation that involved the reenactment of a subject's state of mind.³⁰ This early work was crucial for making empathy an important concept in hermeneutics, as many assumed and continue to assume today that Dilthey was using the concept of *Verstehen* to refer to a type of empathy. Although this reading of Dilthey is understandable, his actual view of empathy is more complicated than many have realized. Interestingly, the complications regarding his view have to do with the same sort of conceptual confusion surrounding empathy today. Not helping matters are the facts that Dilthey shifted his thinking on the nature of understanding in his later work, and that translators have occasionally translated words other than *Einfühlung* as empathy.³¹

A problem with equating empathy with *Verstehen* is that Dilthey rarely used the term and never explicated its meaning.³² Makkreel argues that it is likely that

²⁸ Kögler & Stueber (2000); Stueber (2000, 2006); Makkreel (1992, 1996, 2000); Grondin (1994).

²⁹ For an in depth discussion of how the human sciences were conceived in hermeneutics and how they differ from the natural sciences, see Makkreel (2000), Kögler & Stueber (2000), and Stueber (2006). For a discussion of the hermeneutic tradition more generally, see Grondin (1994).

³⁰ In his later work, Dilthey no longer views introspective awareness as sufficient for understanding. He concludes that psychological interpretation or reenacting a subject's state of mind cannot serve as the basis for the human sciences. On his revised view, all awareness—of both self and others—is based on the interpretation of one's actions, politics, expressions, and so on. If one wishes to understand oneself, for example, one cannot simply introspect but must go through one's old letters, papers, diaries, etc. For more on Dilthey's later view and its relation to his early view, see Makkreel (1992).

³¹ Makkreel (1992: 252–3, note 5).

³² Makkreel (1992, 1996).

Dilthey avoided the term because he associated it with Lipps's definition, which he would have found too restrictive (Makkreel (2000)). Like Husserl and Stein, Dilthey may have interpreted Lipps as claiming that empathy is a pre-reflective state that results in fusion with the object of empathy and a complete loss of self. Such a process could not qualify as understanding for Dilthey since it would be too direct and intuitive to be considered reliable.³³

Karsten Stueber sees the situation differently. He claims that the reason for Dilthey's infrequent use of empathy is that the term was not well established outside of aesthetics when Dilthey was writing his early work. By the time the term became popularized, Dilthey had changed his mind about the conditions for understanding. Since he no longer viewed introspective awareness as sufficient for understanding and dismissed his earlier view as too psychological, he would have had little reason to invoke the concept of empathy since he did not consider such a process to be crucial for studying the human sciences.³⁴

Thinkers within the hermeneutic tradition ultimately dismissed empathy as a process capable of little other than occasionally helping us to understand those very similar to us. It was viewed as something that had nothing to contribute to the process of interpreting subjects culturally different from us, and even those thinkers who continued to employ the concept of *Verstehen* dissociated it from empathy.³⁵

Stueber contends that the criticism of empathy within this tradition has been too extreme. While it may be reasonable to deny that empathy can be the primary method of the human sciences, most philosophers of social science have taken a much stronger position and denied empathy any role at all in the interpretation of others' actions and mental states. This attitude, according to Stueber, stems from theorists' association of empathy with a Cartesian conception of mind, which is now considered highly suspect in all philosophical traditions.³⁶

Stueber has recently developed a defense of empathy that takes account of the concept's history in hermeneutics and the philosophy of social science and draws on recent empirical research in cognitive science and debates in philosophy of mind. He argues that re-enactive empathy, the imaginative reenactment of another's thought processes, is indispensable for predicting, explaining, and understanding others, for it is only through re-enactive empathy that we can see others' thoughts as reasons.³⁷

³³ Makkreel (1996: 206).

³⁴ Stueber (2006: 223, note 17).

³⁵ Stueber (2006: 16–19).

³⁶ Stueber explains that this Cartesian conception of the mind is the view, 'according to which we are primarily acquainted with our own mental states from a first person perspective and according to which we define our mental concepts privately in reference to those inner experiences' (2006: 16).

³⁷ Stueber (2006). There is much more to Stueber's account, including a useful discussion and contribution to the philosophical debate between simulation theory and theory theory, which we will summarize below and which gets discussed throughout the essays in this collection.

Clinical Psychology

From the time that the concept of empathy was first introduced in clinical psychology and psychoanalysis, it was controversial, and it continues to be so today (Bohart & Greenberg (1997b); Clark (2007)). It has most often been associated with client-centered, psychodynamic, and experiential approaches to therapy, but it has received attention in almost all areas of clinical psychology, including psychoanalysis.³⁸

Freud said very little about empathy but he greatly admired Theodor Lipps and claimed to have been highly influenced by Lipps's work, as we noted above (Pigman (1995); Bornstein (1984); Clark (2007); Montag, Gallinat, & Heinz (2008)). This may explain why Freud's brief mention of empathy suggests that it is important; in *Group Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego*, he wrote that empathy is 'that which plays the largest part in our understanding of what is inherently foreign to our ego in other people' (1922/1949: 66). While this statement indicates that Freud took empathy seriously, it played a minimal part, if any, in his model of the therapeutic relationship, which maintains that rational insight is what leads to change and that the analyst must occupy a detached perspective during analysis (Clark (2007); Rachman (1988)).³⁹

In contrast to Freud, psychologist Carl Rogers (1902–1987), one of the founders of humanistic psychology, made empathy the centerpiece of the client-centered psychotherapeutic method he developed, which became highly popular and had a significant influence on the practice of clinical psychology.⁴⁰ Rogers argued that, to be successful, therapy must provide a supportive environment and allow for a deep understanding of the client's experience. Thus Rogers held that a successful therapist must employ empathy as both an epistemological tool that provides access to the client's private, subjective experience and in order to foster the type of environment necessary for the client to be receptive to the therapist's suggestions. Rogers wrote that when we empathize, we are:

³⁸ Clark (2007) provides an overview of thirteen different psychotherapeutic models that emphasize empathy. Additional helpful discussions of empathy's role in clinical psychology and psychoanalysis can be found in Gladstein (1984) Gladstein & Brennan (1987), Basch (1983), Lichtenberg (1981), Schwaber (1981), Hamilton (1981), and Bohart & Greenberg (1997b).

³⁹ In an article on Sandor Ferenczi's development of an empathic method for use in psychoanalysis (1988), Arnold Rachman reports that Freud had concerns about Ferenczi's 'empathic method' due to its potential to seem overly subjective and mystical, which Freud worried would make psychoanalysis seem less intellectually credible. In addition, many theorists argue that a psychoanalytic method employing empathy is fundamentally at odds with the therapeutic stance endorsed by Freud (Rachman (1988); Clark (2007)). See Pigman (1995) for more on the role of empathy in Freud's thought. Verducci (2000) and Clark (2007: 89–120) both speculate on why Freud chose not to explore further the concept of empathy.

⁴⁰ Rogers's method is typically referred to as 'client-centered' or 'person-centered' therapy, though it is sometimes called 'Rogerian psychotherapy' or simply 'humanistic psychology'. Although there are some areas of overlap between Rogers's view and psychoanalysis, particularly in the work of Heinz Kohut, which will be discussed below, client-centered therapy differs from psychoanalysis in a number of important respects. Kahn & Rachman (2000) explain that Rogers's theory and method are more American. For example, the focus during client-centered therapy is on the here and now rather than on the client's development, and the standard duration of therapy is typically relatively brief. In addition, client-centered therapy typically concentrates on the client's current conscious experience. Psychoanalytic psychodynamic approaches often focus on both conscious and unconscious experience (Bohart & Greenberg (1997)).

entering the private world of the other and becoming thoroughly at home in it. It involves being sensitive... to the changing felt meanings, which flow in this person... It means temporarily living in his/her life, moving about in it delicately without making judgments, sensing meanings of which he/she is scarcely aware... To be with another in this way means that for the time being you lay aside the views and values you hold for yourself in order to enter another world without prejudice (1975: 4).

Like Edith Stein, Rogers considered empathy to be a relational process. To empathize with the client, the therapist therefore has to communicate what she, the therapist, feels, periodically checking with the client through questions and restatement to ensure that her empathic understanding is accurate.⁴¹

Rogers believed that therapy could not succeed in the absence of empathy, but he also considered empathy difficult to achieve. He warned that the therapist must preserve the boundaries between herself and the client, lest she risk over-identifying with the client, which distorts understanding and interferes with the therapeutic process. In spite of these worries, Rogers insisted that empathy is critical for psychotherapy; it is one of three conditions he considered necessary for psychotherapeutic change.⁴²

As Rogers progressed in his career, further developing and refining his new model of psychotherapy, he became increasingly convinced of empathy's importance, not only for providing the therapist with invaluable information but also for enabling clients to explore and articulate their own experiences and to see themselves as the agents of that experience (Bohart & Greenberg (1997): 6). Toward the end of his life, Rogers was asked what he considered to be his most important contribution to the lives of others. After pausing for a few moments, he answered that it was his observations and work on empathy.⁴³ This is perhaps unsurprising given that Rogers's work established the place and importance of empathy within counseling and psychotherapy. His work initiated shifts in therapeutic methodologies and prompted numerous empirical studies. But Rogers was not the only theorist committed to organizing the therapeutic experience around empathy.

In the psychoanalytic tradition, Heinz Kohut (1913–1981) came to the conclusion that empathy was of paramount importance to the therapeutic relationship, a conclusion that led him to reformulate and revise many of the theoretical and therapeutic principles of traditional psychoanalysis and to create 'self psychology'. Self psychology is an influential theoretical school and psychodynamic framework that evolved from psychoanalysis in the 1960s and 1970s and remains popular today. Though it is an offshoot of psychoanalysis, self psychology departs from classical analytic theory in multiple ways. One of the most significant is the priority it places on empathy, which it viewed as the most important feature of the psychotherapeutic relationship and values

⁴¹ Rogers (1959). See also Clark (2007) and Bohart & Greenberg (1997).

⁴² Kahn & Rachman (2000); Clark (2007).

⁴³ Clark (2007: xi).

above insight and interpretation. Self psychology further differs from classical Freudian psychoanalysis in that it is not a drive theory and does not emphasize innate instincts, the ego, the Oedipal conflict, or intra-psychic conflict more generally. Instead, the focus is on subjective experience, the self, and the variables involved in its development.⁴⁴ The needs to experience a cohesive or integrated sense of self and self-esteem are thought to be the primary sources of human motivation, and relationships with other people are seen as fundamental to growth, development, and the maintenance of self-esteem. It is primarily through external relationships and social interactions that one has what self psychologists refer to as 'self-object' experiences, that is, experiences of others related to the function of defining, developing, and shoring up one's sense of self (Kohut (1984)). Self psychologists pinpoint the origin of psychopathologies, including several different types of narcissistic and anxiety disorders, in unmet or disrupted developmental needs, which lead to a lack of a continuity in one's experience of self or the inability to maintain a cohesive sense of self.

Empathy is central to self psychology in at least two important respects. During early development, one must experience empathic mirroring from one's parents in order to develop a secure sense of self and healthy self-esteem. These experiences of empathic mirroring constitute positive self-object experiences. As we discuss above, self psychologists also consider empathy to be an essential tool in the therapeutic process. It is a form of what Kohut calls 'experience near observation' and is viewed as necessary for psychoanalytic change. There are currently several different self psychological frameworks, including traditional self psychology, intersubjectivity theory, relational analysis, and motivational analysis. In spite of some important differences among these approaches, all agree about the importance of empathy.

Kohut was a major figure in psychoanalysis. He served as president of the American Psychoanalytic Association and was famous in the early part of his career for his orthodoxy regarding the practice of psychoanalysis. For these reasons, his insistence on the importance of empathy was highly controversial.⁴⁵ Kohut's clinical experience had convinced him that the detached perspective employed in Freudian psychoanalysis was ineffective and that an alternative approach was required. He therefore proposed a new psychoanalytic method that made empathy a 'necessary and defining ingredient of

⁴⁴ Ornstein and Ornstein (1995); Baker & Baker (1987); Sommers-Flanagan & Sommers-Flanagan (2004); Lemma (2003); Bornstein (2003).

⁴⁵ Although Kohut was the first psychoanalyst to assign empathy such a central place in the therapeutic model, and he is the theorist most often associated with introducing empathy into the practice of psychoanalysis, there were a few earlier analytic thinkers who discussed empathy and similar processes, though it is unclear whether or not Kohut was familiar with their views (Clark (2007): 89–120). For example, Arnold Rachman claims that Sandor Ferenczi paved the way for Kohut by creating a model of analysis based on mutuality, empathy, and openness. Ferenczi rejected Freud's characterization of the psychoanalytic cure in terms of intellectual interpretation and cognitive insight, arguing that much of the work of psychoanalysis concerns the emotions and the relationship between the analyst and analysand (Rachman (1988); Clark (2007): 93–8). Other psychoanalytic thinkers who considered empathy or similar processes to be important include Theodor Reik (1948), Sullivan (1953) and Sullivan & Perry (1954), Otto Fenichel (1953), Robert Flies (1942), and Frieda Fromm-Reichmann (1959). For relevant discussion, see Clark (2007): 99–104.

the analyst's attitude as a therapist and a researcher' (1977: 304). In *The Restoration of the Self*, he writes that from 1959 on, his conceptual theoretical outlook was defined by his reliance on the 'empathic-introspective stance' (1977: xiii). A principal feature of this stance was the view that 'the essence of psychoanalysis lies in the scientific observer's protracted empathic immersion into the observed, for the purpose of data gathering and explanation' (1977: 302). This marked a radical departure from classical psychoanalysis, according to which the appropriate perspective for the analyst is one that is cool, removed, and objective with the focus on curing through insight (Clark (2007); Rachman (1988); Bohart & Greenberg (1997)). Kohut contended that the analyst (or therapist) should attempt to empathize with the analysand (the client). He defined empathy as, 'the capacity to think and feel oneself into the inner life of another person', and wrote that, 'it is the lifelong ability to experience what another person experiences, though, usually, and appropriately, to an attenuated degree' (1984: 82).

According to Kohut, empathy contributes to the psychoanalytic process in several important ways. First, it functions as an epistemological tool and a method of observation by providing 'access to the inner life of men' (Kohut (1971): 300). Through empathy, the analyst gains critical information about the analysand's experience—information that would otherwise be inaccessible. A second way in which empathy contributes to psychoanalysis is as a 'fundamental mode of relatedness' (1975) that makes analysands more receptive to analysts' interpretations and provides them with a model for how to relate to themselves (Bohart & Greenberg (1997)). Thus, for Kohut, empathy is both the *primary* method appropriate for the perception of complex psychological configurations (Kohut (1971): 300) and is also beneficial on its own, independent of its ability to provide insight into analysands' experience. In 1985, Kohut writes that that the 'mere presence of empathy [used properly] possesses a beneficial, in a broad sense, effect—both in the clinical setting and in human life, in general' (1985).

Due to its endorsement by Rogers and Kohut, the concept of empathy attracted a great deal of attention during the second half of the twentieth century, not only in clinical psychology but also in experimental and social psychology, where researchers began to develop methods of measuring and testing empathy. At the same time, controversy continued to surround claims that empathy is essential to the therapeutic process (Basch (1983); Bohart & Greenberg (1997)). Within psychoanalysis, for example, many theorists continued to insist, following Freud, that the only genuine basis for psychological change is the type of insight generated by intellectual investigation.⁴⁶ They denied that empathy could provide this type of insight due to its putatively 'unscientific' character (Brenner (1968); Shapiro (1974); Shevrin (1978); Buie (1981)). Many theorists also worried about dangers associated with the therapist's adoption of the empathic stance, including the risk of over-identification with the client, which

⁴⁶ See, e.g. Hartmann (1964) and Shapiro (1984).

leads to an unhealthy enmeshment that impedes the therapeutic process. There was the additional risk that the therapist, rather than empathizing, would project her own concerns and experiences onto the client.

These concerns have persisted, even though evidence has emerged suggesting that empathy is indeed beneficial to the therapeutic process. After performing a meta-level analysis, reviewing numerous studies on the effectiveness of various therapies, Robyn Dawes (1994) concluded that, while the training and approach of a therapist have no significant influence on the success of therapy, therapists who are experienced by their clients as empathic are more effective.⁴⁷

Developmental and Social Psychology

Beginning around the 1960s, empathy became a major research topic in empirical psychology. Discussions of empathy's role in psychotherapy sparked the interest of researchers in social and developmental psychology, and several distinctive research programs were established that investigated multiple aspects of empathy using a variety of methodological approaches. Some of the most influential focused on (1) constructing objective scales to study empathy,⁴⁸ (2) the development of empathy and related processes in the individual,⁴⁹ (3) empathy's role in pro-social and altruistic behavior,⁵⁰ (4) empathic accuracy,⁵¹ and (5) gender differences in empathic responding.^{52,53}

⁴⁷ Though significant, Dawes's conclusion is somewhat problematic since he did not operationalize the term empathy, and thus it is difficult to know what sort of processes are actually responsible for the 'successful' result he identified. For a more recent overview of the empirical research on the role and effectiveness of empathy, which points to mixed findings, see Bohart and Greenberg (1997). For a more recent meta-analysis, see Greenberg et al. (2001).

⁴⁸ See, e.g. Hogan (1969), Carkhuff (1969), Truax & Carkhuff (1967), Barrett-Lennard (1962, 1978), Campbell, Kagan, & Krathwohl (1971), Mehrabian & Epstein (1972), Stotland et al. (1978), Bryant (1982), Chlopin et al. (1985), and Davis (1983). For overviews and analyses of various empathy measures, see Gladstein (1983), Kurtz & Grummon (1972), Greenberg et al. (2001), Davis (1996), Duan & Hill (1996), Wispe (1986, 1987), Eisenberg & Fabes (1990), Eisenberg & Strayer (1987), and Eisenberg (2000).

⁴⁹ Feshbach and Roe (1968); Feshbach (1975); Eisenberg (1983, 2000, 2009a, 2009b); Hoffman (1970, 1979, 1982, 2000); Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow (1990); Moore (1990); Ungerer et al. (1990); Sagi & Hoffman (1976); Zahn-Waxler, Robinson, & Emde (1992); Nichols (2004).

⁵⁰ Hoffman (1982, 1987, 2000); Eisenberg (1983, 1987, 2000); Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade (1987); Eisenberg & Fabes (1990); Batson (1991, 2009b); Batson & Shaw (1991); Batson et al. (1995); Batson et al. (1997); Archer (1991); Davis (1996); De Waal (2008); Nichols (2004); Van Lange (2008); Roberts & Strayer (1996); Lamm, Batson, & Decety (2007); Cialdini et al. (1997).

⁵¹ See, e.g. essays in Ickes (1997), and Ickes (2003), Hodges & Wegner (1997), Zaki, Bolger, & Ochsner (2008, 2009), Zaki, Weber, Bolger, & Ochsner (2009), Eisenberg, Murphy, & Shepard (1997), Hancock & Ickes (1996), and Mast & Ickes (2007).

⁵² Hoffman (1977); Eisenberg & Lennon (1983); Eisenberg & Fabes (1998); Eisenberg, Fabes, & Spinrad 2006; Klein & Hodges (2001); Han, Fan, & Mao (2008); Ickes, Gesn, & Graham (2000); Graham & Ickes (1997); Lennon & Eisenberg (1987); Cheng, Lee, et al. (2008).

⁵³ We are not attempting to provide a comprehensive history in this introduction, and this list of topics within social and developmental psychology is by no means exhaustive. For useful overviews of empathy that address areas of research in philosophy and psychology that we have not discussed, see Stueber (2006, 2008), Wispe (1986, 1987, 1991), Eisenberg & Strayer (1987), Eisenberg (2000, 2009a, 2009b), Miles (2003), Verducci (2000), Gladstein (1984), Gladstein & Brennan (1987), Sawicki (1997), Davis (1996), and Clark

Little consensus has emerged in the psychological literature about what counts as empathy, as we discuss further below in relation to the chapters in this volume, but most accounts list some type of shared emotion as an essential component. Martin Hoffman, for example, defines empathy as 'an affective response more appropriate to another's situation than one's own' (2000: 4). Nancy Eisenberg and Janet Strayer offer a more specific definition but retain the same basic idea, characterizing empathy as 'an affective response that stems from the apprehension or comprehension of another's emotional state or condition, and that is identical or very similar to what the other person is feeling or would be expected to feel' (1987: 5). An exception to the rule of defining empathy in terms of shared emotion occurs in the literature on empathic accuracy where it is more often conceptualized as an inferential process through which a subject comes to know another person's mental states (Ickes 1997).⁵⁴

Some of the most influential and controversial work on empathy has focused on its role in moral development, social competence, and ethical life more generally.⁵⁵ Psychologists have explored this by examining the relationship between empathy and pro-social responding, which refers to 'intentional voluntary behavior that benefits another' (Eisenberg & Miller (1987): 293). Many researchers have concluded that empathy often mediates pro-social behavior, both in specific situations and at the dispositional level. In other words, both 'state empathy' and 'trait empathy' appear to promote pro-social behavior.⁵⁶

It may seem unsurprising that empathy has been linked to pro-social behavior, but establishing this link has been no small task, for conceptual and methodological problems have plagued the research from the outset.⁵⁷ Researchers have employed several distinctive methods to measure empathy, and there has been little uniformity in the use of the key concepts.⁵⁸ As a result, what appear to be the same phenomena have been labeled 'empathic' in some experiments and 'sympathetic' in others, and different

(2007). It should be noted that there are rich bodies of literature on a vast array of topics related to empathy that we do not attempt to cover, including the role of empathy in medicine (Halpern (2001, 2007, 2009); More and Milligan (1994); Hojat (2007); Williams & Stickley (2010)); the role of empathy in education (Verducci (1998, 2000a, 2000b)); empathy and mental illness (essays in Farrow & Woodruff (2007)); empathy and acting (Goldstein (2009); Blair (2008b)); and empathy and fairness (essays in Bock & Goode (2006); Singer (2007); Singer et al. (2004)).

⁵⁴ William Ickes, for example, writes that empathic inference is 'a form of complex psychological inference in which observation, memory, knowledge, and reasoning are combined to yield insights into the thoughts and feelings of others' (1997: 2).

⁵⁵ See, e.g. Hoffman (1970, 1981, 1982, 1983, 1987, 2000); essays in Zahn-Waxler, Cummings, & Ianotti (1986); Zahn-Waxler & Radke-Yarrow (1990); Eisenberg (1983, 1986, 1995, 2000, 2007); Eisenberg, Murphy, & Shephard (1997); Eisenberg & Fabes (1990); Eisenberg & Miller (1987); Eisenberg & Strayer (1987).

⁵⁶ See, e.g. Aronfreed (1970), Hoffman (1982, 1987, 2000), Batson & Coke (1981), Batson (1987), Eisenberg & Strayer (1987), Eisenberg & Miller (1987), Staub (1978). For a review of this research, see Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade (1987), Eisenberg & Miller (1987), Eisenberg (2000), and Batson (1991).

⁵⁷ Discussions of these problems can be found in Eisenberg (1986: 30–57), Underwood & Moore (1982), and Wispe (1986).

⁵⁸ Davis (1996); Eisenberg (1986); Eisenberg & Lennon (1983); Clark (1980); Wispe (1986).

researchers have used the same term to refer to processes and behaviors that differ. This lack of uniformity in terminological usage and measurement has made it difficult to interpret and synthesize the empirical findings. Nevertheless, there is still support for the claim that sympathy and sometimes empathy correlate with pro-social behavior (e.g. Eisenberg (2000); Underwood and Moore (1982); Hoffman (2001)).

Social psychologist C. Daniel Batson, who has been at the center of the debates on the moral significance of empathy since the early 1980s, takes a strong view regarding the moral significance of empathy with his 'empathy-altruism hypothesis'. Developed on the basis of dozens of empirical studies, the hypothesis states that, in many cases, empathy evokes altruistic behavior, that is, behavior motivated by the ultimate goal of increasing another person's welfare (1991: 6). Note that empathy is understood by Batson here as 'empathic concern (other-oriented emotion felt for someone in need—sympathy, compassion, tenderness, and the like)', so it could be argued that the concept has substantial ethical content.⁵⁹

Altruistic behavior is a specific type of pro-social behavior. While all pro-social behavior benefits another, not all of it is performed *for the sake of* benefiting the other. In egoistically motivated pro-social behavior, a subject helps a needy or distressed other in order to increase the subject's own welfare, not the distressed other's. This is almost always the case with behavior generated by personal distress. Personal distress occurs when subjects respond to others' distress by becoming distressed themselves. When this occurs, the target individual's distress causes emotional over-arousal (or aversive arousal) in the subject, which leads the subject to focus on his own distress. The subject may still help the distressed other but when he does, it will be for the sake of alleviating his own distress, not the other's.⁶⁰ In order to learn more about the helping behavior associated with empathy, Batson and his colleagues conducted a series of experiments designed to determine the underlying motivation of empathic subjects who perform pro-social behavior. These experiments varied in how easy it was for subjects to escape exposure to some needy and distressed other without having to help. Batson and his colleagues reasoned that escape—by enabling the subjects to avoid the distressing stimulus—offers subjects a viable way to decrease their own distress without having to decrease the needy other's distress. The studies therefore make it possible to determine whether subjects' motivations are altruistic or egoistic. In situations that involve exposure to a distressed and needy other where escape is relatively easy and helping is moderately costly, individuals' actions reveal their motivations. Those who choose to escape rather than to stay and help are judged to be egoistically motivated.

⁵⁹ See, for example, Batson's discussion in <http://onthehuman.org/2009/10/empathic-concern-and-altruism-in-humans/>.

⁶⁰ See, e.g. Hoffman (1984b, 2000), Davis (1980, 1983), Batson & Coke (1981), Eisenberg & Miller (1987), Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade (1987), Eisenberg, Schaller, et al. (1988), Eisenberg, Fabes, Miller, et al. (1989), Eisenberg & Fabes (1990), Batson (1991), Okun, Shepard, & Eisenberg (2000), Eisenberg (2002), Eisenberg, Valiente, & Champion (2004), Eisenberg et al. (2006), Eisenberg & Eggum (2009), Singer & Lamm (2009), and Decety & Lamm (2009).

In contrast, those who choose to help rather than escape, even though helping is moderately costly and escape relatively easy, are judged to be altruistically motivated. After performing these experiments, Batson and his colleagues found that subjects who experience empathy in response to others' suffering are more likely to stay and help. Subjects who experience personal distress, however, are significantly less likely to stay and help.⁶¹ Batson and many others have interpreted these findings as support for the empathy-altruism hypothesis.

Although highly significant in multiple disciplines, Batson's work has not been uncontroversial. Several researchers have disagreed with Batson's interpretation of the data yielded by his experiments, denying that altruistic empathy is the best way to explain subjects' pro-social behavior (Sober & Wilson (1998): 264–71; Cialdini et al. (1997); Nichols (2004); Stueber (2006); and Doris & Stich (2009)). Another problem with Batson's findings, which we alluded to above, is that in his discussion of the empathy-altruism hypothesis he uses the term 'empathy' more broadly, with more ethical content, than many other researchers. This makes it difficult to know whether or not he has shown that empathy leads to altruism or that some sort of combination of empathy and sympathy or perhaps even sympathy alone leads to altruism, which would be a weaker finding.

While Batson has concentrated in his research on the empathy-altruism hypothesis, developmental psychologist Martin Hoffman, who has been a key empathy researcher since the 1970s, has focused on empathy's development from infancy onwards and its role in and relationship to moral development. Hoffman highlights the role of empathy in moral emotion, motivation, and behavior. More specifically, he claims that empathic distress is a multiply determined pro-social moral motive. Because he offers the clearest and most detailed account of empathy's development, Hoffman's research has been highly influential, both in psychology and philosophy, as well as in other related disciplines.

Hoffman proposes five distinct modes of empathic arousal and five stages of empathic distress. Of the five modes of empathic arousal, three are pre-verbal, automatic, and essentially involuntary: motor mimicry and afferent feedback, classical conditioning, and direct association of cues from the target individual's experience to one's own past experience. These three pre-verbal modes are crucial for arousing empathy in childhood, especially in face-to-face situations. The remaining two modes of empathic arousal—mediated association and role-taking—are higher-order cognitive processes and contribute to the scope of one's empathic ability, allowing empathy with people who are not present (Hoffman (2000)).

Hoffman argues that the five stages of empathic distress result from the synthesis of empathic affect and a cognitive sense of others as distinct. These five stages are (1) the

⁶¹ Batson (1991: 109–74) reviews 25 different studies examining the relationship between empathy and helping behavior. See also Batson and Shaw (1991), Batson, Sager, et al. (1997), Batson (1997), and Batson & Powell (2003).

reactive newborn cry, (2) egocentric empathic distress, (3) quasi-egocentric empathic distress, (4) veridical empathic distress, and (5) empathy for another's experience, beyond the immediate situation (see Hoffman (2000): 63–92). According to Hoffman's account, different cognitive processes are involved in the different kinds of empathy. At stages three, four, and five, empathic distress is transformed, in part, to a feeling of sympathetic distress, so empathy at this point again has substantial ethical content.

Another important topic of study within the social and developmental literature is empathic accuracy. Work on empathic accuracy relates closely to work in philosophy on the problem of other minds and how we come to understand and predict others' mental states. Social psychologist William Ickes, a major figure in this area, locates the study of empathic accuracy within the tradition of psychological research on interpersonal perception. Ickes defines empathic accuracy as, 'the measure of one's ability to accurately infer the specific content of other people's thought and feeling' (Ickes (1997): 3).⁶²

Psychologists have taken several approaches to the study of empathic accuracy. A few have focused on the low-level physiological dimensions of how we come to grasp the valence and intensity of others' affective states. Robert Levenson & Anna Ruef (1997), for instance, argue that understanding others' emotions relies on physiological synchrony between the perceiver and the target.⁶³ Some researchers have examined the development of empathic accuracy. Nancy Eisenberg and her collaborators, for example, argue that empathic accuracy develops over time and relies on both social and cognitive factors (1997). Ickes (2003) has looked at differences in individuals' empathic accuracy and developed strategies for improving it.

Although the majority of the work on empathic accuracy highlights its importance, Ickes & Simpson (1997) and Ickes (2003) point out that empathy has negative dimensions and must be managed in certain contexts. In close relationships, for example, it is not always beneficial to empathize with one's loved ones since doing so can lead to disturbing knowledge. In addition, empathy is not always welcome. In many cases, individuals don't want others to empathize with them; they experience others' attempts to empathize with them as intrusive.⁶⁴

Care Ethics

Within both psychology and philosophy, another area of research in which empathy has been important is the ethics of care. Care ethics was developed in the 1980s as a challenge to traditional principle-based ethical theories (Gilligan (1982); Noddings

⁶² See, also, Ickes (1993), Ickes, Stinson, Bissonnette, & Garcia (1990), and Ickes (2003). It is not entirely clear in what sense Ickes is using the term 'infer', and in particular whether the inference is something of which the empathizer is aware.

⁶³ See, also, Hodges & Wegner (1997).

⁶⁴ See Throop (2008).

(1984); Ruddick (1989); and Held (2006a, 2006b)). Care theorists in philosophy and psychology rejected models of ethical life that emphasize impartiality and abstract rules and that characterize the ethical agent first and foremost as an autonomous, self-sufficient individual who uses reason and suppresses emotion in order to be just and fair. Proponents of care ethics argue that moral thought and action require both reason and emotion, as well as attention to the needs of particular others. In addition, they conceptualize the individual as relational and as epistemologically and morally interdependent (Held (2006a, 2006b); Slote (2007)). There are multiple versions of care ethics but almost all of them include the view that care and the practices of caring are vital to moral/ethical life.⁶⁵

Many care theorists identify empathy as an important element in ethical life. Along with sympathy and emotional sensitivity and responsiveness, empathy is one of the emotional processes that, together with reason, creates a unique moral outlook. It is a valuable—or even essential—tool for developing our understanding of others and enabling us to determine what the best thing to do is in real world situations. Nel Noddings understands care as an activity that closely relates to empathy since caring means attending to the specific needs of particular others and attempting to understand situations from the other's point of view. To care for another requires 'feeling with' the other. Noddings says that it is possible to refer to this 'feeling with' as empathy, but only if we reject the standard notion of empathy as projecting oneself into the other so as to completely understand him, which she considers to be 'a peculiarly rational, western, masculine way of looking at "feeling with"' (1984: 30). For Noddings, empathic caring is about receptivity, not projection. We receive and share the other's feeling and, as a result, are prepared to care where we previously were not. Our 'feeling with' the other begins not with an attempt to interpret the other or solve some sort of problem, though we may learn to do this; it begins with simply attending to and sharing the other's feeling.

Philosopher Michael Slote has recently proposed an ethics of care that draws on research in social and developmental psychology, especially on the empathy-altruism hypothesis and Hoffman's developmental account. Slote's theory revives moral sentimentalism and makes empathy its core feature by using it to ground both a meta-ethical account of moral language and a normative account of moral obligation. He does this by explaining approval and disapproval in terms of empathy and then using these explanations to develop his account of moral language.

Slote's primary use of empathy is to refer to a process of contagion through which feelings can spread among individuals. He distinguishes his notion of empathy from the notion of sympathy, yet he characterizes empathy as necessarily including a feeling of 'warmth'. Regarding normative ethics, Slote argues that we will determine whether an action is morally right or wrong based on whether it expresses or exhibits the absence

⁶⁵ Blum (1994) provides a useful account of care ethics that specifies its virtues as well as some limitations.

of a fully developed empathic caring. Thus Slote treats empathic caring as 'critical for morality across a wide range of individual and political issues' (Slote (2007): 8). Caring motivation, for him, is based in and sustained by empathy (Slote (2007), 2010).

Slote's treatment of empathy strongly emphasizes its positive qualities, but care theorists such as Virginia Held (2001, 2006a, 2006b) are careful to point out that empathy is not an unqualified good and warn that it can be excessive and that this can lead to significant problems. Thus, for Held, empathy on its own is not enough for care ethics. To be beneficial, empathy must be conditioned appropriately and constrained by certain principles, which results from moral scrutiny and evaluations (2006a).

Recent Work in Neuroscience

During the past two decades, some of the most important contributions to the study of empathy have come from the field of neuroscience, where researchers have considered issues ranging from the nature of empathy and its role in various domains of experience to the importance of 'mirror neurons'. This research uses the tools of neuroscience to examine many of the same issues that have interested philosophers and psychologists and provides an important new source of empirical data, the significance of which is only just beginning to be understood.

One way neuroscientists have addressed questions about the nature of empathy is through attempts to determine what sorts of neurophysiological processes are involved in empathy and how they implement empathic processes.⁶⁶ This research reveals how empathy differs from related processes like personal distress. Personal distress has a number of characteristics in common with empathy and yet some have argued that it is a distinctive process. As we discussed above, when we experience personal distress while observing another in a distressing emotional state, we become so aversively aroused by the other's emotion that we end up becoming concerned primarily with our own distress and with alleviating it. And yet, in cases of empathy, observing another in a distressing emotional state causes us to become distressed by the other's emotion but not to such a degree that we end up focused on our own experience rather than the other's. As a result of this difference, empathy is more likely to result in altruistic behavior than personal distress, which may lead to pro-social behavior but which is thought to be motivated by an observer's desire to alleviate her own distress.⁶⁷

⁶⁶ See, e.g. essays in this collection by Decety and Meltzoff, Iacoboni, and Goldman, and Decety & Lamm (2009), Decety & Jackson (2006), Decety & Grèzes (2006), Iacoboni (2008, 2009a), Jackson, Meltzoff, & Decety (2006), Lamm, Batson, & Decety (2007), Decety & Meyer (2008), Singer (2006), Singer, Critchley, & Preuschoff (2009), Singer et al. (2004, 2006), Vignemont & Singer (2006), and Singer & Lamm (2009).

⁶⁷ Theorists who consider personal distress to be a type of empathy include Stephanie Preston and Frans de Waal (Preston & de Waal (2002), de Waal (2009)). Preston and de Waal argue for a broad integrative model of empathy. For more on personal distress, see Coplan (this volume), and discussions in Eisenberg and Eggum (2009), Decety & Lamm (2009), Eisenberg (2000), Hoffman (1991, 2000), Batson (1991, 2009b), Toi & Batson (1982), Batson, Fultz, & Schoenrade (1987), and Eisenberg et al. (1989).

Neuroscientific research has helped to support the view that the difference between empathy and personal distress is more than one of degree. Jean Decety and Claus Lamm (2009), for example, argue that a clear distinction between these two processes can be found at the neurological level; different neural substrates underlie these two phenomena. A related line of research takes a neuroscientific approach to questions about the various roles empathy plays in human experience and in social cognition in particular. This research has been the basis of significant developments and changes in our theoretical understanding of how humans develop, interact, and flourish and of the centrality of empathy in imitation, cooperation, and deception.⁶⁸ In the area of child development, for example, the standard account of infants' early development and capacity for social connection has been completely overturned. Once thought to be asocial and egocentric, infants are now believed to be social, possessing a capacity for imitation, intersubjective communication, and social connection from the time of birth.⁶⁹

Some additional areas of research in which neuroscientific work on empathy has figured prominently include the study of psychopathy,⁷⁰—which has important implications for our understanding of normal development and moral psychology—the study of autism spectrum disorders,⁷¹ and the study of different forms of pro-social behavior.⁷²

Research on mirror neurons has driven much, though not all, of the neuroscientific work on empathy, revolutionizing the way we understand human interaction. In the early 1990s in Parma, Italy, Giacomo Rizzolatti and his group first discovered a special class of neurons in the macaque brain, in the ventral pre-motor area (F5). These came to be called mirror neurons. What makes these neurons special is that they are activated both when an individual performs a particular type of action (e.g. grasping an object) and when an individual observes another performing that type of action. Thus, in some cases, we *mirror* others at a neurological level. Hence the name 'mirror neurons'.

The first mirror neurons discovered were pre-motor visuo-motor neurons so the early data and many of the discussions concern motor actions (Ferrari & Gallese (2007)). Later, however, different types of mirror neurons were discovered. Audio-visual

⁶⁸ See essays in this collection by Iacoboni, Decety and Meltzoff, and Goldman, and Goldman (2006a), Iacoboni (2008), de Waal (2009), essays in Decety & Ickes (2009), essays in Pineda (2009a), Rizzolatti & Sinigaglia (2008), essays in Keysers & Fadiga (2009), essays in Bräten (2007), and essays in Stamenov & Gallese (2002).

⁶⁹ See the essay in this collection by Decety and Meltzoff, and Bräten (2007), Bräten & Trevarthen (2007), and Stern (2004: 241–2). It's worth noting that certain philosophers and psychologists were challenging the standard view of infants as narcissistic prior to the recent neuroscientific findings, including Meltzoff & Gopnik (1993), Cynthia Willett (1995), and Paul Harris (2000).

⁷⁰ See Blair & Blair (2009), Blair, Mitchell, & Blair (2005), Blair (1995, 2006, 2008b), Blair et al. (1997), and Decety & Moriguchi (2007).

⁷¹ See Pfeifer & Dapretto (2009), Pfeifer, et al. (2008), Dapretto et al. (2005), Iacoboni & Dapretto (2006), Baron Cohen (1997, 2003), and Decety & Moriguchi (2007).

⁷² See Batson (2009b), Eisenberg and Eggum (2009), Iacoboni (2008), Preston & de Waal (2002), and de Waal (2009).

mirror neurons, for example, are another class of F5 neurons that can be activated both by the performance of some action (e.g. breaking open a peanut) and by the sound produced by that action (Kohler et al. (2002)).⁷³ Multiple studies employing different experimental methodologies and techniques have demonstrated the existence of a mirroring system in humans. Part of this system involves mechanisms that make it possible for us to share the affective experience of others. As Tania Singer and Claus Lamm explain, 'consistent evidence shows that sharing the emotions of others is associated with activation in neural structures that are also active during the first-hand experience of that emotion' (2009).⁷⁴

It would be difficult to overstate the importance of the discovery of mirror neurons, not only for the study of what we call low-level empathy but for our understanding of mental life more generally. Neuroscientist V.S. Ramachandran claims that 'mirror neurons will do for psychology what DNA did for biology: they will provide a unifying framework and help explain a host of mental abilities that have hitherto remained mysterious and inaccessible to experiments' (2000). Mirror neurons and mirror systems explain how it is that we can experience another's emotion almost instantaneously, without conscious deliberation or the use of imagination. They provide strong empirical support for simulation theory and may be the mechanism or one of the mechanisms for simulation or at least some types of simulation.⁷⁵ In his 2008 book *Mirroring People: The Science of Empathy and How We Connect with Others*, neuroscientist Marco Iacoboni says that mirror neurons are the foundation of empathy and possibly of morality and that they solve the problem of other minds.

Ethology

Another area of research on empathy that overlaps with the research in neuroscience is ethology, the study of animal behavior and social organization from a biological perspective. In his 2009 book *The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society*,

⁷³ See, also, the discussion in Iacoboni's essay in this collection.

⁷⁴ For more on mirroring in humans, see the essays by Iacoboni and Goldman in this collection, Iacoboni (2005, 2008, 2009a and 2009b), essays in Decety & Ickes (2009), essays in Pineda (2009a), Wicker et al. (2008), Goldman (2006a, 2008, 2009a), Goldman & Sripatha (2005), Ferrari & Gallese (2007), Gallese, Keysers, & Rizzolatti (2004), and Keysers & Gazzola (2006).

⁷⁵ See Goldman's essay in this collection and Goldman (2006a: especially 113–46, 2008, 2009a), Gallese & Goldman (1998), Ferrari & Gallese (2007), and Pineda (2009a). Pineda argues that the work on mirror neurons expands the explanatory scope and empirical basis for simulation, and Ferrari and Gallese propose that simulation is a basic functional mechanism that is sub-personally instantiated by mirror neurons. As is clear in his essay in this collection and the references above, Goldman is more cautious about what we can conclude at this point about the relationship between mirror neurons and simulation. Goldman has a duplex theory of simulation that specifies two different types of simulation-based processes—low-level simulations and high-level simulations. While the low-level simulations involve direct mirroring, high-level simulations target more complex mental states and necessarily involve pretense or what Goldman calls enactment imagination. He argues that these two different levels of simulation rely on different mechanisms and operate in different ways.

ethologist and primatologist Frans de Waal states that 'empathy is the grand theme of our time', and argues that it is an ancient part of our heritage that has received far too little attention. De Waal calls for a complete overhaul of our assumptions about human nature that characterize it exclusively in terms of selfishness, competition, and aggression. It is time, he says, to correct this cardboard version of who we are that was perpetuated by the Social Darwinists and allowed to persist due to the tendency of most scientists to pay far more attention to negative emotions than positive ones, and the tendency of most philosophers to emphasize reason over emotion.

Empathy is at the center of de Waal's alternative models of human nature and social behavior in human and non-human animals. In an attempt to 'strip empathy down to its bare bones', de Waal identifies multiple levels of empathy that occur in a wide range of species that includes humans, non-human primates, monkeys, elephants, dolphins, dogs, and rodents. He traces the development of empathy and sympathy from bodily synchronization to high-level perspective-taking and 'targeted helping', describing numerous related behaviors along the way.⁷⁶

De Waal hypothesizes that empathy works the same way in humans and non-human animals, with the only real difference being one of degree. Thus, human empathy, in some cases, possesses greater complexity than empathy in other species (2009: 132).

De Waal likens his model of empathy to a Russian doll:

The full capacity seems put together like a Russian doll. At its core is an automated process shared with a multitude of species, surrounded by outer layers that fine-tune its aim and reach. Not all species possess all layers: Only a few take another's perspective, something we are masters at. But even the most sophisticated layers of the doll remain firmly tied to its primal core. (2009: 208–9)

By explaining the evolutionary story of empathy and pointing out the pervasiveness of empathic behaviors, de Waal hopes both to provide a more accurate picture of human nature and to make it possible for us to work toward a more just society.

Overview of the Collection

Given this history of the term 'empathy', and the multiple uses to which it has been put during its short life, it is not surprising that the contributors to this volume often differ in what they mean by the term. In our view, this does not in any way present a difficulty. We believe that it would not be a good idea, even if it were possible, to attempt to regiment the term into one single meaning. Our everyday use of the term is highly varied, and often quite vague. In philosophical and psychological discussion, it is necessary to sharpen the term in a way that facilitates the particular topic and stance of

⁷⁶ See, also, the important article de Waal co-authored with Stephanie Preston, 'Empathy: its ultimate and proximate bases' that appeared in 2002 in *Behavioral and Brain Sciences* along with responses by numerous empathy researchers. It provides a review of the empathy literature and develops a broad, integrative model of empathy much like the one de Waal proposes in this more recent work.

the particular researcher and his or her readers, but it is not necessary that all researchers should adopt the same meaning.

So we ask readers of this volume to be suitably aware, and not to expect us, as editors, to have forced the term 'empathy' onto a Procrustean bed. There are two corollaries to this. First, we should all take care to be clear precisely what sense of the term is being used by others when they set out their claims and arguments. Too often objections are raised to another's position which are at bottom just a protest: 'But that isn't what I mean by "empathy"'. Second, and obviously, we should all take care to be sure what we mean by the term when making our own claims and arguments—a certain looseness might be acceptable in everyday discourse, but not in philosophical and psychological debate.

This volume is divided into three sections, each one concerned with the relevance of empathy to larger debates in philosophy and psychology. In what follows, we will briefly set the scene for each section and then summarize the content of each chapter.

Empathy and mind

In this first section, contributors address questions of what empathy is from the perspective of psychology, neuroscience, and philosophy of mind. Some background might be helpful here to put the issues in context.

We human beings have an ability to understand, to explain, and to predict what people think, feel and do. Most of the time we exercise this ability with little or no explicit thought or reasoning on our part. This practice is sometimes called 'folk psychology', and the ability is sometimes referred to as 'mindreading', but these technical terms should not give the impression that the practice is anything other than utterly familiar to all of us from a very early age.

As we briefly discussed above, much of the debate over the last two decades has focused on what underlying cognitive or non-cognitive psychological capacities or abilities enable us to perform these tasks. One traditional view, now often called *theory theory*, has been that we take a kind of theoretical stance towards other people, very much as we take a kind of theoretical stance towards, for example, physical objects in space: one is 'folk physics', concerned with the behavior of physical objects, and the other is 'folk psychology', concerned with the behavior of people. So when we try to predict what someone will do, we deploy (perhaps tacitly) this theory, which will involve theorems such as 'if someone wants something and believes that by doing such-and-such he will be able to get it, then, all things being equal, he will do such-and-such'.⁷⁷

The main opposition to theory theory, which was the prevailing view in analytic philosophy up to the mid 1980s, holds that our cognitive abilities in this area are quite different from our cognitive abilities in other areas. This is largely because we ourselves

⁷⁷ See, for example, Gopnik & Wellman (1994), Davies & Stone (1995a), Carruthers & Smith (1996), Davies & Stone (1998), Stueber (2000, 2006), and Kögler & Stueber (2000).

are minded, and this enables us to use our own minds to 'simulate' the minds of others. This view is thus often called *simulation theory*, or *simulationism*.

Although it is much debated precisely how such an account might be fleshed out in its details, simulation theory is now generally accepted to be a real alternative to theory theory.⁷⁸ We cannot go into the details of that debate here, but what has been particularly important, and what motivates many of the chapters in this section, is the role of empathy in simulation. One role for empathy, it is claimed by simulationists, is that it enables us to work out what someone else is likely to do by perspective-shifting, by imagining being in that other person's position, and thus using our imagined thoughts and feelings and decisions to determine what the other will think and feel and decide. For example, if you are asking yourself what she will do if she wants a beer and believes that there is a beer in the fridge, you do not need to deploy a theory about what people tend to do in such circumstances. Rather, you imagine what you would do in those circumstances: you imagine wanting a beer and believing that there is a beer in the fridge, and then imagine reaching a decision on the basis of having that desire and belief. You thereby conclude that that is just what she will decide to do, and what she will then in fact do. Of course your imagined decision does not result in action on your part, just because you appreciate that your thought processes are a simulation of another's thought processes: desires, beliefs, decisions, and so on are imagined, not real (they are, as it is sometimes said, 'off-line').

Empathy is now often taken to involve more than just the kind of conscious imaginative process which we have so far been considering. It is now often also taken to involve a more basic, non-conscious process of 'picking-up on' another person's thoughts and feelings. For example, we humans seem from a very early age to be able to grasp another's fear or anger from their facial expression, or to realize that someone is trying to wipe a table or to turn on a light. The exercise of these abilities seems to be so immediate and non-inferential, and so prevalent in toddlers and even very young babies, that the explanation is unlikely to involve the same kind of psychological resources as perspective-shifting—and even less likely, one might think, to involve the deployment of a theory.

In this Introduction, we will follow Alvin Goldman's lead (2006a) and call these two kinds of empathy *higher-level empathy* and *lower-level empathy*. Other terms for higher-level empathy include *re-enactive empathy* (Steuber (2006)), *reconstructive empathy* (the term which Goldman uses in his chapter in this volume), and *perspective-shifting* (Goldie this volume). Other terms for lower-level empathy include *basic empathy* (Steuber (2006)), and *mirroring* (Goldman this volume).

The arguments for the role of empathy in simulationism are partly empirical and partly a priori, although it is probably true to say that the evidence brought forward for lower-level empathy has tended to be more empirical than the evidence for higher-

⁷⁸ See footnote 1 for references.

level empathy. Moreover, the empirical evidence for lower-level empathy is much more robust. This is in part because lower-level or basic empathetic processes are more readily observable in, for example, toddlers and babies; and in part because these processes would seem to have more salient neural pathways—see the discussion of mirror neurons below. In contrast, *a priori* arguments are more at home with higher-level empathy, which is more directed towards imagining the *reasons* for someone else's mental states or action; and *a priori* arguments are more at home where reasons are concerned.⁷⁹ Nevertheless, there is also strong empirical evidence adduced for higher-level empathy in arguments against theory theory, including substantial work in developmental and empirical psychology, and in studies of autism.

Not surprisingly, some philosophers and psychologists have concentrated their research on one or the other of higher- or lower-level empathy. Others have concentrated on both, seeking to find reasons for unifying them in a larger theoretical framework which justifies them both being included under the single rubric of *empathy*. In her chapter, 'Understanding Empathy: Its Features and Effects', Amy Coplan gives theoretical and methodological reasons for resisting the assimilation of lower-level or basic empathy and higher-level empathy or perspective-shifting, and puts forward a conceptualization of empathy which, with one important qualification, is in line with our rough characterization of higher-level empathy which we set out above. She says, 'empathy is a complex imaginative process in which an observer simulates another person's situated psychological states [both cognitive and affective] while maintaining clear self-other differentiation' (p. 5).

Coplan goes on to consider three central elements of her definition. First, there is 'affective matching', where the imagined affective states are qualitatively the same as those of the other person, the 'target' (the term we will use for the person with whom the 'empathizer' is trying to empathize). Here Coplan makes clear the important distinction between shared affect which arises as a result of other-oriented perspective-taking, which Coplan calls *affective matching*, and shared affect which arises through other means—for example, through two persons reacting with the same emotion to the same object, or through *emotional contagion* (which we will discuss in more detail in relation to Stephen Davies' chapter in this volume). The second central element of Coplan's definition marks the important difference with our rough characterization of higher-level empathy: on her account, perspective-taking must be other-oriented rather than self-oriented. So empathy is not putting *yourself* in the other's shoes; it should not involve imagining *yourself* wanting a beer and so on. Putting yourself in the other's shoes in this way can easily result, Coplan says, in 'false consensus effects, personal distress and prediction errors based on egocentric biases' (p. 13). In contrast, other-oriented perspective-taking involves imagining being the target, having the target's thoughts and feelings, and not imagining yourself having those thoughts and

⁷⁹ For arguments along these lines, see especially the papers collected in Heal (2003), and Stueber (2006).

feelings. The third central element of Coplan's definition, self-other differentiation, requires that the empathizer remains conscious of the clear boundaries between the self and the other.

In 'Empathy as a Route to Knowledge', Derek Matravers begins by establishing a definition of empathy close to that of Coplan. Like Coplan, Matravers separates empathy from other, closely-related phenomena, and in particular from emotional contagion (and from other kinds of lower-level affective responses), from imagining oneself in another's shoes, and from sympathy. Empathy on this definition is a conscious imaginative project that requires a full understanding of the target's mental states in order to be able to engage with them imaginatively. Matravers then examines whether empathy, defined in this way, is a reliable route to, first, knowledge of others' mental states, and second, to knowledge of what unfamiliar mental states, in particular feelings and emotions, are like. He argues that there might be in principle some obstacles to empathy's ability to yield knowledge of the mental states of another. In particular, he questions whether two conditions which are necessary for successful empathy can, in fact, be satisfied: first, whether it is possible to provide 'inputs' to the imaginative process with the right content—right, that is, in the sense of being mental states with contents appropriate to the target; and second, whether it is possible, even with the right inputs, to reliably generate the affective states which match those of the target. Moreover, Matravers argues, there are potentially significant differences between how one imagines responding in a certain imagined situation (being faced with the prospect of death for example) and how one would actually respond if such a situation were real.

On the second topic of his chapter, the question of whether empathy can yield knowledge of what unfamiliar mental states are like, Matravers raises three requirements for the causal efficacy of an empathetic engagement with a target's experience which are, again, difficult to satisfy: the empathizer's imagined beliefs must have the right amount of 'vivacity' relative to the target's beliefs; the imagined mental states must resonate in the empathizer's mental economy in the right way relative to the target; and finally he points to the difficulty, or sometimes impossibility, for the empathizer of simulating certain triggers of the target's affect in order to give rise to that affect—simulating smells or sounds for example. Although Matravers concludes that, in the right circumstances, empathy with a target can have a cognitive advantage over mere knowledge *that* the target is in a certain mental state, nevertheless he doubts that empathy, as he defines it, 'is as common an occurrence as we might think' (p. 28).

In his chapter, 'Two Routes to Empathy: Insights from Cognitive Neuroscience', Alvin Goldman, in contrast to Coplan and Matravers, proposes a working definition of empathy which allows for two 'routes' to empathy: what he calls the 'mirroring' route and the 'reconstructive route'. These are equivalent to lower-level empathy and higher-level empathy respectively. The mirroring route is named after the discovery of mirror neurons and mirroring processes, which we briefly explained above. These are discussed in detail in the chapters by Marco Iacoboni, and by Jean Decety and

Andrew Meltzoff. Recall that, when the monkey or human observes a target's facial expression or bodily movement, the same cells are activated in the observer as in the target: thus the name *mirror* neurons and processes. This kind of mirroring has been discovered in relation to emotions, pain, touch, and action-planning. Goldman says that these mirroring episodes are 'below the threshold of consciousness' (p. 33), and accepts that terms such as 'resonance' and 'contagion' might be considered preferable.

Goldman's reconstructive route to empathy is much along the lines we have so far discussed here: reflecting on the other's situation, you imagine how you would feel if you were in his shoes. This is, Goldman says, 'a more effortful or constructive process' (p. 36) than the mirroring route; and it is less reliable. Goldman goes on to consider what the neural pathways might be for reconstructive empathy, and how they are distinct from those for mirroring; and here he registers disagreement with Iacoboni and others, who suggest that mirror neurons might be involved in both kinds of empathy.

Like Goldman, and Jean Decety and Andrew Meltzoff in their chapter, Marco Iacoboni, in 'Within Each Other: Neural Mechanisms for Empathy in the Primate Brain', addresses the question of what the neurophysiological mechanisms are that underlie empathy. He sets out a fascinating history of this inquiry, starting from the discovery of mirror neurons in the macaque brain in the late 1980s. He discusses how more recent studies have shown that macaque mirror neurons discharge not only at the sight of actions by the target, but also at the *sound* of actions—such as the sound of the breaking of a peanut. He then discusses related studies in humans, which are, for ethical reasons, restricted in their methods to measuring fMRI activation in groups of cells; he notes in particular that action sounds heard by humans give rise to activation consistent with the presence of mirror neurons, and argues that it is reasonable to hypothesize that human brains contain mirror neurons. Furthermore, he appeals to other recent studies of epileptic patients, where electrodes could be implanted on independent medical grounds, which show that mirror neurons are much more widespread in humans' brains than previously realized, beyond just mirroring of motor neurons. As we have seen, Goldman (along with many other scholars) has argued that mirror neurons cannot account for the higher-level forms of empathy—for what Goldman in his chapter calls reconstructive empathy. Against this view, Iacoboni argues that the fact that there are many different kinds of mirror neurons, and that they are also much more widely distributed in the primate brain than previously thought, suggests a very sophisticated neural system that may support complex forms of mindreading and empathizing, including higher-level empathy.

Jean Decety and Andrew Meltzoff, in 'Empathy, Imitation, and the Social Brain', bring to the fore something that is in the background in Goldman's and Iacoboni's chapters: the connection between empathy and imitation. They begin with imitation in babies, and show how their studies of neonates (only a day or so old) reveal imitation of facial expression such as tongue protrusion, explained by what they call 'active intermodal mapping'. This unifies the actions of another person, observed through perception, with the child's own actions, observed through proprioception. Imitation,

functional at birth in humans, is they say, 'a marker of innate intersubjectivity in action' (p. 61). So what they call the 'Like-Me bridge' is not one that is first crossed later in life, as a developmental achievement, but is part of our human biological constitution at birth. Grounded in innate shared representations, imitation in toddlers (from 18 months old) comes to be regulated by reference to the adult's emotional reactions: a negative reaction from the adult to an observed action leads to significantly less imitation.

Bringing together these and other studies in imitation from developmental science and cognitive neuroscience, Decety and Melzoff show how imitation, including emotional sharing, plays an essential formative role in the child's developing sense of agency, self, and self-other differentiation—capacities which are involved in the emergence of empathy at age 2–4. Thus, they argue, imitation and empathy are closely linked, although they are not underpinned by identical neurological processes. They emphasize, as does Coplan, the dangers of imagining *oneself* in perspective-taking, which can result in a tendency to avoid negative emotions of one's own, and which can in turn, through egocentric bias, inhibit any tendency to mitigate the target's suffering and negative emotions. Accordingly, they say, empathy—understood as adopting the *other's* perspective—involves significant executive functions, which 'not only facilitate perspective taking, but also control attention and meta-cognitive capacities, both of which facilitate pro-social responding in reaction to another's distress' (p. 79).

Gregory Currie's 'Empathy for Objects' represents a transition point from this section, Empathy and Mind, to the next section, Empathy and Aesthetics. In this chapter, Currie argues for a more inclusive role for empathy other than with persons and their mental states. He argues that we also empathize with things. In this he recognizes a continuity of thought with what he calls the Empathists of the early twentieth century; as noted above and in this chapter by Currie, the term empathy or *Einfühlung* was first introduced in a wide sense of feeling our way into things, as what Currie calls 'a general means of knowing' (p. 83). Following Herbert Langfeld, a psychologist writing in the 1920s, he develops an idea of inner mimicry or motor imagining in our sensory engagement with objects—a process which Currie argues has an equivalent in the present-day notion of simulative processes, such as are used in our imagining the rotation of objects. Maintaining the connection with the Empathists, Currie goes on to claim that these kinds of simulative processes are involved in our engagement with the aesthetic properties of artworks such as pictures and sculptures as well as in our recognition of the emotions of other people in low-level, basic empathy. More than that, he speculates that bodily simulations are a pervasive feature of our relations to the external world, including ordinary everyday non-sentient things such as trees and telephones, sculptures and buildings. This kind of empathy, Currie says, is not merely a curious by-product of the evolution of social-empathic capacities; it is part of a sane grip on the world.

In his chapter, Currie discusses an issue in the philosophy of mind which we consider to be of the greatest importance. An intuitive temptation is to say that our simulative response to another's emotion is through perception: we *see* or *hear* the other's grief or terror. (And equivalently in the aesthetic case: we *see* the aesthetic emotional properties of the picture.) In other words, simulations of this low-level basic kind are perceptions. Currie resists this temptation. Instead, he says (with the aesthetic case in mind), 'These [simulative] processes provide information which is accessed by the visual system, and which contributes to a visual experience in which various properties of the work, or of that which is represented in it, are made manifest' (p. 90). However, he continues, 'these things are given to me in visual experience itself, as that experience is enriched by its connections with simulative processes; they are not given to me by a combination of vision and a set of distinct, simulation-based perceptual systems' (*ibid.*).

What we think is the important issue here—one which has not yet been fully addressed in the philosophical literature on empathy—is whether basic, low-level empathy with other people, of the kind which is non-conscious in the way discussed by Goldman for example, can at the personal level be thought of as a kind of perception. If, as Currie says, 'things are given to me in visual experience itself', then the fact that the deliverances of the visual system are 'enriched' by simulative connections should not force one to deny that. It might be, then, that the discovery of the marvelous complexities of the operations in the human brain, and in particular of simulative processes involving mirror neurons, should not mislead us to reject our intuitions about what to say about the person and the person's mind: we *see* in the face of the other his grief, his joy, his fear; we *see* that he intends to wipe the table, to pick up the glass, to open the suitcase, to bite the apple.

Empathy and aesthetics

As Gregory Currie's chapter foreshadowed and the first part of this introduction indicated, there is a strong historical link between the concepts of aesthetics and empathy, one which is to be found in the *Verstehen* tradition and in the work of those who Currie calls the Empathists of the early twentieth century. In many respects, this link ought not to be surprising given the role that we have already seen to be occupied by empathy in mindreading. For artworks are, like actions, the product of, and expressive of, people's feelings and intentions. Moreover, empathy can also be involved in our engagement with the characters that are portrayed in representational works of art—for example, in film, literature, and pictures. Not only are these characters the intentional products of the artist; they also have a life of their own, so to speak, which is in many respects just like ours, and which is there to be understood, and, perhaps, empathized with.

The varied, and often vague, everyday use of the term 'empathy' which we have already mentioned in relation to mindreading, is also to be found in aesthetics. In literature and film for example, readers and audiences often say that they empathize

with a character, but when pressed as to exactly what this involves, they will often be unclear precisely what is going on, and precisely what sense of the term they are using.

In this section of the volume, our contributors consider the role of empathy in relation to various art forms: to film, to pictures, to music, and to literature. These discussions throw light on the different kinds of empathy that are involved, so issues of definition are as important here as they were in relation to empathy and the mind. They also reveal just how diverse are the roles of the different kinds of empathy in our engagement with the arts. And finally, a number of the discussions suggest that it would be mistaken to assume that empathy, whether higher- or lower-level, is the only method by which we engage with artworks; in this respect at least it is arguably in line with our engagement with other people in life beyond aesthetics.

Murray Smith, in 'Empathy, Expansionism, and the Extended Mind', considers the role of empathy in representational works of art, and in film in particular. His definition of empathy is as a variety of what we have called higher-level empathy: what Smith calls 'other-focused personal imagining'. It is personal imagining as it is a kind of imagining of what an experience is like from a point of view; and it is other-focused as the imagined point of view is that of another, the target, rather than the imagined point of view of oneself in the target's circumstances. Affective mimicry and emotional contagion—varieties of what we have called lower-level empathy—act, Smith says, 'as prompts to, and props within, fully-fledged imaginative projects' (p. 101), but, as he makes clear, these lower-level, non-conscious processes are excluded from his definition of empathy: empathy, for him, is a 'higher-level type of volitional imagining' (p. 104).

Smith goes on to consider the relationship between empathy thus understood and the concept of the *extended mind*—the idea that many features of human mentality can only be understood by relating the 'naked' power of the mind to the tools of technology, language, and culture. One role for empathy here, Smith suggests, lies in the *coupling* of the empathizers mind with the targets mind—as, for example, when we respond fearfully to the alarmed glance of another. In the other direction, so to speak, empathy can itself be enhanced as a capacity by the extended mind, and in particular by public representations and narratives such as films. Films and film-making can thus be seen, he says, as 'cognitive prostheses', aiding the development of these kinds of imaginative capacities both in their scope and in their intensity.⁸⁰

⁸⁰ We cannot resist here the temptation to mention Freud's prescient description of these and other kinds of prostheses in his 'Civilization and its Discontents': 'With every tool man is perfecting his own organs, whether motor or sensory, or is removing the limits to their functioning': he mentions motor cars, telephones, telescopes, cameras, etc. He then continues: 'Man has, as it were, become a kind of prosthetic God. When he puts on all his auxiliary organs he is truly magnificent; but those organs have not grown on to him and they still give him much trouble at times. Nevertheless, he is entitled to console himself with the thought that development will not come to an end precisely with the year 1930 A.D. Future ages will bring with them new and probably unimaginably great advances in this field of civilization and will increase man's likeness to God still more. But in the interests of our investigations, we will not forget that present-day man does not feel happy in his Godlike character.' (Penguin Freud Library, volume 12, page 280).

There are important connections between Smith's discussion and the chapter from Dominic McIver Lopes, 'An Empathic Eye', which is concerned with our engagement with pictures. Both Smith and Lopes recognize the value of artworks in the development of empathy. Pictures that evoke empathy are valuable, Lopes says, in part because they can make us better at seeing empathetically. However, it is important to appreciate here that Lopes is working with what is, in one respect, a broader definition of empathy than is Smith (indeed it is broader than most of the definitions in this volume): Lopes takes empathy to include sympathy or concern for another person's suffering, a concern that might be grounded in empathetic imagining of how it is for the other to suffer.⁸¹ He also includes the kinds of emotional sharing and emotional contagion that are involved in lower-level empathy.

Lopes acknowledges that seeing pictures can enhance empathy simply by being able to 'evoke experiences as of the scenes they represent' (p. 119), but what he is seeking here is a distinctively *different* way in which pictures contribute to our empathetic skills, and yet still in a way that 'carries over to life beyond pictures' (p. 119). Solving these two requirements at once—what he calls the *difference problem* and the *carryover problem*—is the task that Lopes sets himself. He solves the difference problem by appealing to the idea that our seeing-in pictures can evoke empathetic responses that our perception of the world beyond pictures does not: for example, we can respond sadly to a brown scene in a picture, or we can recognize the despair in the shipwrecked people portrayed in Géricault's *Raft of The Medusa* because the sea and the ship express malignant indifference to their fate, and despair is appropriate where something more powerful expresses malignant indifference. Like the ship and the sea, generally scenes in pictures can express emotion, just so long as one accepts, as Lopes does, that something can be expressive of emotion without any emotion being felt. To solve the carryover problem, Lopes turns to the phenomenon of social referencing: the child sees fear in the mother's face as she looks at an object that both child and mother can see, and as a result the child responds also with fear. Similarly, if we see fear in an experienced sailor's face as he looks at the oily-flat sea, we realize that fear of the sea is appropriate even though the sea, unlike the sea in the picture, is not expressive of a threat of the oncoming typhoon. Thus both the difference problem and the carryover problems are solved, and Lopes has shown us that pictures are prostheses for empathy just as Smith has for film.

Music too can give rise to emotions: sad music can make listeners feel sad, and happy music can make them happy. Stephen Davies, in 'Infectious Music: Music-Listener Emotional Contagion', provides an account of this which is in clear contrast to the familiar cognitive account of the emotions, according to which an emotion consists of, or depends on, a belief that the object of the emotion in some way warrants that emotion. For example, your belief that your best friend is sad warrants your feeling sad for her. So on a cognitivist account of our emotional responses to music, the music

⁸¹ Recall from the discussion of the psychologist C.D. Batson above that he has a similarly wide definition; see the discussion of Jesse Prinz's chapter below.

would have to be, in fact, sad. And yet, as Davies says, 'those who are saddened by sad music are not sad *about* or *for* the music' (p. 136). In contrast to the cognitive account, Davies argues that our response to music is one of emotional contagion. He points out that emotional contagion is a very common phenomenon: we become cheerful in response to the cheerful décor of the pub or in response to the cheerful laughter of the group at the table in the corner. Note here that in this Introduction we have characterized emotional contagion as a kind of *empathy*, but the emotional contagion that is at issue in the case of the cheerful décor is one where the cause of the emotion is not another person's emotion. So the cheerful décor of the pub is the better analogy with cheerful music than is the cheerful laughter of the people in the pub. In his account, accordingly, Davies provides a definition of emotional contagion which is indifferent to the cause of the emotional state.

Davies distinguishes between two kinds of music-based emotional contagion: those occasions where we respond to 'elevator music' without being aware of the music (although of course we hear it); and those occasions where the music is the object of our attention, even though (in contrast to the cognitivist view) our emotional response is not about the music. Davies goes on to address and respond to alternative accounts of our emotional responses to music, and in particular the account of Jenefer Robinson, who also holds that our response to music can be explained by emotional contagion, but who differs from Davies in certain important respects.

The next three chapters in this section are all concerned with our empathetic engagement with literature and with literary characters. In her chapter, 'Empathizing as Simulating', Susan Feagin sets out a simulationist account of what it is to empathize with characters in literary works of art. Feagin's account of what simulation consists in is quite strict in the following respect (it is stricter than that of, for example, Goldman): for a process to simulate another process, it is necessary for it to be 'structurally similar, in relevant respects, to the process simulated' (p. 149). So it is not enough for simulation of another's mental state that one's own state ends up the same as that of the target: the process itself has to match that of the target too. Thus simulation is a process, and simulating a mental process of the person with whom one empathizes is a necessary condition of empathizing with them.

Feagin then goes on to consider simulation as a necessary condition for appreciation of, and empathy with, literary characters. Here she particularly focuses on the importance of literary devices, such as style and the use of punctuation, or the way in which the story is narrated, in enabling us to empathize with literary characters, including in particular empathizing with the phenomenology of those characters' desires and desire-like states. In this sense at least, simulation with literary characters is easier than simulation with real life people, 'since literature is written for those who would appreciate it—something not to be assumed of the 'narratives' that people create as we live our lives' (p. 161). As Feagin argues, the importance of literary devices in our

engagement with literature tends to be neglected by those accounts that involve our simulation of a hypothetical reader of fact (see for example Currie (1997)).⁸²

Noël Carroll, in 'On Some Affective Relationships between Audiences and the Characters in Popular Fiction', considers the various ways in which we can be engaged emotionally with the emotional states of fictional characters—especially the protagonists in popular fictions. He chooses to avoid using the term 'empathy', preferring to work with a wide notion of emotional engagement, involving 'cases where the emotional states of audience members converge, are congruent with, or otherwise resonate appropriately with what we are given to imagine are the emotions of fictional characters' (p. 163). This has some similarity to the notion of empathy that Lopes works with in his chapter, for Carroll, like Lopes, includes in the notion of 'appropriately resonating' with a fictional character what is effectively sympathizing with that character. But Carroll's aim is not to put forward any kind of definition, or to regiment our theorizing in any particular direction. On the contrary, his aim is to set out the variety of ways in which we can and do respond to the fates of fictional characters. These include: identification, including what we have called higher-level empathy; coincident emotional states; vectorially converging emotive states; sympathy, involving care and concern for another; solidarity; and mirror reflexes, of the kind we have been discussing above under lower-level empathy. Carroll concludes that 'there is no single affective relationship that describes the one and only connection between readers, listeners, and/or viewers on the one hand, and fictional characters, on the other hand' (p. 180). If this is correct, then we again have reason to question accounts of our emotional engagement with literature that are exclusively based on simulation, or in putting ourselves in the shoes of someone—whether of the protagonist, or of the hypothetical reader of fact, or of the implied author.

Graham McFee's 'Empathy: Interpersonal vs. Artistic?', a chapter strongly influenced by the work of Ludwig Wittgenstein, puts empathy in aesthetics and empathy in interpersonal relations side by side as 'objects of comparison'. With interpersonal empathy understood, roughly, as taking on in imagination the perspective and experiences of another, McFee asks what is 'carried over' to our empathizing with a character in literature. Successful interpersonal empathy involves, McFee says, a matching of one's psychological states with those of the target; success here can come in degrees—the match can be more or less precise. At this point he questions the role of empirical research in determining quite what 'success' might be in an individual interpersonal case—and further, whether empirical research has any grip at all when it is concerned with our empathetic engagement with characters in literature. McFee then considers the difficulties facing a modern male in empathizing with a Victorian woman, or with a South American gangsterista, many of whose values he does not share. Emphasizing the special importance of 'understanding' in the literary case, in the end McFee

⁸² James Wood's discussion of free indirect style in his *How Fiction Works* (2008) is very illuminating in this regard.

expresses doubt about whether 'we can import "insight" from empathy in the interpersonal case to the empathetic reading of literature' (p. 208).

Empathy and morality

In morality, and elsewhere as we have seen, we make a very straightforward distinction between, for example, feeling the suffering of another person, and feeling *for* that person's suffering, and this distinction is one that is often (if not always—see for example Lopes above) made in terms of calling the first empathy and the second sympathy. However, the waters are considerably muddied by David Hume, who, as we previously mentioned, used the term 'sympathy' for (more or less) empathy, and 'benevolence' for (more or less) sympathy, and also by the fact that, as we have seen, many psychologists and philosophers define empathy in a way that includes pro-social motivation. In this section, however, we will restrict the term 'empathy' to a kind of 'matching' of another's psychological states, where that matching does not arise through emotional sharing (see Coplan's chapter for discussion).⁸³

On this definition of empathy, it would seem that empathy is not sufficient for morality. For one could feel another's suffering and yet, like the empathetic torturer, use that sensitivity to further increase the suffering of the other person rather than to mitigate it. What is missing in this empathetic torturer is the appropriate moral motivation. Whereas sympathy, at least on most accounts, does involve the appropriate moral motivation.⁸⁴ This is not to say, of course, that, on this understanding of sympathy, the sympathetic person will necessarily act according to his feelings of sympathy: his motivation to help the other might be outweighed on a particular occasion by other considerations, such as concern for his own welfare. For example, at the airline check-in desk one might feel sympathy for one's fellow-traveler who is told that the plane is full, but still not give up one's own seat because of one's concern to get home that evening. On the strength of this example, then, it might seem that sympathy is not sufficient for morality either. But this is not a question that we will address here, except to note that there are many accounts of morality according to which neither empathy nor sympathy, nor the two together, are sufficient for morality.

Jesse Prinz's chapter asks this question: 'Is Empathy Necessary for Morality?'. Like us in this respect, Prinz avoids those definitions of empathy which include what we intuitively think of as concern for another: for example, C. D. Batson's definition of empathy as 'an other-oriented emotional response congruent with the perceived welfare of another person' (Batson, Turk et al. (1995): 300), and this seems to include empathetic concern, or concern based on empathy.⁸⁵ He also avoids those definitions

⁸³ A further issue also muddies the water. Sometimes we empathize with a target where that target does not himself feel the emotion. For example, we feel fear as the little princes innocently and unknowingly go to their place of execution. Jesse Prinz discusses this too in his chapter.

⁸⁴ See, e.g. Eisenberg & Strayer (1987), Wispé (1986, 1987, 1991), and Eisenberg (2000).

⁸⁵ For further discussion, see Slote (2007, 2010).

that involve feeling as the other *ought* to feel, for this, Prinz says, again gets us too close to sympathetic concern. The central notion of empathy that Prinz works with is of 'a kind of vicarious emotion: it's feeling what one takes another person to be feeling' (p. 213).

Prinz argues that there is little evidence for the claim that empathy, thus understood, is necessary for morality: not for moral judgment, for moral development, or for moral conduct. So far as moral judgment is concerned, he points out that many such judgments are not directly concerned with people, and here empathy has no place. Moreover, other emotions, without empathy, are sufficient for moral judgment. Turning to moral development, some recent work on psychopathology purports to show the necessity of empathy for moral competence, but Prinz challenges this account on a number of points. One such point is that it is possible that psychopaths have some third deficit which causes both a deficit in empathy and in moral competence: in particular, Prinz suggests, they lack depth in their moral emotions, which fact would also lend support to his positive claims about the source of morality in our moral sentiments—our dispositions to have moral emotions such as anger, disgust, guilt, and shame. On the role of empathy in moral motivation and moral conduct, Prinz argues instead that the source of motivation is to be found in the moral emotions; and he also claims that there is little evidence of any strong positive correlation between empathy and pro-social motivation. Finally, Prinz discusses whether moral systems that promote empathy should be encouraged, and again he expresses doubts for a variety of reasons, including empathy's fragility and biases, concluding that, 'in the moral domain, we should regard empathy with caution' (p. 229).

The authors of the next two chapters take a more positive line towards the role of empathy in particular aspects of morality. In 'Empathy, Justice, and the Law', Martin L. Hoffman argues for the importance of empathy in justice and the law—places where the traditional view is that empathy is out of place. Hoffman works with a notion of empathy and of empathetic distress which is broader than that of Prinz, in three important respects: his notion of empathy includes a pro-social sympathetic element ('feeling *for* as well as *with* the victim' (p. 235)); it involves a notion of distress towards, for example, non-psychological states such as being poor, and also towards the distress of a group; and his notion of empathy includes empathic anger, which Prinz would treat as a moral sentiment rather than as a part of empathy.

Whilst Hoffman accepts the fragility and biases involved in empathy, he argues that these can be corrected for through deliberation. He then goes on to consider the role of empathy in a number of Supreme Court decisions, including the famous *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Roe v. Wade*, and the empathetic work of individuals to help change the law which benefited distressed groups: Lyndon B. Johnson, Harriet Beecher Stowe, Ivan Turgenev, Robert Kennedy, and Yale Kamisar. In *Roe v. Wade*, concerning the right of women to have an abortion, Hoffman notes an important feature of empathy: it can give rise to conflicting empathetic concern, in this case both for the pregnant women and for what the anti-abortion lawyers called 'unborn

children'. This feature alone shows that empathy can in no way be sufficient for reaching judgments in the law as there has to be some principle to decide which empathetic concern should carry the greater weight. Moreover, the degree of empathetic concern cannot be the deciding factor, for there remains the worry of empathetic biases, to which Hoffman returns towards the end of his chapter, including the potential bias from heart-rending victim-impact statements. But these observations do not imply that one should return to the traditional view of the role of empathy in the law—the view that 'the law and its underlying justice principles are, and should be, cleansed of emotion so that reason and logic can prevail' (p. 230).

E. Ann Kaplan, in 'Empathy and Trauma Culture: Imaging Catastrophe', drawing on examples such as the war in Iraq, the Holocaust, and Hurricane Katrina, considers the role of empathy in our responses to images of catastrophe and individual trauma on TV and other media. As Kaplan notes, in the West today 'we are surrounded by spectacles of individual suffering'. She sets out to show that empathy comes in various forms—she picks out three—and the kind of empathetic response that we have to trauma depends (amongst other things) on the form of the image and its context. The first form of empathy is what she calls the 'vicarious trauma response', where the pro-social motivation that empathy involves (agreeing with Hoffman here) is blocked off by the viewer's empathic overreaction to the image portrayed. The second form, 'empty empathy', arises where not only pro-social motivation is lacking but also where fleeting, transitory empathetic feelings become diminished through exposure to successive images of terrible suffering, to be replaced by a kind of bland sentimentality.

The third form of empathetic response discussed by Kaplan is 'witnessing' through images—what she calls 'ethical witnessing'. Witnessing through images necessarily involves a degree of distance, but Kaplan's concern is the potentially positive effect of being at a distance. Especially where individual suffering is focused on in the images, as was the case with many images of the Iraq war, feelings of hopelessness arise, easily leading to empty empathy. In contrast, she says, are the images from Katrina, which were less controlled by the government, and which included pictures of group suffering, often set against a background which revealed the catastrophic situation. These images 'generated more complex, varied and ethical emotional impact' (p. 270), including group empathy and, as a result, anger and shame at the injustices of the situations which were being witnessed. In this sense, then, 'witnessing leads to a broader empathic understanding of the meaning of what has been done to victims' (p. 275).

The answer to the question that Heather Battaly poses in 'Is Empathy a Virtue?' will depend, she says, on what concepts of empathy and of virtue are in play. She begins by outlining four different concepts of empathy. The first is our ordinary everyday concept of empathy, which Battaly interprets as being 'a process of caring, or sharing, or knowing, or some combination thereof' (p. 279). This is a vague concept, or to use Battaly's useful technical term here, it is 'thin', in just the sense that competent speakers of English can disagree over which combinations of these three conditions—caring, sharing, and knowing—is necessary or sufficient for application of the concept.

Empathy, being a thin concept, can be thickened in various ways, and Battaly goes on to consider three theoretically driven ways of thickening the thin everyday concept. The first such thickening is the concept of empathy as 'sharing by multiple means', where what is shared is not only affective states but mental states in general, and multiple means incorporates both higher- and lower-level empathy. Although caring could arise as a causal outcome of sharing, neither caring for the other's suffering nor knowing the other's suffering is part of the concept itself. The second thickening is empathy as sharing and knowing the other's mental states, which again does not require caring. And finally, there is empathy as knowing.

Battaly shows that these three recent theoretically developed concepts of empathy in philosophy and psychology imply that empathy is neither a moral nor an intellectual virtue, nor is it sufficient for virtue, which is, according to Battaly's Aristotelian account, a disposition of character that aims at the good. In contrast, according to the pre-theoretical everyday concept as interpreted by Battaly, empathy is a virtue. She concludes that the fact that the theoretical concepts of empathy conflict with our ordinary concept over whether empathy is a virtue does not by itself constitute sufficient grounds for rejecting them.

The last two chapters are concerned with higher-level empathy or perspective-shifting, and the difficulties that can arise in shifting our perspective in the right way onto the thoughts and feelings of another person. Peter Goldie, in 'Anti-Empathy', puts to one side in-his-shoes perspective-shifting, which involves imagining yourself in the other's circumstances, and focuses specifically on what he calls empathetic perspective-shifting, which involves imagining being the other in the other's circumstances. These are often treated as equivalent, and they will deliver up the same outcome in what Goldie calls 'base cases'. Base cases are of this kind: where the empathizer has the same psychological dispositions (including character and personality) as the target; where there are no non-rational influences on the target's thinking; where the target is not confused about his state of mind; and where the target is not psychologically conflicted in his deliberations.

When we turn to empathetic perspective-shifting beyond the base case, difficulties arise. This is not because of limitations in our imaginative powers, but for deeper, conceptual reasons. Drawing on the work of Richard Moran, Goldie argues that the deliberative, practical stance that we take in practical reason, when part of a full-blooded notion of agency, is radically first-personal. When we attempt empathetic perspective-shifting beyond the base case, it is impossible to take on in imagination the appropriately full-blooded notion of first-personal agency that is involved in deliberation, whereas in the base case all that is necessary is that the empathizer and the target share rational agency in a thin sense. To attempt to empathize with the target in this way is to attempt to usurp the target's full-blooded essentially first-personal agency, replacing it with one's own.

Adam Morton, in 'Empathy for the Devil', considers how morality can be a barrier to empathy. In particular, our sense of decency limits our capacity to empathize with

those who perform atrocious acts; they become alien to us, and we are unable to imagine how we—or anyone—could possibly do such things. In such cases, Morton says, ‘We can describe the motives, and we can often even imagine some of what it might have been like to do the acts, but there are deep obstacles to the kind of sympathetic identification required for empathy’ (p. 321). Morton argues that we can find ways around these barriers to empathizing with evil actions, for (unlike Goldie in his chapter) Morton sees the barriers as related to the limits of our imaginative powers. He illustrates this by analogy with something outside empathy: how one can use certain techniques to overcome attitudes of one’s own through, for example, re-conceptualizing the object of one’s disgust, or through using a physiologically aroused state to overcome one’s timidity. In respect of empathy, one technique for overcoming the barriers is to imagine doing a venial act rather than an evil one, or perhaps to remember something venial that one had done in the past, and the emotions that had led to that action; for there are psychological continuities between these more innocuous actions and the horrifying ones which one finds puzzling or repulsive. Morton here emphasizes that empathetic understanding, as contrasted with ‘pseudo-empathy’ requires ‘a grasp of how, rather than why, a person could do what they did’ (p. 329); we need to represent ‘the person’s actual psychology rather than a convenient metaphorical description’ (p. 329). In conclusion, he leaves us with a nice dilemma. On the one hand, we want empathy with evil-doers to be as easy as possible, exploiting the psychological continuities that Morton discusses. And on the other hand, we want to ‘keep a distance between us and those we despise’ (p. 330).

Conclusion

What the individual chapters in this volume reveal is just how important it is, in a wide range of fields of enquiry, to bring to bear an understanding of the role of empathy in its various guises. There remains much more work to be done, but we hope that this volume will make a helpful and lasting contribution to the continuing debate, in philosophy, in psychology, and elsewhere.

We would like to express our thanks to the individual contributors for their efforts, and to Peter Momtchiloff and his colleagues at Oxford University Press for their support throughout the production process. The idea for this volume first emerged at a conference on empathy at California State University-Fullerton on June 22–23, 2006, at which a number of the chapters in this volume were first presented, and we would like to thank California State University (including Thomas Klammer, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Department of Philosophy, the Office of Academic Affairs, the Department of Psychology, the Honors Program, the Department of Radio, TV & Film, and the Women’s Studies Program), the American Society for Aesthetics, the British Society of Aesthetics, and Shirley Coplan for their support in making that conference possible.