

EXPERIENCES OF 'EMPATHY'

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ABSTRACT

The meaning and experience of 'empathy' was investigated for this thesis. A mixed approach was utilized, with a strong qualitative accent. There was evidence of an 'intuitive' social understanding which appears to be theoretically and experientially distinct from the two prevailing models of empathic understandings (intellectual, or explicit simulation theories; and sympathetic, or implicit simulation theories). Phenomenological views on intersubjectivity were the principal interpretative framework.

The *first Chapter* reviews two main theoretical meanings of empathy: empathy-as-knowing, or understanding someone's experience (empathy), and empathy-as-responding to someone's experience (sympathy).

The *second Chapter* describes the study of the folk psychology stories and definitions of 'empathy'; and their resemblance to the various theoretical meanings.

The *third Chapter* summarizes Edith Stein's phenomenological views about empathy-as-knowing; and compares these views with more contemporary approaches.

The *fourth Chapter* describes the study of the essential qualities of the experiences of 'insight into' the experiences of another (resonance), alongside experiences of feeling understood by another (reception). Social understandings happened by thinking, listening, perceiving and experiencing.

The *fifth Chapter* describes the study where pairs of participants were invited to share their stories of a prior happy experience with each other, and then to scrutinize their recent interpersonal understandings during joint 'cued-recall' interviews. There were intuitive, sympathetic and imaginative social understandings.

The *sixth Chapter* is an overview of the overall findings associated with sympathetic, intellectual, and intuitive understandings.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

E.g.: For example

Cf.: Conferred to

I.e.: That is

IRI: Interpersonal Reactivity Index

QCA: Qualitative Content Analysis

IPA: Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

DPA: Moustakas' (1994) Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis

OVERVIEW

*Back and forth
and to each thing asking
its name¹*

I became interested in empathy as a research object partly due to my prior psychotherapeutic and clinical experience (I trained in a humanistic and objects relations psychodynamic background). This was (one) starting point of the journey I am about to narrate.

I am influenced by what I have retained from these areas. For instance, in these approaches it is the other who matters, rather than what I might *personally* think or feel about the other's situation of life. The core of therapeutic attention focuses on the other person; and on the way that other experiences, and gives meaning to the world - the therapist being a tool to facilitate the clients' self-insight. From this beginning, I was therefore concerned with understanding others' experience.

For Carl Rogers, 'father' of humanistic psychotherapy, the way that people presently experience their world - that is, peoples' lived experiences or phenomenology - was the centre of reasoning and practice. On the other hand, for Sigmund Freud, 'father' of psychodynamic psychotherapies, the interpretation of these experiences was central. He developed a conceptually consistent interpretation system to be applied to give meaning to every single lived experience. Consequently, at the

¹ Freely translated from Sofia de Mello Breyner Andersen's (2005) original: "*Ía e vinha/ E a cada coisa perguntava/ Que nome tinha*".

outset, the two aspects of empathy which mattered to me were relative to these two levels of analysis: the experiential and the conceptual.

Psychodynamic and humanistic approaches share the view that empathy is a form of understanding others. This was my starting point. I aimed to study the *experience* of understanding other people's experiences, the associated psychological mechanisms as these were experienced at this level, and how these resonated with available contemporary empathy models. The framework which most satisfactorily answered my queries and resonated with this background was phenomenological. It is from this standpoint that I have attempted a dialogue across psychology areas (social, clinical, cognitive, developmental, and phenomenological).

It is critical to start an investigation by defining the research object with rigour; understanding that which has been said about it, and this should be a collaborative process. When arriving at this area of research, with my own ideas about the nature of empathy, I had the impression that everyone was standing in the middle of the 'empathy' room shouting at different corners – myself among them. That is, everyone was talking and no-one quite talking about the same thing, let alone talking to each other.

This is partly because the term empathy is used in a variety of contexts and has been explicated by means of disparate constructs and mechanisms, even when restricting ourselves to the psychological domain. This obliged me to make a slight detour from my initial goal. Despite the complexity of the task, and this conceptually-chaotic state of affairs, I felt the necessity of addressing this matter directly. I thus

begin this thesis by carefully reviewing these ‘shouts’ about the nature of empathy, as they appear in literature (*Chapter I*) and in Folk Psychology (*Chapter II*). I hope to provide readers with a guide which will permit them to follow what will be pursued here - even if the reader might begin from a different corner to me.

This is the spirit of the two first chapters of this thesis; I have asked of ‘each thing its name’. This means that the thesis begins with the possibility of multiple ‘empathies’ (there are, of course, corners which I have not explored).

After Chapter II, I narrow down the focus to examine the phenomenon which appealed to me the most, perhaps for being closer to my original interest (empathic interpersonal understandings). In Psychology, social understandings are usually explicated via mechanisms such as perspective-taking and empathic accuracy (‘intellectual’ understandings; e.g., explicit simulation processes); or via mechanisms such as contagion and identification, understood to be associated with additional implicit simulation or projective mechanisms (‘sympathetic’ understandings, e.g., implicit simulation theories).

Chapter III is dedicated to the exploration of Edith Stein’s phenomenological description of a particular form of understanding that, in the light of the lived experience, is not properly explained by any of the two prevailing models above. For Stein, empathy is a way of knowing, *directly* and *intuitively*, what someone is experiencing in a particular moment. This view of empathy is reasonably consensual in the field of phenomenology; though certainly not consensual in psychology. Thus, the

contentions thereby raised between hers and alternative contemporary explications for empathic understandings are also explored for this chapter.

Following this, there are two further empirical studies which aim to investigate this particular phenomenon: through written accounts, and the description of its essential experiential qualities and processes (*Chapter IV*); and through joint 'cued recall' interviews (Interpersonal Process Recall), and the description of its experiential qualities and processes (*Chapter V*). The locus of attention is always upon the *experience* of empathy, its prereflective and reflective qualities. These studies yielded that there was an alternative form of social understandings, lived and described as a non-mediated, instant, intuitive, sensory, perceptive and/or experiential understanding, that was consistent with phenomenological (e.g., Stein) and humanistic (e.g., Rogers) models of empathy. This form of understanding is proposed here as new conceptual and experiential category for social understandings.

Chapter VI reviews these findings, by proposing that 'sympathy' could be the actual focus of many researchers claiming to be examining 'empathy' – certainly of those who are interested in the way that people respond to another's experience by experiencing, say, pity. 'Empathy' would then exclusively refer to an interpersonal understanding, in (at least) either of its intuitive, intellectual or sympathetic forms.

In conclusion, although you might start from a different corner of the big room called empathy, I wish to share with you the journey that allowed me to uncover a particular understudied form of social understandings (intuitive) – so that you may comprehend the significance of these findings.

CHAPTER ONE

THEORETICAL MEANINGS OF EMPATHY:

AN INTRODUCTION

CHAPTER I

The aim of this chapter is to show how, in psychology, empathy is an umbrella term that has multiple distinctive and even opposing meanings.

Introduction

This chapter shows how empathy assumes many meanings, within and beyond the field of psychology, some of which are perhaps irreconcilable. This is a common, but unresolved, observation in many psychology domains (cognitive, developmental, social, psychotherapeutic, and phenomenological). It sometimes requires the adoption of particular empathy research strategies. These strategies, and those meanings of empathy which are of relevance for the present thesis, are reviewed here.

A big drawer called empathy

Empathy is understood in very dissimilar manners across fields of research, and even within the same field, namely, psychology. During the last two decades of research into empathy, this observation is a common experience (Batson, 2009; Churchill & Bayne, 1998; Davis, C.M., 1990; Davis, M.H. 2009; Duan & Hill, 1996; Eisenberg & Eggum, 2009; Gladstein, 1983; Preston & Waal, 2002; Reik, 1948/ 1971; Waldinger, Hauser, Schulz, Allen & Crowell, 2004; White, 1997; Zepf & Hartmann, 2008). For any committed researcher, this is probably the first impression – that one’s understanding of the nature of ‘empathy’ is one among many.

This divergence in the meanings of empathy is not a superficial one. As Batson (2009, p.3) realizes, *“the term empathy is currently applied to more than a half-dozen phenomena (...) each conceptually distinct, stand-alone psychological state. Further, each of these states has been called by names other than empathy”*. Then, to complicate the

picture, each of these diverse concepts and psychological states has been called other things.

Therefore, empathy seems to be an umbrella term, used, in an extensive body of publications, to designate all sorts of experiences. Empathy is a big drawer that stores all sorts of objects, and as such, a cause of controversies and conceptual chaos. The quotes included in Figure 1 illustrate how some of these meanings of 'empathy' can appear to be irreconcilable.

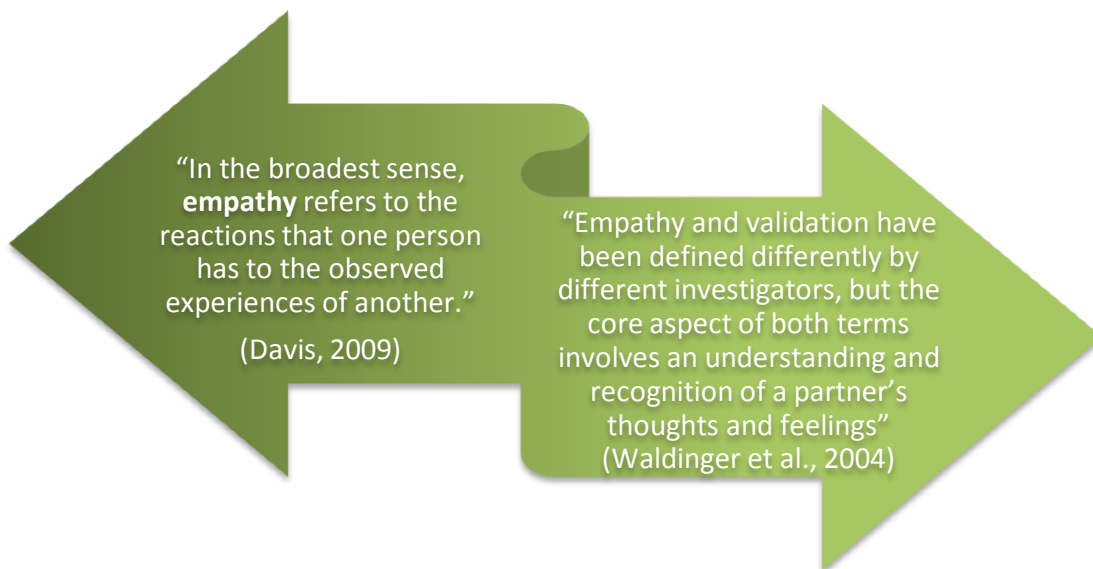


Figure 1: “Example of contrasting psychology views about the meaning of empathy”

To the left of the arrow, there is Mark Davis’ (2009) stake, as published in a psychology encyclopaedia. Despite recognizing that there are common “*disagreements over the ‘proper’ definition of empathy*”, in his view, these disagreements can be solved

by realizing that “*underlying all of these definitional approaches is one core assumption: that empathy in some way involves the transformation of the observed experiences of another person into a response within the self*”. Davis’ conclusion is that all these constructs refer to ways of responding to someone else’s observed experience; for example, pitying another’s visible distress.

To the right of the arrow, there is Waldinger et al.’s (2004, p.60) conclusion. Although Waldinger et al.’s starting point is also the acknowledgement of empathy’s multiplicity of meanings, they conclude that the underlying connective link to current meanings of empathy is the assumption that empathy is a way of knowing, or understanding, that which another person is experiencing; for example, imagining that another perhaps missed the bus.

These two conclusions would only be reconcilable if knowing someone’s experience was the same as a responding to that experience. Although, in some circumstances this is precisely the case, knowing (e.g. imagining that someone missed the bus) and responding (e.g. pity) may be utterly distinctive experiences. Indeed, knowing and responding to someone’s experience are commonly conceived of as distinctive phenomena, with the implication that the two conclusions in Figure 1 are irreconcilable.

It is by asserting this knowing-responding difference that Max Scheler (1913/ 1979, p.8) begins his dissertation on the phenomenon of sympathy:

Any kind of rejoicing or pity *presupposes*, in principle, some sort of *knowledge* of the fact, nature and quality of experience in other people (...). It is not *through* pity in the first place that I learn of someone being in pain,

for the latter must already be given, in some form, if I am to notice and then share it. One may look at the face of a yelling child as a merely physical object, and one may look at it (in the normal way) as an expression of pain, hunger, etc., though without therefore pitying the child; the two things are utterly different. Thus experiences of pity and fellow-feeling are always additional to an experience in the other which is already grasped and understood.

For Scheler, on the one hand, there is one's knowledge of another's experience of pain; and, on the other, there is a personal response to that experience of pain (e.g. pity). This clarifies that these are two possible-to-distinguish, perhaps independent, phenomena. One may know about another's peril without *necessarily* responding to that distressing situation with a feeling of pity (or any other kind of responsive psychological state). Secondly, by definition, a response is a response to a stimulus. In the case of empathy, the 'empathic' response is generally² assumed to be provoked by some sort of 'empathic' knowledge of another's experience - which acts as the stimulus. In this case, knowing and responding are associated in a cause-effect manner; are distinguishable phenomena; and both are sometimes called 'empathy'.

Consequently, neither of the conclusions included in Figure 1 is independently true to the picture of contemporary psychology research on empathy. Rather, responding to someone's experience is one side of the coin, and knowing someone's

² For Scheler (1913, p.12), the only situations during which a knowing act does not precede the subject's response are extreme or "*pure*" cases of emotional contamination, an experience characterized by a "*complete lack of mutual 'understanding'*" (p.12), that does not "*presuppose any sort of knowledge of the joy which others feel*" (p.15).

experience is the other. Each of these viewpoints alone cannot be said to be a transversal common characteristic across meanings of empathy.

This distinction between knowing and responding helped Batson (2009) to order the multiplicity of phenomena that are currently called empathy, as well as other things, in psychology. He divided these phenomena into two groups that I here call *empathy-as-knowing*; and *empathy-as-responding*. Within each group there are several meanings of empathy-as-knowing and of empathy-as-responding.

The knowing-responding strategy that is adopted here to deal with the observed multiplicity of empathy's meanings is not the only, nor the most common, strategy offered by academic psychology literature. I therefore first review the main strategies in the following subsections, with the purpose of contextualizing my own approach (knowing-responding).

Discriminate, agglomerate – a matter of strategy

Batson's binomial (two groups) strategy of dealing with the diversity of empathy's meanings is a common strategy in psychological literature. However, the most widespread binomial distinction (Davis, M.H., 1983; Duan & Hill, 1996; Eisenberg & Eggum, 2009; Gladstein, 1983; Goubert, Craig & Buysse, 2009; Hassenstab, Dziobek, Rogers, Wolf & Convit, 2007; Kerem, Fishman & Josselson, 2001; Paal & Bereczkei, 2007) is not in terms of knowing-responding. Rather, it distinguishes between affective

empathy (also called sympathetic, emotional, hot, or automatic); and cognitive empathy (also called intellectual, simulative, cold, and deliberated).

Duan and Hill (1996) noticed that these affective and cognitive labels can refer to a particular quality of the empathizer's experienced *content* (say, personal emotions against personal thoughts); but they can also refer to the underlying *process* (Preston & Waal, 2002); that is, emotional mechanisms as opposed to intellectual mechanisms. Either way, this strategy limits responses to affective phenomena; and understandings to intellectual acts. Moreover, each of *these* two groups (affective and cognitive) contains an array of essentially distinctive empathic phenomena that cannot be seen as equivalent either, and the set of phenomena is seldom the same across approaches.

An example is provided by Mark Davis' (1983); and it is associated with the development of the Interpersonal Reactivity Index (IRI). IRI is a paper-and-pencil empathy assessment, recently found to be one of the few with satisfactory psychometric characteristics (Hemmerdinger, Stoddart & Lilford, 2007). It is composed of the following subscales, or empathic phenomena: Perspective-Taking (assuming another's perspective), Fantasy (projecting into the experience of fictional characters), Empathic Concern (sympathy for someone), and Personal Distress (emotional reactive distress at the sight of another's distress). Davis further considers that these four phenomena can be grouped into the two formerly identified groups: affective (Empathic concern; Personal distress) and cognitive (Perspective-taking; Fantasy) - they are just finer distinctions of distinctive affective and cognitive phenomena. We might even see in this

association an acknowledgement of the responding (Empathic concern; Personal distress) and knowing (Perspective-taking; Fantasy) approach.

Limitations of the discrimination-agglomeration strategy

As with Scheler, Davis (1983) proposes that there is an inaugural perceptive moment (observing the experience of another), during which one becomes acquainted with another's experience (*"empathy in the broadest sense refers to the reactions of one individual to the observed experiences of another"*, p.113). Then, from this inaugural way of knowing may follow any of the responses assessed via the IRI's subscales (empathic concern; personal distress; perspective-taking; and fantasy). Therefore, in Davis' theory, perspective-taking is conceptualized as a response, because it follows the prior knowing gained during the observational act. For instance, seeing an inexplicable gesture performed by another person would provoke in the observer a perspective-taking response, during which one imaginatively considered the motivations behind such gesture. In this sense, perspective-taking can be understood as a response.

This is in contrast with Batson's proposition, for whom perspective-taking is included in the knowing drawer. Since the purpose and/or outcome of perspective-taking is knowing what another's experience may be, it is also justifiable to conceive of it as a way of knowing another's experience, rather than a response. Secondly, for Batson, the seeing of the gesture and the imagination of the reasons behind the gesture are both experiences that are explained through perspective-taking cognitive mechanisms.

Since the 'inaugural' moment of perceiving another's experience is seen as a perspective-taking act, then the knowing act is less naturally conceived of as a response.

In conclusion, perspective-taking is conceptualized as both a *way of knowing* another's experience; and as a *way of responding* to another's experience. Consequently, even the issue of which phenomena should be included in which drawer is not consensual.

Regardless of these more detail-related disagreements, what these strategies have in common is that they identify several phenomena, while, at the same time, claiming that these are all rightfully called empathy. It is a *discriminate and agglomerate* strategy. It deals with the multiplicity by identifying many phenomena called empathy and putting these into distinctive (two or more) conceptual drawers (discrimination side of the strategy), and then asserting that all these phenomena are 'empathy' (agglomeration side of the strategy).

First of all, none of these drawers are a dichotomy. For instance, the logical opposite of knowing is *not* responding - it is rather 'not knowing'. Secondly, what is achieved is merely a slightly more organized chaos. Everyone's opinion is validated, but the disparity is not assertively solved. The chaos is still there to be found. We are still faced with a huge set of phenomena that are called empathy, sometimes related to each other by no other aspect than the name of the group each of them belongs to. Not surprisingly, then, empathy becomes a "*complex*" (Greenberg, Watson, Elliot & Bohart, 2001, p.380) phenomenon. Although I am aware that the purpose of the revised

strategies was probably the opposite, I find this discrimination-agglomeration procedure rather unhelpful.

For instance, what does it really mean to say that someone with autism is not empathic? Or that someone with psychopathy lacks empathic skills? As Jones, Happé, Gilbert, Burnett and Viding (2010) found, the meaning of 'not empathic', associated with each of these diagnoses, is not the same. More precisely, in their paper, people with autism were found to have some difficulty with perspective-taking, whereas those with psychopathy seemed to feel little concern for another person and for themselves. A 'non-empathic-autistic' is someone who has difficulties in imagining another's perspective, whereas a 'non-empathic-psychopath' is someone who doesn't really care. Hence, they conclude that *"the types of 'empathy deficit' characteristic of psychopathic tendencies and ASD [autistic syndrome disorder] are specific to each psychopathology"* (Jones et al., 2010, p. 7). Each deficit denounces a distinctive 'type' of lack of empathy.

Thus, we have observed that the affective and cognitive dimensions are held to have *independence* (one needs not to imagine another's perspective in order to care for another, as their study shows), *low co-variation* (Davis, 1983), or unclear relationship (Duan & Hill, 1996); *differences in meaning, process, and psychological experience* (Batson, 2009); and their *differential association with other variables* such as psychopathological syndromes. Why are these phenomena still called empathy, as if they were one and the same thing? It may be rather that I am unable to see what binds them all together, or that they are indeed different concepts, dealing with different psychological experiences.

For me, this agglomeration hinders the dialogue across theories and associated findings. In some papers, I found that findings relative to different phenomena were juxtaposed in a rather puzzling manner. Take, for instance, the following research hypothesis: *“it is conceivable that highly accurate observers would be characterized as oversensitive, suffering unduly (Shalder & Cialdini, 1988) and having difficulties in delivering effective helping behaviour”* (Goubert et al., 2009, p.156). For these authors, in the light of available literature, it seems plausible that knowing with exactitude another’s experience (from the authors’ viewpoint, via a perspective-taking act) is associated with an inability of helping another person.

In a way, Goubert et al. are saying that only the ‘socially blind’ would do such a (consequently daft) thing as helping another person... Reasoning that there is a ‘plausible’ negative association between perspective-taking and prosocial behaviour is probably a consequence of the agglomeration strategy. Concepts such as emotional distress and perspective-taking are joined under the same umbrella term, an apparent similarity that provokes a non-sensitive or discriminative generalization of findings of one ‘empathic’ phenomenon (distress) to the remainder (perspective-taking).

The one true empathy

A rarer strategy consists of electing a particular meaning of empathy as the genuine meaning of empathy, as is implicit with Preston and Waal (2002). These authors designed a large circle that represents the concept empathy, illustrated in Figure 2.

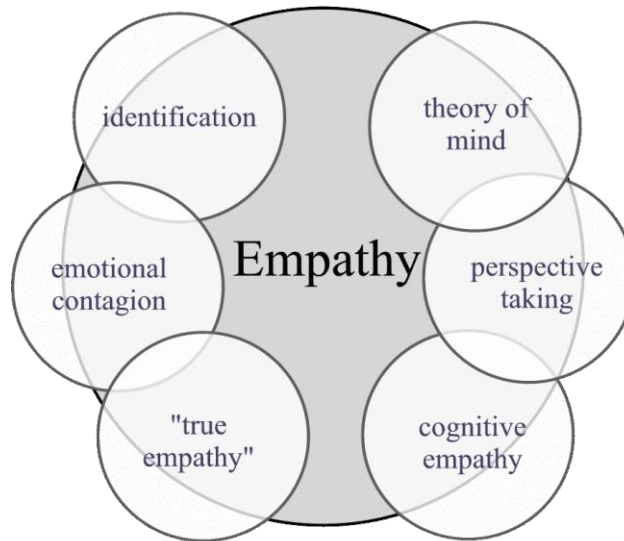


Figure 2: “Preston & Waal’s (2002) empathic phenomena”
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This circle is populated by smaller circles (subclasses), each representing distinct-but-related empathic phenomena (a good example of the differentiating-agglomerating strategy). In it, I notice a separation, down the middle of the circle, putting affective phenomena in the left side; and, in the right side, intellectual phenomena – the most widespread binomial distinction.

One of the identified subclasses goes under the name of “*true empathy*”. It amounts to “*any process where the attended perception of the object’s state generates a state in the subject that is more applicable to the object’s state or situation than to the subject’s own prior state or situation*” (p. 4) – more or less in line with understandings of empathy as a form of responding to another’s experience. As Scheler and Davis emphasize, this is preceded by a perceptive knowledge of that very same experience.

Moreover, their 'true empathy' is placed in the affective side of the circle, and it overlaps with the emotional contagion subclass. This suggests that, for them, the observer's empathic response is affective, at least in terms of process; and it is similar to the phenomenon of emotional contagion. It is not any kind of emotional response. It is, as defined, an emotional state responsive to an observed (and, hence, known) state that matches the state of the observed "*at a representation level*" (p.5). This means that subject and object states are necessarily similar, if not identical. In principle, this similarity is in terms of neural activation, but also, as their presentation continues to argue, in terms of experience as well. To say it differently, the empathizer must feel what the other person is experiencing for the response to be considered an empathic response. One must feel as another is feeling.

In summary, Preston and Waal elevate a very particular kind of responsive emotion to the status of 'empathy', because it is: 1) elicited by a perceptive act; 2) similar to the observed emotion; 3) more 'appropriate' to the target's situation, whatever that might mean; and 4) potentiated by factors such as familiarity, similarity and salience (e.g., p.5).

More important for the present argument, is that, through the given label, and their argument, I have the impression that phenomena which do not fit these criteria should not be called empathy – including the remainder of identified subclasses. These authors acknowledge empathy's multiplicity of meanings, while at the same time defending that there is a one and only authentic empathy. This is a tricky solution, in the sense that those who have been studying the remainder as empathic phenomena might

immediately and instinctively oppose their proposition (their paper is followed by 29 pages of open peer commentary raising issues about their theory). Secondly, it is not the name given to a phenomenon that is the centre piece of their study, but the phenomenon itself. Whether it is the one which should deserve the name empathy is a detail the investigation and theory in question. 'True', or 'untrue', Preston & Waal know precisely what they are studying, and this is what is important.

But in terms of a strategy for dealing with the current state of affairs, electing it as the authentic meaning of empathy is quite a controversial strategy; and one which does not facilitate constructive dialogue between empathy researchers. In this thesis, I have refrained from nominating my one and only true empathy. I am not arguing that it is only my corner that deserves the name empathy. What matters to me is calling attention to an understudied research object. What matters to me is an essence, a particular phenomenon - not its name. However, for communication purposes, as in a thesis, these names become fundamental.

Thus, instead of adopting the term 'empathy' to designate these (too) many different things, I have attempted to deal with this multiplicity in a very objective manner. I will employ exclusive terms or nouns for each of these 'empathic' phenomena throughout these pages, none of which are elected as the one true empathy. For instance, perspective-taking is to be called perspective-taking, never empathy. In a way, this means that the word empathy *per se* will tend to become obliterated, or, better, ever increasingly more transparent and rare – quite an unexpected twist for a thesis on empathy.

Meanings of Empathy

This section examines those *theoretical*³ meanings of empathy that are relevant for the present thesis (Figure 3). Batson’s listing of meanings of empathy-as-knowing is the starting point, from which follow a few additional meanings of empathy-as-knowing that are absent from his listing. Finally, empathy-as-responding phenomena are discussed, though following less closely in Batson’s footsteps.

Meanings of Empathy	Empathy-as-Knowing: Batson's (2009) meanings	Perspective-taking
		Inference from behaviour
		Inference from felt-feeling
	Empathy-as-Knowing: Additional meanings	Analogy
		Understanding
		Direct Empathy
	Empathy-as-Responding phenomena	Pity
		Sympathetic Joy
		Emotional distress
Sympathetic concern		
Identification		
Contagion		
	Imitation	

Figure 3: “Examples of empathy-as-knowing and empathy-as-responding phenomena”

³ ‘Theoretical’ simply because they are proposed by empathy researchers.

Batson's Meanings of Empathy-as-Knowing

Batson's meanings of empathy-as-knowing are restricted to those proposed by simulation theories. These theories claim that we are able to know what another person might be experiencing by means of an implicit or explicit simulation process. That is, understanding occurs via the imaginative act of 'simulating' someone else's experience and attributing to another person this imagined experience, via an act that can be said to be 'imaginative', 'simulative', or 'inferential' (Gallagher, 2007; Zahavi, 2008a,b; 2007; 2001). In brief, it can be said to be an *intellectual* act; and exclusively subjective, performed by the empathizer.

By restricting one's ability to know other people's experiences to an intellectual act, Batson is simultaneously addressing two questions: the *what* (knowing another's experience); and the *how* (imaginative act). For him, there is no knowledge about another's experience that is not intellectual, imaginative or logical (inferred/ deduced), and a by-product of a simulation process. This is Batson's underlying assumption.

This is my reading of his exposition. As a consequence of it, I can synthesize his six empathy-as-intellectually-knowing concepts into two main groups: *inference from felt-feeling* (implicit simulation theories); and *perspective-taking* and *inference from behaviour* (explicit simulation theories). These are Batson's main meanings of empathy-as-knowing, which are explored in more depth in the following sections.

Explicit simulation theories: Perspective-Taking

This phenomenon is commonly called cognitive empathy, mind reading, perspective-taking, or role-taking (Arriaga & Rusbult, 1998; Baron-Cohen, Wheelwright, Hill, Raste & Plumb, 2001; Batson, 2009; Decety & Jackson, 2006; Duan & Hill, 1996; Kerem et al., 2001; Lobchuk, 2006; Preston & Waal, 2002; Gladstein, 1983; Paal & Bereczkei, 2007). It consists of “*intellectually taking the role or perspective of another person*” (Gladstein, 1983, p.468).

It is explained by Batson (2009) as a higher-order reasoning about available information or “*cues*” (Batson, 2009, p.4) related to the other’s experience or situation, such as “*what she says and does and your knowledge of her character, values, and desires*” (Batson, 2009, p.7). These cues are used to simulate, conjecture, and/or predict another person’s experiences. One formulates a ‘theory of mind’ (hence, explicit simulation) that might correspond to the other’s experience.

Therefore, perspective-taking can be said to be an intellectual act, mediated by a (hopefully logical) reasoning process. One has to reason about available information in order to know another person’s experience. This view of empathy-as-knowing corresponds to the conception put forward by *explicit simulation theories* (e.g., Gallagher, 2007; Zahavi, 2008b).

Batson further distinguishes between two types of perspective-taking: intellectually imagining the world from another’s viewpoint (*imagine-other*); intellectually imagine how one would feel in the other’s situation (*imagine-self*). They

both culminate in the attribution of a conjured state to another person; and represent intellectual imaginative ways of knowing people's experiences. I adopt the distinction between imagine-self and imagine-other, wherever relevant.

To these imaginative experiences, and in line with phenomenology, I added Batson's understanding of the inaugural perceptive moment. This is because Batson argues that first one sees behaviour (cue). This observed behaviour has the value of a symbol that must be intellectually and subsequently infused with meaning. That is, the behaviour and the meaning-making 'reasoned' act mediate people's social understandings. You need both of these acts to know the other's experience. Hence, were it not for the pre-acquired knowledge that one possesses about the meaning of a cue, one would know nothing of another's experience. An example would be seeing someone laugh, and subsequently, and intellectually, reasoning that, since conventionally laughing people are happy, the laughing person is (probably) happy too – and, if one knew not the meaning of a smile, one would not understand that the other was happy in any way.

This is then an intellectual process, here called *inference from behaviour*: one sees the particular (behaviour), and during the subsequent, additional, interpretative act, generalizes its reasoned meaning to an overall experience (another's experience). The particular becomes the general (inference). This amounts to the construct 'empathic accuracy' studied in a few cognitive approaches to empathy (e.g., Batson, 2009; Blair, Herrera & Hess, 1999; Hall & Mast, 2007; Hancock & Ickes, 1996; Hess &

Blairy, 2001). In this area, researchers are interested in studying how people see behaviour-as-cue and intellectually interpret this cue.

Some authors highlight that inference from behaviour should not be conceived as a simplistic act, such as seeing a smile and from it inferring that the smiling person is happy. For instance, Hess and Blairy (2001, p.131) propose that emotional expressivity is an overall behaviour that includes “*facial, vocal, postural, etc.*” displays; and all these aspects “*can be used to draw inferences regarding the presumed emotional state of the sender using a pattern-matching approach*”. Regardless of the complexity and speed of this process, these authors have described it as an inferential intellectual act that culminates, as they so well acknowledge, in the knowing of a “*presumed*” imagined state - one which I will sometimes make reference to through the smile example, for simplicity’s sake.

At a theoretical level, then, the mechanisms of perspective-taking, and inference from behaviour (or empathic accuracy) are both conceptualized as ‘intellectual’ mediated processes; they are explained as the result of a ‘reasoning’, an inference, a ‘higher-order’ decoding process. Hence, they are here used as examples of intellectual ways of knowing other people’s experiences. Note that, for this thesis, this classification is not dependent upon the qualities of this reasoning (slow or quick, complex or simple, deliberated or spontaneous, implicit or explicit, higher-order or lower-order), but of its *necessity*. Intellectual acts may have varying degrees of higher-order processing and speed, but this does not change the process as conceptualized (its underlying explanatory psychological model).

As noted by Scheler, this implicitly implies that the empathizer relates with other people as if they were 'mere physical objects'. The perceiver is consequently obliged to intellectually and subsequently embed the cue with some possible experiential meaning; *"yet mental life can be quite different from observable behaviour; and inferring mental life from behaviour entails recourse to reductive logic, which can never be conclusive"* (Zepf & Hartmann, 2008, p.747). This view also clashes with the phenomenological stance, which proposes that people 'normally' relate to one another directly, that is, one directly sees the behaviour and its meaning; another's happiness; another's expressive (and hence meaningful) behaviour.

In summary, for Batson, perspective-taking, and the perceiving moment, are, in terms of process, given meaning as an intellectual reasoned imaginative process that deals with 'objective' cues so that a hypothetical intellectual knowledge of another's experience can be produced.

Implicit simulation theories: Inference from felt-feeling

The remaining meanings of empathy-as-knowing proposed by Batson (2009) are relative to studies about mimicry and emotional contagion. To imitate another's behaviour, or to be contaminated by another's experience, are first and foremost, usually conceptualized as an individual response to a perceptively known experience. One automatically responds to an observed state by imitating it and/or being contaminated by it.

This responsive side is explored in the appropriate empathy-as-responding subsection. However, since those who theorize about imitation and contagion commonly transform these responses into a simulative way of knowing someone else's experience, this perspective must be explored in this section too.

The most obvious example of how a response is transformed into a way of knowing someone else's experience can be observed in the description of the process put forward by Jabbi, Swart and Keysers (2007, p.1744):

(a) observing the states of others activates representations of similar states in the observer; (b) these activations, which represent a form of simulation of the observed states, are sensed by a network of brain areas that represent bodily states; and (c) the sensed states are interpreted and attributed to the other individual, distinguishing them from the observer's own emotions. (...) The processes of simulating and sensing the simulated state of others, hypothesised earlier (Gallese et al., 2004, Keysers and Gazzola, 2006), would be common to emotional contagion and empathic understanding (for reviews see Critchley, 2005; Adolphs, 2006). Thus only the third process of attribution, that enables an observer to associate his/her own simulated emotional state to that of the observed, differentiates early emotional contagion from more mature empathic understanding.

Firstly, one observes another's behaviour. Secondly, similar representations are activated (that is, one is contaminated). Thirdly, one's mind intellectually decodes these personally active neural networks into an experience. Fourthly, and finally, this experience is interpreted and inferentially attributed to the observed target. That is,

one starts with the particular case of one's personally felt experience; and then generalizes it to the experience of another person. This is why this process is named here *inference from felt-feeling*. One infers from one's experience the experience of another. It would be by means of this linear, sequential, causal process (observation – contamination - interpretation - attribution) that the inference of empathic knowing from felt-feeling would come about. A simple example of this experience could be feeling happy, and ending up realizing that this happiness was, after all, another's happiness – not one's own.

This particular contagion-based and mimicry-based process amounts to an implicit simulation theory (Gallagher, 2007; Zahavi, 2008b), and it is a very common theory in neurocognitive empathy studies⁴ (e.g., Hatfield, Rapson & Le, 2009; Darling & Clarke, 2009; Jabbi et al., 2007; Decety & Jackson, 2006; 2004; Preston & Waal, 2002). Across these implicit simulation models of empathy, it is claimed that an unconscious automatic response becomes, after a sequence of lower-order causally-related processes, the basis of one's knowledge of another person's experience. The usual key processes are: 1) contagion and/or mimicry as the starting point; 2) followed by, or equivalent to, an implicit simulation of another's experience from one's own feeling; and 3) an act of self-other discrimination.

This discrimination, equivalent to Jabbi et al.'s attribution stage, is necessary in these models partly because it is presupposed that, at a given point of the contagion

⁴ Implicit simulation theories, associated here with the social neurosciences psychology field, can also be found, for example, in some psychotherapeutic (Zepf & Hartmann, 2008) and developmental approaches (Gladstein, 1983; Hoffmann, 2000). Nevertheless, this area is the mainstream and within this area, this is the most widespread view on empathy-as-knowing. This justifies the association established in this thesis, although inexact and for simplicity's sake, between implicit simulation theories and neurosciences.

and imitation process, subject and object are merged, fused, or overlapped with each other. Since there is a point where everything gets fused, there has to be a point where everything gets 'defused' once more, for the felt-state to serve as a basis of knowledge of another's experience. Consequently, self-other discrimination mechanisms, or equivalent processes, are a common party to implicit simulation models of empathy, and are thought to "*play a crucial role in maintaining a boundary between self and other*" (Decety & Jackson, 2006, p.57). Thus, implicit simulation theories envisage the overall process as a mediated one.

Implicit simulation can be distinguished from explicit simulation principally because of the information used in these processes: one's affective reaction, for implicit simulation; and available cues, for explicit simulation. Despite this, and as a consequence of the underlying philosophical stance of cognitive approaches, both theories propose that knowing another's experience is the result of a step-wise model that involves 'reasoning' (about one's experience or about available cues). Phenomenology tends to describe these models as 'inferential', not because of the quality of the processing level or the extent of the empathizer's awareness; but because these models explain empathy-as-knowing by seeing 'reasoning' as a *necessary* act.

Beyond Batson's meanings of Empathy-as-Knowing

Analogy and Identification

Identification has been proposed as synonymous with empathy (Davis, C.M., 1990); a level, a pathway, or a constituent of empathy (Gladstein, 1983; Håkansson & Montgomery, 2003; Kerem et al., 2001; Tempel, 2007; Zepf & Hartmann, 2008); a way through which empathy expresses itself (Bachelor, 1988; Boulanger & Lançon, 2006); the result of losing the empathic 'as if' quality (Barrett-Lennard, 1981); and a "*a prerequisite to feeling sympathy and empathy*" (Decety & Chaminade, 2003, p.590). Thus, it has been positively and negatively related with 'empathy', but it is also established as a synonymous, or a 'subcomponent', of empathy - and commonly the affective component of empathy, as with Preston & Waal (Figure 2).

Identification stands for the establishment of an analogy or similarity between two or more elements. In the case of empathy, these elements are the subject and the object; or a particular quality of their situations or experiences. This comparison can happen at a very primordial level of analysis: "*starting from my own mind (...) I infer that the foreign body is probably also linked in a similar manner to a foreign mind*" (Zahavi, 2001, p.151). In this case, analogy is the presupposition that another person's body is probably linked to a mind, as one's own body also is. One inspects one's experience and from it analogically imagines that the other person's experience or

identity is similar to one's own. Identification-as-knowing is an intellectual act, built upon an intellectual comparative act.

At a more psychological level, it involves finding qualities that are 'common' or 'shared' between involved people; and an assumption that the other person is probably feeling as one does or did, in a similar past situation. For example, a person would observe a "*similarity between what the target is experiencing and something the empathizer has experienced in the past*" (Håkansson & Montgomery, 2003, p. 272). This analogy, established in the light of one's past experience and cues relative to the other's experience, is sometimes thought to:

evoke emotions that match the target's situation. For instance, if we have a distressing experience, and later observe someone in a similar situation, cues in the other's situation that remind us of our own past experience may evoke a feeling of distress in us again (Håkansson & Montgomery, 2003, p. 270).

For Håkansson and Montgomery, the observed 'cues' evoke a memory of a past experience with similar elements to the observed one (intellectual comparative act). This reminiscence may involve a reliving of the past experience, and be used to imagine another's probable experience. Analogy is then an *intellectual* way of knowing another's experience. It involves an intellectual comparative (or analogical) act, a similarity assumption.

Analogy is often described in Psychology as a projective way of knowing other people's experience; the seeing of oneself, or of one's experience, in another's 'screen'. As such, identification was said to be the very own antithesis of an empathic

understanding (Stein, 1917; Zahavi, 2001; Zepf & Hartmann, 2008), or responsible for “*cognitive bias*” (Baumeister et al., 1998, p.1090), because it is only revealing of another’s experience indirectly, intellectually, comparatively and projectively, via one’s personal experience.

Some argue that identification is more of an empathy-as-responding phenomenon, close to the concept of contagion; an automatic affective sympathetic response (Gladstein, 1983; Hoffman, 2000; Scheler, 1913) that is similar to that of another person. Then, it also has, at its heart, the establishment of an analogy (the other is feeling like one does). In this particular sense, it has been associated with a feeling of oneness (e.g., Zepf & Hartmann, 2008) and a sense of belonging, inclusiveness, and bond forming (Decety & Chaminade, 2003). A parallel can be drawn between this oneness idea, and the neurocognitive assumption that contagion involves a self-other merging. Moreover, the associated empathy-as-knowing process also resembles implicit simulation theories: one projects/ attributes one’s felt-level affective response onto the other-as-screen; one infers from one’s emotional response the other’s experience. It is then only revealing of another’s experience in an indirect, projective, ‘inferential’, ‘reasoned’ or ‘intellectual’ manner.

As a response or a knowing, it utilizes a very particular source of information (one’s personal experience), and, by being limited to this particular source of information, becomes an intellectual act that can be distinguished from perspective-taking (imagine-other). What matters for analogy and for identification experiences is

what is held in common between people. It has been non-consensually called empathy.

In this thesis, I will prefer the term analogy to designate the knowing side of this experience (*analogy-as-knowing*); and the term identification to designate the responsive side of this experience (*identification-as-responding*).

Understanding

Barrett-Lennard's (1981) "*empathic understanding*" is one of the most fundamental meanings of empathy-as-knowing, for the purpose of this thesis, and one which is still very influential in psychology (Barkham & Shapiro, 1986; Duan & Hill, 1996; Greenberg et al., 2001; Håkansson & Montgomery, 2003; Kerem et al., 2001; Watson & Greenberg, 2009; White, 1997), though principally in the area of psychotherapy.

Although empathy as an understanding of someone's experience is a common conception of empathy (as the Oxford dictionary online indicates), Barrett-Lennard's empathic understanding is more than a mere intellectual reasoned experience, and is distinguished here from explicit simulation theories and their view of empathy-as-knowing. Barrett-Lennard's empathy is not simply 'imagining what another's experience might be' in order to intellectually understand it. On the contrary, it is a very particular kind of interpersonal understanding, typified by his 'Cyclical Interpersonal Model of Empathy'.

This cycle, developed with therapeutic settings in mind, though generalized to daily rapport, involves four stages. These are: 1. Resonance: the empathizer is “*actively attending*” (p.94) to another’s present experience and expressiveness, and “*reads and resonates*” (p.94) with the experiencing target (empathee); 2. Communication: the empathizer “*expresses or shows in some communicative way*” (p.94) that which was understood during resonance; 3. Reception: the empathee attends to the empathizer’s “*response sufficiently at least to form a sense or perception of the extent of*” (p.94) the empathizer’s “*immediate personal understanding*” (p.94); and 4. Feedback: the empathee confirms, or disconfirms, the accuracy of the empathizer’s understanding.

From this model, I offer here a more detailed reflection on the resonance experience (the experience of the subject of empathy) – the one that has been, so far, under scrutiny. Barrett-Lennard (p.92) explains this resonance stage as follows:

Qualitatively it [empathic understanding] is [a] an active process of [ai] desiring to know [b] the full present and changing awareness of another person, of reaching out to receive [bi] his communication and meaning, and [c] of translating his words and signs into experienced meaning that [ci] matches at least those aspects of his awareness that are most important to him at the moment, [d] 'It [the synthesis of a through c] is an experiencing of the consciousness ‘behind’ another's outward communication, but [e] with continuous awareness that this consciousness is originating and proceeding in the other.

Above, Barrett-Lennard defines resonance as a moment-to-moment deliberate ‘desire to know’ another person’s present experience. In itself, this here-and-now

moment-to-moment understanding is an experience, which one is aware of, in the manner of attention, as being another's experience (nothing gets fused, or needs to be defused). Finally, the empathizer's attention, or awareness, has two foci: 1) verbal and non-verbal behaviour (Batson's 'cues') which must be translated into an 'experienced meaning'; and 2) another's experience beyond this behaviour. That is, it involves a reaching out to the 'meaning' of the behaviour, the experience that brought the behaviour about, or, in his terminology, another's 'consciousness'. This attention must be enough for the empathizer to 'form a sense or perception' of another's current experience, as with reception experiences, that is partly faithful (accurate) to the foreground of the empathee's experience.

His description of an experiential understanding can be interpreted in two manners. First, it can be seen as a simulative experience, as with *perspective-taking* and *inference from behaviour*. In the end, he does emphasize a process, and one which uses 'cues' and 'translates' these cues into experience. Therefore, one could use the cues to imagine another's experience in an intellectual reasoned manner. For Bachelor (1988), Barrett-Lennard's empathy test taps precisely into this intellectual type of understanding.

Nevertheless, for the empathizer's experience to amount to an 'experiential' type of understanding, this intellectual act would have to involve other experiential sides as well (sensitive, emotional), even if merely provoked as a consequence of the imaginative act. Otherwise the experiential quality of the definition would be lost.

The alternative interpretation accommodates this more experiential side: for Gladstein (1983), Barrett-Lennard's understanding is an affective empathy-as-responding experience. I would like to offer yet another alternative interpretation, more in line with phenomenological views. As I understand Barrett-Lennard's claims, there is an emphasis on our ability to reach out to receive both 'communication and meaning'; on knowing another 'consciousness'; on forming a 'sense or perception'; on an experiential here-and-now moment-to-moment knowing; and on the necessity of a present awareness, that seems to amount to the phenomenological conception of empathy.

That is, 'experientially understanding' someone could be achieved by the empathy-as-knowing experience of gaining access to another's present experience directly. This is a 'how', a process, that must be distinguished from the formerly considered intellectual meanings of empathy-as-knowing, and it is not quite an affective, sympathetic or contamination response. It is explored in the next section.

Direct Empathy

Direct empathy is perhaps an *experience* very similar to the experience of the perceiver who is not aware of the reasoning behind his/ her quick inference from behaviour. Yet, the underlying models are conceptually very different. Simulation models stipulate that one only has access to other people's behaviour. That is, people are seen as separated, "*isolated*" (Håkansson & Montgomery, 2003) from each other,

as if they were tightly sealed opaque boxes. Thus, to know what is inside the other box, one must simulate its content (explicitly or implicitly), and assume it as another's experience. The 'reasoning' is conceptually necessary to explain how the percept or cue becomes meaningful, and thereby the act transformed into an access to another *separate inner* mind. This is how the gap between individuals is surmounted. This transforms empathy-as-knowing into an imaginative, exclusively personal act. Social understandings are always 'intellectual', step-wise individual processes, for simulation theorists.

The phenomenological model allows us to look at empathy from a fresh perhaps enlightening angle. It is there argued that people are not separated from each other by a non-transposable barrier; and that the world can be given to oneself directly. Because the box is neither sealed nor opaque, a separate, meaning-making, individual, detached process is not required. As a consequence of this epistemological stance, it is proposed that there is a way of knowing someone else's experience, sometimes called empathy, that is not exclusively subjective; nor does it involve inference or projection or reasoning or the other 'intellectual' processes (it is not mediated by any of these acts, it is not a step-by-step process). Instead, people have direct access to others (behaviour *and* mind), and thus perceive another's meaningful never-purely-inner experience directly. That is, empathy is argued to be grounded upon a direct route: the intersubjective underlying link between individuals. Empathic understandings are conceptualized as an *intersubjective* experience, in terms of process and in terms of experiential quality.

This is why this experience is here called *direct empathy*. It is not because it does not involve neural activation or spread of information, and all that implies. In phenomenology, it goes without saying that experiences are both embodied (experiences of a body), and situated (experiences of a body in a particular place). Direct empathy is no exception. But the mechanism behind interpersonal understandings is explained as a direct access to other minds. This view is then incompatible with more cognitive standpoints: either people are separated from each other, and must simulate another's experience; or they are connected, and may directly know it.

Direct empathy is an intersubjective, embodied, situated, direct knowing. It is to, there-and-then, directly experience another's unfolding present experience (Depraz, 2008, 2001; Gallagher, 2007; Gurmin, 2007; Hart, 1999; Prinz, 2006; Scheler, 1913; Stein, 1917/1989; Thompson, 2001; Zahavi, 2008b; 2007; 2001). (Depraz, 2008, 2001; Gallagher, 2007; Gurmin, 2007; Hart, 1999; Prinz, 2006; Scheler, 1913; Stein, 1917/1989; Thompson, 2001; Zahavi, 2008b; 2007; 2001). One experiences another's meaningful experience, and simultaneously⁵ knows that this is the experience of the target, without the necessity of, say, an additional discrimination between self and other. One needs not to *aposteriori* assume (project, infer, attribute, hypothesize) that one's simulation perhaps translates the other's experience, because the empathic experience is informative of another's present experience at the outset, at once.

⁵ From a phenomenological viewpoint, the term 'simultaneous' applied here should not be read as implying a separate process. Rather, the empathized experience, its meaning, and the knowledge this experience is another's experience, as intrinsic parts of the whole, of the overall empathic experience.

It is most often exemplified with descriptions of direct perceptive acts, but experiencing and perceiving are not such distinctive, separate phenomena in phenomenology. Perceiving is in itself an experience, grounded on the notion of intersubjectivity. Through direct perceptive acts, one simultaneously sees another's behaviour and its meaning; this is, in itself, an intersubjective experience. Hence, one directly knows another's meaningful experience "*not by inference, but directly, as a sort of primary 'perception'*" (Scheler, 1913, p. 10). This ability is present from infancy, when already "*in a non-mentalizing way, I am able to see meaning, intention, and emotions in the actions of others, and in their gestures or facial expressions*" (Gallagher, 2007, p. 354). That is, one does not necessarily imagine the happiness, nor imitates the smile, nor catches the other's emotion. One just directly and immediately senses (perceives, experiences) that the other is happy, and perhaps simultaneously smiling.

In Batson's exposition, where meanings of empathy-as-knowing are restricted to simulation theories, there is no room for a 'non-intellectual' form of knowledge-gaining. On the other hand, phenomenology, by accepting that self and other are embodied, embedded and minded, and in direct relationship with each other and with the world, contends that people may have a non-mediated (hence direct) access to another's ongoing experience. The divergence between these approaches is conceptual, and process-related; but it is also a fundamental epistemological and ontological divergence in understandings of what empathy is and how it can be explained.

In this section, I wish to leave you with the thought that there is an empathic knowing which is said to be gained directly, rather than intellectually; and intersubjectively, rather than subjectively. Since I dedicate the greater part of this thesis to describing this experience, and building a case for its further investigation, I hope that this serves as a sufficient introduction for the time being.

In summary, I have shown how empathy-as-knowing can be seen as both a direct way of knowing someone's experience (directly experiencing it, directly understanding it), but also as an intellectual way of knowing (perspective-taking, or explicit simulation; inference from behaviour; inference from felt-feeling, or implicit simulation; analogy; and intellectually understanding). This is one side of the coin of possible meanings of empathy. The other is about conceptions of empathy as a response to someone's experience.

Meanings of Empathy-as-Responding

Empathy is often confused with sympathy. The Oxford dictionary online further adds that these are to be distinguished, because empathy is understanding someone's state (empathy-as-knowing), and sympathy amounts to feeling pity for another person (empathy-as-responding).

In the next sections, I discuss how, in academic psychology literature, many (if not all) meanings of empathy-as-responding can be said to be sympathetic responses to another's known experience; and how these meanings include phenomena other than

pity (e.g., Batson, 2009; 1997; 1996; Eisenberg, 2000; Hoffman, 2000; Scheler, 1913). I continue by discussing in more detail a few of these meanings.

Empathy as a sympathetic responsive emotion

The particular quality of the emotional response appears to be of primary importance for someone who is on the responding side of the coin. Most psychological meanings of empathy-as-responding are distinguished by the quality of the experienced emotional response. It is the emotional quality of that response which decides whether the subject is empathizing with another person or not. That is, empathy-as-responding contemporary researchers are usually not interested in the way one's responsive emotional reaction comes about⁶. They are not so interested in the 'how' (as those belonging to the empathy-as-knowing group), but in the 'what' (in the qualities of the emotional response, in the content of these responses).

⁶ Hoffman (2000) is an exception. He is also concerned with processes, with underlying mechanisms. His five distinctive modes of 'empathic arousal' (reactive cry; emotional distress; quasi-egocentric empathic distress; veridical empathic distress; and empathy/compassion) are ever increasingly more developmentally mature and complex responses, linked to particular ways of knowing (mimicry, classical conditioning; automatic analogy; deliberated analogy; and perspective-taking). In the light of my present reasoning, it could be said that, in Hoffman's theory, someone's sympathetic response (empathic arousal) varies in function of the way one came to know that experience. For instance, if one mimics another's behavior, one reactively cries; and one feels compassion when one assumes another's perspective. Hoffman's (2000, p.4) 'empathic arousal' is "*more appropriate to another's situation than one's own*", as with Preston & Waal's 'true empathy'. For him, the first 'empathic' level is a "*passive, involuntary affective response, based on the pull of surface cues, and requires the shallowest level of cognitive processing. This simple form of empathic distress is important, however, precisely because it shows that humans are built in such a way that they can involuntarily and forcefully experience another's emotions*" (Hoffman, 2000, p.5). Yet, the quality of the response (distress against compassion) is of primordial importance, the quality of the emotion is of essence.

For instance, Batson, Early and Salvarini (1997) propose that an 'imagine-other' process (a subtype of perspective-taking) is responsible for an 'empathic' response (ratings for sympathetic, softhearted, compassionate, tender, and moved); whilst an 'imagined-self' process (a subtype of perspective-taking) would provoke a non-empathic emotional distress response (ratings for alarmed, grieved, troubled, distressed, upset, disturbed, worried, perturbed). If the subject responded with a 'positive' affective response, then 'empathy' was experienced; and if the subject responded with a 'negative' affective response, then the subject was not sympathizing, but rather emotionally distressed.

Therefore, for Batson (2009; 2002; 1997; 1996), empathy is synonymous with sympathy ('sympathetic' and 'compassion' adjectives). It is a very particular type of responsive emotion ('positive' feelings, other-oriented, congruent with the target's imagined experience/ situation), that is to be distinguished, by function of the quality of the responsive emotion, from a non-empathic reaction ('negative' feelings, self-oriented, congruent with another's experience/ situation).

Conceiving empathy as an emotion was, for me, at first, the most puzzling of empathy's meanings, and, I believe, a phenomenon found only in psychology. This was because in emotion theories that I was acquainted with neither empathy, nor sympathy, figured as emotions (Damásio, 1999; 1994; Eckman, 1999; Plutchik, 1982; Russell, 1980).

There are, however, exceptions, such as Parrott (2001), for whom sympathy, compassion, caring and pity do figure in the listing, as tertiary emotions (though note how empathy is still absent from this listing). Tertiary emotions are higher-order

emotions, more cognitively complex and associated with moral judgments of value. It is more or less in Parrot's sense that Eisenberg (2000) justifies her understanding of sympathy and empathy as emotions. Empathy and sympathy are for her emotional responses ethically 'congruent' with another's experience, they have a moral value.

I argue that empathy-as-responding equates to Scheler's conception of sympathy. For Scheler (1913, p.6), sympathy is "*essentially a reaction*", an affective reaction to someone else's experience, associated with moral functioning. Secondly, the set of phenomena that Scheler identifies as examples of sympathy (community of feelings, fellow-feeling, emotional infection and emotional identification) amount to the meanings of empathy-as-responding in Psychology⁷. Those interested in empathy-as-responding phenomena are, for me, interested in sympathetic phenomena - empathy and sympathy being confused terms, as the oxford dictionary highlights.

Congruent responsive emotions: pity, sympathetic concern, emotional distress and sympathetic joy

There are many kinds of emotional responses being studied in the empathy-as-responding literature, though their labels are usually particular to each theory. For

⁷ The only sympathetic phenomenon identified by Scheler that is absent from psychology empathy-as-responding studies is the phenomenon of 'community of feelings'. This is even a common folk psychology meaning of sympathy. It illustrates, for instance, the experience of supporting another's cause, that is, of sympathizing with another's cause, of sharing another's views. During these experiences, there is a common or single intentional object (the cause) towards which two people feel similarly. It cannot amount to the psychological phenomenon of *emotional distress* because theoretically, in psychology, distress is seen as a self-oriented non-sympathetic or ethical response, in contrast with Scheler's conception of community of feelings.

example, for Batson (2009) pity is equivalent to the non-‘empathetic’ (non-sympathetic) phenomenon of emotional distress. Conversely, Eisenberg’s (2000) ‘sympathy’ is a particular kind of emotional response that consists of “*feelings of sorrow or concern for the other*” (Eisenberg & Eggum, 2009, p.72). Sympathy is thus composed of the experience of *pity* (sorrow for another), and of the experience of *sympathetic concern* (concern for the welfare of another). These are to be further distinguished from the empathic *emotional distress* reactions (“*self-focused, aversive affective reaction to the apprehension of another’s emotion, associated to a desire to alleviate one’s own, but not the other’s distress*”, Eisenberg & Eggum, 2009, p.72).

Thus, in contrast with Batson, for whom pity and distress are non-sympathetic phenomena, for Eisenberg (2000) and Hoffmann (2000) pity is a sympathetic response; and emotional distress is a developmental antecedent of sympathy, a sympathy-to-be phenomenon. I adopt their perspective here.

Pity and sympathetic concern are particular forms of responses, in which the personal affective response is a negative emotion, usually qualified as ‘congruent’ with another’s known negative situation/ experience. As I understand it, this congruency means simply that the valences of self-other experiences match, say being proud (hypothetically a positive emotion) for someone’s achievement (hypothetically a positive event). This is what makes of these responses ethical emotions.

In psychology, this congruency is usually opposed to the criterion of similarity, in one’s differentiation of types of sympathetic responses. On the one hand there are congruent responses that equate to Scheler’s fellow-feelings; and on the other hand

there are similar responses. In the having of a responsive similar emotion, the subject must experience an emotional state that is very similar, if not equal, to another's experience, say, feeling happy too, rather than proud. Indeed, Eisenberg reserves the term 'empathy' to describe an experience that is not only congruent but also similar to that of another (happy), and 'sympathy' is used to describe congruent non-similar affective responses (proud). Once more, the importance of the quality of the emotion transpires in this division.

Hitherto, I distinguished several affective responses, all of which are, in terms of valence, negative emotions (pity, concern, distress). Since psychology studies about empathy-as-responding are usually performed in the context of another's traumatic negative experiences, we would probably have some difficulty in finding descriptions of Scheler's sympathetic 'joy-with-him' (Stein, 1917, p.14), an example of a fellow-feeling.

For Scheler, the valence of the emotion is not a core discrimination criterion. Rather, sympathetic responses can occur in either positive or negatively valenced experiencing contexts. I came up with the expression *sympathetic joy* to designate a congruent positive response, because it suggests the valence of the experience, its interpersonal sense, and the phenomenon from which it is a derivative. An example is the hypothetical pride directed towards another's achievements.

In summary, as examples of sympathetic congruent responses, there is *pity*, *sympathetic joy* and *sympathetic concern*. *Emotional distress* and *pity* sometimes are not considered as 'empathic' responses (Batson); and emotional distress is usually taken as an egocentric response across approaches, and belittled as a non-moral - hence not

really sympathetic - response. It is, for me, in contrast with the remainder of 'congruent' affective responses, possibly rather a similar response. One becomes distressed too.

Altruistic and Egotistic experiences

What binds together pity, sympathetic joy and sympathetic concern is that they are about the experience of 'feeling for' another person and their experience. On the other hand, emotional distress is commonly described as 'self-oriented', or self-focused response. Therefore, psychologists also discriminate emotional reactions in terms of their intentional object (oneself, for emotional distress experiences; and another person, for sympathetic experiences). However, in this field, the intentional object criterion appears to be the fruit of an underlying ethical judgment of value (in some cases more explicitly than others).

Indeed, those studying empathy-as-responding are partly concerned with that which is responsible for the occurrence of ethical feelings and behaviours, and this connection is sometimes understood in the light of Darwin's theory. There is also an echo of Jean Jacques Rousseau's reflection about the noble savage in these empathy-as-responding theories. For instance, Batson formulates his empathy-altruism hypothesis in the light of these theories. For him, emotional distress is associated with egotistic self-oriented behaviour, whereas 'empathy' (compassion, sympathy) is associated with altruistic other-oriented prosocial behaviour. Those who are compassionate towards someone else's suffering are not seeking to promote their immediate survival, they are

not 'egotistical', they are the noble savages; whereas those who get very upset by another's suffering, are fighting for their own individual survival, they are the bad savages.

There is a clear judgment of value, and an ethical judgement, associated with this classification (distress is egotistic and bad; and sympathy is altruistic and good); and it is this ethical judgment that enables me to make sense of the prompt dismissal of emotional distress and pity as examples of sympathetic reactions in his approach.

On the other hand, emotional distress and sympathy are much more closely connected in Hoffman's (2000, p.6/7) developmental approach to sympathy. Here, sympathy is said to evolve from a largely automatic, involuntary and passive innate distress reaction. Although his criterion is not ethical, but developmental, in a way, the judgement of value is there too. The 'other-orientedness' of the response, and its implicit altruistic 'good' connotation, is fundamental. It is said that only infantile people feel distressed; whereas more mature people feel compassion instead. One needs to 'educate' the bad primitive savage within oneself so that moral altruistic behaviour can be developed. Robert Trivers, with his studies about reciprocal altruism in the animal kingdom, might have something to say about this developmental and ethical judgement. I would like to side with him, I drop the issue as tangential to this thesis.

Either way, it is the sympathetic emotional response to another's known state that is prone to ethical considerations, and is associated with moral development theories. It is sympathy, or empathy-as-responding, that is being related to prosocial functioning.

Similar responses: identification, contagion, imitation

Identification is an affective response to another's known experience, associated formerly with analogy-as-knowing. It is one of Scheler's (1913, p.12) sympathetic phenomena ("*true emotional identification*"). The qualities of this response are very similar to those of contagion experiences. Indeed, for Scheler (1913, p.18), identification is a "*heightened form*" of contagion. Since contagion is a more recurrent phenomenon in the literature, and across psychology areas, it is to the latter that I will dedicate a greater attention.

For many researchers empathy is, or involves, what Scheler calls emotional infection, and is nowadays commonly called *emotional contagion*. An example of its lived experience follows:

You might enter a bar and be swept over by the jolly atmosphere. A distinctive feature of what is known as emotional contagion is that you literally catch the emotion in question (Scheler, 1954, p. 15). It is transferred to you. It becomes your own emotion. Indeed you can be infected by the jolly or angry mood of others without even being aware of them as distinct individuals. (Zahavi, 2008b, p.516)

Contagion is the experience of being contaminated by an overall emotional atmosphere; or, as usually studied in psychology, by other people's present emotional states. In order to be contaminated by another's present state, one must at least have perceived the other's state in some way, even if subliminally (Gallese, 2003). Thus, it is a response and one which follows an inaugural implicit or explicit knowing moment, even

when this knowing and responding both happen beyond awareness, when these are not part of the 'conscious' lived experience.

Contagion is even defined as an 'unconscious' responsive emotional phenomenon in most neurocognitive theories. It is about "*sharing emotions without self-awareness (...) total identification without discrimination between one's feelings and those of the other's*" (Decety & Jackson, 2004, p.75). In brief, this approach defines contagion as an unconscious, automatic response that translates the existence of a personal experience that is similar, or even 'totally' equal, to another's current experience. During contagion experiences, subject and the object's 'representations' are thought to overlap in terms of "*cognitions, feelings, and behaviour*" (van Baaren, Decety, Dijksterhuis, van der Leij & van Leeuwen, 2009, p.33).

Contagion researchers commonly backup their empathy theories on cross-species studies of emotional contagion, social imitation, and the work of audiovisuomotor neurons/ mirror neurons (van Baaren et al., 2009; Boulanger & Lançon, 2006; Decety & Jackson, 2006, 2004; Dinstein, Thomas, Behrmann & Heeger, 2008; Gallese, 2003; Goldman, 2006; Hatfield et al., 2009; Preston & Waal, 2002). In short, a team of researchers, while experimenting on macaque monkeys, found that there was some neurons who were active both when performing a goal-directed action, as well as when observing it being performed by another monkey or person. They called them mirror, or audiovisuomotor, neurons.

Since this discovery, there has been a boom in research about mirror neurons. During mirror neuron activation, neuropsychological contagion researchers argue that

the subject literally experiences another's emotions for oneself; one 'feels as another does', or, at least, a "*weaker version of the same emotion*" (van Baaren, 2009, p.32).

This similarity in the subject's and object's neural network activation is, as remarked, often read as a sign of one's merging with the other person, one's "*entanglement*" (Decety & Jackson, 2006, p.56) with another person, to the extreme extent that the observer becomes unable to distinguish that which is a personal, from that which is another's experience. There is no self-other 'discrimination', in these theories, they claim, because a similar network of neurons (mirror neurons) is automatically activated during a perceptive act. This is an interpretation of a neural activation that is refuted by more phenomenology-informed theories (Thompson, 2001).

In some models, contagion is associated with the experience of covert or overt *imitation*, two concepts which have been said to be "*sometimes defined in overlapping terms*" (Hess & Blairy, 2001, p.130). An example of such a model is proposed by Hatfield et al. (2009, p.26). They argue that, as a consequence of the linear stepwise process of initially automatically mimicking another's visible observed behaviour, a feedback process occurs. This feedback shapes the empathizer's experience to match that of the empathized person. Therefore, first empathizers see behaviour, secondly they mimic that behaviour, thirdly they become contaminated, and finally they would be "*able to feel themselves into those other emotional lives*".

Contagion and imitation are, objectively speaking, a personal response to perceived stimuli. They correspond to a possible meaning of empathy-as-responding,

and one of Scheler's sympathetic phenomena. Through contagion and/or mimicry, one responsively feels an emotion that is similar to what the other person is experiencing.

For Scheler, these are to be distinguished from direct empathic experiences, because there is nothing in contamination that reveals the otherness of the contaminated felt experience. Its 'cause' is not even necessarily a person or another's genuine experience. Therefore, it can only become a source of interpersonal understanding in an intellectual manner, such as via the attribution process proposed by Jabbi et al. (2007) – unlike direct empathy. Indeed, phenomenologists accept that, for these responses to become a way of knowing someone else's experience, it would indeed have to be via a reasoned act based on, say, "*causal considerations*" (Scheler, 1913, p.15) – precisely as described by implicit simulation theories.

As described by neuropsychological stepwise models, every step of the experience follows in a cause-effect manner, with several "*mediating*" factors (van Baaren et al., 2009). Contagion is a starting point, and, via the mechanisms such as 'inference from felt-feeling' and self-other discrimination, one achieves some form of 'intellectual' social understanding. This is how mirror neuron activation and contagion become a way of "*understanding the meaning and intentions of observed actions, learning by imitation, feeling empathy, formation of a 'theory of mind' (...)*" (Dinstein et al., 2008, p.13). One has to feel for oneself to be able to know what another person is feeling.

In brief, the contamination unconscious response is transformed into a mediated way of knowing another's experience. This kind of sympathetic response, based upon covert mimicry and/ or contagion, is consequently said to be a rudimentary and

automatic kind of empathy-as-knowing, lower-order empathy, lower-level mindreading, or basic empathy. Its higher-level counterpart is perspective-taking, or explicit simulation. Both acts involve inference, and are mediated, in the sense of the 'intellectual' meanings of empathy-as-knowing as outlined in this chapter.

Phenomenologically speaking, contagion is a phenomenon that must be distinguished from an empathic knowing. It should not be confused with empathy, not even when used as the grounds of an 'inference from felt-feeling' type of knowing (Scheler, 1913; Stein, 1917; Zahavi, 2008b). For phenomenologists, empathy is the having of an experience that is, at the outset, another's, given with its otherness. This empathic knowing occurs at the most at a pre-reflective level (rather than an unconscious one); is not explicated in a stepwise manner; nor experienced as a personal, or a merging, or a sympathetic experience; and is never a source of an inferential knowledge of another's hypothetical experience (e.g., Depraz, 2001; Stein, 1917; Thompson, 2001). Contagion and the phenomenological meaning of empathy-as-knowing are two conceptually distinctive phenomena.

In non-neurocognitive approaches, contagion is generally not transformed into a knowing act. For example, Eisenberg (2000) and Hoffman (2000) would see in the neuropsychological illustrative examples of contagion a prototype of adults' compassion, that goes under the name of empathy, in Eisenberg's theory; and under the name of emotional distress, in Hoffman's theory. For them, 'contagion' is thought to represent the beginning of an emotional response that may evolve into feelings of sympathy, pity, empathic concern, and the like. This is closer to Scheler's perspective on sympathy.

I hold that awareness, of lack of it, should not change the essence of a phenomenon (just think of subliminal perception, which, despite its automaticity, is still rightfully called perception). For me, the phenomenological and psychotherapeutic contagion and identification (sympathetic, affective, unconscious or conscious phenomenon); the developmental distress or empathy (sympathetic, affective, unconscious or conscious phenomenon), and the neurocognitive psychological contagion (unconscious responsive emotional phenomenon) are the same phenomenon, and defined by virtue of the similarity and automaticity of the response - though labelled differently across theories, related to other variables in different manners. This typifies for me the dialogue that currently exists between the several corners of the big conceptual room called empathy.

Conclusions and Discussion

Encountering the multiplicity of theoretical meanings of empathy, I felt the necessity of organizing these meanings to contextualize my research. Drawing upon Batson's (2009) argument, I have split these meanings into two main groups of phenomena: those relative to ways of knowing another's experience (perspective-taking and inference from behaviour; inference from felt-feeling; analogy; understanding; and direct empathy); and those relative to ways of responding to someone's experience (sympathetic concern; emotional distress; pity; sympathetic joy; identification; emotional contagion; and imitation).

The responding-knowing organizing strategy seemed a necessary procedure, but it is not exempt from criticism. At times, this division depends upon the angle one looks at the phenomenon, or how one values one aspect against another. As noted, 'knowing' phenomena can sometimes be conceptualized as responses, and vice versa. This means that the line that separates empathy-as-knowing from empathy-as-responding is not clear cut.

By reflecting upon the reasons that led me to consider a given experience as being about knowing or responding, I realized that the purpose (having the intention of knowing another's experience) or the result (having the experience of knowing the other's experience) of the empathizer's activity is important. That is, when the empathizer's objective, or when the act's result, is knowledge-related, then these activities become, for me, a way of knowing.

On the other hand, a response does not necessarily have a purpose; and, in this thesis, if it does have a purpose, it is not a knowledge-pursuing goal, since that would make it an empathy-as-knowing experience. Similarly, if it does have a clear outcome, it is not a knowledge-related outcome, since that would transform the experience into a way of knowing.

The listing of meanings offered in this chapter is not intended to be exhaustive. There are more meanings of empathy, such as those relative to empathy as a communication skill fostering therapeutic alliance. My objective was to identify each of those phenomena that have previously been named 'empathy'; and which have, at some point of my research, demanded some theoretical revision.

It seems important at this point to have demonstrated that experts understand empathy in very dissimilar ways, sometimes even opposing ones; and use the same labels to describe different phenomena, as well as different labels to describe the same phenomenon. And, to complicate the picture, some authors argue that empathy is all of these things, some of these, or yet even another thing. 'Empathy' is a (too) big drawer, even when restricting the search to psychology.

Secondly, I wanted to emphasise that, when researching empathy, this multiplicity of understandings, explanations and definitions is the first complicated matter at hand. Each meaning is associated with distinctive lived experiences, underlying mechanisms, and psychological states. Consequently, each probably relates differently to other psychological variables – such as with Jones et al.'s study. It is thus necessary to recognize what each of these phenomena is, what it is named in competing approaches, and to situate our own understanding amidst this chaos. I hope that, in this manner, I have helped you find your own standpoint, and hence more easily relate to what is proposed in this thesis. A glossary follows, spelling out the meaning of each phenomenon that was mentioned in this chapter; and one which might be useful throughout this thesis.

Glossary of Theoretical Meanings of Empathy

Analogy: assuming that another person has an experience that is similar to one's own, via the establishment of similarities between subject and object, or their experiences or situations. Sometimes synonymous with projection, and associated with identification responses. It is seen as an act of knowing act in this thesis.

Contagion/ Contamination: personal emotional response of automatically catching another's experience, exclusively because the other person is feeling it; and is associated with the 'inference from felt-feeling' act in neurocognitive theories. Plausibly equivalent to some developmental concepts (e.g., emotional distress). It is seen as a response in this thesis.

Direct Empathy: Intersubjective, moment-to-moment, embodied, situated direct perceiving or experiencing of another's present experience. It is seen as a knowing act in this thesis.

Emotional distress: personal, negatively valenced, emotional reaction to the sight of another's suffering. As a developmental concept, it is often qualified as a 'congruent' and 'egotistic' response (felt because of another, but not *for* another), and is sometimes synonymous with pity and empathy. It is seen as a response in this thesis.

Identification: personal affective response to the empathee's experience that is similar to the empathee's known experience. It is close to the concept of contamination and associated with analogy-as-knowing. It is seen as a response in this thesis.

Imitation: Explicit (behavioural) or implicit (activation of a neural network responsible for the behaviour) imitation of another's expressive behaviour; and associated with the 'inference from felt-feeling' act in neurocognitive theories. It is seen as a response in this thesis.

Inference from behaviour: inferring from another's visible behaviour that which the other might be possibly experiencing. Synonymous with empathic accuracy. It is seen as a knowing act in this thesis.

Inference from felt-feeling: inferring from one's own contamination experience that which another might be possibly experiencing. It is seen as a knowing act in this thesis.

Pity: personal, other-oriented, congruent, emotionally negatively valenced, response, consisting of feelings of sorrow, pity, or the like. It is feeling *for* another. It is seen as a response in this thesis.

Perspective-taking: conjecture, imagination, or intellectual simulation of another's experience. Particular cases are imagining the world from another's perspective (imagine-other); and or oneself in another's situation (imagine-self perspective-taking). Synonymous with role-taking and 'cognitive empathy'. It is seen as a knowing act in this thesis.

Sympathetic concern: personal, other-oriented, congruent emotionally negatively valenced response, consisting of feelings of concern for the welfare of another. It is 'feeling for' another. It is seen as a response in this thesis.

Sympathetic Joy: other-oriented congruently emotionally positive response, consisting of feelings of joy and the like. It is 'feeling for' another. It is seen as a response in this thesis

Sympathy: personal, emotional, similar of congruent response to another's known situation or experience. It is seen as a response in this thesis

Understanding: intellectual, partly interpretative, knowing of another's experience. Can result from any of empathy-as-knowing experiences, or be synonymous with any of these. It is seen as a knowing act in this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

FOLK PSYCHOLOGY: EVERYDAY MEANINGS OF EMPATHY

Chapter II

The aim of this chapter is to describe a study about the understanding of 'empathy' of the folk psychology, and participants' empathic experiences.

Introduction

The ability to be clearer about a meaning transforms someone into a good communicator. To be truthful, I sometimes have not felt like a good communicator when asked about my research theme (empathy). People's subsequent topics of conversation were the evilness of human nature; mind-reading and its potentials; the in-session⁸ manipulation of clients' behaviour and perceptions; the marvellous experience of being transformed by a work of art; objects' affordances; the Dalai Lama's infinite wisdom, insight and compassion....

And it was always so unexpected, diverse and puzzling that I even stopped talking about it, or intentionally avoided the word empathy. Simultaneously, I felt impelled to understand the implications of this observation in the work I was developing. This means that the study that is described here is a consequence of the literature review presented in Chapter I, as well as a consequence of personal reflections about my daily experience with the word under study. I became interested in exploring 'non-experts', or lay people's, understandings of 'empathy'.

What does it mean to answer, in a survey, that one believes oneself to be a very empathic person? Would it mean that the person in question sees (or wants to be seen, to accommodate for social desirability effects) oneself as someone who usually worries about other people? Or someone who cries at every encounter with other people's misery? Or someone who often spends time imagining what another person

⁸ 'Neurolinguistic programming therapy', or so I was told its name was, amidst my disbelief that a therapist would see in such non-empowering treatment an ethically responsible therapy.

may be experiencing (say, a writer)? Someone who is very compassionate and forgiving (say, a priest)? Someone who imitates everyone (say, a ‘wanna-be-mime’)?

In the light of the literature review, claiming oneself to be an empathic person could mean any of the above. This is not, for me, just a superficial question. A word that can mean almost anything does not mean anything at all, and a study about it is as good as nothing. Since I planned to inquire, in the future, about peoples’ empathic experiences, I felt the necessity of defending myself from this potential misunderstanding, and this possibility of lack of construct validity. This is the main reason for the conduct of the study I am about to describe.

In a very straightforward way, I asked people to write about an empathic event from their own experience, and then to define the term empathy. This allowed me to interpret the lived experience in the light of an interpretation of the word empathy made explicit in the subsequent question; and to explore folk psychology meanings of empathy.

Past Research

There are also theoretical differences in the meaning of empathy. Batson (2009) suggested that so-called ‘empathic’ phenomena can be grouped under two main categories: *empathy-as-knowing* (perspective-taking; inference from behaviour; inference from felt-feeling; analogy; understanding; and direct empathy); and *empathy-as-responding* (sympathy; emotional distress; pity; sympathetic joy;

sympathetic concern; identification; contagion and imitation). A summary of each of these is provided in Chapter I's glossary.

The here adopted knowing-responding organization strategy, at least in this thesis, is a theoretical response to this observed multiplicity of meanings of 'empathy'. Its adoption intends to promote the dialogue across research areas and knowledge construction; and avoid unnecessary controversy. It is also an example of the most common theoretical strategy for dealing with the evidence of empathy's multiplicity of meanings; it is a *discriminate, agglomerate* strategy. In terms of empirical work, alternative strategies are found.

Some of the empirical studies which investigated empathic experiences avoided the term empathy under the suspicion investigated here, that is, that people gave meaning to 'empathy' in varied distinctive manners. Instead, researchers explicitly inquire about, for example, experiences of understanding another person; and subsequently link their results to empathy (e.g., Kerem et al., 2001). Another (additional or complementary) strategy is providing participants with a very long definition of empathy, such as in Barkham and Shappiro (1988) and in Pistrang, Picciotto and Barker (2002), in an attempt to approximate the phenomenon people think of, when faced with the word empathy; and the researchers' understanding of the very same word.

Often then, the issue of the meaning of the word is bypassed, by either avoiding the word empathy (and further along the line framing results as being about empathy), or by specifying how the word empathy should be interpreted as part of the

instructions. Before adopting any of these strategies, I realized I could benefit from addressing this difficulty head-on, to inform future research. This means that the study in this chapter has a grounding nature, in the sense that, by going to the source of this problem, most of my subsequent methodological choices are a direct consequence of its findings.

At least two previous studies have been concerned with how empathy is given meaning. One of these studies is Carlozzi, Stein and Barnes' (2002) research on five distinctive ways of defining empathy across psychotherapeutic approaches. Their point of departure is realizing that Beck's cognitive-behavioural theory defines empathy as a "*process that fosters collaborative alliance*" (p.161); Rogers' experiential-humanistic theory as "*sensing another person's feelings as if one were that person*" (p.162); and Kohut's psychodynamic theory as "*experiencing the inner life of another person while retaining objectivity*" (p.162). They developed a questionnaire, which was sent to a large sample of clinical psychologists (response rate of 556 over 600), aiming to study whether the psychotherapists' conceptions of empathy was consistent with the therapeutic approach they identified most with.

There are two main reasons for considering that this particular study is of only partial interest for the present one. First, it is conducted with clinical psychologists. As implicitly demonstrated by this paper, considering a clinical psychologist a non-expert in empathy is not quite accurate, since it is a word taught, practiced and discussed in this area. Hence, Carlozzi et al.'s findings would provide a limited insight into wider meanings of empathy. Secondly, most unfortunately, their paper only reports on one

main factorial analysis, through which two factors are delineated ('feeling focused' and 'communication'), that account for only 5% of the total variance, and which have an unknown relationship to each of the psychotherapeutic approaches; and three excluded factors (for unknown reasons and of unknown nature). Hence, at the most, this study alerts us for the possibility of finding conceptions of empathy relative to either of these two factors.

The other study, published by Håkansson and Montgomery (2003), bears a greater resemblance with what was done here. It is an analysis of people's written texts about an empathic episode from their own experience; that the authors describe as a follow-up of a previous study⁹, in which they inquired directly about people's definitions of the word empathy.

Their aim was to find 'universal' components in the stories people remember when asked to write about an empathy story. In their own wording, they wanted to nominate 'constituents', that is, "*qualities that, in conjunction, form the experience of empathy*" (p.268) – implicitly suggesting that these qualities are supposedly present in "*each*" (p.273) empathic experience. In contrast, the present objective was to study possible meanings of empathy, possibly only a few among many existing others. Thus, whilst my aim was to particularize, they sought 'universal' generalized features in people's lived experience texts. However, the empathic experience of a 'wanna-be-mime' is perhaps very distinctive from the experience of the writer, or of the priest. For me, people's stories and qualifying features would probably vary in accordance

⁹ The definitions' study is unpublished, and is not in Håkansson's (2003) thesis about the phenomenon of empathy.

with people's definitions of 'empathy', and therefore represent a less than sound basis of generalization attempts. Consequently, I primarily wanted to characterize meanings, the one aspect which was perhaps behind the qualities manifested in people's stories.

These authors attempted to adopt a phenomenological viewpoint (a possible basis of comparison), though this was not consistently adopted, either for explaining the individual in ontological terms, or their results. For instance, they open their article by claiming that empathy "*connects two otherwise isolated individuals*" (p.267). Given that, for Håkansson and Montgomery, empathy is not an intersubjective self-other link, but instead a combination of four components (understanding, emotional response, similarity impression and felt concern for another), most phenomenologists would contest their claim that individuals are 'isolated' were it not for empathy.

Although they did not identify the method adopted for the analysis¹⁰, they mostly report upon frequencies of easily observable categories (manifest content). This was the principal (but not exclusive) essence of their findings: tables of frequencies of categories such as the gender of the involved people; and the valence of experienced emotions. In conclusion, Håkansson and Montgomery's study can only be indirectly related with the present one, not only in terms of objectives, but also in terms of theoretical assumptions and methodological choices.

¹⁰ They direct the reader to another paper, in which the method is also not specified.

Present study

This study was an exploratory study that was largely concerned with non-experts' (lay people) ways of giving meaning to 'empathy'. Data were analysed by means of an inductive-deductive Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA), as described by Mayring (2000), and Graneheim and Lundman (2004). In summary, this method is said to offer the advantages of quantitative content analysis (theory reference, deductive categories, category led, and criteria for reliability and validity), as well as the strengths of qualitative analysis (inductive categories, summaries and context analysis).

In contrast with quantitative content analysis, QCA explores both implicit (how is) and explicit (what is) content, forming categories inductively (bottom-up, from data to theory) and deductively (top-down, from theory to data). Therefore, categories relate to data in more complex, sensitive and qualitative manners. With QCA, the analysis becomes grounded in participants' discourse, rather than in theoretical aspects alone, approximating it to other kinds of qualitative research. Through it, I identified *empirical*¹¹ meanings of 'empathy', as participants' themselves explicitly defined and exemplified the term; language-in-use; and how these meanings related to *theoretical* meanings of 'empathy'.

Qualitative inductive research is said (Morse & Mitcham, 2002) to have two main frailties: the pink elephant (the impossibility of bracketing out an idea which has previously been pointed out to us); and the conceptual tunnel vision (seeing

¹¹ In opposition to the 'theoretical' meanings reviewed in Chapter I, that is, put forward by 'experts' on empathy.

everything as linked to the phenomenon under study). Morse and Mitcham further argue that prior knowledge and conceptually focused qualitative research does not necessarily jeopardize inductive reasoning, because these possible biases can be controlled through processes of saturation, replication and verification; by increasing sample sizes; by constantly looking for alternative explanations; and by asking critical questions about the data. Inductive research can be a systematic process which *“progresses sequentially from deconstruction of concept analysis of the literature to the use of these data as a skeleton, or to using prior knowledge as a scaffold”* (p.33).

Thus, as long as rigorous methodological procedures are installed, an extensive prior review of existing information about the object of research does not necessarily skew inductive research findings. In this study, and in the remainder of the studies conducted for this thesis, the concepts detailed in Chapter I were used as an ever-evolving skeleton (one which pre-established a few observable dimensions), or as a scaffold (a comparative supportive template). This does not mean that the reasoning behind became deductive. Rather, it means that the inductive reasoning was guided by conceptual concerns and knowledge. I never shaped the findings to fit the concept, and always gave priority to the data itself. If there was something in need of change, it was my theoretical understanding of a particular feature, and never participants' claims and their inductively derived meaning.

A rigorous data analysis method that reduced the risk of falling into these biases was fundamental here because I wanted to understand how theoretical meanings of 'empathy' were reflected in empirical meanings, while simultaneously remaining open

to the appearance of new meanings, of new perspectives. QCA offered this possibility for a moderately large sample. It showed how my personal experience with 'empathy' was not such an odd one out.

Method

Sample

The opportunity sample of 62 participants was composed of all those who anonymously voluntarily completed an online survey. They were all connected in some way to the University of Birmingham (students/ former students/ employees), and all were informed about the aims of the study and gave their consent.

Participants had a mean age of 26.6 (SD=10.67) years, ranging from 18 to 62. They were mainly females (N=47, 75.8%), British (N=53, 85.5%) and full-time students (N=51, 82.3%). There was almost an even number of both undergraduate (N=33, 54.1%) and postgraduate students (N=29, 45.2%). In terms of area of studies, many were psychology students (N=22, 35.5%), though the majority was from a variety of other courses, including disciplines such as engineering, philosophy, nursing, theology and economics. Eight participants did not identify their particular area of studies. This means there were few working people (N=11, 17.8%); and few non-British (N=9, 14.5%) people residing in England.

Procedure

The protocol for this study¹² was ethically reviewed and approved. After a pilot study, 32 online answers were collected between December 2009 and March 2010; and an additional 30 were gathered between June and July of 2010.

Participants were recruited by advertising the online survey's link in the participants' recruitment website (usually credit-paid psychology students); in the subjects' recruitment day (non-psychology students that were monetarily rewarded, by the organization committee, and guided to a computer where the link was available for immediate use); through the university's mailing list (non-rewarded participants); and in the university's personal announcements webpage (non-rewarded participants). This last webpage add was explicitly directed to "*non-psychology students (undergraduate or postgraduate) and staff*". The interest was in gathering higher amount of answers from non-psychologists, because the preliminary analysis, conducted mid-way data collection, suggested that participants' academic backgrounds (psychology or other) might be responsible for significant differences in the way empathy was given meaning¹³.

¹² This study was a variation of another study, to be presented in Chapter IV.

¹³ There was a preliminary analysis of findings, disseminated in the form of posters (an example is included in *Appendix I*); and at the British Science Festival 2010, which generated considerable beneficial feedback.

Materials

The instrument used for data collection consisted of a purpose-built online survey (*Appendix II*). I aimed to obtain a wide and rich picture of the variety of empathy's meanings and thereby have a more accurate idea about what to expect, when asking people about their empathic experiences. This more standardized data collection procedure is appropriate for the analysis of moderately large sets of qualitative data, hence suitable for achieving this goal.

The questionnaire was divided into five sections, preceded by an informative box describing the aims of the study. *Section A* asked for “*a story of empathy from your own experience*”. It was intended to gather participants' stories about an empathic event they had experienced in the recent past. *Section B* solicited participants to classify the degree of closeness to the other person in their story, if any. This was done in two ways. Firstly, via a closed question offering the following randomly presented options: Family member; Partner; Friend; Acquaintance¹⁴; Strangers; No-one. Secondly, via an open-ended question, that asked participants to briefly and qualitatively describe the relationship in question.

¹⁴ This particular option was included mid-through data collection, as a consequence of a suggestion. In retrospect, I regret this choice. First, changing a standardized data collection instrument mid-way data collection is a questionable research procedure. Secondly, the objective of this question was principally to have an idea of how the closeness of a relationship was related to participants' stories and definitions of empathy, since it has been said that closeness and/or familiarity *both* enhance *and* hinder the experience of 'empathy' (Barrett-Lennard, 1981; Håkansson & Montgomery, 2003; Hancock & Ickes, 1996; Marangoni, Ickes, Garcia & Teng, 1995; Noller, 2006; Preston & Waal, 2002; Pistrang et al., 2002; Vignemont & Singer, 2006). To study this relationship, I only needed to see if people would write episodes involving strangers, one side of the spectrum; any mid-spectrum category; and family members or partners, the other side of the spectrum. Hence, I collapsed the categories 'acquaintance' and 'friends' for the purpose of this chapter's data analysis.

Section C consisted of a single question, asking individuals to define empathy, with the prompt “*what is empathy for you*”. Its objective was the gathering of non-experts’ definitions of empathy; and it was placed after the request for a lived experience description in the hope that participants would reflect on their daily use of the word, rather than turning towards a dictionary definition.

Section D asked participants to leave feedback about the experience of completing the online interview. It was included for the pilot study, but answers to it were interesting, because they provided an overview of the way the individual related to the survey, and of their experience of fulfilling the questionnaire, so it was kept throughout the study. Finally, *section E* gathered demographics (age, gender, nationality, first language, level of studies, area of studies, and occupation).

Analysis

The analysis of participants’ texts followed the Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA) guidelines (Graneheim & Lundman, 2004; Mayring, 2000). The overall analytical process is illustrated in Figure 4.

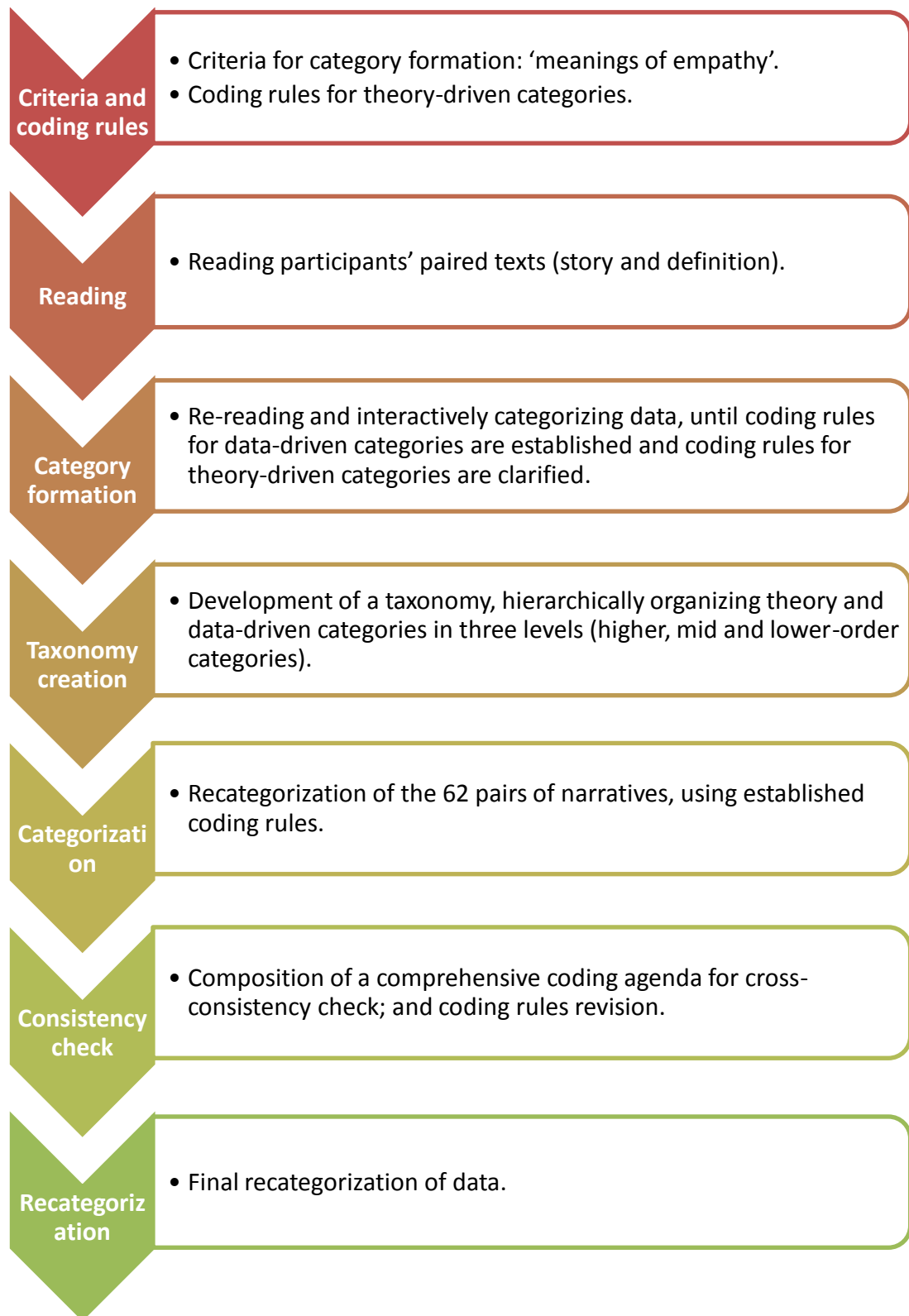


Figure 4: “Steps for the QCA of empathy texts (story and definition)”

The core interest was the survey's sections A (stories of empathy) and C (definitions of empathy). For these, the starting point was defining the theoretical criterion for the formation of *categories* (short descriptive labels illustrative of recurrent meanings), namely, meanings of empathy. Theory-driven categories were defined at the outset (Chapter I's glossary), and the coding rule was to categorize a meaning unit as belonging to a category when it described that particular pre-defined phenomenon.

Having these set, the next step was reading participants' paired texts (story and definition), to have an idea of the whole. Then, in a constant reading, re-reading, categorizing and reviewing process, additional inductive categories were iteratively formed. During this process, both theory-driven and data-driven categories were clarified; and their coding rules defined in the light of data. This culminated in the creation of the *taxonomy* (set of hierarchically organized categories), with three levels (higher, mid and lower order categories), that is shown in Figure 5.

Guided by the coding rules of each of these categories, every *meaning unit* (content unit, or constellation of words that relate to the same central meaning), that was related to a possible meaning of empathy (deductively or inductively) was then categorized. This procedure was followed by the composition of a coding agenda. Although *Appendix III* offers a few examples for each category, it originally consisted of a comprehensive listing of every single meaning belonging to that particular category. This was done for the purpose of cross-checking the consistency and overall coherence of the categorization across accounts.

This led to a re-categorization of data, in the light of revised categories and more clearly objectified coding rules. In *Appendix IV*, there are nine randomly chosen categorized paired texts (story and definition), illustrating the final outcome of the categorization stage.

Moreover, QCA offered the possibility of assessing the frequencies of each category by transforming it into a dummy nominal variable. This allows frequencies to be recorded; and for the examination of quantitative statistical relationships between categories. Since most of the quantitative data is categorical, the statistical tests used (SPSS v.16) were mainly association tests, chosen as appropriate for each case.

Finally, I use the participants' number, preceded by reference symbol (#), to identify the person responsible for the quote transcribed from an anonymized account; and, at times, fictitious names. Their texts were corrected for minor typing misspellings.

Coding specifications and examples

The final taxonomy (Figure 5) consisted of three higher-order categories (immediately knowing, intellectually knowing and responding), that further collapsed into Batson's binomial division (empathy-as-knowing and empathy-as-responding). It listed empirical meanings of empathy, that is, meanings that were proposed by participants, in their definition texts, as amounting to the meaning of empathy.

Immediately knowing

- **Perceiving:** perceptively knowing another's experience
- **Feeling:** having an intuitive feeling amount another's experience

Intellectually knowing

- **Analogy:** comparison between oneself and another
- **Perspective-taking:** imagining another's experience
- **Reasoning:** logically determining another's experience, including inference from behaviour.
- **Understanding:** "*understand*" and "*relate*"

Responding

- **Sympathy for:** 'feeling for' another person, including pity and sympathetic joy
- **Sympathetic sharing:** feeling as another does, including fellow-feeling and contagion-like
- **Impact:** reactions to another's experience, including emotional distress
- **Altruistic experiences:** willing another's welfare, including sympathetic concern and helping behaviour

Figure 5: "Hierarchical taxonomy of empirical meanings of empathy"

Both texts were read and analysed together. That is, the definition and the story texts were analysed in parallel, so that the content of one was used to illuminate the other. Consequently, the analysis is mainly based upon manifest content, but, in many circumstances, a manifest content-in-context, that is, in the wider context of two texts (story and definition). No answer was excluded as irrelevant/ invalid/ unworthy of consideration, and each was valued in a way that attempted to be faithful to the participant's intended meaning.

Lower-order categories, very detailed and grounded in data, were the result of a continuous and systematic questioning of coding-related decisions, aimed to avoid the pink elephant and the tunnel vision biases. These were excluded from Figure 5, but a complete listing of categories, specifying coding rules and examples, is offered in *Appendix III*, so as to clarify the relationship established here between these two higher-order levels, lower-order levels and language-in-use. Every meaning unit describing a way of knowing or a way of responding was coded.

Empathy-as-knowing categories were concerned with categorizing the ‘what’ of empathy (knowing another’s experience), but also the ‘how’¹⁵, that is, the way participants proposed that this knowing came about. As a consequence of the interest in the ‘how’, two higher-order categories were established: immediately knowing and intellectually knowing (the terms immediate and intellectual referred to this how).

An example of *intellectually knowing* was reporting that “*I could imagine the speaker’s embarrassment*” (#12). In this statement, I observed that: 1) another’s experience was “*embarrassment*”; 2) and the knowledge-gaining activity was *perspective-taking* (the associated lower-order category was, in this case, imagine-other). Then, another’s embarrassment was an imagined one; and this knowing was achieved via an intellectual act. Indeed, what linked intellectually knowing categories

¹⁵ For a meaning unit to be classified as about knowing, the participant had to literally associate, to the experience of knowing another’s described experience, a particular ‘how’. For instance, descriptions of how one came to know about another’s situation (e.g., being texted with the news), do not amount to the knowing of an experience, but rather to being informed about another’s situation. This particular type of experience amounted to the *verbal information* contextual category. Furthermore, being verbally told about another’s experience was a content included in the contextual category *communicated knowledge* (e.g., she told me she was happy); and another’s described experiences there were not associated with a ‘how’ were included in the contextual category *general knowledge*. None of these figures in the taxonomy because they were not proposed as a meaning of empathy in definition texts.

together was precisely participants' association of an intellectual act with the knowing of another's experience.

The above meaning unit, part of the story text, illustrated well Vivian's definition of empathy: "*Empathy is when you can understand how a person is feeling in a certain situation and put yourself in their shoes*" (#12). That is, for this participant, empathy was understanding another person's experience (*understanding* as the mid-order category) via a perspective-taking mechanism (*perspective-taking* as the mid-order category). Then, the meaning of empathy in both texts converged to a conception of empathy as an intellectual way of knowing another person's experience, and one which involved a perspective-taking act.

The alternative non-intellectual way of knowing another's experience was the *immediately knowing* higher-order category. This category was inspired by phenomenological theories about the experience of being immediately aware of another's experience in a non-intellectual manner. Since, to my knowledge, no-one has ever attempted to empirically study how these experiences were narratively described by non-experts, the analysis of this category was a challenging task.

Meaning units included in the *immediately knowing* higher-order category were not descriptive of an intellectual experience. For example, they neither illustrated an *inference from behaviour*¹⁶, nor an *inference from felt-feeling*¹⁷. I have labelled it as *immediately knowing*, because this study does not seem appropriate to make

¹⁶ This amounted to a *reasoning* experience.

¹⁷ *Inference from felt-feeling* was an envisaged deductive category, inspired by neuropsychology views of the way contagion is used to determine another's experience, but one which bore no echo in present findings; and if it did have manifested itself, it would have amounted to a *reasoning* experience.

theoretical epistemological claims about the possibility of this knowledge being, or not being, direct – simply that the knowing *appears to be* (i.e., is understood to be) immediately given to participants.

The immediately knowing categories were applied to meaning units which portrayed a way of knowing *another's experience*¹⁸ that happened, as written, immediately. For example, "*seeing someone who you care about and who you have shared so much with this upset*" (#24). From this, I observed that: 1) another's experience was "*upset*"; 2) and the knowledge-gaining activity was 'seeing', that is, *perceiving* (the associated lower-order category was, in this case, perception of experiences). That is, another's distress was a perceived one.

The associated definition text mentioned that empathy happened when "*you are upset because someone you love is crying and upset*" (#24). For Andrew (#24), the meaning of empathy involved the act of perceiving someone's distress experience (perceiving mid-order category). Therefore, the meaning of empathy converged across texts, in that it was proposed that the meaning of empathy involved a perceptive knowing act.

Note that all of these empathy-as-knowing mid-order categories can be argued to be an understanding of another's experience, though one of different natures. Consequently, for this study, I opted for an in-vivo¹⁹ categorization coding rule for

¹⁸ Again, of essence was identifying in writing another's experience, and associating to this knowing a particular non-intellectual 'how'. For example, plain descriptions of another's behaviour, or actions, counted as the contextual category *observed behaviour*.

¹⁹ This mid-order category understanding was attributed to the terms 'understand' and 'relate'. These two terms have a slightly distinctive connotation, with 'relate' closer to an analogical form of understanding. However, they co-occurred in 6 out of the total of 7 definitions in which 'relate' was observed; hence I opted for merging these two in-vivo categories.

'understanding'. The use of this term was more frequently connoted as an intellectual act, via its association with other intellectually knowing mid-order categories, and it was thereby included in the *intellectually knowing* higher-order category.

Finally, there was the higher-order category *empathy-as-responding*. Responding categories were applied to meaning units which illustrated a personal response to another's experience. For these categories too, both the what (responding) and the how were important. An example was saying "*i felt sorry for him*" (#8). From this, I observed that 1) one responded to another's experience; and 2) the response was pitying (the associated lower-order category was, in this case, pity). Congruently, Gloria's (#8) definition text proposed that "*empathy is when you feel sorry for someone or a group of people*" (#8). Therefore, both texts revealed the responding sympathetic meaning that empathy had for Gloria.

Each answer was usually associated with several of these categories. For instance, perspective-taking and pity were two categories through which Gloria (#8) defined empathy, in the sense that it was claimed that empathy was a pity experience consequent of the act of imagining another's experience. Hence, the two categories (*pity* and *perspective-taking*) were necessary to illustrate the way empathy was given meaning in that answer.

In addition to the above taxonomy, there were additional data-derived categories, named *contextual categories*. These resulted from the analysis of paired texts, as well as of the remaining sections of the survey, such as people's descriptions of their relationship with the object of empathy (survey's section B). They helped

characterizing the context in which empathy happened, in these texts. They were excluded from the above taxonomy, for clarity sake, but can be found in *Appendix III*. These were: Closeness (perceived closeness to the object of empathy); Fondness (affective appreciation of the object of empathy); Familiarity (pre-acquired knowledge about the object's past life experiences); Target's situation (another's intentional object or situation); Emotional Valence (positive or negative); and Participant's role (resonance or reception, after Barrett-Lennard, 1981).

Trustworthiness

In general, interpretations of findings were explicated throughout the chapter; and exemplified by the use of *verbatim* quotations from several participants, in order to increase the study's transparency - hence, its trustworthiness.

Dependability was enhanced by having gathered answers within a relatively short interval of time; by having used a standardized questionnaire; by gathering a relatively large sample; and by having relatively small amounts of data.

Nevertheless, *transferability* may be questionable because, for example, the taxonomy developed for the preliminary analysis (*Appendix I*) had to be refined in the light of the overall sample. It may be that this approach is too data-driven, hence sample-specific. However, I argue that most of the defined categories would most probably be found in a replication study, as I did find that some of the new answers were still suitably described by the initial taxonomy. Furthermore, since data is not

extensive and is partly interpreted by the participant for the definition answer, the interpretative gap is diminished; and findings are easily observable in manifest content - potentiating *confirmability*.

Findings

This section describes a few contextual categories which are of relevance for the overall thesis. It follows an overview of findings relative to the frequencies of higher-order and mid-order categories in story and definition texts. I continue by exploring the meaning of the observed discrepancy in the incidence of categories across questions. Finally, the statistically significant effect of people's academic background is discussed.

Degree of Closeness to the empath

The survey (section B), asked participants to describe the relationship held with the object of empathy in accordance with pre-established degrees of closeness (strangers, friends, partner, family member, none). This was complemented with an open-ended question. The frequencies of participants' choices are illustrated in Figure 6. The highest degree of intimacy was represented by *kinships* (N=5) and *partnerships* (N=4), which were the contexts of 14.5% of the total of gathered stories of an empathic event. It followed the *Friend/ acquaintance* option (N=38, 61.3%). This was

the most frequent category, probably because it grouped a wide variety of degrees of closeness, from “old”, “close” or “best” friends (N=14) to “not very close friends” (N=4), ex-best friends (N=1) and more distant acquaintances (N=5). There were also two participants who described events which happened between a group of people, some closer to the participant than others.

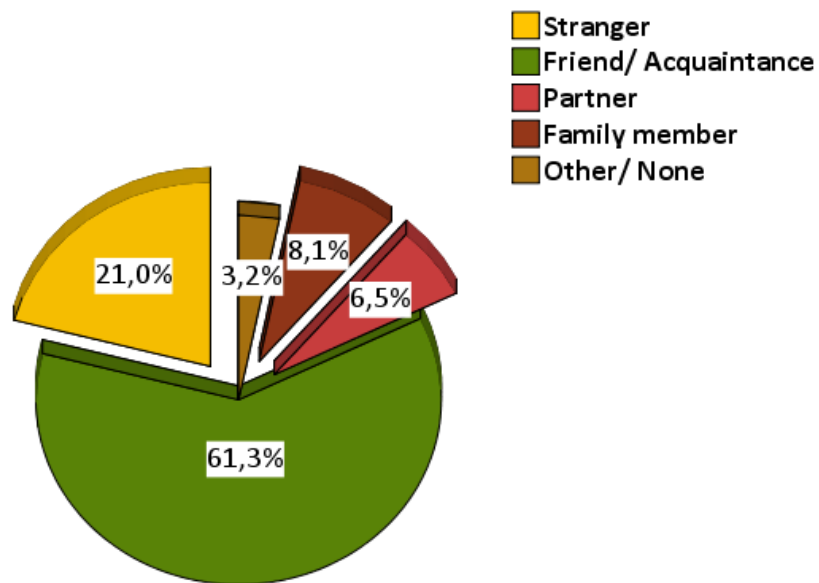


Figure 6: “Degree of Closeness to the empathizer”

On the other side of the spectrum there was the category *stranger*, which had the second highest frequency (N=13, 21%). In two cases, the empathic experience was felt towards a group of strangers. There were also episodes (N=3) involving strangers, though these strangers were: fictional characters (a book character and a television character); and a TV-seen-only Prime Minister. In these three instances, participants were probably slightly familiar with their stories (fictional or not). Hence, they were

strangers, in the sense that participants did not know these people personally, yet they were, in a sense, better called acquaintances. Despite this, the majority of strangers relationships contexts involving people the participants had never seen before the reported event, hence properly called strangers (N=9).

Finally, two participants chose the *no-one* category. The latter option was included as a safeguard, a logical possibility. Even though, through these no-one answers, I suddenly realized that I never, throughout the survey, specified that I expected the lived experience to happen in an interpersonal relational context. I never demanded of participants to report upon an episode involving another person. I even included the 'no-one' option. But, albeit classified as no-one, these events still involve living beings. One of them is a pet; the other is oneself.

Even in these circumstances, it can be argued that, empathy was always seen as an interpersonal experience, in the sense that it always involved both a subject, and an object of the empathic act. Even in the one example where empathy was experienced towards oneself, by considering his definition of empathy (#58: "*intimate emotional connection*"), I still had the impression that he was suggesting that there were two sides that were linked through empathy, in this case, say, the 'I' and the 'me'.

As with experts' theoretical opinions about the importance of closeness, in participants' empathy-related paired texts there were opposing views on the relationship between empathy and closeness (being "*close*" to the object of empathy), familiarity (being familiar with the object of empathy, on knowing about another's past life events), and fondness (liking, or being fond of the object of empathy). In particular,

in definition texts, there were a couple of participants who argued that one (or more) of these aspects, was essential for the occurrence of the empathic experience (N=4), whereas others supported the opposite position, that is, that these aspects were irrelevant (N=2). An example is Nina's (#40) reflection:

I think an element of likeability comes into this, if a dangerous criminal with a penchant for the torturing or murdering of other people was in a similar situation, I think that knowledge would prevent me from empathising with him.

Nina, who continued her definition text by telling a story about a situation during which she felt unable to 'empathize' with someone she was not fond of, is arguing that fondness is probably a necessary condition for 'empathy' (understanding by analogy) to occur. On the other hand, Carmen (#54) presented a straight-to-the-point affirmation: *"I don't think you need to know someone in order to experience empathy, you don't even have to like them very much"*. For Carmen, one does not need to either know or like the other person in order to 'empathize' (feeling, perspective-taking, altruistic experience).

In conclusion, non-experts argued²⁰ in favour, as well as against the importance of closeness, familiarity and fondness for empathy; and the degree of intimacy does not seem to restrict the occurrence of an empathic experience. Each of the offered categories was a chosen relational context, strangers and partners alike. Empathy, regardless of the way it was given meaning, happened in a wide variety of

²⁰ It was not adequate to study whether these relations were influenced by participants' particular conceptions of empathy, because these comments were overall rare occurrences.

interpersonal contexts, of extremely different degrees of intimacy. One experienced pity towards a stranger in the same way one experienced pity towards one's mother. One imagined a close person's experience, in the same way one imagined a stranger's experience. 'Empathy' was even experienced in relationship to a pet, groups of known or unknown people, fictional characters, and oneself – though it always seemed relate a subject to an object.

Target's situation, Emotional Valence and Participant's role

In the story text, the most common reported situations involved: deaths (N=11); diseases/hospitalizations/accidents (N=17); relationship conflicts (N=15); and course/work-related difficulties (N=9). Thus, as described in the empathy story text, the target's situation, or intentional object, was usually a "*difficult or troublesome situation*" (Håkansson & Montgomery, 2003, p.277).

In addition to these recurring scenarios, the texts were rather homogeneous in several ways. Firstly, gathered stories were usually about how the subject empathized with another's experience (*resonance*). There were only three participants (interestingly, all male) who reported upon their own *reception* experience; that is, about how another person empathized with them. There were also two participants, one male and one female, who described themselves, in the empathic episode text, as simultaneously the empathizer and the recipient of another's empathy.

Furthermore, with one exception, empathy was never *defined* as a reception experience. At the most, and simply because the agent of empathy was not identified, it was both a resonance and reception experience (N=3). An example was defining empathy as “*a feeling of emotion from one person to another*” (#25), in which the agent and the recipient of the transferred feeling were not established. Thus, normally, empathy was conceptualized through the angle of the resonant empathizer – even when participants remembered and described being the recipients of another’s empathic experience.

Another rather homogenous aspect was the emotional valence of the experiencing context, which was predominantly negative. This negative valence was even perhaps upgraded, from its contextual character, to a defining characteristic of empathy, for someone who defined empathy as a *pity* or *emotional distress* response. Despite this, some participants agreed that empathy was not restricted to negative emotions or situations (N=6), that “*It could be happiness, but it could also be sadness*” (#25); and there were three empathic episodes’ texts (N=3) depicting positive situations and positively valenced emotions.

Yet, empathy was habitually an experience associated with emotionally negative contexts of experiencing, as conceptualized in definition texts, (N=20, 32.3%) and/or as remembered in the empathic episode question (N=59, 95.2%). With a few exceptional cases, what was observed was that “*I’d say if you use the word empathy it’s more in the context of empathising with someone’s sorry or bad fortune, rather than empathising with someone’s happiness*” (#52).

To conclude, there was an overall homogeneity in these texts relatively to these contextual dimensions. Then, when we inquire about an empathic experience, what we will probably obtain is a story about how the subject empathized with someone else (resonance), in the context of another's disturbing emotionally negatively valence situation. This is what comes to mind to most people when thinking about an empathic event from their own experience.

Overall frequencies of higher-order categories for meanings of empathy

One of the objectives of this study was exploring how the folk psychology definitions of 'empathy' were related to theoretical meanings of 'empathy'. This was partly answered via the development of the taxonomy (Figure 5). Batson's theoretical knowing and responding distinction was a useful broad approach to these participants' texts, because participants' definitions of empathy could be fittingly conceived as either a way of knowing another's experience, and/or a response to another's experience. Thus, Batson's conceptualization seems a largely robust reflection about some commonly expressed broad understanding of the meaning of 'empathy'.

Table 1 illustrates the representativeness of each of these categories (highest frequencies were shaded). In both questions, the co-occurrence of these two categories (knowing and responding) was a more frequent event than the preference for one without the other. That is, most commonly, empathy was defined and lived as both a way of knowing and a way of responding to another's experience.

In almost half of *definition texts* (46.8%), empathy was simultaneously seen as a knowing *and* a response, rather than one of these acts alone (Knowing: 35.5%; Responding: 17.7%). For instance, Gloria’s (#8) definition text offered that: “*empathy is when you feel sorry for someone or a group of people because you can put yourself in their position*” (#8). For her, empathy was a personal emotional response (empathy-as-responding) to the imagined experience of another (empathy-as-knowing).

Table 1: “Overall frequencies of higher-order categories *per* question”

Question Category	Definition	Stories
Knowing	22 (35.5%)	7 (11.3%)
Responding	11 (17.7%)	10 (16.1%)
Both	29 (46.8%)	44 (71%)
Answers’ total	62 (100%)	61* (98.4%)

*One participant discussed the contexts in which empathy happened, rather than offering a definition of the term.

By adding the frequencies of the knowing and responding categories to the frequency with which they co-occurred separately, we find that knowing was mentioned in 82.3% of definition texts, a frequency higher than that of responding (64.5%). On the other hand, in story texts, the frequencies of each of these categories are above 80%, and very close to each other. This means that, although participants usually described a story of empathy that involved both a way of knowing another’s experience and a response to this knowledge, in definition texts they less frequently suggested that empathy was both of the acts they described in the story - being more often knowing the preferred defining aspect (N=22). Consequently, story texts were

more similar to Håkansson & Montgomery's results than definition texts, in that many participants selected one of these higher-order categories to define the term, rather than both; and principally a knowing category.

In conclusion, as with theoretical meanings of empathy, it seems appropriate to talk about everyday meanings of empathy as being about responding, and/or as knowing another's experience. Non-experts give meaning to empathy in these two ways. Most participants' described both of these experiences in their lived experience texts; they were both equally important for the sharing of an empathic episode. Similarly, they most commonly proposed that empathy could be defined as simultaneously knowing and responding to someone's experience. However, some participants restricted the meaning of empathy to one of these acts, principally to knowing acts.

Mid-order categories for meanings of empathy

Relationship between theory and folk psychology

There was also a link between theoretical and folk psychology meanings of 'empathy' in what came to mid-order categories. To begin with, as with theoretical meanings, the multiplicity increased when looking at the differences between particular ways of knowing and responding that were associated with 'empathy'. In this study, ten mid-order categories were devised (Figure 5); six mid-order categories

illustrated empathy-as-knowing meanings, and four mid-order categories illustrated empathy-as-responding meanings.

Empathy-as-knowing was an *immediate* act when it translated the experience of perceiving another's experience (*perceiving*); and of feeling, intuitively feeling even, that which another person was experiencing (*feeling*). These two mid-order categories were the result of breaking into two separate parts the theoretical meaning of direct empathy. Phenomenologically speaking, perceiving is experiencing, and therefore these two aspects are usually not theoretically discriminated. In this study, however, the methodology did not allow for their merging into a single category.

Empathy-as-knowing was an *intellectual* act when the interpersonal knowledge was the result of a comparison between empathizer and empathee's identities or past experiences (*analogy*); of a perspective-taking imaginative act (*perspective-taking*); of a logical reasoning act (*reasoning*); or of an "*understanding*" act (*understanding*).

There were examples of perspective-taking (imagine-self and imagine other) and analogy - as with theoretical meanings (Chapter I). However, in contrast with the theoretical discussion in Chapter I, *understanding* was categorized here as an intellectual act for methodological reasons; and *reasoning* referred to the logical use of available cues to determine another's experiences, but was not limited to the 'inference from behaviour' theoretical meaning of empathy, and could not be merged with perspective-taking. There were no examples of the inference from felt-feeling theoretical meaning of 'empathy'.

As for empathy-as-responding, there were participants who argued that empathy was feeling for another person, most frequently pity²¹ but also sympathetic joy (*sympathy for*); sharing another's known experience, that is, experiencing similar feelings (*sympathetic sharing*); reacting to another's known experience, that is, feeling the impact of another's experience upon oneself, such as when one becomes emotionally distressed (*impact*); and intending to welcome, support, "be kind" (#32) and help others (*altruistic experience*).

With the exception of sympathy for (Scheler's fellow-feeling), most empathy-as-responding mid-order categories did not manifest themselves as theoretically discussed. In particular, *sharing* included several affective responses that were distinguished in the glossary: contagion, identification, and Scheler's community of feelings (the having of an experience similar to that of another, directed towards a common intentional object). *Impact* included any emotional reaction to another's known experience, and was inclusive of experiences that resembled the phenomenon of emotional distress and the very rare phenomenon of sympathetic concern. Even though, the only exclusively empirical meaning of empathy-as-responding was *altruistic experiences*.

In conclusion, the match between theoretical and empirical meanings of 'empathy' was not absolute, because there was one additional meaning of 'empathy' (altruistic experiences); understanding was here limited to intellectual acts for methodological reasons; and a significant amount of theoretical meanings had to be

²¹ Most frequently, the term pity was negatively connoted, who preferred expressions such as 'feeling bad for' to pity.

reformulated (direct empathy; inference from behaviour; emotional distress; and contagion and identification). Despite this, there was an overall sufficient fit between that which is theoretically said and that which folk psychology had to say about 'empathy'.

Overall Incidence of mid-order categories

Figure 7 illustrates the incidence (inscribed inside the bar) of each of the mid-order categories in participants' definition texts (in yellow, to the right) and story texts (in green, to the left). The total amount of mid-order categories ('total' bar) needed to faithfully categorize participants' answers was lower in definition texts (N=133); than in lived experience texts (N=167). The difference in the total amount of utilized categories across questions is (but only) partly justifiable in the light of the texts' length. Generally, story texts (mean of 158.2 words, SD=31.7) were longer, and perhaps more reflected and detailed, than definition texts (mean of 39.6 words, SD=104.5), which sometimes were straight to the point and non-elaborated.

None of the mid-order categories consisted of a general 'universal' definition of meaning. The most common category was *understanding* (N=32, 51.6%), whereas the rest of the categories represented far less than half of these participants' opinions about the meaning of empathy. That is, the meaning of empathy was rather non-consensual in the light of these categories.

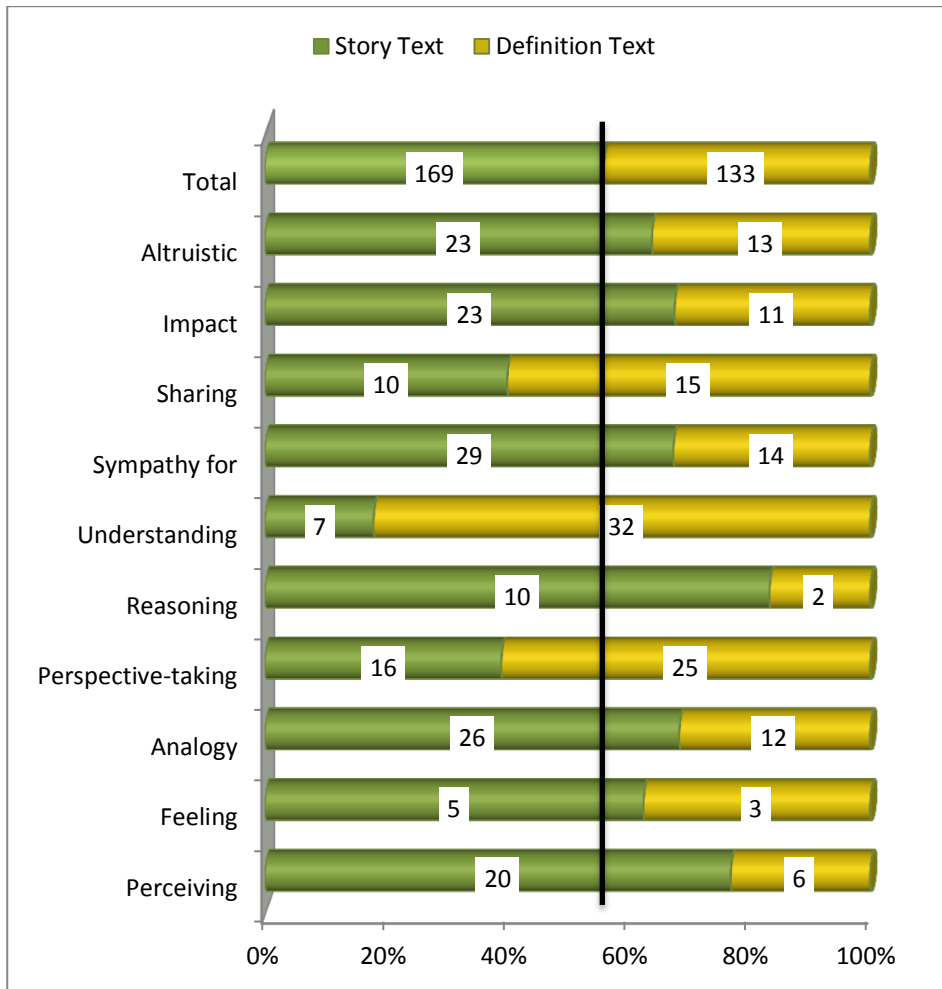


Figure 7: “Frequencies of mid-order categories across paired narratives”

In Figure 7, a line is drawn because it helps to accentuate the differential importance of each mid-order category for either defining empathy or narrating a lived empathic experience. For example, perspective-taking was registered in 25 out of the 62 definition texts; whilst this category was recorded in only 16 out of the 62 story texts. This category was thus more frequent in definition texts than in story texts; and the thus the definition bar extends itself to the left of the line, that is, is bigger than

the story bar. *Sharing, Understanding and Perspective-taking* were all more important to define the meaning of empathy, than for communicating a story of a lived empathic episode.

On the other hand, *altruistic experiences, impact, sympathy for, reasoning, analogy, feeling and perceiving* were more important to describe an empathic episode than in definition texts, because the opposite was observed (the story bar extends itself to the right, being bigger than the definition bar). These categories were then common experiences in people's empathy stories, though they were not so useful for *defining* the meaning of empathy.

In summary, there was only a category more consensually descriptive of participants' definitions of 'empathy' (*understanding*). Secondly, *understanding, perspective-taking and sharing* seemed to be more useful to define empathy, whereas the remainder of the categories were more useful to describe a lived experience.

In the following section, I show how some explanations for this differential incidence of each of the mid-order categories' across texts (definition and story) were tested. This matters insofar that it reassured me about the taxonomy's credibility; and the moderate autonomy of each of these mid-order categories.

Excessive discrimination, flawed taxonomy?

There is a difference in the distribution of higher and mid-order categories across questions; and the incidence of each mid-order category per question was tested.

Table 2 shows the statistically significant differences across questions relative to the presence or absence of each mid-order category; and in which question they were more often observed.

Table 2: “Significant differences in the incidence of mid-order categories across questions (definition, story)”

Mid-order category	X ² results	Significance (2α)	More frequent in...
Perceiving	X ² (1)=5.554 ^a	p=0.018*	Story
Feeling	X ² (1)=24.09 ^a	p≤0.001**	Definition
Understanding	X ² (1)=2.296 ^a	p=0.13	
Analogy	X ² (1)=15.114	p≤0.001**	Story
Perspective-Taking	X ² (1)=2.273	p=0.132	
Reasoning	X ² (1)=5.295 ^a	p=0.021*	Story
Sympathy for	X ² (1)=4.412	p=0.036*	Story
Sharing	X ² (1)=24.037 ^a	p≤0.001**	Definition
Impact	X ² (1)=9.25 ^a	p=0.002*	Story
Altruistic experiences	X ² (1)=2.99 ^a	p=0.084	

^a Yates' correction for expected cell frequency less than 5 (Fisher exact test more accurate results were not preferred to simplify presentation of findings).

** Significance ≤ 0.01

* Significance ≤ 0.05

The results in Table 2 surprised in that, for example, *understanding*, which was the most frequent category in definition texts, and one of the least frequent in story text, did not yield a significant difference. The most significant differences (≤ 0.001), perhaps the only ones which deserve attention, were observed for *feeling*, *analogy* and *sharing*: whereas *feeling* and *analogy* were very frequent in participants' stories, *sharing* was more frequent in definition texts.

Nevertheless, the results have to be interpreted with care, because, in many circumstances, observed and expected frequencies were very low. Speculating about significant differences regarding the category *feeling*, registered merely five times in story answers, and three times in definition texts, does not seem very interesting or credible. Therefore, this category is excluded from these considerations.

This leaves us with the *sharing* category (significantly more frequent in definition texts) and the *analogy* category (significantly more frequent in story texts). This finding could perhaps suggest that, for some participants, 'empathy' would be the responsive experience of *sharing* another's experience, a defining meaning that translated the lived experience of comparing oneself to the object of empathy, and thereby gain some knowledge of their experience *analogy*).

Then, perhaps these two categories could have been collapsed, and still validly translate the participants' meaning-making of 'empathy'. The taxonomy would then be flawed by an excessive discrimination derived from the analysed question. It is possible that, in certain cases, the amount of categories was perhaps exaggerated. For example, participants often proposed a causal link, in definition texts, between *understanding* and *perspective-taking* (*Understand by Perspective-taking*: N=8); and between *analogy* and *understanding* (*Understanding by Analogy*: N=9. This makes of *understanding* a common objective (N=17) of imaginative and/or analogical acts, as illustrated by definition texts; and of *analogy* and *perspective-taking* means towards an understanding end. Their stories would then be about how they imagined or

remembered a similar experience, and the definition texts would clarify that this act had the purpose of understanding another person.

However, sometimes participants proposed a distinctive association between mid-order categories (for example, for Gloria, the finality of perspective-taking was pity), as, by merging²² these categories together, we would still observe that this analogy-perspective-taking-understanding single category was more frequent²¹ in definition texts (N=69) than in story texts (N=49). The same would be observed relatively the hypothetically sharing-analogy experience across questions: this single category was more frequent in participants' stories (N=36) than in definition texts (N=27). Consequently, although fewer categories, in certain cases, could have been created and still translate the participants' intended meaning, this would not explain the difference in their incidence across questions.

Furthermore, there were reasons for not collapsing these categories, namely, views and associations which were contradictory, as with the importance of *analogy*. For instance, at the same time that someone claimed that empathy "*is when you feel bad for someone over something which you do not have experience in*" (#33), another participant defended the opposite perspective: "*Empathy is understanding how another person feels due to your own experience of life*" (#55). Hence, by collapsing *perspective-taking*, *analogy* and *understanding* I would be acting against some of these participants' manifested claims about the meaning of empathy – and some categorical discrimination became consequently more important and necessary.

²² Please note that this simple addition of the frequencies should be divided by the number of merged categories. I have not adopted this procedure here for simplicity and confirmation sake; and, since the denominator remains a constant, the concluding observation would be the same.

In the end, the higher-order categories were created precisely to highlight less sensitive to data findings, that is, more conceptual and generic levels of analysis. That is their purpose. Thus, there seemed to be no need or reason for collapsing a few mid-order categories.

Oversensitivity to language-in-use, flawed taxonomy?

The categorization of participants' answers drew upon the content of both texts. Meaning units were categorized in parallel; the language-in-use in one illuminated the language-in-use in the other. Then, although it is arguable that people adopted a particular jargon in the story text, and another in the definition text, and that this question-specific language-in-use was responsible for the observed difference in the incidence of mid-order categories across questions and for a flawed taxonomy, this methodological procedure of analysing paired texts dealt directly with this issue. The examples included in Table 3 were chosen precisely to illustrate how this procedure worked with each mid-category.

These were exceptions to the categorization procedure, because usually the language-in-use was very similar across questions. Nevertheless, when there seemed to be some language-in-use disparity, it was usually always possible to find the category used to define empathy in the story text, perhaps with a slightly distinctive jargon, but, nevertheless, there and categorized as such.

Table 3: “Examples of story and definition answers for each mid-order category”

Categories	Exemplary Definition	Exemplary Story
Perceiving	<i>“Watching someone in pain (physical or emotional)” (#14)</i>	<i>“There was an old man on the table next to us with his granddaughter, he looked quite fragile when helping himself to the buffet.” (#14)</i>
Intuitively feeling	<i>“When you kind of get a feeling of how someone's feeling without them having to say anything. I suppose I would also call it 'gut feeling'.” (#18)</i>	<i>“After a few minutes I looked up and glanced at her back and just had the feeling that all was not well with her” (#18)</i>
Analogy	<i>“Based on having had an experience oneself which is roughly (sometimes very remotely) comparable” (#47)</i>	<i>“She was longing to tell someone but didn't want to appear to be boasting and I knew exactly how she felt, having been in similar positions when my daughter was accepted at Cambridge.” (#47)</i>
Perspective -taking	<i>“A feeling that you can imagine what it would be like for them in a particular situation” (#2)</i>	<i>“If I had not done this, then maybe he wouldn't have gotten into trouble” (#2)</i>
Reasoning	<i>“Empathy is the realisation and acknowledgment of another person's current bad situation.” (#26)</i>	<i>“As I had been in lectures with him and were assisting each other in doing the practical based coursework, I knew how much had gone into it” (#26)</i>
Understanding	<i>“Empathy is the way in which we can understand another person's feelings.” (#49)</i>	<i>“Because we knew each of us knew the pain the other felt, it was hard to sit and talk about it to each other” (#49)</i>
Sympathy for	<i>“When you feel sorry for someone or a group of people” (#8)</i>	<i>“I felt sorry for him” (#8)</i>
Sharing	<i>“Like sharing an emotion or the reason of an emotion with someone.” (#24)</i>	<i>“I shared her feelings of uncertainty for her, for we were very close” (#24)</i>
Impact	<i>“I don't necessarily feel the same emotions that they were feeling at the time but I have a strong emotional reaction to their experience, such as feeling angry when someone has been hurt” (#15)</i>	<i>“I felt annoyed with him that he is still treating people in this way. She is not manipulative at all and is very much a team player so his comments are completely unjustified” (#15)</i>
Altruistic experience	<i>“Action of showing kindness to a person” (#32)</i>	<i>“This story relates to how she helped me recently (...). She has managed to help me and make me look on the bright side” (#32)</i>

For instance, in Table 3, Betsy's (#49) definition of empathy was in terms of *understanding*; and this was the only knowing act that she described in the definition text. Consequently, to give meaning to the sentence "*each of us knew the pain the other felt*", central to this study, I turned towards the definition text and classified it as about understanding. Another example is how an 'appearance' of fragility (#14) became associated with the category *perceiving*.

In conclusion, the differential incidence of mid-order categories across questions does not seem plausibly explained by oversensitivity to language-in-use, one which could hypothetically differ in accordance with the type of question posed.

Contextualized stories and spontaneous use of the term 'empathy'

In the light of data, there are two more plausible explications for the detected discrepancy across questions. First, participants were asked to share a story about 'empathy' and to provide contextual details. Thus, it is expectable that they would do as requested, and describe an empathic experience, but also the relevant (for them) context in which it occurred – a 'context', a sequence of events, that might involve additional experiences that amount to other people's understanding of the meaning of empathy. Then, I am suggesting that many of these phenomena were necessary to properly describe an empathic episode, although only a few of them, or one, amounted to the meaning of empathy for that participant.

For instance, although empathy often occurred in the context of helping another person (*altruistic experiences*), this category seldom corresponded to what that participant saw as the empathic phenomenon in the whole narrated story. This is, for me, one of the most plausible justifications of the disparity of the incidence of each mid-order category across questions.

Secondly, these two questions probably involve accessing different kinds of information. Stories probably involved a more spontaneous and applied use of a concept, the way one related to the term in one's daily life, an everyday meaning of a word. This applied meaning of the concept is not necessarily the same as its conceptual meaning, that is, the one comes up with when asked to conceptually define that term. Thus, the concept being described in the story text could be an applied one, whereas the concept being described in the definition text could be a conceptual and abstract one.

This reflection resulted from noticing that the spontaneous use of the word empathy in the participants' stories texts sometimes seemed to differ from its meaning in definition answers. This does not mean that the defined phenomenon was not part of the lived experience, but that the use of word seemed to bear distinctive qualities. For this purpose, I counted those accounts in which the expression feeling 'empathy for' / 'empathy towards' appeared (N=13). Eleven of these meaning units were written by participants who define empathy as knowing (N=12); sometimes even exclusively as nothing but knowing (N=3).

When someone defines empathy as perspective-taking and writes, in the paired text, does this mean that they felt empathy for the object that they imagined and thereby experienced a state because of the object? It is possible, but, at least for me, a rather unusual use of expression 'feels empathy for'. This observation becomes more intelligible by accepting that the spontaneous use of the word empathy was often closer to the concept of sympathy, but that, when asked to define the concept, their reflection suggested otherwise.

In conclusion, I believe that the difference in the incidence of mid-order categories across questions is partly explained by accepting the above explications: a preference for one of the described lived phenomena as the 'proper' definition of empathy; and an applied meaning of empathy (empathy-as-responding) distinctive from its more common conceptual 'proper' meaning (empathy-as-knowing).

Academic background and the meaning of empathy

Empathy's meanings seemed to be partly affected by one's academic background. Regarding empathy-as-knowing categories, psychology students more often defined empathy as *perspective-taking*, in contrast with non-psychology students. Concretely, fifteen²³ perspective-taking definitions were provided by the group of 22 psychologists, whereas only eight definitions along these lines were given by the group of 32 non-Psychologists. This difference was highly significant (Pearson's

²³ This total of fifteen represents the 14 definitions in which perspective-taking was observed, plus the answer in which perspective-taking and analogy were both registered.

$\chi^2(1)=9.942, 2\alpha p=0.002$). Thus, perspective-taking was a much more common stance among psychologists. In addition, psychologists more often define empathy as *understanding*, though in this case the difference is less significant (Pearson's $\chi^2(1)=5.968, 2\alpha p=0.015$). This is illustrated in Figure 8.

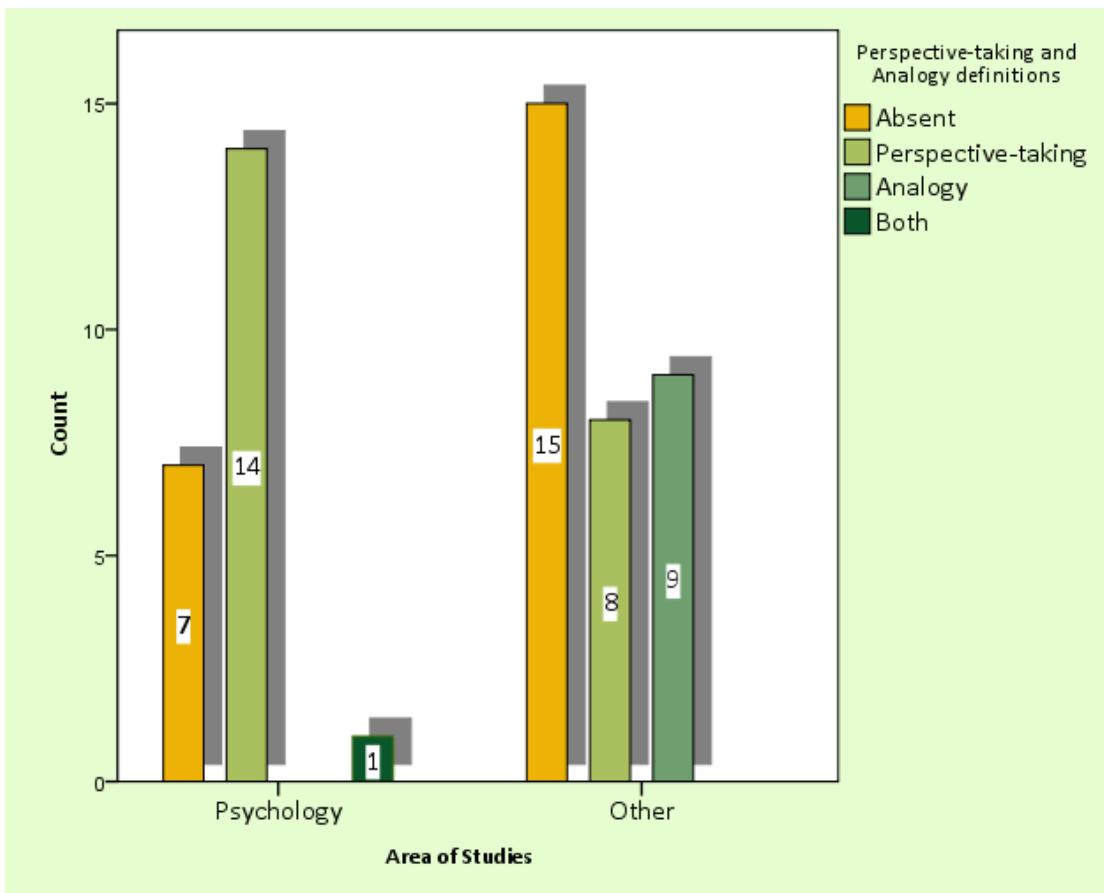


Figure 8: “Frequencies of definitions of empathy-as-knowing involving perspective-taking and analogy, *per area of studies*”

On the other hand, there was only one psychologist involving *analogy* in the definition of empathy, in contrast with the nine non-psychologists who anchor the meaning of empathy in *analogy*, a statistically significant difference (Pearson's $\chi^2(1)=4.804, 2\alpha p=0.028$).

Non-psychologists then defined empathy less often in terms of *analogy* and/or *perspective-taking* (yellow bar). They also more often defined it in terms of *analogy* alone - whereas psychologists never did so. This does not mean that psychologists did not write about having remembered a similar past experience during an empathic episode in the story text. In fact, this statistical difference was not observed for the comparison of these groups' story texts. It only means that psychologists did not commonly see in *analogy* a defining meaning of empathy: only one psychologist offered *analogy*, in combination with and *perspective-taking*, as empathy's definition. Rather, psychologists tended to prefer the *perspective-taking* conceptual meaning of empathy.

As for empathy-as-responding categories, eleven non-psychologists involved, in the defining meaning of empathy, an *altruistic experience*; whereas there was only one psychologist defining empathy in this manner (Fisher exact test, $2\alpha p=0.009$). Overall, then, non-psychologists more often defined empathy as an *altruistic experience*; less often as an intellectual ability of knowing another's experience, by *perspective-taking* or *analogy*; and, when they did identify empathy with intellectually knowing another's experience, *analogy* was preferred.

These differences, consequent of participants' area of studies, and considering that the proportion of psychologists in this sample (35.5%) is not representative of the vaster population's education level and academic area, strongly emphasised that these frequencies should not be generalized without first attending to this variable. With a study more balanced in terms of participants' academic backgrounds, it is probable

that empathy-as-responding, and that a few meanings of empathy-as-knowing like analogy, will be more frequent.

Conclusions

The variety of lived empathic experiences, as well as definitions of the concept, suggests the findings are moderately representative of folk psychology stances. Batson's knowing and responding approach to theoretical meanings of empathy was effective for the organization of empirical meanings of empathy. Most commonly, empathy was defined as both a way of knowing and responding to another's experience, although their combination was more important for the sharing of an empathy story, than for defining 'empathy'. There was also an overall sufficient fit between theoretical and empirical meanings of empathy. That is, theoretical claims bore an echo in participants' texts and opinions. Nevertheless, the inductive categorization procedure was a very adequate methodological choice because this fit was far from absolute.

Empathy-as-knowing appeared as a more common form of defining empathy. However, in comparison with the general population, this sample included a larger number of psychologists, who more often defined empathy-as-intellectually-knowing another's experience. Consequently, the empathy-as-knowing meaning is probably overrepresented. We should expect to find more people defining *empathy-as-*

responding, in a sample more balanced in terms of participants' academic backgrounds.

As a consequence of a prior interest in the phenomenological theoretical meaning of empathy (*direct empathy*), this meaning was isolated as a separate empathy-as-knowing higher-order category. It had two mid-order categories (*perceiving* and *feeling*). Despite their median (in story texts) or low (in definition texts) frequency, the appearance of these ideas is important; as it even sometimes corresponded to the unique meaning of empathy (e.g., for the participant in Table 3, used to illustrate the *feeling* category). It was thus an unavoidable meaning, not just some pink elephant or tunnel vision of mine. It suggests that 'immediately knowing' might represent some people's understandings of what empathy is. Although this phenomenon appeared to be a moderately common lived experience, since its frequency on definition texts was rather low, the term empathy should be avoided when inquiring people about experiences such as these.

With a few exceptions (e.g., #40: "*This day, however, he was stumbling over his words but almost enthusiastically so.*"), *perceiving* was not about seeing particular meaningful behaviours. Indeed, the seen 'behaviour' could be as non-illustrative as another's "*back*" or totally absent from the text. *Perceiving* was rather about the knowing of another's experience, there-and-then, through a sensitive act, for which intellectual processes seem of little relevance, if contributing at all. Moreover, in texts descriptive of this immediate knowing, both *perceiving* and *feeling* were sometimes closely associated phenomena: "*After a few minutes I looked up and glanced at her*

back and just had the feeling that all was not well with her” (#18). That is, Mimi’s (#18) intuitive feeling was linked to a perceptive act, to a ‘glance’ thrown at another’s direction. Nevertheless, the coding rules did not allow for their merging.

The alternative knowing higher-order category was about intellectually knowing another’s experience. This *intellectual empathy-as-knowing* was a much more frequent meaning of empathy, principally among psychologists and in terms of *perspective-taking*. Therefore, even though in psychology both sympathy (*empathy-as-responding*) and *perspective-taking* amount to possible theoretical meanings of empathy (e.g., Batson, 2009; Davis, M. 2009), *perspective-taking* seems to be a more usual meaning of empathy in this academic area. On the other hand, non-psychologists more often defined empathy as a way of responding to another’s experience; and when they did define it as an intellectual act, it was analogy that became a more useful category.

In my opinion, these intellectual forms of knowledge-gaining seemed to have the character of an in-depth intellectual exploration of another’s experience. That is, in empathy stories, some sort of introductory knowledge preceded every single non-immediate way of knowing, such as initially being told about someone else’s experience (*communicated knowledge*); or immediately perceiving an experience. It was only after this ‘initial knowledge’ that intellectual knowing acts was put in action. Intellectually knowing represented as a second step, a follow-up to some introductory knowledge relative to another’s situation/ experience. By being a second step, intellectually knowing another’s experience can equally be conceived of as a response, though not a reactive personal response, as with sympathy; but as a cognitive

knowledge-pursuing response, one which allows us to understand another's experience in "*a way that you couldn't otherwise*" (#3). This is in line with Davis' (1983, 2009) stance, but also in line with Batson (2009) in terms of purpose (i.e., knowing another's experience in a light). Non-immediate ways of knowing are not seen here as incompatible with immediate ways of knowing. Indeed, in people's paired texts, it was possible to find examples of their complementary use. For example, Mimi (#18) continued her story text about her intuitive feeling by describing imagined reasons behind the intuited experience.

I suggest that immediate and non-immediate ways of knowing may co-occur, and complement each other, but that they are not one and the same phenomenon. Each is described in different manners and illustrates very different experiences and contexts. For example, there was a participant who perceived another's fragility, and reacted with an intense distress and pity experience for unknown reasons; and never attempted to intellectually understand the object's experience. She was just puzzled with her reaction, and one which she attributed to a very particular cause (perceiving another's experience). Therefore, immediately knowing was not always described in association with intellectual knowing acts, and this observation is suggestive of their independence.

Empathy-as-responding categories portrayed the experience of being affected by another's known experience, in one, or another way; and were generally suitably described as sympathetic emotional responses to another's experience. Sympathy and knowing were not mutually exclusive meanings of empathy; and, in many cases,

definition answers included mid-order categories from both groups. These two experiences (responding and knowing) were even sometimes causally related by participants in a cause-effect manner that was similarly to the one proposed by Scheler (Chapter I). Those who partly defined empathy as sharing, implicitly or explicitly, presupposed that what they were feeling was similar to what the object of empathy was feeling. This was the only way through which I was able to detect the presence of an 'inference from felt-feeling'. It was not quite along the lines of contagion theories, because the reflective movement, as written, was: 1st the object had a known state; 2nd the subject felt a state; 3rd self and object were having what was implicitly suggested as a similar/ common/ shared experience. Hence, the similarity was, at the most, inferred from what was known from *both* the object's and subject's experiences, not of the subject's known reactive experience alone (e.g., #19: "*I could tell that she was really nervous, because she was blushing bright red everywhere and her hands were shaking slightly (...). I became aware during her practice talk that I was starting to feel nervous too*").

As for the *impact* category, and despite the occasional high level of reported personal distress, what I found was not so much an egotistic self-oriented individualistic response (as emotional distress is theoretically connoted), but a very intense personal emotional response which superimposed itself to another's known experience, obliterating it, precisely due to the intensity of one's response. Just like someone who has two aching injuries might focus upon the more intense pain, while sending the other to the background of experiencing.

Although there were differences in the incidence of mid-order categories across each questions, it seemed that this difference was not a consequence a flawed taxonomy (e.g., unable to detect the same meaning for both questions). Instead, this difference seemed to derive from the distinctive meanings of an applied concept (story text) and an abstract concept (definition text). The more spontaneous applied use of 'empathy' seemed closer to the concept of sympathy, whereas the abstract concept was closer to an empathy-as-knowing meaning.

Finally, contextually speaking, empathy appeared as an experience that puts an object and a subject in relationship with each other, by means of an empathic act. and that occurred regardless of the emotional valence of the experiencing context, and the degree of closeness of the involved people. Nevertheless, it was usually associated, principally as a lived experience, to negatively valenced emotional contexts, and defined and remembered from the perspective of the empathizer.

Discussion

'Empathy' is often understood as an interpersonal act (Barret-Lennard, 1981; Boulanger & Laçon, 2006; Gallese, 2003; Håkansson & Montgomery, 2003; Stein, 1917/1989; Thompson, 2001). In this study, it put in relation two poles, a self and an object, even when that object is an animal, a group of people, a fictional character, a stranger, a partner, or even oneself. 'Empathic' experiences happened in a wide variety of 'interpersonal' contexts, regardless of the way empathy is given meaning by

a particular individual. I found examples of immediate knowing, intellectual knowing, and sympathetically responding happening in-between strangers, as well as in-between close others. That is, for none of these types of empathy, closeness, or lack of it, seems of essence; 'empathy' happened in spite of it.

Although there were a few stories involving partners, people did recall less empathic episodes happening in this context (it was the lowest frequency among pre-established degrees of closeness); and Håkansson and Montgomery gathered none. This suggests that people prefer to discuss empathic experiences occurred in non-romantic relational contexts; or it pends in favour of Pistrang et al.'s (2002) suggestion this particular context may sometimes work as an impediment, rather than a facilitator, as some proposed (Kerem et al., 2001; Noller, 2006; Preston & Waal, 2002; Stinson & Ickes, 1992; Zaki, Bolger & Ochner, 2007).

The open-endedness of questions was fruitful. For instance, I would never have thought of predefining an animal as the object of empathy (albeit theoretically proposed, Scheler, 1913; Stein, 1917; Thompson, 2001); nor of empathy as, 'tout court', an act of kindness (#32). This is one of the reasons for conducting exploratory qualitative studies. By being, now and again, surprised by participants' answers, I have the impression that it was a very useful choice.

The experience of categorizing data was not a simple task. To solve many decision difficulties, I sometimes turned towards the lived experience. However, an example of a lived event from one's experience is merely a possible concretization of an abstract concept. Lived experience accounts are like shedding the light upon one

single facet of the multiple facets of a conceptual mirrored ball. It is not, therefore, representative of the whole experience, or of the whole meaning behind it – if that can even be found. As a consequence of this procedure, the weight of explicit content, and the particularizing goal, I might have narrowed down participants' intended meaning to its visible facet. Nevertheless, this procedure made me feel more reliant on the overall trustworthiness of these findings; Batson's criterion is perhaps broad enough to compensate for the effect of these more detail-related decisions; and the size of the sample gives to the findings an increased strength. There is, in some cases, strength in numbers.

My methodological choices were a conscious and effortful strategy of avoiding biasing the interpretation to support some conscious (or unconscious) belief of mine, partly derived from reflections relative to Håkansson and Montgomery's (2003) data analysis. Since my goal was not, as theirs, to find 'universal' constituents of empathic experiences, but precisely to understand patterns in the meanings of empathy, I thought that I could afford focusing on differences, instead of identities, derived from latent content or from a less systematically categorization method. Objectivity (as with this QCA approach) can be a cruel strategy (for a researcher holding a very strong belief about some data's latent meaning). But I defend that it is also a more faithful (to the data) strategy. As these categories were established here, there is a lower margin for multiple competing interpretations.

Håkansson and Montgomery's results bear a much stronger echo in findings relative to these participants' empathy stories (the basis of their analysis too), than in

those relative to the meanings of empathy. For example, they nominated both empathy-as-responding (emotional response, felt concern) and empathy-as-knowing (understanding, similarity impression) as empathy's constituents, and in this study, the co-occurrence of these higher-order categories was 71% in participants' texts about a story of empathy. However, the co-occurrence of these in definition texts is much lower (46.8%), and therefore these constituents seem less representative of people's ways of giving meaning to 'empathy'.

This implies that we cannot derive, from descriptions of a lived empathic story, and without a great margin of misunderstanding, what was empathic for the individual in the overall narrative – though we might suggest that a particular set of phenomena often co-occur, that they often go hands-in-hands with an 'empathic' experience. But by no means did this study's high-order or mid-order categories appear here as 'universal constituents' of 'empathic experience', or as universal meanings of empathy. There was a high variability, then, low consensus, across questions and in-between participants.

Secondly, the emotional valence (the way Håkansson and Montgomery operationalized the 'emotional response' constituent) appeared in this study as a contextual category, definitely not a constituent. For example, there was a participant who described how she imagined the speaker's embarrassment and did not report feeling any responsive emotion.

There were examples of positive experiencing contexts, but the vast majority of participants' story texts involved at least another's negative emotions. It seems that

the term empathy principally evoked the recollection of disturbing life events of another. Although this might partly result from the pity and distress meanings of empathy, I believe the reason for this is unrelated to the concept of empathy. For instance, it is known that people more often feel the need to talk about traumatic negative experiences, as a sort of catharsis, than positive ones; or that discussing a positive event might feel like a 'bragging' act to avoid. People also tend to question less (reflect less) about an offered candy, than a slap in the face.

Understanding was the most common category, even under the strict 'in-vivo' coding rule. This finding partly supports Kerem et al.'s (2001) and Tempel's (2007) choice of the word understanding for gathering empathy-related data – though *understanding* alone would not be enough to represent everyone's beliefs about the meaning of empathy. Secondly, in half of these cases, *understanding* was often (though not always) associated with two intellectual acts, *perspective-taking* and *analogy*. This could explain why their findings concentrated around intellectual ways of knowing, and justifies Kerem et al.'s (2001) conclusion: "*it seems rare that empathy will exist without any cognitive understanding*" (p.727). But this was not always the case, as with the participant that was distressed at the sight of another's frailty.

The main objective of this investigation was realizing whether non-experts provided, as experts, multiple definitions for the term empathy. And, indeed, this objective was accomplished, because I found many distinctive empirical meanings of empathy, most of which corresponding to theoretical meanings of empathy, though also some additional few. This supports the initial supposition, one which has a major

implication. We cannot go around asking people about empathic experiences, and believe they will talk about what we intend them to talk about. Empathy is then a term prone to misunderstandings (lay people and experts alike). One should not study empathy without starting to clarify very clearly what one understands by such word, both to oneself, to the team of involved researchers, to participants, and to readers. At least while this current state of affairs perseveres. And if one is really interest in ‘understanding’, ‘helping’, ‘sympathy’, ‘perspective-taking’, and so forth, why not call each just that?

And it is precisely this advice that I have taken from this study. In the following chapters of this thesis, I concentrate upon the immediate ways of knowing, an experience which I distinguish from sympathetic and imaginative ones. This phenomenon is a kind of an immediate understanding of another’s experience that I approximate to the phenomenological conception of empathy. Since this seldom was the meaning behind people’s interpretations of ‘empathy’, I do not attempt to ask people about ‘empathy’ and hope that perceiving is what comes to their minds. I simply avoid the word empathy altogether, and try to make people talk about this phenomenon with alternative expressions. But I am reassured that this phenomenon appears in people’s lived experiences, even if not always under the label ‘empathy’.

CHAPTER THREE

EDITH STEIN'S EMPATHY

Chapter III

The aim of this chapter is to illustrate Edith Stein's phenomenological descriptive analysis of the nature empathy.

Introduction

Empathy' entered everyday discourse surprisingly recently. The German philosopher Theodor Lipps was influential in this. In 1903, Lipps²⁴ adopted the German term *Einfühlung*, derived from the Greek *empathēia* (from **em-** 'in' and **pathos** 'feeling'), in his thesis on aesthetic experiences. This concept was translated by Titchener into English as 'empathy'. It was used to describe the "*process of humanizing objects, of reading or feeling ourselves into them*" (Duan & Hill, 1996, p.261, cf. Titchener, 1924, p. 417). At the core of this concept is the idea of "*going into a strong feeling-connection with another*" (Barrett-Lennard, 1981, p.91).

Soon after this, Max Scheler's (1913) work on sympathy appeared, (*Sympathie/ mitgefühl*), followed by Edith Stein's thesis on empathy (1917/1989). Lipps, Scheler and Stein proposed theoretically distinct views of these interpersonal phenomena (sympathy and empathy), which over time have been confused with one another. It is possible to draw a parallel between Lipps' proposal and current neuropsychological views on contagion and mimicry, as a step towards one's inferential knowledge of another's experience (Chapter I); and between Scheler's work on sympathy and ethics

²⁴ This is a common contemporary historical view, though Duan and Hill (1994, p.261) were able to track down the use of *Einfühlung* to Robert Vischer (1873), in the aesthetic field, which would be the "*predecessor of empathy, to mean humans' spontaneous projection of real psychic feeling into the people and things they perceive*". On the other hand, Zepf and Hartmann (2008, p.56) remarked that the word empathy was first used by Lotze, in 1858, to describe how "*we can deploy our imagination to place ourselves in, and participate in the experience of nature*", as well as to Herder, in 1774, to describe how one 'feels oneself into everything'. Therefore, although there are alternative historical versions, in these early beginnings, empathy was a term that described an act that connected a subject to an object (person or other) by means of which some sort of knowing of that object occurred.

with the contemporary meanings of empathy as sympathy and pity offered by developmental approaches (Chapter I).

Edith Stein's thesis, "*On the problem of empathy*" (1917; *Zum Problem der Einfühlung*), was conducted under the supervision of Edmund Husserl. It is a rare, canonical example of orthodox, Husserlian, phenomenological inquiry. In this work, Stein provides one of the most systematic, complete, and thorough applications of a phenomenological and descriptive approach to experience; in particular, to the psychological experience of 'empathy'.

Stein's clarity about the limits and nature of empathy was achieved by means of the descriptive phenomenological method. This required her to establish the essential features of empathy, and to rule out of her account those simulacra of empathy which, without close examination, might be mistaken for empathy itself. This means that she *discriminates without agglomerating* (after Chapter I), electing a particular meaning as her *one true empathy* - as Preston and Waal (2002) implicitly did. Given that the field of empathy studies is in some conceptual disarray, and that the term itself has a relatively recent academic history, Stein's conceptual and experiential clarity is worthy of re-discovery and offers a sound basis for further psychological research.

Unfortunately, the conceptual clarity of her *thinking* is not mirrored by the *accessibility* of her work. The text of her thesis on empathy is embedded within the dense and specialist phrasing of the German phenomenologists. Therefore, Stein's ideas are unpacked here for psychology readers, in the hope that you find it as illuminating as I did. I believe that this theoretical journey is fruitful, because, through

it, a new clearly defined meaning of the term empathy arises; and one which is remarkably contemporary and theoretically coherent.

I turn towards Stein's understanding of empathy, for many reasons. Stein is concerned with the experience of directly knowing what someone is presently experiencing, there-and-then. This is largely what Stein conceptualizes as an empathic experience. For some, it is the inaugural moment which precedes the 'proper' empathetic experience (e.g., Davis, M., 2009; Preston & Waal, 2002). I believe that this phenomenon, particularly as Stein explains it, has not been given enough attention in psychology literature. Secondly, it has definitely not been given the attention which Stein dedicated to its lived experience. Stein's work then assumed a greater relevance here.

Stein's understanding of empathy, as a concept, permeates the reasoning and research choices throughout this thesis. For instance, it has already manifested itself theoretically (*direct empathy* as a theoretical meaning of empathy, in Chapter I), but also empirically, by being responsible for the attention paid to immediate ways of knowing someone's experiencing (*perceiving* and *feeling* mid-order categories of the folk psychology study in Chapter II). Finally, it was precisely its discovery that grounded my view and impelled me to elect it as my research object. Subsequent empirical studies presented here are precisely about its lived experience. Consequently, I detail her work in this chapter.

Stein's brief biography

Edith Stein²⁵ (1891-1942) was born at Freiburg im Breisgau, Germany, into a Jewish family. In her youth, she declared herself an atheist. Stein began her doctoral thesis while working as an assistant to Husserl at the University of Göttingen, but her studies were interrupted by the war, and the death of Husserl's son. For a period, she worked as a nurse at a field hospital in Austria. In 1916, the field hospital was dissolved, and Husserl took up a new post at Freiburg im Breisgau, so Stein returned to the town of her birth, where she completed her doctorate in 1917. Stein worked alongside Martin Heidegger, who was also an assistant to Husserl during this period.

Professorial posts were not easily obtained by women at this time, nor by Jews in Germany; and Stein appears to have struggled to find a niche for herself. She held posts at Freiburg and Göttingen, before working as a schoolteacher for some years. Academically, she retained an interest in phenomenology, philosophy and psychology, but in the 1920s she also converted to Catholicism, and an increasingly theological focus informed her later work. She left her final teaching post and entered a convent in 1934, and was smuggled into Holland in 1938. She was arrested by the Gestapo in 1942, and sent to Auschwitz, where she was killed together with her sister. Stein was beatified in 1987. Her life and work are as important to the Catholic Church as they are to students of philosophy. I have taken her work in its own right, but of course I recognise that the story of her life and death is remarkable.

²⁵ For a biography, see Oben (1988/2010), and Macintyre (2006).

Stein's work on empathy was written before her conversion to Catholicism, and it is not in any way a mystical artefact - although this misunderstanding does exist (see Boulanger & Lançon, 2006, p.505). As a writer of her time, Stein was not alone in having to address, and reflect upon, the relationship between her ideas and the concept of God; the concept of God was central to the concerns of her readership and peers. This does not transform her early work into theology: in the work discussed here, the concept of God, in itself, is never used to explain the essence of the phenomenon of empathy, or of human beings.

Stein and contemporary psychology

Even though her particular conception is absent from Batson's (2009) listing of psychological meanings of empathy, according to the binomial strategy adopted in this thesis, Stein's views can be included in the 'empathy-as-knowing' drawer. It is a commonly overlooked 'empathic' knowing and it is also sometimes misinterpreted, or only partially portrayed. Recently, however, there has been a growing resurgence of interest in some of her doctoral claims, in philosophy and in psychology (e.g., Boulanger & Lançon, 2006; Depraz, 2008, 2001; Gallagher, 2007; Geist, 2009; Gurmin, 2007; Hart, 1999; Hobson, 1985; Prinz, 2006; Reik, 1948; Rockwell, 2008; Rogers, 1957/2007; Thompson, 2001; White, 1997; Zahavi, 2008b; 2007, 2001).

I think that her proposition has the potential to clarify the concept of empathy for psychology, and to open up new directions for researchers in this field. I focus here

upon the key aspects of Stein's thesis, drawing out those which have most relevance for the contemporary psychology of empathy. Stein's views sometimes contradict widely-held contemporary views about empathy, but they are developed with a logic and elegance which is persuasive and logically consistent. I am then suggesting, to those interested in the nature of empathy, that, through its study *as a lived experience*, a theoretically and coherently grounded understanding of 'empathy' can be produced, and guide research in an insightful illuminating manner.

Stein's empathy phenomenon

Empathy as a way of knowing

To introduce what Stein means by empathy, I begin by clarifying the epistemological assumptions behind her reasoning, which are drawn from the first phases of Husserl's phenomenology (Gurmin, 2007).

The first of these is that people are embodied, minded and embedded in the world. Secondly, the world is objectively 'out there' to be perceived, in the sense that it is not merely a subjective representation inside the mind. Thirdly, people relate to the world by means of an intentional act of consciousness. This intentional act is what brings the world and its objects into consciousness, as phenomena. Consciousness is always intentional - it connects in consciousness a self to an object, worldly or other - and it is always relational - in the sense that it places a self and an object in relation to

one another, by means of an intentional act. Fourthly, phenomena (objects as appearing in consciousness) bear in themselves essential qualities of the given object. Finally, through phenomenology, it is possible to inspect these phenomena and identify an object's essential qualities.

For Stein (p.6; p.21), empathy is an intentional act in this phenomenological linked-in-consciousness sense. However, it is a very particular kind of intentional act, because its object is the present experience of another. For Stein, empathy deals with the *givenness*, to oneself, of this foreign experience; and it is through empathy that "*foreign experience is comprehended*" (p.6). This is also a core contemporary assumption, referred to in the literature as the *alterity*, *otherness* or *foreign* quality of an empathic experience.

To begin with, then, for Stein, empathy is a way of knowing another's present experience. Among Scheler, Lipps and Stein, there is, indeed, the agreement that empathy is a way of knowing or understanding others: "*There are three spheres of knowledge. I know about things, about myself, and about others.... The source of the third type of knowledge is empathy*" (Barrett-Lennard, 1981, p.91, cf. Allport, 1937, p.351). This was then a consensual meaning of empathy in philosophy in the beginning of the twentieth century, and one which contrasts with contemporary psychological theories that view empathy as a response to another's experience (Chapter I).

Many psychologists would hold that empathy is (only or also) a response to another's experience. This is often conceptualized as empathy's affective component, that is, one's personal emotional congruent *response* to the affective state of another

person (Batson, 2009; Boulanger & Lançon, 2006; Decety & Jackson, 2006; 2004; Depraz, 2001; Duan & Hill, 1996; Eisenberg, 2000; Gladstein, 1983; Håkansson, 2003; Hoffman, 2000; Hassenstab et al., 2007; Hatfield et al., 2009; Jabbi et al., 2007; Kerem et al., 2001; Preston & Waal, 2002). Two forms of affective responses commonly investigated by these authors are contagion and emotional distress; and their importance in current empathy-related literature is evident in the following: “*All forms of empathy involve some level of emotional contagion and personal distress*” (Preston & Waal, 2002, p.4).

Stein explicitly rejects this idea, not because these responses do not exist, but because, for her, it is not *the response*, in itself, that is empathic. For Stein, empathy is, by definition, a means through which knowledge is acquired about another person’s experience – and *not* the subsequent reaction or response to that understanding. That is, empathy amounts to an empathy-as-knowing experience that does not *necessarily* involve a personal emotional response, it “*amounts to experiencing, say, the other person’s emotion without being in the corresponding emotional state yourself*” (Zahavi, 2008b, p.517). Contagion and distress are ruled out as a mere simulacra of empathy, precisely because these are *personal* and *responsive* experiences - not *another’s* experience:

Feelings are aroused in us by witnessed ‘phenomena of expression’ (...) we speak of contagion or transference of feelings in such cases. It is very plain that these actual feelings aroused in us (...) do not announce a foreign experience as empathy does (Stein, p.23).

Stein is not entirely alone in her understanding of empathy as a way of knowing, rather than a personal response, but there is a further process-related distinction to be made between her views and those of others. According to Batson (Chapter I), there are two prevailing approaches to empathy-as-knowing: explicit simulation (reasoning about available information, for an imaginative theory of mind to be formulated; *perspective-taking, empathic accuracy*), and implicit simulation theories (contagion response that acts as an unconscious replication of another's experience, and is subsequently used to determine another's experience; *inference from felt-feeling*)

From Stein's perspective, these two approaches are similar in that it is argued that the basis of empathic knowledge is acquired by means of an 'intellectual act'. The processes implied here suggest a mediated, inferential, intellectual knowledge of another's experience. Stein's view is distinct from these approaches in this point.

For Stein, empathy is, by definition, the *direct givenness* (immediate and experiential) to oneself of another's experience. Empathy is a non-intellectual givenness of foreign experiences. She does not ignore the existence of these other processes, or that "*our understanding of others comes in many shapes and forms*" (Zahavi, 2008b, p.515) but, for her, empathy is a very particular and immediate form of knowledge, and a very particular form of understanding.

Empathy as an interpersonal experience

Stein's empathic experience involves at least two perspectives, self and other, throughout the process. It is an interpersonal experience in that there is always an empathizer who relates with an empathizee²⁶, personal and foreign experiences connected via an intentional empathic act. On the other hand, in the models of empathy proposed by her predecessor, Lipps, and in some contemporary theories, a kind of 'merging' of empathizer and empathized is hypothesised.

For Stein, Lipps' ultimate level of empathy is a unity between self and other, captured by a feeling of "*oneness*" (p.16). Lipps describes a kind of 'inner participation' in other's experiences (p.12), which is only complete when there is no longer a distinction between oneself and the other. This is explained with a theory of imitation, which resonates with contemporary ideas about contagion and mirroring (e.g., Hatfield et al., 2009).

Perhaps as a consequence of Lipps' work, we find a number of recent authors asserting that empathy is, or involves, a lack of "*self-other distinction*" (Preston & Waal, 2002, p.4, tab. 2), or a "*total identification without discrimination between one's feelings and those of the other*" (Decety & Jackson, 2004, p.75); or a 'merging-with', where subject and object function as an unique body (Finlay, 2005); or a feeling of "*at-oneness*" (Davis, C., 1990, p.709), or a connection that "*temporarily unites the separate social entities of self and other*" (Davis, M., 2009).

²⁶ This claim is sustainable even regarding situations when one empathizes with one's own experience – Stein's "*reflexive*" sympathy (p.18; p.88).

Stein irrevocably rejects the idea that empathy is the experience of 'oneness' with another: "*empathy is not the feeling of oneness*" (p.17). Empathy as this 'oneness', "*entanglement*" (Decety & Jackson, 2006, p.56), fusion, or confusion, is, for Stein, an impossible position²⁷, simply because "*what my body is doing to my body and the foreign body is doing to the foreign body would then remain completely obscure*" (p.16). This degree of perceptual, embodied and experiential confusion is simply not a phenomenological characteristic of people's experiences of empathy, and it lacks persuasive face validity. At the most, this oneness is illusory ("*a feeling in another that is unconsciously taken as one's own*", Scheler, 1913, p.18), and not empathic at all because it does not reveal another's experience to oneself. As Gallagher points out:

At the phenomenological level, when I see the other's action or gesture, I see (I *directly perceive*) the meaning in the action or gesture. I see the joy or I see the anger, or I see the intention in the face or in the posture or in the gesture or action of the other. I see it. I do not have to simulate it. And I immediately see that it is their action, gesture, emotion, or intention, and it is extremely rare that I would be in a position to confuse it with my own. (Gallagher, 2008, p.359)

Lipps' empathy implies a blurring of one's self-identity with the identity of another person, in a manner which is not consistent with most people's experiences of empathy-as-knowing, even in its *direct* knowing sense. This oneness feeling is perhaps a very platonic, romantic idea, but, in a clinical sense, this degree of fusion is usually seen as either infantile or pathological. For example:

²⁷ Despite Stein's clarity on this, she is still portrayed by White (1997) and C. Davis (1990) as supporting the notion of empathy-as-oneness.

From object relations theory to transpersonal psychology, there is a presumption that the newborn experiences the world in a preegoic fusion with the primary caregiver and the world at large. (...) There may be similar empathic fusion in adults who have unusually permeable boundaries and a symbiotic relational style (see Johnson, 1994). In conventional diagnostic formulations, this may occur with some regularity in Borderline or Dependent personality disorders. The symbiotic character style may “know” the other by introjecting, or swallowing whole, the other’s experience without digesting the experience so as to understand or appreciate it as the other’s. (Hart, 1999, p.113/114).

For Stein, empathy involves a self-object connection, not a self-object fusion. This is perhaps more in line with Heidegger’s *mitsein* (‘being with’), than with Lipps’ *Einfühlung*. Stein explicitly denies that empathy is a fusion - or even an analogical feeling or knowing (p.87), as Håkansson and Montgomery’s (2003) propose. Empathy is not this contaminated responsive feeling, nor a personal identification with another person. Rather, it is an intersubjective experience.

To summarise (Figure 9), then, for Stein, empathy is neither a *reaction* to another’s experience (e.g., contagion, imitation, identification, oneness, sympathy); nor any form of *intellectually-reasoned* knowledge about another’s experience (e.g., inference, projection, fantasy, analogy, perspective-taking, memory).

Empathy is not	Contagion	EXCLUSION CRITERIA:	
	Imitation		
	Oneness		'I' personal response
	Sympathy		Indifferentiated, 'unconscious' selfness and otherness
	Identification	Necessary similarity in experiencing	
	Analogy	'I' personal knowing	
	Projection		
	Association	Produced by Intellectual activity	
	Inference		
	Memory	Mediated	
Fantasy	Past intentional object		
Simulation			
Perspective-taking			

Figure 9: “What Empathy is not: Stein’s logical path towards a phenomenological definition of empathy”

Figure 9 is an illustrative (not comprehensive) table that intends to clarify Stein’s understanding of what is, and what it is not, empathic in nature. It shows how Stein applies her phenomenologically-derived criteria (right column) to nominate simulacra of empathy (middle column) that should be regarded as non-empathic in nature.

It sketches the reasoning behind Stein’s derivation of the essence of empathy, and one which concludes that empathy is the interpersonal process of *directly* and non-intellectually coming to know another’s experience, as it unfolds in the present.

Or, better, more in line with a contemporary phenomenological view, empathy is the *intersubjective* experience of directly knowing what someone is experiencing, there-and-then. This is Stein's one true empathy.

Three levels of empathy

There are three levels to Stein's understanding of empathy, which merit further exposition. The term 'level' – which Stein employs – may be slightly misleading. There is not a strongly hierarchical element to her account. She notes that while one might usually progress *through* the levels (from first, to second, to third) this is not always the case. Rather, it is possible to imagine one can skip level 2, for example (p. 70). However, for reasons which will become obvious, it is unlikely that Stein considered that someone could be said to be having an empathic experience via level 3 alone.

Each of these described levels has a particular defining essential characteristic, but they all are experiences which directly bring another's experience to our awareness. This is what makes of these acts essentially empathic, their common essential empathic feature. This means that, in a way, these levels can be seen as different kinds of empathic phenomena, or different *ways into* empathy.

I have attempted to label them in ways which are reasonably clear and meaningful to the contemporary reader²⁸, namely: 1. *Directly perceiving* (the immediate perception of another's present, minded, embodied, embedded,

²⁸ For reference, in Stein's (p.10) thesis, these are: 1) the "*emergence of the experience*"; 2) the "*fulfilling explanation*"; and 3) the "*comprehensive objectification of the explain experience*".

experience); 2. *Experientially projecting* (the non-intellectual experience of another's unfolding experience); and 3. *Interpretatively mentalizing* (the higher-level recognition and interpretation of one's knowledge of another's experience). In the following subsections, I expand upon each of these levels in more detail.

Level 1: Direct immediate perceiving

For Stein, empathy is a founding or fundamental act. In this level, it has a status analogous to perception. Empathy in this level is "*a kind of an act of perceiving 'sui generis'*" (p.11), though which one directly perceives another's experience, in its embodied, embedded, minded present givenness; and it is not the product of deliberated intellectual processes (e.g., p. 10, p. 14; p. 20, p. 24, p. 27).

What it is that we perceive [another's experience]

Direct perception is a special case of perception because what is immediately perceived is the foreign experience. That is, it is not an external meaningless cue, such as a meaningless gesture or a facial expression, into which some meaning is subsequently, imaginatively, and intellectually, infused. Even though "*we grasp the other's experience with the same perceptual intention that we grasp a thing*" (Moustakas, 1994, p.94) there is a contrast, between ordinary perceptive acts and empathic perceptions.

Whilst ordinary perception brings to one's awareness 'concrete' worldly objects (physical objects, "*closely wedded in appearances*", Prinz, 2006, p.434), empathic perceptions bring into one's awareness an experience. From a more dualistic inside-outside perspective, it would then be argued that empathy allows the perceiver to see there (concrete behavioural situated appearance) and beyond (its experiential meaning, another's "*consciousness*", Barrett-Lennard, p.92). In empathic perception, one perceives an embodied embedded experience, an expressive gesture: the foreign gesture and its foreign meaning given immediately and together to the perceiving subject.

Stein refers to this possibility of perceiving the body and its experience as empathy's "*con-primordiality*" (p.57), or 'double given-ness' (p.43) – by which she means that seen, hidden and co-seen sides are given to the perceiver at once. As Zahavi (2001) would add, "*experiences are not internal, they are not hidden in the head*" (p.153). The perceiving of another's experiences is a phenomenologically acceptable possibility.

How we do this [directly, immediately, non-inferentially]

At the outset, Stein determines that "*empathy deals with grasping here-and-now*" (p.7). She stresses (p.10) that empathy is always the "*primordial*"²⁹ act (one's

²⁹ I understand this adjective, in Stein's thesis, to mean 'here-and-now'. Bournemark (2005, p.124) translates it as "*original*" instead. 'Original' accentuates a facet relative to the 'authenticity', the source location, the propriety, the entitlement. When Stein defines empathy as "*an act which is primordial as present experience though non-primordial in content*" (p.10), it would be precise to infer that empathy's

present perceptive act) with a 'non-primordial' intentional object (the non-present to oneself experience of another). These two aspects both contribute to the nature of empathy: for the perceiver, whilst the perceptive act occurs 'here-and-now'; the content of this act (perceived foreign experience) is not happening in the now. The perceived experience is not presently occurring to the perceiver, but to the perceived person. This intrinsic otherness quality of the perceived experience, then, distinguishes empathy from memory and fantasy, whereas the non-primordial quality distinguishes it from contagion and sympathy.

Hence, we directly know the foreign experience without any intellectual, underlying act (fantasy, memory); and without deriving it from one's personal current experience (contagion, sympathy). These are key features of empathy: an act of perception that is responsible for our immediate direct knowledge of another's present experience; and that has the foreign embodied embedded experience for its intentional object.

In short, much like any ordinary perceptive act, empathy happens here-and-now, but specifically to bring to our awareness the experience of another. In everyday language we might understand this sort of perception in terms of having a 'sense,' an

content is located in the other (empathy being responsible for its subsequent givenness to the perceiver). However, when Stein discusses acts of memory (p.8), she highlights that memory deals with 'non-primordial' phenomena. And, in memory, the source is the perceiver; the recalled experience is personal, authentically entitled to the self – it is simply not a present experience, but a past one instead. Hence, the term primordial cannot be read as relative to the source location. To avoid this interpretation of primordial as meaning 'located in the self' and of non-primordial as 'located in the other', I define primordial as present, actual, and here-and-now. Thus, in the former quote, I understand that Stein means that the empathic experience is happening in the now for the perceiver, but its content (foreign experience) is not happening in the now for the perceiver – it is, after all, another's experience, happening in the now merely to the other, not oneself. The perceived experience is always another's, throughout the empathic act. It never becomes personal and located in the self as a present experience. Or, better, empathy is an intersubjective experience that links a personal intentional act to a foreign experience.

intuitive knowledge, or a 'feeling about' another's experience. Stein's preference is simply to say that we are able to see the foreign experience, as it happens.

Example

Stein's model of empathic perception has a gestalt quality, in a con-primordial sense. Here-and-now and moment-to-moment "*the averted and interior sides of a spatial thing are co-given with its seen sides. In short, the whole thing is 'seen'*" (p.57). She uses a visuo-spatial metaphor to unpack this.

Imagine that you perceive a chair. When you perceive it, you see the presenting sides of the chair (those facing you), and you see the surrounding area (the context). You would not literally see the back of the chair (averted sides) or its underlying structure (hidden sides), of course, but the chair is still perceptively given to you in its wholeness (i.e. as a composite of its seen *and* averted *and* hidden sides). Under normal conditions we do not perceive a fragmentary chair, composed only of what is concretely accessible to our gaze.

In empathy, this means that one simultaneously perceives at the same time ('co-perceives') the other's outward, expressive, visible (seen sides) and non-visible behaviour (averted sides), as well as the other's experience (structure). This is the meaning of *direct* perception for Stein. In empathy, we directly co-perceive body-and-mind, together, at once, in their context. We perceive another's minded, embodied, embedded, expressive experience. We have access to this gestalt 'other' through

empathic perceptive acts. This is a core feature of empathy, and she wishes to emphasise that there is an unmediated gestalt quality to this act.

How might this be understood?

Stein names this level "*the emergence of the experience*" (p.10). This might suggest that she sees empathic experience as a process, and one which *begins* at this level, but this is not necessarily the case. Stein emphasises that "*in a concrete case people do not always go through all levels*" (p.10), and that one's empathic lived experience may be carried out in a manner different from her own order of presentation (p.14/15; p.70; see also Depraz, 2001, for a similar formulation).

In line with Zahavi (2007; 2001), she sees direct perception as the most fundamental mechanism underlying our daily interpersonal understandings. Empathy, he argues, makes people intelligible to one another in a direct, immediate manner, and is the core form of interpersonal knowledge.

Level 2: Experientially Projecting

Why empathy is a form of 'projecting'

Stein herself names this level "*the fulfilling explication*" (p.10), for reasons to be soon explained. On the other hand, the nomenclature here adopted highlights one of

this level's qualities: during this empathic experience the empathic act involves a kind of transposal or projection³⁰ of the self.

By examining Stein's step-by-step elimination of what empathy is *not* about in this level, I conclude that empathic projections: 1) are *experienced* (not reasoned, or imagined, or simulated, p.14); 2) are a means of accessing *genuinely foreign experiences* (not hypothetical "*probable*" experiences, p.27; nor conjured, or projected, experiences, p.20); and 3) are a *direct* access (not based in any kind of past knowledge, such as the empathizer's past experiences, p.27).

In more common usage, 'projection' is understood as the process of projecting into the world some pre-acquired knowledge, one's own experiences. In contrast, Stein's projection is a very particular kind of projection. It is an experiential, non-intellectual, and intuitive (p.20) kind of projection that is not a 'personal', 'primordial' experiencing of another's current experience. This notion is much closer to Lipps' understanding of empathy, though it can be distinguished from his theory and contemporary neuropsychology theories because this is still a non-intellectual simulative experience; it directly reveals moment-to-moment the genuine experience of another, rather than one's own, as mirrored by another person. That is, the experienced projection is not an intellectual simulation or a mimicking, and is co-perceived as a foreign experience throughout the empathic experience.

³⁰ Thompson (2001) offers a similar reading by explaining this level as a kind of projection. This supports my reading, even though, explicitly, in her text, Stein never connects empathic projections, discussed at length, with the second level as put forward in the beginning of the dissertation. Though, after careful analysis and consideration, this is the most reasonable and probable reading of her ideas for this level.

An example

Imagine that you are watching a novice acrobat balancing on a wire. At first, you directly see his/her fear of heights (direct perception). You may also *experience* this fear to some degree, but for that experience to be an empathic one, the fright could not be our *own* personal fear (e.g., contagion), or an imagined probable fright (simulated, remembered), or a fear *for* the safety of the acrobat (Scheler's fellow-feeling). Instead, it would have to be the acrobat's fright, given to you via experiential projection.

While you observe the acrobat, you can empathically and directly project into their experience, turning 'with them' towards the wire and the depths below. At such a point you are empathically being given an 'experience' of the acrobat's own fear. Critically, you experience it, not in the fullest sense (the sense with which you might experience our *own* fear, for your own safety), but only partially – and as the *acrobat's* fear. The fright, for you, as the empathising observer, is not happening in here-and-now, nor is it located in yourself. After all, it is not you who are fearfully balancing on the wire – you are just watching the acrobat and having an empathic experience. As Stein puts it, "*I am not one with the acrobat, but only "at" him. I do not actually go through his emotions but quasi*" (p.16). This distinguishes projection from contagion.

Empathic *perception* has another's experience for intentional object (e.g., the acrobat's fear). For empathic *projection*, the intentional object shifts – the subject focusing on the intentional object which is at the center of another's experience (e.g.,

the high wire, the looming depths below). Regardless of this intentional object shift, subject and object are not one, they are not having the very same single experience – neither in empathic projections, nor in empathic perceptions. The *otherness* of the experience, implicitly a self-other differentiation, is one of empathy's defining attributes throughout these levels. The observer does not really feel any fear (only 'quasi' fear), but gains access to the *acrobat's* fear by feeling it *with* him/her.

Metaphorically speaking, it is a 'second-person' fear, where we are 'with' the other, experiencing the other's extant ongoing state, *almost as if* we were having the experience ourselves, but aware that we are not. In the acrobat's example, for you, the fear is not happening here-and-now, and nor is the act of wire walking. And yet, you are *with* the other, experiencing it. Hence, Stein claims that this level "*exhibits the non-primordial parallel to the having of the experience*" (p.10).

In a way, this experience is similar to the experience of identification, during which one experientially, at a very embodied and emotional level, believes oneself to be experiencing someone else's experience. Theoretically, the difference between these two acts is that identification is usually conceived of as involving a retrospective act, during which one has access to one's similar past experiences; an intellectual act, a self-other comparison and intellectual projective attribution of the recalled personal experience to another person; and oneness, or at least, a personal responsive affective experience. Identification, as when you identify with a movie character, is usually thought of as a sympathetic reaction and an analogical way of knowing foreign experiences.

For example, the acrobat's observer would only be able to understand what the acrobat was experiencing by remembering their own fear of heights; and by attributing this personal recollected experience to the acrobat. On the other hand, Stein's proposal argues that there is an experiential projective act that is direct. That is, one needs not to remember a similar past experience, nor reason that in such circumstances one would feel fear, nor imagine that the acrobat's experience is probably fear, nor compare oneself to the acrobat in any way, for the direct experiential projective understanding to happen. In this level, as with perception, the only personal intervention for the knowing to come about is that the act itself is personal, it is the observer that is empathizing. Through experiential projection, then, we would be able to 'quasi' experience familiar as well as unknown never-experienced-before experiences.

For Stein, empathic experiences can be about sensations just as easily as they can be about emotions; and they involve visual perception but also other sense-perception. The perceiver is not required to literally see an emotion, by using his eyes. Rather, he/she may see in other ways, using other senses; and see non-emotional aspects of another's present experience. This makes sense when we think about the features of her approach, but it is a dimension of empathy which is not always included in contemporary writing. In Stein's description, the movement from perception to projection is identical, regardless of whether the observed experience is an emotion or a sensation: a 'feeling into' and then a 'feeling with.' This idea is explored in her thesis as 'sensual empathy' (p.58/60).

Why Stein calls this the 'fulfilling explication'

Stein uses the term self-transposal. This delineation is applied in some contemporary work, too, such as when Depraz (2001) describes an equivalent stage as being about a spontaneous, highly embodied, imaginative and kinaesthetic self-transposal to another's experience.

Returning to the novice acrobat's fear of heights, recall that, initially, one empathically perceived the acrobat's fear. However, it is only through projecting *into* this experience, that one is able to explore this foreign experience, and inspect its many sides. By directly projecting into this experience, one would, for instance, acknowledge that the acrobat is looking beyond the trembling wire into the void, searching for a safety net and getting ever increasingly more upset for its absence. This happens in an exploratory lived manner, unfolding in the present with the foreign experience. Then, through this act, other sides of the foreign experience are revealed, such as acknowledging the trembling wire and the absence of a safety net. Consequently, one fulfils (the term adopted by Stein) one's awareness of another's experience – or, at least, one's awareness is enriched. This act is an explication precisely because it details, in a more fulfilled manner, that which was initially perceived as merely fear.

Here, I refrained from using the word 'imaginative' in association with the self-transposal level because this might be incorrectly understood in the usual conception of imaginative acts, that is, in an intellectual sense. Calling it an imaginative projection,

such as with Depraz (2001) and Thompson's (2001) exposition, falls short of this level's experiential, present, intuitive sensing-in essence - and so does, and probably in the same manner, the word projection. These words have the potential of leading to the misperception that Stein's view is closer to intellectual conjecture, an interpretation which, by now, hopefully, will not seem adequate to you either. As Stein points out, this experience is not about the 'feeling' of one's own experience via another's "screen" (p.20). It is about how we come to feel the experience of another, a concept is perhaps closer to the notion of a 'sensing-in', a 'feeling-at', a feeling "with" (p.58), than an imaginative act – and an intersubjective experience all along and throughout.

However, it is not easy to find an unequivocal suitable descriptive qualitative label for this act.

Level 3: Interpretatively Mentalizing

Since empathy is often given meaning, in psychology, as (partly or wholly) an intellectualized ability, this level is probably the aspect of Stein's account which is most familiar to a contemporary readership. Thompson (2001) claims that, in this level, "*the experience faces me again, but now in a clarified or explicated way*" (p.16). This is because this level is usually seen as following on from the explicative, experiential second level. However, for me, this is not its most distinguishing characteristic.

What is fundamental, and fundamentally different, is that, for the first time, empathy includes a clearly intellectual facet, responsible for its more intellectual

comprehensibility. With this level, Stein describes the point at which the interpersonal direct process of empathic knowing reaches its inevitable conclusion – that is, where one actively interprets the intuitive experience. Empathic knowing, in this level, becomes more explicitly and linguistically accessible as ‘knowledge’, though it is still distinguishable from a purely intellectual act because its intentional object is a directly given foreign experience (not a deduced, inferred one). It is an intellectual act bounded to a direct knowing experience.

What is mentalized [the foreign experience]

Here, for the first time, that which was directly intuitively given (during direct perception and/or experiential projection) about the foreign experience is represented, in awareness, as an intellectual form of knowledge of the foreign experience. That is, the content of the intuition is mentalized, becoming, in awareness, an intellectual idea about the foreign experience. This is most transparent when Stein defends that empathy can only, and properly, be seen as an intuitive idea about another’s experience at this level. Before this level, empathy is not an idea, not a representation, but intuition only (p.20). At this level, we face a form of knowledge about the foreign experience, in the usual conception of the word knowledge, but only at this level. Through it, then, empathic understandings become not only intersubjective intuitive understandings but also partly intellectual understandings.

Through mentalization - the making of an experience into a mental object - empathy becomes comprehension ("*a part of the interpretation of foreign experience*", footnote 24). This is the quality particular to this level that I chose to emphasize. During this level, the empathizer is finally given the foreign experience in an intelligible, partly interpreted, manner. Consequently, the foreign experience becomes once more, as it was during direct perception, the intentional object of the empathic act – with the difference here that now the other's experience is not the target of a purely *intuitive* act, but of a *mentalizing* one.

Example

To extend the example of the acrobat, the fear was directly perceived (first level). Then, the perceiver projected into it, to explore some of its non-initially given sides (second level), such as the escalating intensity of the acrobat's fear. Then, finally, the perceiver gives to the intuition an intellectual form – what could hypothetically translate into the empathizer saying to him/herself that the acrobat is experiencing something that could be called fear of heights (third level). In this intellectual manner, the acrobat's experience is partly, or fully, comprehended; the empathic experience completed. Hence, it is only through this level that empathy is an act through which "*foreign experience is comprehended*" (p.6).

These three aspects (occurring after experiential projection; requiring the making of the experience into a mental object; and being an interpretative activity), in

conjunction, somehow seem enough to justify the name given by Stein to this level:
“comprehensive objectification of the explain experience” (p.10).

The importance of the mentalization level

This interpretative, mentalizing act is simply the giving of an intellectual meaning to an intuition. For Stein, the empathic experience can only be completed with the intellectual interpretative act (representation is the term she adopts). More than that, she even tells us that the *“empathic representation is the only fulfilment possible”* (p.57).

In order to understand the meaning behind this claim, we must inspect the term ‘fulfilment’. I used it in relation to the second level, and translated it in terms of the experiential enrichment and revelation of the non-perceptively given aspects of the other’s experience. I also noted that Stein sees the third level as the fruition and end of the empathic process. Metaphorically-speaking, we might imagine a river flowing through the earth, exploring the surroundings as it goes. This would be the experiential fulfilment. At the point where the river reaches the ocean, in a sense, it ceases to be a river - but by ceasing to be, its path is complete. This would be the representational act. When Stein claims that the empathic act can only be completed by establishing an intellectual representation, it is as though the empathic act arrives at its destination, and in doing so, the process of knowing is complete and transformed, partly becoming something else – less of an experience, and more of an interpretation.

Summary of Stein's approach

Stein's phenomenological equation includes the self, the intentional act (empathy) and its object (foreign experience; foreign intentional object). With this equation, Stein is able to detect three kinds of empathic phenomena: direct perception; experiential projection; and interpretative mentalization. And although these ways into empathy are about the knowing of the foreign experience, it is only the latter (mentalization) that can be properly qualified as a form of knowledge. The first two are intuitive, not ideational.

The first level, *direct perception*, is about the direct, non-mediated (e.g., by inference from behaviour or aprioristic knowledge) perceptive co-givenness of another person's present embodied, embedded, minded experience. Here, one immediately 'sees' the foreign experience. The second level, *experiential projection*, is about exploring, as if with the other person, their unfolding experience. Here, one 'feels' aspects of the foreign experience, some of which may not have been perceived at level 1. Finally, in the third level, *interpretative mentalization*, empathy is an intellectual, interpretative act. During this level, one recognises and intellectually represents the other's experience, one intellectually interprets what was intuitively given of it. And, since this act is bounded to an intuitive act, although of a more intellectual nature, this is still an empathic act. Through it, the empathic experience is completed.

Although organized in a sequential manner, people may perhaps enter into empathy at any of these levels, and may even skip a few (p.10, p.70). Nevertheless,

level 3, alone, cannot count as an empathic experience because it must always be an interpretation of level 1, 2, or both; one may be more aware of it than of the intuitive associated acts due to its intellectual nature, but alone it is not essentially an empathic experience.

These levels share some essential characteristics that distinguish them from non-empathic acts of consciousness. First, the act of empathizing is immediate, direct and embedded, it is a *“here and now experience”* (p.7). Secondly, it is an intentional act of consciousness that links the empathizer to aspects of another person’s present experience. Thirdly, this experience is mostly direct, non-intellectual and non-mediated. Fourthly, empathy is specifically about the knowing of another’s experience, rather than responding to it. Finally, what is given through empathy is always a second-person experience. It is *not* an authentic personal experience. This is what essentially defines empathy as a phenomenon across the three levels: empathy is the direct and experiential coming-to-know of another’s unfolding embedded embodied experience, where the subject and the object *“experiences are actually different in themselves”* (p.23).

Deception and limits in empathy

Direct empathy does not necessarily reveal to oneself the foreign experience in its entirety, as there is perhaps as well a *“sphere of absolute privacy”* (Scheler, 1913, p.10). Both self and other are never perceived as complete. To use Stein’s expression,

each is always “*absently available*” (Stein, p.19), to oneself and to another. Nevertheless, to only be given a partial aspect of another’s experience does not make our access less direct, less experiential, less accurate, or less empathic: “*there is so to speak more to the mind of the other than what we are grasping, but this does not make our understanding non-experiential*” (Zahavi, 2008b, p.520).

As Barrett-Lennard (1981, p.92) noted, empathic understandings are about the knowing of “*at least those aspects of his awareness that are most important to him at the moment*”. In fact, “*it is exactly this inaccessibility, this limit, which I can experience (cf. Husserl, 1973a, p. 144). And when I do have an authentic experience of another subject, I am exactly experiencing that the other eludes me*” (Zahavi, 2001, p.153). There is then a limit to that which can be accessed through empathy. Imagine that the acrobat was fearful, but also thrilled with the performance’s suspense. By noticing only the fear, the observer is still having an experience that is suitably described as an empathic experience.

Empathically knowing another’s experience is not incompatible with the use of other knowing acts. For example, “*when I empathize the pain of the injured in looking at a wound, I tend to look at his face to have my experience confirmed*” (p.84) via an intellectual act. The combination of empathic acts and reasoned intellectual acts (e.g., drawing upon “*meaning contexts*”, p.85), helps “*accurately interpreting ‘equivocal expressions’*” (p.85), such as, experiences which have a dissonant or incongruent feature to them (e.g., the acrobat restraining any visible manifestation of the felt fear). The combination of this intuitive empathic act with an intellectual confirmative act,

drawing upon available 'cues' (after Batson, 2009), works progressively, to transform our knowing of another's experience into a more accurate one. This implies that these two acts can work in parallel, to contribute to a more accurate interpersonal understanding (p.85; p.87). Secondly, this shows the difference between an empathic experience and, say, inference from observable behaviour. Their natures, one reasoned and intellectual, and another intuitive and direct, generate distinctive types of interpersonal knowledge.

The interpretative act of level 3 is more evidently permeable to the empathizer's past experiences and knowledge, more vulnerable to the influence of idiographic perspectives, preconceptions, or habits. But so is the intuitive act, because empathic experiences are shaped by the empathizer's "*life-long habits of intuiting and thinking*" (p.62). That is, the intuitive act is also a gained habit. Although these habits are not necessarily responsible for inaccurate knowing (for example, they may just condition the selectiveness of the empathizer's attention), through them empathy becomes susceptible to deceptive knowledge. Stein wishes to emphasize that inaccuracy can be prevented by combining reasoned and empathic acts; their combination is a way of reducing the odds of inaccurate knowing.

Nevertheless, this potential inaccuracy is not restricted to empathic acts. Indeed, for Stein, non-empathic acts more frequently generate deceptive knowledge. For example, if the interpretation draws upon one's similar past experiences (analogy) there is a heightened risk of deception: "*we come to false conclusions if we empathically take our own individual characteristics as a basis*" (p.87).

In conclusion, the empathic knowing can be partly inaccurately interpreted and subjected to habits of intuition; and it does not necessarily reveal to the empathizer all there is to know about the foreign experience. Despite this, accuracy can be enhanced by complementing consecutive empathic acts (moment-to-moment empathy) with non-empathic intellectual acts. They can be used in a complementary fashion, with the goal of correctly interpreting that which was empathically experienced, but they are to be distinguished by their nature.

Empathy's fallibility justifies Barrett-Lennard's (1981) need to introduce the notion of feedback. For him, the empathizer and the empathized continue interacting and feeding back on the accuracy of the empathic content, in an attempt to validate, confirm, disconfirm, or correct it. Although relevant in therapeutic settings, the notion of feedback is less relevant in an orthodox phenomenological framework. It transforms an investigation of individual consciousness, into the expanded investigation of at least two individual consciousnesses. The bracketed equation is merely the self, the empathic act and the foreign experience as given to the empathizer. Any subsequent communicative or interactive act is, properly speaking, out of the equation. It is another act.

Empathy as an everyday experience

Across the three levels, empathy has two sides, it has two "essences" (p. 19), namely: 1) the foreign experience; and 2) one's own experience. More concretely, "if I

have an emotion that is given to me as one of another's, I have it given twice" (p.34), once as my own, and once as another's. It is perhaps better said that empathy is an intersubjective experience, in the sense that it is an act of consciousness that does not exist in the absence of a foreign experience. The act is personal, but its content is foreign. Then one empathically has an intersubjective experience, co-generated in-between involved people; one experiences another's experience.

Empathy is the common intersubjective experience of everyday interpersonal understandings; not such a 'special' case but rather a fundamental interpersonal experience. It is *"how human beings comprehend the psychic life of their fellows"* (p.11) and even the key to one's individuality. As Stein proposes while exposing the concepts of reflexive sympathy (p.18; p.88; Reik's 'recurrent reflections'), empathy is the way through which *"I'm given to myself as a psycho-physical individual in the full sense"* (p.63). It allows for mutual interpersonal understandings and for self-understandings.

Discussion

As a consequence of her phenomenological analysis of the bracketed equation, Stein is opposed to views of empathy as contagion, sympathy, perspective-taking, simulation, analogy, oneness and so forth (Figure 9). That is, to the great majority of the phenomena studied in Chapter I. Despite this, she is still able to distinguish three types of empathic experiences, none of which are commonly called empathy in the

psychological literature. In this section, I compare her views to more contemporary approaches, starting with those that are closer to her views.

Correspondence with psychotherapeutic theories

There is no other area which is so fundamentally concerned with other people's genuine experiences as psychotherapy. And, in contrast with neurocognitive and developmental psychology, some humanistic and psychodynamic approaches to psychotherapy more commonly offer a view of empathy much closer to Stein's conception. In this particular 'Steinian' sense, empathic understandings are conceived as a key aspect of the therapeutic process. The therapists' claims can be received by the client as 'correct or incorrect', but, through the continuous maintenance of an empathic rapport, the client develops "*a sense of realness, an awareness of being alive, personally present, and invested*" (Geist, 2009, p.64) to the point when the accuracy of the intervention is less important (with both 'right' or 'wrong' commentaries serving as an invitation for exploration, and each responsible for personal growth).

For example, Rogers (Bozarth, 2009, p.103, cf. Rogers, 1959, p.210) proposes that "*experiencing an accurate, empathic understanding of the client's awareness of his own experience*" is a necessary condition for the success of therapy. For him, empathy is sensing, perceiving (Stein's level 1) and 'as if' experiencing (Stein's 'quasi' quality of level 2) the client's experience and meaning:

The state of empathy, or being empathic, is to perceive the internal frame of reference of another with accuracy, and with the emotional components and meanings that pertain thereto, as if one were the other person, but without losing the 'as if' condition.

For Rogers, empathy is the perceptive ability of knowing another's experiential meaning; and it involves an experiential resonance side that is never to be confused with a genuinely personal experience. For Freud, I believe that this experience corresponds to a temporary, partial, identification mechanism, used to get into another's feelings without being directly implicated; and a mechanism helpful for the psychoanalyst's comprehension of what is felt as foreign in the self of another person (e.g., Boulanger & Lançon, 2006; Zepf & Hartmann, 2008). Similarly, for Reik (1948; Arnold, 2006), psychoanalytic listening involves an intuitive detection of the client's experiential meanings, a perceiving of the tip of the iceberg of another's initially unknown psychic dynamics. From these perspectives, as with phenomenology, empathy fosters a moment-to-moment understanding of that eluding otherness, that foreign, hence strange and perhaps estranged, experience.

A moment-to-moment awareness, from these phenomenological, psychodynamic and humanistic perspectives, involves an experiential resonance, an 'emotional' (though the emotional adjective falls short of the meaning of experiential) and 'personal' side. Therapy is a "*meeting between two experiencing subjects (an I and a Thou) here and now*" (Hobson, 1985/1989, p.xiii), a relationship between two experiencing people. In the above frameworks, "*the impressions aroused in the*

individual are experienced as belonging to an object” (Zepf & Hartmann, 2008, p.749), the location of clients’ and therapists’ experiences are clearly differentiated, their belongingness clearly given to the therapist throughout the empathic experience.

Thus, in the light of Stein’s work and these approaches, there is no need to become an emotional stone-therapist, or to introduce a distance between subject and object, as some have proposed (e.g., *“in the experience of empathy, individuals must be able to disentangle themselves from others. This distance is a key characteristic in psychotherapy”*, Decety & Jackson, 2006, p.56). Since there is no merging to begin with, any ‘defusing’ or distancing is irrelevant.

To conclude, Stein’s writings, thorough and detailed, can inform the research, practice and teaching of psychotherapy, by illuminating empathy’s lived experience, from the empathees’ side, one which is not commonly studied in this area (Greenberg et al., 2001).

Stein and contemporary empathy theories

Presently there seems to be a return to some of Stein’s phenomenological claims about the nature of empathy, principally in phenomenological and phenomenology-informed theories. These are, for instance, Depraz’s (2001) empathy theory; Gallagher’s (2007) views on situated cognition; Rockwell’s (2008) ‘vectorial’, ‘multidimensional’ and experiential mind-reading; Prinz’s (2006) argument about the possibility of perceiving directly complex conceptual qualities of the worldly intentional

objects; and Zahavi's (2008b, 2001) argument about direct perception. As an example of this return, I would like to offer a brief review of Depraz's (2001) paper on empathy, also described in detail by Thompson's (2001).

Depraz (2001, p.172) names the first level "*Paarung*" (after Husserl, usually translated as pairing); or "*coupling*" (after Maturana, 1975). The risk of using Husserl's pairing to explain direct perception is allowing for misinterpretations along the lines of analogy (e.g., Moustakas, 1994, p.37). Pairing and intersubjectivity are not about analogy, not even in Husserl's perspective, at least according to Zahavi's (2001) reading of Husserl's work. Similarity is a slightly misapplied accent on the core of intersubjectivity, though it could explain how Stein's empathy can be read as being about an appreciation of similarity (Boulanger & Lançon, 2006; Gallese, 2003).

Therefore, describing empathy via the notion of coupling seems less prone to misinterpretations. Indeed, Depraz (2008), in a following paper, distinguishes coupling³¹ from Paarung because coupling implies "*the far broader relationship between an organism and its environment. This bodily link is not symmetrical but inclusive*" (Depraz, 2008, p.239/240). Therefore, Stein and Depraz's first levels seem equivalent; both not about an analogical act, but a direct knowing.

Depraz's second level is about the act of 'imagining oneself into'³². The connection between Stein and Depraz's views is found in the necessity of the preposition 'into'; Stein's feeling 'with'. Both illustrate that this imaginative act is not a typical imaginative individual experience, but an interpersonal one. Secondly, they

³¹ Originally, 'acoplamiento' (after Maturana 1975).

³² Originally named '*Sich Hineinphantasieren*' (Depraz, 2001).

both highlight its experiential nature. Since Depraz does not explore this notion at length, this superficial approach nevertheless suggests that the two levels might be equivalent in their theories.

The situation is slightly different regarding the third level. This is because Depraz joins together two distinguishable (for me) phenomena: 'Interpretative Understanding' and 'Communication and Expression'. Both of these titles are used, in conjunction to label her third empathic level. I claim them to be different phenomena because one does not need to overtly communicate with the object of empathy about that which is empathically understood. And, by separating the communicative act from the interpretative act, as two different phenomena, I establish a parallel between Depraz's 'interpretative understanding' and Stein's third level.

Hence, these three levels (perception, projection and interpretation) are identified by both Depraz and Stein as empathic experiences.

Finally, Depraz's fourth level, 'ethical responsibility and affect', is given to me, and to Thompson (2001), as connected to the notion of sympathy. As Scheler, Geist and Zahavi argue, "*it is possible to empathize with someone without feeling any sympathy*" (Zahavi, 2008b, p.516). It is neither a part of the bracketed equation; nor of the essence of empathy. Direct empathy may allow for the creation of a more attuned reaction to another's present experience (Geist, 2009), that is, become responsible for a more attuned sympathetic action, but these are two distinctive acts.

In conclusion, Depraz identifies a couple of empathic phenomena that, for Stein, are non-empathic: communication and sympathy. Otherwise, there is a good convergence between their ideas about the nature of empathy.

These propositions are not restricted to phenomenologically-informed theories. Even from a distinctive theoretical background, relative to the study of artificial intelligence, a similar claim can be found: *“there is a kind of mind reading which is in a certain sense purely “perceptual” and unaided by any verbal theoretical elements”* (Rockwell, 2008, p.54). Hence I claim that this convergence is not restricted to the field of phenomenology; and that these lines of research denounce a rediscovery or return to Stein’s stance.

Explications for direct empathy

So far, I have been concerned with describing the experience of empathy from Stein’s standpoint. I have also distinguished it from acts that are perhaps used for similar purposes, but are conceptually distinctive experiences and processes in themselves. Stein’s approach is phenomenological and descriptive - not explanatory. She does not discuss the psychological mechanisms behind the experience of empathy beyond the experiential (reflective and pre-reflective) and conceptual levels. For these, we must turn elsewhere.

In neurocognitive psychology, mirror neuron activation is read as a contamination or contagion response. This phenomenon is a discrete individual

personal reactive phenomenon that “*does not presuppose any sort of knowledge of the joy which others feel*” (Scheler, 1913, p.15). It is an experience in which “*there is nothing in the mournful feeling itself to point to its origin; only by inference from causal consideration does it become clear where it came from*” (Scheler, 1913, p.15). It may even happen beyond awareness, “*in the sense that we ‘get into’ these states without realizing that this is how this comes about*” (Scheler, 1913, p.16/17).

Mainstream neuropsychology transforms this contamination into a way of knowing another’s experience via causal considerations, via the inference from felt-feeling act (Chapter I) – this amounts to an interpretation of the mirror neuron activation called here *contamination-as-knowing*.

In phenomenologically-informed research areas, the same neurobiological and behavioural evidence is often interpreted in a *coupling-as-knowing* sense (Depraz, 2008, 2001; Gallagher, 2007; Thompson, 2001). The difference between the *neurocognitive contamination-as-knowing* interpretation and the *neurophenomenological coupling-as-knowing* reading of the same evidence is irreconcilable; they cannot both be accepted to explain the same evidence. As offered by their authors, one excludes the other.

The term coupling originated from Humberto Maturana’s biological research (1975) on autopoiesis (explanatory theoretical description of the inter-relationships between living beings and the environment), currently most often associated with his student, Francisco Varela and his neurophenomenological approach to psychology.

Coupling is a self-other linkage occurring at a biological cellular level. It is a pre-reflexive, permanently dynamic and co-generative self-other link. For him, both environment and organisms are said to be constantly changing and co-determining each other, even at a cellular level. This theory is sometimes criticized for its solipsism, though given the intrinsic intersubjective meaning of coupling, this criticism is somehow, for me, a misinterpretation. Claiming that the observer and observed change one another at such a primordial level of analysis is not an elegy to solipsism, it is not a defence that the world is nothing but a subjectivity inside one's mind.

Rather, it is accepting that the world is intersubjectively constructed, in the more Heideggerian sense of being-in-the-world. This view does not obliterate or clash with the premise, stated in the introduction of this chapter, that there is a world out there to be perceived and experienced. Subject and object are still two different entities, despite their mutual influences upon each other. Coupling is not merging, or a dissolution of self and other identities as some tend to suggest (e.g., Finlay, 2005). It is simply an interaction occurring at a biological level. Gallagher (2007, p.356) gives a good example of this coupling mechanism:

If we think of perception as an enactive process (e.g., Hurley, 1998; Noë, 2004) - as involving sensory-motor skills, rather than as just sensory input/processing; as an active, skilful, embodied engagement with the world rather than the passive reception of information from the environment - then it may be more appropriate to think of the resonance processes as part of the structure of the perceptual process when perception is of the action of conspecifics. Fogassi and Gallese, despite their simulationist interpretation, put this point clearly: "*perception, far*

from being just the final outcome of sensory integration, is the result of sensorimotor coupling'' (2002, p. 27). Mirror activation, on this interpretation, is not the initiation of simulation, it is part of a direct intersubjective perception of what the other is doing.

Gallagher does not dissociate the mirror neuron activation from empathic experiences; he reads it as a sign of the phenomenon of coupling; and associates it with the meaning of direct perception. This illustrates the *coupling-as-knowing* interpretation of neurological evidences. Through coupling, the empathizer's experience is composed of 1) a perceptive side; 2) a self-felt resonant personal side (inclusively, mirror neuron activation) – Stein's two-sidedness of the experience. For him, mirror neuron activation is part of the empathic perceptive act; but it is a response insofar as a perception can be conceptualized as a 'response' (to the existence of an object in the environment). This is a radically different interpretation of the mirror neuron activation; and one which does not involve an inferential act, as with the *contamination-as-knowing neurocognitive* interpretation. These two competing theories are illustrated in Figure 10.

As illustrated there, *coupling-as-knowing* (intersubjective empathic direct experience) is not to be confused with the *contamination-as-knowing* theory (a personal response, an experience which is no longer, or never was, another's).

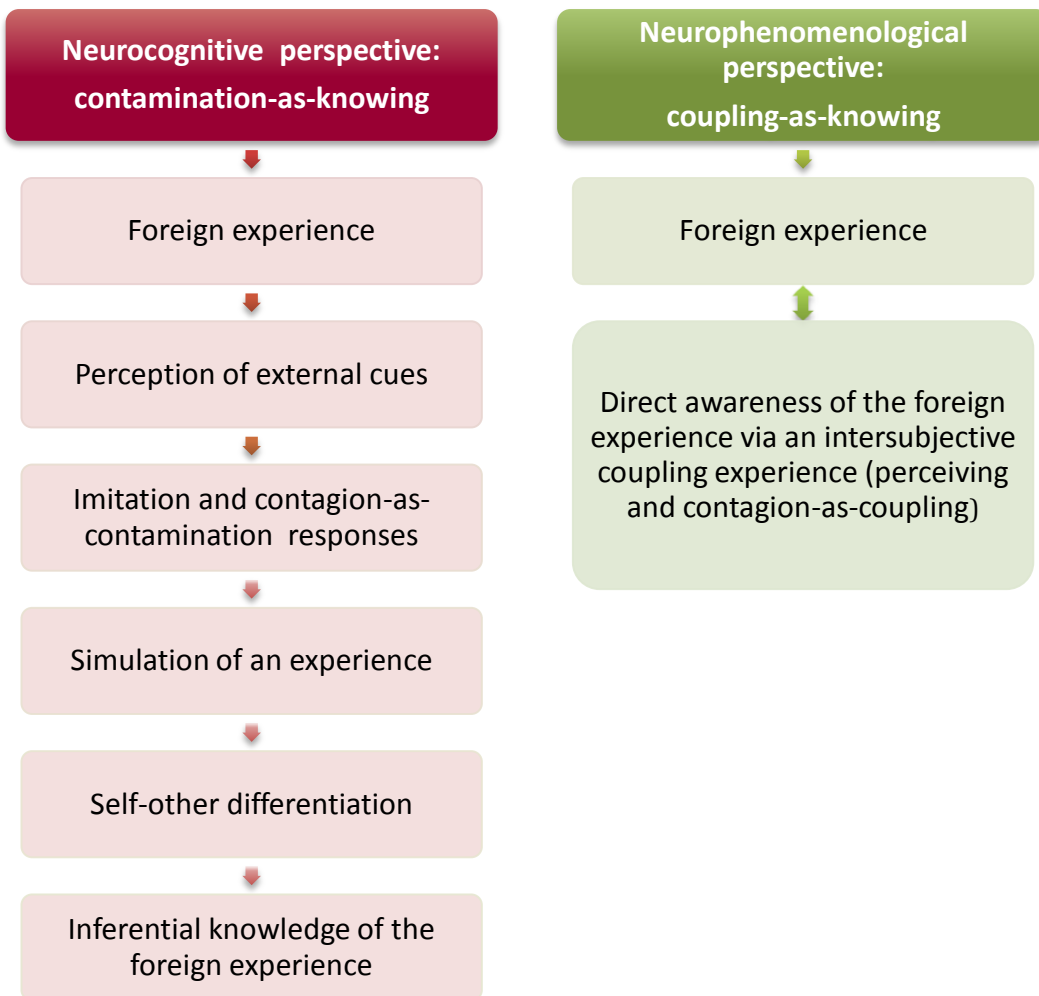


Figure 10: “Comparison between the neurocognitive and neurophenomenological explanations of empathy-as-knowing”

Both these interpretations imply that empathy involves an embodied resonance with other people’s experiences, empirically translated by the mirror neurons activation. They are, however, fundamentally different in the way the process, *and* the qualities of this experiential resonance, are explicated.

The neurocognitive perspective suggests that the mirror neuron activation translates the experience of contagion. Empathic understandings are said to start with a subjective (quality) resonance experience that belongs exclusively to the subject. This resonance experience is typically conceptualized as developing, in a step-by-step (hence, linear) manner, with each step (the cells identified in the column to the left) following on from the preceding: perception, then mimicry, then contagion, then simulation, then discrimination, then understanding. This is so, even when a few of these steps are collapsed as equivalent to each other. Thus, the process is indirect, mediated by several components - a quality that is here described as 'inferential'.

Note that it is one thing to say that mirror neurons are probably "*doing an internal simulation of such actions*" (Ramachandran & Hubbard, 2001, p.20); it is, after all, a valid way of giving a linguistic meaning to an empirical observation (better would be referring to it as similarity in neural activation). It is another to claim that this simulation is attributed to the object, that it is a form of understanding others (implicit simulation theories). It can just be a form of, say, learning by imitation (about actions, and about communication of emotions). Learning by imitation teaches more about the action or the expression, than about the other person and their present experience (except, perhaps, if I will, in an indirect manner). The mother who is behaviourally reinforcing the child's liking for vegetables with an approving smile, is teaching the child that vegetables are good. The focus of attention is upon the vegetables – not another's inner experience. Secondly, if this is to serve as an everyday form of understanding, that which is known of the other person must reach the threshold of

awareness (prereflectively, reflectively); and be used for that particular purpose. It cannot be an implicit process all along and throughout.

Conversely, neurophenomenology argues that mirror neuron activation illustrates a coupling intersubjective experience *and* the process. There are no causal steps, first resonance, and then attribution. One experiences another's state (process), and recognizes it as another's (quality), at once, simultaneously. This is why the process is here called direct empathy. It is not because there is not a set of neural networks involved.

Secondly, in phenomenology, the resonated state is a very particular embodied meaningful state. One might not be able to properly verbally describe what kind of state it is, or describe it accurately. But I argue that this does not make the experience meaningless. Just think of a first-time ever felt emotion, say, a first-time ever felt lust. Just because one does not quite know what one is experiencing does not mean that the experience is meaningless, and does not have a suitable name, or that it is not possible to categorize it, subsequently, through reflection (an act described by Stein as amounting to the interpretative mentalization level for the particular case of empathic experiences). When one sees an unusual never-seen-before object, one directly sees it at an experiential level, even if one does not know its name.

Note then that the meaning of 'meaning' in this argument is not associated with a linguistic and formal aspect: "*the movement from silence to speech is not a movement from nothing to something*" (Spurling, 1977, p.51). Moreover, the 'meaning' of an experience is shaped by the context and past of the people involved (Anderson,

2003). This is responsible for individual variation, but it does not imply that the percept has not arrived directly to the empathizer in an unmediated manner; that this percept was not meaningful at once, at the outset, in a particular idiographic manner. It does not change the route or the act, or the observation that a perceptive meaningful experience happened. My experience of lust is different from your experience of lust, I can even take mine or yours for anxiety, but that does not change its direct *experiential meaningfulness*. Then, the meaning of 'meaning' in this argument is closer to an overall experiential configuration, to an arrangement of the many aspects that compose the experience of lust, in its distinctiveness from other types of experience.

This is also how the 'meaning' of the other's experience is not based upon an analogical act. In analogy, the starting point is always one's past experiences, and it is in the light of these that the other person becomes an experiencing person. For instance, someone tells you that they have found a job, and because you were happy in a similar situation, you now imagine that they are happy - and, *were it not for this analogical act*, you would not know that they were having a meaningful experience at all. Phenomenologically speaking, the other person is an experiencing person at the outset. Their happiness is transmitted to you directly, experientially (regardless of the way you linguistically interpret this state, or of the way your own characteristics moulded this experience). The colour blind person would directly have a meaningful perceptive experience, even if that was a never-seen-before object, and the overall configuration slightly different from the non-colour blind person. Then, in the same way one experiences new experiences for oneself, or sees never-seen-before objects,

one is directly exposed to the other's perhaps unknown meaningful experience. Analogy and direct empathy are two distinctive processes, even given that former knowledge and experiences might be helpful with the subsequent interpretation of the directly presented phenomenon, or shape the overall empathic experience.

In the perceptive act, the question of the otherness of the emotion does not pose itself so poignantly. We seldom doubt the distinctive identity of perceiver and object. On the other hand, felt-level resonance experiences, such as coupling and contagion, are hypothesized to be more distributed, embodied, global, responsive experiences than a perceptive act is usually conceived to be. Here, the question of the state's alterity is perhaps more pertinent for the observer (but not for the experiencing person, according to Stein) – at least in the light of the literature. Are subject and object merged? Are they similarly activated, with two separate emotional personal experiences that are causally related? Or, as phenomenology would offer, are they experiencing another's state?

One of the fundamental differences is then one of the location, or alterity (personal or merged, for contagion; and foreign, for coupling) as given in consciousness. This difference might have a neural translation, say, a particular area or route responsible for an experience to be felt as one's own (neurocognitive claim) or to be felt as another's (neurophenomenological claim).

Evidence for competing explanations

Both mimicry and the mirror neuron activation are well established interpersonal phenomena that happen when a perceiver observes (even implicitly, see Gallese, 2003) particular behavioural expressions and actions. The hypotheses in Figure 10 are much debated hypotheses that try to make sense of this empirical observation, and in particular for emotional displays. They equate mirror neuron activation with emotional resonance (contagion or coupling), and each proposes an alternative explanation for the way this resonance might be useful as an interpersonal understanding. The two level of analysis, theoretical and empirical, have to be clearly and objectively discriminated.

These hypotheses relate mirror neuron activation with an outcome for the perceiver, precisely, the ability to know what another person is experiencing. Understanding, knowing, recognizing, accurately identifying, empathic accuracy: these are a few of the terms used in the literature to designate this outcome. Therefore, to test these hypotheses one must study the relationship between the neural activity *and* the nominated outcome. Studies of the brain activation of participants-as-passive-observers of visual displays of emotions (e.g., Sato, Kochiyama, Yoshikawa, Naito & Matsumura, 2004) clarify little about the relationship between emotional resonance (mirror neuron activation, contagion or coupling) and the perceiver's understanding. Secondly, the neocognitive hypothesis argues that this happens in a sequential

manner. Consequently, testing it involves proving the *causal links* between mimicry, then contagion, then understanding.

There is evidence of the relationship between certain neural regions and emotion recognition, principally as derived from the study of selective brain damage (reviewed by Adolphs, 2002). These measure both the neural activation and that which the participant knows of the target's state. In this case, it is important to understand what, within the participants' neural activation, amounts to emotional resonance; and in what way this recognition is an interpersonal understanding.

In relationship to the assessment of resonance, are the target *and* the object's experiences (brain activation, lived experience accounts) assessed, compared and found to match at that specific level? For mimicry, this matching is easier to assess because it resumes itself to behavioural data. The variable is visible behaviour of both target and perceiver. Even when the mimicry is implicit, automatic and minimal, there are forms of assessing muscle contraction, and this is used as an indicator for this matching. There is evidence that mimicry happens in certain circumstances, for certain emotions (e.g., Blairy, Herrera & Hess, 1999; Hess & Blairy, 2001; Gallese, 2003).

Yet, it is not enough to show a picture, observe mimicry, and conclude that someone is contaminated at any other level beyond the observed motor response. This conclusion is not empirical, but results from one's theoretical presumptions about a particular phenomenon; theory and data get confused through this process. For emotional resonance, there are at least two different forms of measuring and matching: the perceiver *and* the target's brain activation for that observing moment

(neural level); or the perceiver *and* the target's experience for that perceiving moment (lived experience level). I argue that, presently, the lived experience should be included in these assessments. This is because one of the main differences between these hypotheses is conceptually grounded on the otherness of the felt-state, and there is not yet, I believe, neurological evidence undoubtedly showing that there is a neural area or route responsible for this otherness quality. Also, since the main dispute between the hypotheses in Figure 10 concerns the interpretation of emotional resonance, I will exclude further mimicry-related considerations.

With regard to the recognition issue, brain lesions clarify the relationship between active neural areas (to my knowledge, often not matched; thus not a very precise measure of emotional resonance), and the perceiver's ability to categorize a particular emotional stimulus correctly. There are many ways via which this categorization can happen. For example, the perceiver might remember what that expression conventionally means for most people; and use this as a source of knowledge of the meaning of that expression for the answering task. In this case, one would be evaluating perceiver's ability to identify the meaning of an expression, and not the target's experience itself. This is described in this thesis as intellectual act, and may be performed with various levels of speed, effort, and deliberation.

This answer (experience of another) can only be assumed to be correct if the target's experience (not behaviour) is assessed. From a cognitive standpoint, if the participant is guessing what is 'inside the box', it is necessary for the experimenter to know what is 'inside the box' (instead of presuming its content in the light of

conventions). It is only in this manner that the experimenter can rate the participant's answer as correct or incorrect, or otherwise risking to resume the study to an investigation of the ability of knowing the meaning of emotional displays alone. The box might be tattooed with smiles on the outside; and hold inside a hand-full of tears. In short, one has to match the answer with the stimulus at the very same level of analysis. If the stimulus is say, a photo of a smiling person, of whom we know nothing of the internal emotional state for lack of measure, then the answer must be smile. If the stimulus is happiness (for the state of the target was assessed), than the answer can be happiness. The recognition task must be matched to what was assessed of the target.

Adolphs (2002, p.172), who objectively differentiated theory from evidence, suggested that there were several neurological routes via which emotional resonance experiences might contribute for interpersonal understandings. One of these routes amounted to a feedback process that, as he acknowledged, "*might*" be read along the lines of implicit simulation theories (via the the amygdala, and the orbitofrontal cortex, in their connections with the motor structures and the somatosensory cortices). But this is offered as one among other alternative routes, and as an interpretative hypothesis. The other route, for example, consists of a feedforward processing that allows for the categorization of the stimuli as a function of its structural proprieties.

We can see in these two routes the single process described by implicit simulation theories (and, hence, the step-wise quality should translate into differences

in promptness of activation, with the feedforward and other knowledge-related routes starting after the feedbackward route). This would translate the experience of inferring from one's reaction alone the experience of another at a neurological level. We can also see in these routes two separate processes, translating, say, the mechanisms described by explicit (feedforward) and implicit simulation (feedbackward) theories; and the categorization experience as an act distinctive and possibly dissociated from the resonance experience. For this reading, the timeline is not central. Finally, we can also see in these routes a one and only distributed process, as the one described by neurophenomenology. For this reading, the timeline is not central either. This would amount to the experience of directly experiencing another's meaningful experience, whilst knowing that it was the experience of another.

The study of lesions is the study of interruptions to the normal processing of stimuli. A particular lesion might affect similarly the resulting experience, regardless of whether we see in these routes two separate processes, or one distributed process. It is then perhaps not sufficient as the basis of a decision of which is the best interpretation. Furthermore, we should bear in mind that these are not isolated routes either; the neural network is a network, and, as such, links to other areas of and these become part of that experience. In conclusion, presently, I feel that much still rests on the way we look at evidence and interpret it in conceptual process-related terms.

To review, developing, and then testing the hypotheses in Figure 10 requires an interpersonal study, anchored in the constructs of matched behaviour, experience, and recognition. In my opinion, the measures must be gathered at the same level of

analysis for target and perceiver, for theory and evidence to be clearly discriminated for what they are. Consequently, there must be four matched variables under study: the subject's behaviour - the target's behaviour; the subject's emotional neural activity - the target's neural activity; the subject's experience – the target's experience; and the recognized dimension – assessed dimension. I have not found many studies that satisfy these requirements (matching mimicry; matching emotional resonance; and matching recognition), because resonance (experience and neural activity) and recognition are often not matched. Hence, in my view these are not properly assessed; and the gap is filled in in the light of current knowledge or theories.

Among those found, there is some disconfirmatory evidence for the neurocognitive interpretation gathered within a cognitive paradigm (Blairy, Herrera & Hess, 1999; Blairy & Hess, 2001). Hess and Blairy (2001) set out to study Lipps' model ('father' of contemporary implicit simulation theories). In short (Blairy et al., 1999, p.6), it states that people mimic an observed person's affective behaviour. Through feedback, imitation generates the *"corresponding affective state in the observer"*. Finally, the experienced state is a *"shared affect"* that is used to understand the target's state. It is through this process that people know someone else's emotions, via what was here called an 'inference from felt-feeling'. To achieve this purpose, these authors (properly) assessed the causality between the three variables (mimicry, contagion and accuracy); and conducted the matching at approximately the same empirical level for both perceiver and target.

It was found that participants mimicked dynamic observed non-*“prototypical”* (p.130) facial expressions of happiness, anger and sadness, as assessed with EMGs; and reported being contaminated for the similarly pre-assessed happiness, anger and sadness of the target. However, there was no evidence of a causal *“link between mimicry and contagion”*³³. Further, mimicry and contagion did not directly relate to accuracy, either directly, or indirectly (first comes mimicry, then contagion, then accuracy). Mimicry was even sometimes found to be incongruent with the target’s behaviour; and contagion negatively correlated with accuracy. Thus, they concluded that *“no evidence for the process proposed by Lipps was found”* (p.138).

In brief, these findings suggest that people do not seem to accurately know another’s experience as a consequence of mimicry or contagion. Hence, even though these phenomena occur, in certain situations, for certain emotions, their causal association with accuracy has not been supported. At best, mimicry was found to facilitate emotional recognition by increasing the speed, but not the accuracy, of women’s emotion recognition of the meaning of a facial expression (Stel & van Knippenberg, 2008) - and this was not a causality study, because it only assessed mimicry.

In conclusion, although mimicry and contagion occur, and may interfere with the process (facilitating or hindering, as reviewed here), in the light of current empirical data, the neurocognitive model in figure 10 is not, for me, a convincing explanation of empathy-as-knowing. Not even taking into consideration the critical observations

³³ The only criticism to their study and this conclusion, that someone from the Lipps’ school could put forward, that I can think of, is that contamination happens beyond awareness, hence contagion would be impossibly or fallibly accessed via self-ratings.

above, and that the usual assessment of accuracy restricts the empathic knowledge and the target's experience to a verbal, simple, dimension; what is not a faithful literal translation of overall multi-faceted experiences. Consequently, the phenomenological model, debated throughout this thesis, offers a plausible alternative. Direct empathy could amount to an instant intersubjective form of understanding others, as described by phenomenology. This is not, obviously, the only possible explanatory alternative.

At a less neurological, and more psychological experiential level, we find Elliot, Watson, Bohart and Greenberg (2011, p.43) description of the "*subprocesses*" commonly involved in 'empathy': emotional simulation; conceptual perspective-taking; and emotional regulation. This is congruent with the explicit and implicit simulation division proposed by Batson (2009). The emotional regulation component, as noted in Chapter I, is required because emotional resonance is seen as merging with the object of empathy, or an acute reactive experience (e.g., sympathetic distress).

For these authors, Rogers' definition of empathy varies from the above, and is not sympathy-related. It is to be distinguished from sympathetic reactions. Rather, it is related to the understanding of the unfolding moment-to-moment in-relationship experience of the other, and it is a near-experience understanding. This is in accordance with Stein's position. That is, the closer we get to the experiential level, the less sympathy (personal reaction) seems to be confused with empathy (understanding), even when the understanding involves a strong experiential side – at least from the phenomenological, and the experiential-humanistic psychotherapeutic standpoints. Thus, it seems relevant to investigate the lived experience of empathy to

better understand what its analysis may reveal about 'empathy'. Moreover, if we want to use, teach, and train others about empathy-in-praxis, this is the best level of analysis.

This thesis is then not an investigation of 'unconscious' or neural processes, as those nominated by implicit simulation theories (these would require the adoption of alternative methods). Rather, it is an investigation of the empathy-as-knowing experience, and of the involved psychological processes as experienced at that (prereflective and reflective) level. It therefore builds a case that there is a question to answer, when it comes to direct perception or direct resonance experiences of intuitive understandings, without going so far as to speculate what the right 'explanatory models' might be from a neurological standpoint. Any mechanism-related consideration included in this thesis is nothing but a critical thought about the way current models of empathy-as-knowing resonate with people's lived experiences; I make sense of participants' claims in the light of available knowledge.

The lived experience will never be proof of processes that are claimed to be 'unconscious'. People's insights into their experiences can help us understand the lived experience of a phenomenon, and sometimes even its underlying mechanisms as given in consciousness. But they will never allow for any definite proof about processes that are, at the outset, defined as unconscious, impenetrable, or inaccessible through self-reflection. Yet, they do pave the way to our understanding, in psychological terms, of what it is, after all, to 'empathically' and 'directly' know another's experience. This thesis is dedicated to this quest.

CHAPTER FOUR

'INSIGHTS INTO' EXPERIENCE:

PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF EMPATHY-AS-KNOWING

Chapter IV

The aim of this chapter is to describe the essential qualities of empathy-as-knowing, as appearing in participants' narratives about their immediate interpersonal 'insights into'.

Introduction

Among existing meanings of empathy, I chose to immerse myself in the study of immediate empathy-as-knowing experiences. These instantly bring the empathee's present experience to the empathizer's awareness and have been proposed in phenomenology to have a direct unmediated character to them (Depraz, 2001; Gallagher, 2007; Gurmin, 2007; Scheler, 1913; Stein, 1917; Thompson, 2001; Zahavi, 2008b; 2007; 2001). This phenomenological conception of empathy is here addressed under the name of *direct empathy*.

In published empirical work, I detected the presence of this phenomenon, though it was, for instance, agglomerated with other "*elements of shared emotions*" (Kerem et al., 2001, p.718); or described as an unidentifiable moment in therapeutic settings (Tempel, 2007). Tempel (2007, p.261/2) was concerned with means by which clinical social workers were able to empathize with mothers at risk of abusing their children. She called these pathways to empathy. In this paper, a transcript was included ("*but then I saw her together with her child and I had them play a game and I could see how she was such a little girl herself—she didn't really know how to play with her child*"), which was commented upon as follows:

Something occurs to cause the worker to view the mother differently. We do not know specifically from the above narrative what actually happened to cause the shift within this particular worker. (...) I speculate that an internal referent within the worker was stimulated to resonate with this mother's plight because of the particular scene created in the office at that

moment. Since this kind of situation occurred repeatedly with a number of workers in different formats (...)

For a reason unknown to Tempel, something particularly important happened when the worker was observing the mother playing with her child. As an explanation, she suggested that the observed scene 'stimulates an internal referent' in the perceiver, changing the way the worker 'saw', or understood, the mother. This is a possible interpretation.

But, from my present viewpoint, I can shed another light onto that 'unknown something', by interpreting the worker's experience as resulting from an immediate direct perception of the mother's present experience. This sudden insight into the mother's experience would have unexpectedly brought to the worker's awareness a never-seen-before quality of the mother's experiencing: she was just a child herself. And this revelation had a great interpersonal impact, allowing the therapeutic bond to evolve. In its absence, the worker would have continued to experience difficulties in relating to and helping the 'bad' mother.

For Edith Stein (1917, p.19), "*knowledge is blind, empty, and restless, always pointing backwards to some kind of experienced, seen act*". When we encounter an experience, it is always framed in the context of our past knowledge, and we may at first be blind to its novel qualities. This is because we sometimes tend to see again what has been seen before, instead of seeing the new and unknown aspects of the situation. This is particularly true for our interpersonal relationships. However, if

Tempel's worker had not been open to the unknown qualities of what she took to be the mother's experience, her prejudgemental idea would have prevailed - preventing the creation of an authentic therapeutic relationship with the initially censured bad mother.

Thus, immediate empathy appears as a human capacity for being open to the unknown possibilities that lie in experience. It is mainly through empathy that we are able to really simultaneously see others as a 'never-seen before' unique "*'I' among many*" (Stein, 1917, p.64), and to relate to others in an authentically open way, without the distortions of prejudice and prior knowledge. There is a sense of discovery in every Steinian empathic act.

The adoption of an empathic attitude is important in therapeutic settings, where the client must be recognized as a unique person. For the relationship to evolve in a nourishing, authentic and therapeutic way, clinicians should "*resist the temptation to prematurely apply the systematic, jargon-laden concepts ("preconceived ideas")*" (Arnold, 2006, p.757, cf. Reik, 1948, p.116). For example, Pilgrim and Bentall (1999) have written about the dangers of psychological therapists relying too heavily on diagnostic models of depression. In such cases, there is a risk of drawing primarily on formalised past knowledge, and attempting to fit current foreign experience into an *a priori* frame (or, indeed, seeing only the frame). It is only by relating empathically that the therapeutic alliance is enhanced, psychological comprehension achieved and the chances of therapeutic success improved (e.g, Arnold, 2006; Duan & Hill, 1996; Elliot, 2008; Greenberg et al., 2001; Hobson, 1985). 'Empathy' is thus very important in

therapeutic relationships (it is that which empathy means and is explicated, or what this attitude should be called, that lacks consensus).

In this chapter, participants' immediate experiences of empathy-as-knowing, as they were communicated by both the empathizer (subject) and the empathee (object) were qualitatively investigated. These were the two perspectives which participants in this study were invited to take, which are here named *resonance* (subject's experience) and *reception* (object's experience), after Barrett-Lennard (1981). Having found examples of what appeared to be an immediate (felt/ perceptive) knowing in Chapter II, as well as having read studies such as Tempel's, I was confident that utilizing first person accounts, about people's lived experienced of this phenomenon, could yield some interesting results.

Resonance, reception and 'direct empathy'

Barrett-Lennard (1981, p.92/4) describes a "*cyclical interpersonal model of empathy*", which includes stages of resonance, communication, reception and feedback. In everyday interactions, these stages are cyclical, and may feedback into each other *ad infinitum* (Chapter I).

Resonance is the empathiser's experience of actively attending to another person so that an "*immediate personal understanding*" of another's experience is

allowed to happen. Resonance is, then, an immediate empathic experience; possibly partly a direct way of knowing as well.

Reception is the complementary partner of resonance. It occurs when the empathized person is aware of the way the empathizer has understood his/her experience. By being defined as a “*sense or perception*”, it also appears as an immediate and direct experience. However, for reception to exist, that is, in-between resonance and reception, Barrett-Lennard establishes the *communication* stage, that consists of ‘showing in some communicative way’ that which was understood of the empathee’s experience.

Psychotherapists are commonly very interested in the outcomes of therapy and on improving its efficacy; and they have a preference for valuing the role of communication (e.g., Barkham & Shapiro, 1986; Barrett-Lennard, 1981; Bozarth, 2009; Carlozzi et al., 2002; Duan & Hill, 1996; Greenberg et al., 2001); or of communication and reception (e.g., Elliot, 2008; Greenberg et al, 2001; Pistrang et al., 2002); They are interested in knowing what the therapist can say that generates in the client a feeling that he/she is understood. The therapists’ resonance experience seems to have been given little attention. For instance, in Greenberg et al.’s (2001) meta-analysis of 47 studies, only 14% used therapist measures (resonance). But communication and reception, in Barrett-Lennard’s sense, is always a consequence of a preceding resonance experience.

Communication is here seen as only one of the routes to reception, principally when it is assessed as overt verbal communicative behaviour (e.g., Greenberg et al.,

2001; Pistrang et al., 2002). One does not really need to verbally communicate one's resonance experience. The interpersonal cycle does not necessarily have to go beyond resonance either, as with Barret-Lennard's observational empathy, which occurs at a distance, without interaction, and possibly in the absence of the target's awareness of having become the object of another's empathic act.

In this chapter, I am then more interested in the '*whats*' of empathy (resonance and reception experiences), rather than in the way these are communicated. As Bachelor (1988, p.238) concludes, "*the helper's mode of communication of empathy is never synonymous with the essence of empathy*". It is not the verbally discussed content, and the type of verbal intervention, that matters.

This is in accordance with a phenomenological viewpoint. Phenomenologically, it is the experiential side of empathy that is, first and foremost, fundamental. The subject's experience is an unavoidable definitive part of the equation, whereas what they do with these experiences afterwards, or how they overtly discussed them, afterwards, is not. Applied to Barrett-Lennard's cycle, this means that what makes the difference, and is essential to empathy, is the experiential quality of therapists and clients' resonance and reception experiences, as some psychotherapeutic works argued (Arnold, 2006; Bachelor, 1988; Hobson, 1985; Pistrang et al., 2002; Reik, 1948).

Empathy as an intersubjective process

The 'subject' of phenomenology is not exactly a subject at all – not in the conventional sense of a contained and discrete individual consciousness. The person in phenomenology is understood to be an intersubjective, temporal, embodied and embedded 'being-in-the-world.' The embodied 'mind' of phenomenology is intentional, always directed towards an object, co-generated by it and its surroundings. While attending to someone, one may directly know another's experience or know that one's experience is known; this is part of one's experience of being-in-the-world.

Phenomenologically speaking, empathy is understood not simply as an interpersonal phenomenon, but as an intersubjective phenomenon. The term intersubjectivity presupposes the self-other linkage and mutual shaping. It expresses that empathy happens in the context of an intersubjective relationship, in which object and subject's experiences mutually co-determine each other, shape each other. Using Tempel's example, at a psychological level, a mother who was brought up to believe that she is a bad person, will most probably end up acting like one. But if she is seen by therapeutic eyes, which do not enclose her identity in the 'bad' interpretation box, she might end up acting like a good mother instead (i.e., the subject affects the object's experience).

This empowerment is only possible because the social worker was open to the revelation of another quality of the mother's experience, a 'child-like', instead of 'cruel', quality. Both these interpretations are possible. There is also probably some truth in both interpretations (bad and child-like). In a Steinian sense, the child-like interpretation is faithful to what was immediately given to the perceiver, as well as an objective truth concerning the mother's experience. The question of whether it really is the truth, or a fortunate perceptive illusion, is a philosophical debate that will not be held here. But, in Stein's phenomenology, there is an essential truth, and one which can be given by immediate insight into the foreign experience. This is a theoretical assumption.

Present study

There is a need for research which explores immediate empathy via empirical data and which gives a more central role to resonance. The study in this chapter addresses this need, by exploring the qualities of immediate resonance and reception in empathy-as-knowing experiences; and their relationship to direct empathy theories.

When resonance has been studied qualitatively (e.g., Kerem et al., 2001; Tempel, 2007), it is usually with an accent on "*understanding*" the object. Partly because 'understanding' is commonly associated with an intellectual reasoning act (e.g., Chapter II; Kerem et al., 2001), I do not believe this to be a very suitable prompt for

researching direct empathy. Intellectual acts can be used in addition to empathy. They may precede (Stein, 1917, p.65), follow (Depraz, 2001; Stein, 1917, p.27) or replace (Zahavi, 2001, p.155; Stein, 1917, p.27; p.65) empathy, and may complement the goal of fully understanding an object. But they do not represent a direct knowing act, as with direct empathy (phenomenological conception of empathy, outlined in Chapter III).

The first challenge, then, was to delineate an instrument suitable for eliciting accounts about possibly direct empathy-as-knowing experiences; and one which, after the lessons learnt already, avoided the words 'empathy' and 'understanding'. Here, I adopted the expression 'insight into' as a means of asking for written narratives about a recent interpersonal experience, during which immediate 'insights into' a significant other's present experience had been experienced.

In qualitative research one usually sets out to 'reveal and reflect upon' the way the researcher affects the study (e.g., Finlay & Gough, 2003). In this case, however, I felt that the phenomenon at hand was already too intersubjective; and that it could be helpful to minimise the effect of an extra layer of intersubjectivity, if that could be done without damaging the quality of the data. Consequently, the online written interview format was chosen. After all, *"even if verbal reports are necessarily incomplete and do not reveal everything, what they do reveal is important"* (Hansen, 2005, cf. Kiraly, 1995 p.41).

I take the view that *"a story (...) is a portal through which a person enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally*

meaningful" (Clandinin, 2006, p.45). The way stories are told is never about what *"really' happened"* (Hobson, 1985, p.xv), if there is even such a thing; but about what is meaningful and truthful, for that person, about that event. I here then observed probably incomplete, 'truthful' and partly interpreted descriptions of interpersonally insightful experiences.

A Steinian phenomenological approach accepts that it is possible to determine the essential features of direct empathy through the study of its lived experience (in the same way that the child-like interpretation was accepted as a genuine trait of the mother's experience). This was precisely what was attempted here. The goal was to investigate the 'truthful' experiential qualities of immediate interpersonal understandings; and, in particular, what fundamentally conveyed the impression that the described insightful experience was a direct empathy-as-knowing experience, an act essentially distinctive from other types of understanding.

This study is thus a qualitative phenomenological analysis of insightful experiences. These were partly interpreted in writing by participants themselves, and further interpreted in light of the theoretical concepts outlined above. Texts were drawn from a non-clinical population and framed in the context of close relationships. In this non-therapeutic interpersonal context, empathy is expected to be part of people's daily experiences, in such a way that their resonance and reception roles *"spontaneously reverse from one cycle or series of cycles, as described, to the next"* (Barrett-Lennard, 1981, p.94) within the same interpersonal context of experiencing. I also asked for descriptions of insightful resonance and reception as experienced

towards the same person, in order to have a more complete view of that individual's empathic experiences from the two perspectives.

Methods

Sample

The sample of 20 participants was drawn from students at the same university. These students had a mean age of 20 years, varying from 18 to 26. They were mainly females (N=17; 85%), British (N=18; 90%), undergraduate (N=17; 85%); and psychology students (N=15, 75%). These participants provided forty: twenty about resonance, and twenty about reception experiences. The mean length of their answers was, for resonance, 188.5 words (SD=102.6); and, for reception, 131.5 words (SD=60.7).

Materials

I used a simple, four-section online written interview schedule (*Appendix V*). These questions were contextualized with instructions which tried to emphasize the insight's here-and-now quality, and encouraged participants to provide detailed situated answers and to write in a free-flowing manner.

The *first* section asked participants to choose a significant other and describe their relationship with this person. By forcing participants to elect a particular interpersonal context of experiencing, I was able to elicit descriptions of interpersonal insights. The *second* section asked for accounts about the experience of having recent there-and-then “*immediate insight into what your chosen person was experiencing*” (resonance). The *third* section asked for accounts “*about a situation where the opposite happened, this is, where the chosen person had an immediate insight into what you were experiencing?*” (reception). The *fourth* section asked for some basic demographic information (age, gender, nationality, education level and area of studies).

The two insight-related questions further specified that their narratives could be about ‘sensing’ or ‘feeling’ another’s experience, as well as “*thinking as if you were the other person*”. This wide meaning of the term ‘insight’ foregrounded the possibility of direct empathy not being an experience present in their recalled repertoire of interpersonal events; and of there being some difficulties in relating to the term ‘insight’.

Procedures

The proposal was approved by the University’s Research Ethics Committee. Three face-to-face pilot interviews (two women and one man from the target

population) were conducted and these suggested that the expression 'insight into' was effective and probably would generate narratives about direct empathy-as-knowing experiences. It also culminated in a slight revision of the adopted data collection instrument.

Recruitment was conducted in two stages, between February and March of 2009. Fifteen participants were psychology students, credit-paid, consent-giving, who anonymously and voluntarily completed an online version of the survey, at their own convenience, via the School of Psychology's 'research participation scheme' website. Five were students from other courses, who attended a School of Psychology subjects' recruitment day, and volunteered to take part in the online version of our written interview *during* that event. These participants had expressed an interest in participating in psychology research in return for a small payment, and had then joined a participant pool. They were invited by the researcher, one at a time, to review the information sheet and consent form. Having agreed to take part, they then completed the online interview at a set waiting computer. They were monetarily rewarded by the organization committee.

Participants are here identified by their number (preceded by the # symbol); and a fictitious name. Their accounts were anonymized, and corrected for minor typing misspellings.

Data Analysis

The approach to analysis was informed by Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009/2010); and by Moustakas' (1994) guidelines for the application of a (comparatively) more Husserlian, descriptive phenomenological analysis (DPA).

IPA is a qualitative hermeneutic approach, with an idiographic-level commitment to understanding experience from another's perspective. It looks for epistemological direction for the researcher's interpretation from within the textual data and it involves a *reflection* on one's own preconceptions and meaning-making (i.e., *interpretation*) through the establishment of a “‘*dialogue*’ between the researchers, their coded data, and their psychological knowledge” (Smith et al., 2009, p.79). The core of IPA's analysis is the line-by-line iterative and inductive qualitative constitution of *themes* (i.e. coding, patterns and commonalities descriptive of a set of experiential qualities present in single and, then, in multiple cases) and the study of their inter-relationships (via the development of a guiding *structure*³⁴).

Yet, the main goal of this study was to define the *essential* qualities of the qualities of participants' ‘insight into’ experiences, and inspect which of these

³⁴ In IPA, ‘structure’ refers to the hierarchical organization of themes. On the other hand, in Moustakas (1994, p.78), ‘structure’ is a concept opposed to ‘texture’. Whilst structure speaks about essential qualities of the phenomenon (‘how’ it is experienced), without which the phenomenon would cease to be, textures speak about more idiographic qualities of the individual or collective phenomenon (‘what’ is experienced). In the present study, the term structure is used in Moustakas’ sense, that is, there is an attempt of understanding that which is fundamental in insightful experiences.

resonated well with the theoretical direct empathy phenomenon. I wanted to render direct empathy-as-knowing as a “*clear, explicit and complete*” (Bradbury-Jones, Sambrook & Irvine, 2009, p.664) concept, defined in the light of its fundamental, distinctive, empirical qualities, in order to guide further research. This is, to a great extent, the goal of DPA. Therefore, IPA’s analytical procedures were complemented by those of DPA; an hermeneutic approach is not incompatible with a more descriptive phenomenological approach (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009). Each has its own merits and purposes, and may complement the other; though they rarely are used in this manner.

Firstly, IPA’s reflective attitude was complemented by an effort towards *Epoche* (bracketing out everything that is not strictly given in writing). Secondly, for the coding procedure, a *Phenomenological Reduction* was conducted, during which each sentence is given equal value (*Horizontalization*), for the extraction of textural meanings and invariant constituents of the experience. These were then clustered into non-repetitive and non-overlapping abstract themes (recurrent qualities of the experience). Finally, *imaginative variation* was conducted, that is, alternative scenarios and meanings were imagined for each theme, so that structural qualities (features that define the essence of the phenomenon) would emerge.

For instance, if you accept that the phenomenon of sympathy is a congruent emotional reaction to someone else’s experience (Chapter I), then you may write that someone ‘felt happy for you too’. First, consider the theme of the happiness feeling. This is a textural theme because sympathy might have happened even if the quality

was not the emotion of happiness, but, instead, of pride. Then, consider the similarity theme (the other person was happy 'too'). Since sympathy might have happen even if the other felt pride, then similarity is also a textural theme. In this manner, we found two *textural themes*: emotional similarity and happiness.

Now consider the theme of responding. If the other person had 'ignored' your experience, not reacting in any emotional way, sympathy would not have happened. Then, there is the congruency of the other's feelings with your own feelings. If the feeling was one of sadness, the experience would cease to be a sympathetic one, to become perhaps one of envy or self-pity. Through this process, we found two *structural themes*: emotional reaction and congruent emotion. It is their combination that structurally qualifies the phenomenon of sympathy. These are its fundamental features; and their interaction is required for the experience to be one of sympathy. This is how imaginative variation is conducted.

For communication purposes, I had to name the phenomenon in a simpler way than the listing of its structural qualities (e.g., congruent emotional response). For this purpose, I have defined *essences*, or *structures of experiencing*, as a set of structural qualities that, in conjunction, formed a particular phenomenon.

In summary, *essences* defined the overall phenomenon (e.g., sympathy); *structural themes* identified its fundamental 'hows' (e.g., congruent emotional reaction); and *textural themes* its non-fundamental 'whats' (e.g., happiness and emotional similarity).

Subsequently, these essences and themes were used to compose individual and group structural-textural descriptions (DPA), and then an interpretative narrative account of findings (IPA). This allowed for the emergence of the themes' organization, or interrelationships; and their re-embedding in an interpretative framework. It was an important part of the analysis because it helped to contextualize the results in a broader theoretical framework. This enabled the investigation of the relationship between theoretical claims (Chapter III) and the qualities found here.

Trustworthiness

In general, interpretations of findings are presented throughout the chapter; and exemplified by the use of verbatim quotations from several participants, in order to increase the study's transparency. Furthermore, *Appendix VI* lists the main structural and textural themes, provides illustrative examples for each, and indicates the essence associated with each. *Confirmability* is thereby enhanced.

Dependability was enhanced by having conducted a pilot study in a face-to-face individual interview setting; by having used a standardized questionnaire; and by gathering answers in a short interval of time.

Finally, interpretation was triangulated by submitting a case to the Experiential Psychology Group in the West Midlands. In this session, there were eight researchers, most of them using IPA and/or grounded theory qualitative methods. I started by

asking them to reflect upon the answers provided by Suzy (#6). Suzy was a 21-year-old British undergraduate Psychology student. Her case was chosen because her narratives seemed structurally exemplary of direct perceptive experiences; and were of manageable length, but did not lack detail.

After distributing her resonance and reception texts to those present at the meeting, I asked them to comment upon manifested qualities, without enlightening them about the topic under study, or any other particulars of the study. Most of their comments supported my interpretation, though they also revealed new interesting themes. The discussion added depth to each of the found themes, and brought new angles for consideration, principally because researchers analysing material were not informed about the interpretative context adopted here. In fact, the best way of describing the triangulation experience is by quoting Moustakas (1994, p.91): *“each angle of perception adds something to the horizons of a phenomenon”*.

Findings

Supporting previous findings (Chapter II), there were only three participants using the word *“empathy”* in their narratives, and never as synonymous with an immediate non-intellectual experience (e.g., Louise, a psychology student, whose account is described further on). Instead, for this phenomenon, the preferred expressions were to see, sense, understand, know, feel, or experience someone else’s

experience. They also, though infrequently, used expressions like: *"I could tell"*; 'mindreading', and *"communicating"*, among others. But empathy was definitely not part of the language-in-use adopted to talk about these experiences. This supports the methodological choice of adopting the alternative expression 'insight into' for the study of immediate empathy-as-knowing experiences.

In this section, I describe the general essences of participants' resonance and reception experiences, along with their structural qualities. It follows a more detailed analysis and a reflection upon their inter-relationships. Finally, a few textural themes, of relevance for the present thesis, are explored.

Essences and structural themes of insightful experiences

The essence of resonance was determined in the light of how participants described becoming aware of someone else's experience (e.g., *"seeing her so upset"*, #10, resonance); whereas, in reception, what was at the centre of the attention was the way participants' described knowing that the chosen person knew what they were experiencing, that is, *"the moment when I knew that my sibling was experiencing a similar feeling to me"* (#4, reception). The attempt to understand the essence of each of these roles involves a shift in one's focus of attention.

Across resonance and reception answers, the expression 'insight into' generated four distinctive meaning patterns in data; with each of these having a clear distinctive

structure and texture. These were: *thinking* about another's experience and *thinking* about another's resonance ('thinkers'), *listening* to another's experience and *listening* to another's resonance ('listeners'), *perceiving* another's experience and *perceiving* another's resonance ('perceivers'), and *experiencing* another's experience and *experiencing* another's resonance ('experiencers'). These were the four found essences of insightful experiences.

I will sometimes use the designations included above, in between brackets, but this is not a suggestion of human typology. I am not suggesting that, say, participants are 'thinkers' in their everyday interpersonal life *and* in every circumstance. I am not making any claims that go beyond the texts at hand. I am simply saying that the individual is a thinker in that part of the account. Nevertheless, hopefully, if the phenomenological analysis was successfully conducted, it is reasonable to assume that the essences found here will translate to some people's significant experiences of the way that they come to know another person's experience, in their daily lives, in the context of a close relationship.

These findings do not even support typological claims, because there were narratives that contained every single one of these essences. That is, there were participants who described how they thought, listened, experienced and saw another's experience – each of these acts revealing a particular, distinctive aspect of another's experience. Nevertheless, there were also texts which illustrated a single essence. For those participants, it was one essence alone which defined the meaning of an

insightful experience; and so these texts provided support for their differentiation as a distinctive essence.

Among the participants', there were those who consistently provided structurally similar accounts, that is, with the same essential features, across questions; whilst others did not. But even when participants provided texts with divergent structures, they usually gave meaning to the empathizer's experience (whether themselves, for resonance; or the chosen person, for reception) in very similar terms, across paired narratives. That is, they interpreted the resonance act in the same way, whether they were describing a resonance or a reception experience. Louise, whose account will be explored in some detail further on, is an example of this observation.

In Table 4, there are excerpts from participants' texts to illustrate each of these essences. For me, these texts are very suggestive of what each of these essences means. They referred to acts in-between which there was little margin for confusion. In simple terms, for a thinking act there was a reasoning ('as I too'); for a listening act, there was another's 'telling'; for a perceiving act there was a 'watching'; and for an experiencing act there is a 'feeling'. Each of these acts amounted to one of that essence's structural themes; and the naming of the essence was mainly a result of it.

Table 4: “Illustrative texts for essences of insights into another’s experience”

Essences	Data extract
Thinking	Anyway whilst telling me the story i could completely understand what she was going through as i too split up with a partner for no reasons of our own but instead that of a third party (...). I knew it was just as hard for her as it was for me. [#13: Linda, resonance]
Listening	There was an occasion when i was quite low on self-esteem and it was over a girl, and he talked to me and said he knew how i was feeling. And it was odd because all the emotions and thought processes i thought and went through, he actually named and mentioned and said how to combat that to feel better again. [#7: Paul, reception]
Experiencing	He had an argument with parents who told him they never wanted to see him again. i felt how he felt - upset angry etc. - knew what he was going through (...). It was like being him for a short while. [#11: Eve, resonance]
Perceiving	I watched my sister perform at the Christmas Carol event where she was in the choir. I went with my mum to watch her and you could tell that she was really proud of herself but really embarrassed at the same time. (...) I could tell how she felt. We kept waving to her and she would pretend that she didn't really see us. [#14: Judy, resonance]

Essences (*thinking, listening, experiencing and perceiving*), and their structural defining themes, were the result of a detailed analysis of many themes. Most of these (textural) themes did not survive imaginative variation as fundamental features. Nevertheless, some came forward as structural, essential defining attributes. Their identification was one of this study’s objectives, because it allowed me to clearly differentiate that which defined the concept ‘direct empathy-as-knowing’ in

participants' lived experiences. Figure 11 illustrates essences and their most determinant structural themes.

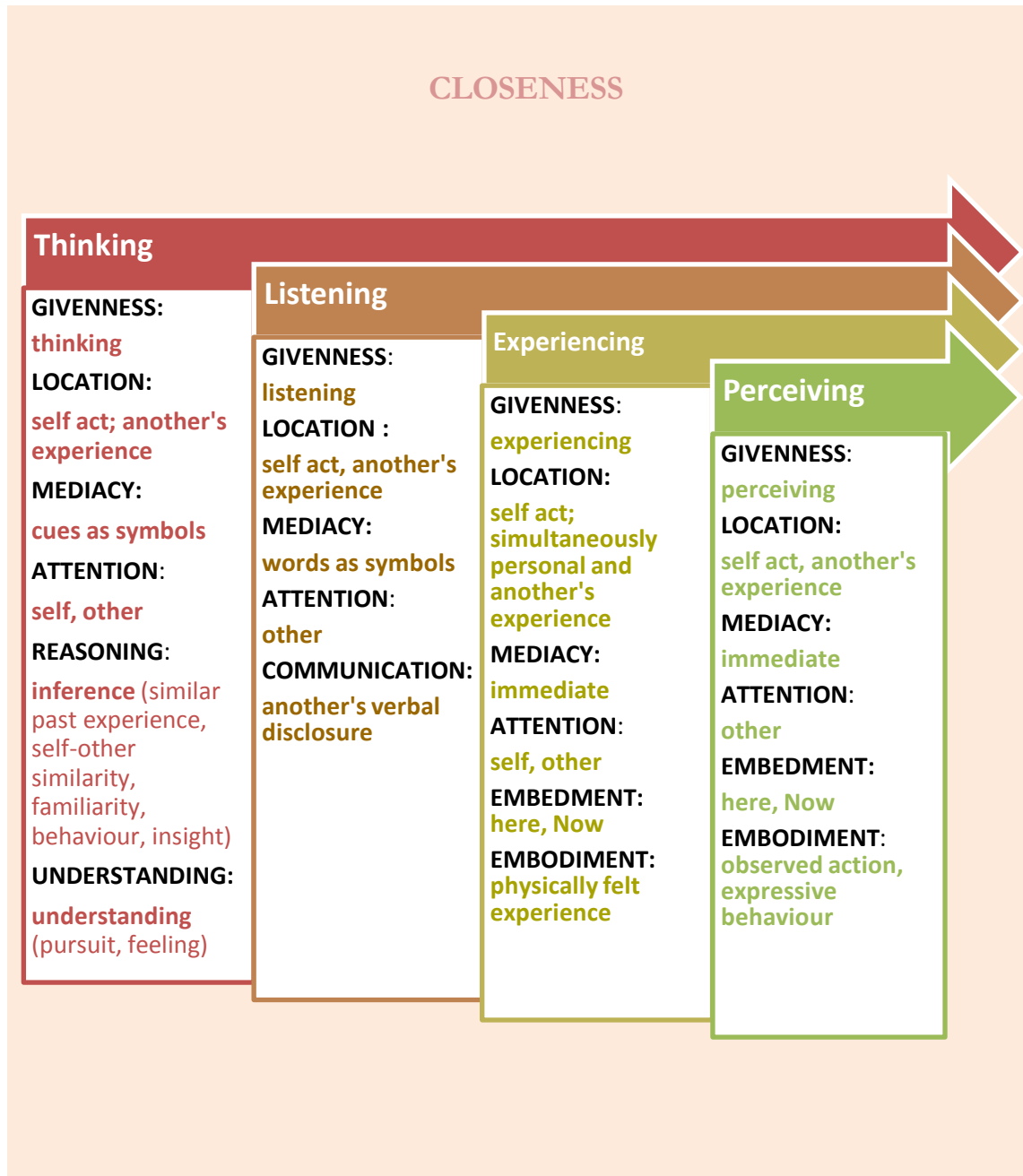


Figure 11: “Essences and structural themes of ‘insight into’ experiences”

Closeness is inscribed in the surrounding box, to illustrate how these experiences happened in the context of a close significant relationship. And it is an important context, since, in my opinion, it was responsible for bringing to light some recurrent textural themes, such as helping.

The four main boxes represent essences; and each specifies associated structural themes (coloured and not capitalized). For example, *thinking* is a combination of the structural themes: a thinking act performed by the self, with another's experience for intentional object, that uses cues as symbols of experience during a logical reasoning that culminates in an intellectual understanding experience – it is a *thinking* essence, for short.

I have also capitalized the underlying conceptual angle of analysis (the question posed through imaginative variation) relative to each theme, to facilitate the understanding of what each of these structural themes refers to; and Table 4 provides illustrative material for each of these essences and qualities.

Since my question to participants asked for immediate insights, these were the essences proposed by participants as 'immediate' ways of knowing someone's experience. They had, however, essentially different natures, and largely as a consequence the *givenness* themes, that is, of the act nominated by the participant as responsible for their interpersonal knowing (i.e., they knew because they thought, listened, experienced or saw), each essence assumed a clear distinctive nature.

Location partly referred to the agent of the knowing act. Essences were acts of different natures, but which were all performed by the participant. Regardless of the role (resonance, reception), it was always the participant who thought, listened, perceived, or experienced. They were all 'self acts'. These personal knowing acts had the known experience for intentional object, either another's experience (e.g., 'she was upset', for resonance experiences) or another's reception experience (e.g., 'she knew I was upset', for reception experiences). This was a structural theme common to all essences, but there was one exception. *Experiencing* was structurally defined by the fact that the participant declared that subject and object were experiencing for themselves an intersubjective experience ('I felt her happiness', for resonance; 'she felt my happiness', for reception). This was a fundamental feature in *experiencing* essences - the felt experience had to be described as simultaneously another's and one's own. Hence, for this essence, the known experience was located in both of the involved people.

The *mediacy* themes were important and responsible for the creation of two groups of essences: *immediate* (experiencing, perceiving) and *non-immediate* (listening, reasoning). Non-immediate (or mediated) essences were overtly associated with an intermediary step or a mediating symbol of experiences: cues, for thinking; and words, for listening. Therefore, although these non-immediate essences were present in texts about 'immediate' experiences (consequent of the question posed), conceptually speaking, by being mediated acts, these are not properly seen as possibly

direct acts. *Non-immediate essences* came about as a consequence of nominated mediators, they were about the knowing of symbols.

On the other hand, *immediate essences* were not explicitly associated with a mediator, a symbol that stood in-between the knowing act and the known experience. This was how the directness (immediate essences) and non-directness (non-immediate essences) revealed itself in this analysis. Since the directness of the experience is theoretically a fundamental quality of direct empathic experience (Chapter III), only immediate essences were here associated with the phenomenological conception of empathy-as-knowing.

This means that the adopted prompt successfully led to the recollection and description of immediate (possibly direct) experiences, as intended, but also seemingly non-immediate ones (in the sense outlined above). Since the study of seemingly direct experiences was one of the main objectives of this study, *thinking* and *listening* essences were principally useful as a counter-point, a basis of comparison. They did not help illuminate the qualities of seemingly direct experiences.

As for the *attention* themes, all these acts are partly dedicated to another's experience. It is the experience that they knew through the insightful act that is mobilizing their attention. However, experiencers and thinkers were attending to their experience as well: their knowledge and intellectual opinion, for *thinking*; and their felt-level experience, for *experiencing*. On the other hand, listeners and perceivers were completely focused upon the empathee during the knowing act.

The remainder of themes (related to reasoning, understanding, communication, embedment and embodiment) are particular to each essence, and will be described in the following sections, with the help of a few examples. This is done by presenting the two main groups of essences, immediate and non-immediate. The main focus is on immediate essences, however. In *Appendix VI*, you will find more exemplary excerpts for these structural, and their associated essences.

Non-immediate essences: Thinking and Listening

Thinking was insight gained by reflecting about another's experience in writing. In these texts, participants sought to understand someone's experience at an intellectual, reasoned level. They considered the reasons for the existence of the identified other's experience by drawing upon clearly identified information sources. These most common sources of information were: similar past experience, assumed self-other similarity, and familiarity, but there were also instances of *thinking* about an observed behaviour of another. In these examples of 'inferences from behaviour', the behaviour was a symbol that was subsequently infused with meaning, in a reasoned logical manner.

In their resonance answers, participants who *thought* were interested in understanding someone's experience, but also the insight experience itself, and in making sense of these in an intellectual reasoned manner. They described why they

knew the foreign experience and/or why the knowing came about. For reception, they were interested in the reasons for the empathizer's knowing of their experience (and/or, implicitly, how this knowledge made them feel understood and supported).

This non-immediate structure was to be expected perhaps because of the reflective design of this study; the theoretical presupposition that non-immediate ways of knowing may complement immediate ones; and the inclusion, in the clarification prompt, of a reference that could be interpreted in a perspective-taking sense.

The second non-immediate structure was *listening*, and was about becoming aware of someone's experience via that person's verbal overt communication. During this communicative act, the other person spelled out the experience, and the participant listened to it. This was how the insight was gained. *Listening* was associated with, and mediated by, an intentional verbal communicative act.

For resonance narratives, these participants described knowing another's present experience because they were told about it, by the object of the insight, and what they did with that knowledge (understand, help); whereas, in reception, they described how the other person told them that their experience was known, and the impact of that knowledge (feeling understood and helped).

Although verbal communication is in itself an expressive behaviour, in these texts its value for participants was in terms of words as symbols of experience – not in terms of a behaviour that is expressive of an experience. The focus was upon the content of

the communicative act. It was what was verbally described that mattered, it was the word as a symbol of an experience that was responsible for the knowing.

A thinker-listener: Mary

Mary's (#3) resonance account illustrates the *thinking* and the *listening* structures of experiencing. This is because her knowing of her friend's experience was partly a consequence of a *thinking* structure (inference from a similar past experience), but this was also reached via a *listening* structure. By combining the information verbally disclosed by her friend with a reasoning act, Mary is then able to understand her friend. Mary is neither a pure listener, nor a pure thinker, but simultaneously both. She told the following:

I suppose that a situation which could be used as a good example was when my friend became madly in love with a guy in her school. From the day she noticed him, she couldn't stop thinking or talking about him although they didn't even know each other by then. She would drag me around the school just to catch a glimpse of him for few seconds. The situation was becoming more and more ridiculous and tiring but I understood her perfectly because few months earlier had exactly the same situation. I knew exactly how she felt, what where her thoughts because I had went through all that as well and knew what she needed. My great empathy was increased by the ability to place myself in her situation. We could talk about it, exchanging our views and emotions and I feel like I was a great help to her. I think that this experience was putting myself in her

shoes and deciding what I would do if I was her and giving honest advice in such situation. (#3, resonance, whole)

Mary never specifies the whereabouts (spatial embedment) of her friend or herself, or the moment where the insight happens (temporal embedment). Rather, the experience seems to have happened during a long period of time, in many places. It is not clearly embedded in either of these dimensions.

The *thinking* structure was never simultaneously and clearly embedded in a particular moment and place. There are exceptions: the two instances about an inference from behaviour; and Linda (#13). Linda is both a listener and a thinker, and starts her narrative by informing that she went to “*our spot*” to have a conversation with her friend. But in this case, the ‘spot’ is not embedding her *thinking*. It is rather highlighting the closeness of their relationship, and embedding the place where they usually discuss things of importance to them. Linda’s example also highlights how the embedment of the experience may be more significant for listening essences. That is, significant conversations were more often remembered as having happened in a particular place, in a particular moment, whereas the insightful thinking was less frequently recalled as having happened in a particular here-and-now.

Mary’s insight is a consequence of being told about her friend’s situation (hence, *listening*) and reasoning about it and her past similar experience (hence, *thinking*). During this intellectual activity, she infers, from her own similar past experience, what her friend’s infatuation experience is like. That is, in the way Mary gets to know her

friend's experience, *thinking* and *listening* are fundamental. Without *thinking* and *listening*, her knowing act would cease to be visible to me. *These* are the essences of her narrative; they structurally define the way that the knowing of her friend's passion was given to Mary. Since there is no immediacy or directness in putting two and two together, these were then non-immediate essences.

As a consequence of these essences, Mary is empowered by the belief that she can understand and help her friend; and imagine herself in her friend's shoes. In her case, this helping is done through talking, a common way of helping among people who described non-immediate essences. This was a very common conjugation (*thinking* and/or *listening* and helping). This was perhaps because of the closeness context in which these experiences happened. In Mary's case, she probably would have not let herself be 'dragged' around the school, or be engaged in "*ridiculous and tiring*" conversations, if the person confessing her crush was not one of her "*closest friends*", with whom she talks "*about literally anything*" and who "*will always give me an honest advice or criticism*".

Finally, it is her friend who is in love. The experience of love is her friend's all along, from the beginning to the end of the narrative. The known experience is located in another person. However, in some thinker's accounts (but never in listeners' accounts), the experience is sometimes referred to as a 'we' experience. For instance, Katy (#12) described that "*the main similarity between both our situations were that we weren't close to our relatives to passed away, so we sort of felt a guilt*". That is, thinkers sometimes expressed a thought experience via the use of a 'we'. In these

cases, the use of the collective person was always a consequence of a self-other similarity assumption.

Immediate essences: Perceiving and Experiencing

Perceiving corresponded to an immediate sensitive awareness of an experience. It was expressed through perception-related words, such as 'seeing', but also sensing, knowing or mind-reading.

Perceivers saw. They could just tell what another person was feeling or thinking, in face-to-face situations, as well as in observational situations, during which the object was probably not always aware of this seeing, or voluntarily expressing their experience to the empathizer. They saw another's meaningful experience at once, another's authentic experience. What was perceived *was* another's experience, and that was the end of the story. That is, the 'perceptive knowing' recurrently had the weight of authenticity, or accepted truth; and this type of certainty appeared to be qualitatively different from the more evidence-like certainty associated with non-immediate acts. For *perceiving* to become an insightful, revealing experience, no proofs were needed.

In resonance texts, participants "*saw*" the close other's experience, as it unfolded, there-and-then; and in reception texts they "*could see*" how someone knew what their experience was; and they never involved any intermediary step or symbol

as responsible for this perceptive knowing. The experience was meaningful and informative of the other's experience all along.

Perceiving did not require a sharing of experiences either, and, for it to happen, the subject's experience, beyond perceiving, was insignificant. On the other hand, *experiencing* was grounded precisely on this sharing of experiences. Experiencers were primarily concerned with their own experience, and it was their personal experience that was at the centre of their attention. However, an *exclusively* personal experience, (say, sympathy) was not enough for this essence to be found, nor would it be enough to describe what the other person was feeling. Rather, experiencers had a simultaneously personal ('I' experience) *and* foreign ('you', 'we') experience. Experiencers described feeling for themselves a simultaneously personal and foreign experience, that is, they had an 'intersubjective' experience. This was what their insight into someone else's experience was all about, its essence.

Thus, *experiencing* was a special kind of personal experience because it was immediately meaningful and informative of another's experience; it was an "*experiential resonance*" (Barrett-Lennard, 1981, p.93) that directly acted as an insight into somebody else's experience.

Experiencers felt. They felt another's excitement, another's sadness, another's physical pain, another's intention. They felt another's resonance. The extent of this personal embodied feeling varied considerably, from feeling an acute pain oneself, to simply declaring feeling or experiencing someone else's experience.

Experiencing did not involve any intellectual act, such as an inference from felt-feeling. There were two possible exceptions to this observation. Michelle (#9, resonance) finished her narrative by arguing that *“you could really feel what the other person was going through because i could feel it myself”*. However, this inference from felt-feeling was not used to imagine another’s experience, because this experience was already known to her. Rather, it was because she felt it herself that she became surer that what she sensed was really her boyfriend’s experience. The reasoning was then used in a confirmatory manner, to prove to herself the accuracy of her immediate experienced and perceptive insight.

Sarah (#8, resonance) also never questioned whether her friend was really in pain. This much was a certainty. Instead, she questioned whether the pain she felt was indeed another’s. She questioned her pain’s quality of otherness: *“I don’t know whether I was experienced a part of his pain, but it definitely felt like it”*. This sentence showed her doubt, but also showed the solution: in the light of the lived experience, her experience felt foreign. That is, as a lived experience, it appeared to her that she was experiencing her friend’s pain. This is not really an inference from felt-feeling either.

Therefore, these texts seem to favour phenomenological theories that argue that otherness is directly given with the direct empathic experience itself. It is nevertheless curious to observe that, although rare, doubts about the otherness of the experience and a certain lack of certainty were only observed in the two cases above. The scarcity of such doubts emphasises the *experiencing* essence.

An experiencer-perceiver: Louise

For Louise (#20), an insight was to immediately know someone's experience, and this knowing involved both a perceptive and an experiential knowing act. She was both an experiencer and a perceiver:

I probably had an immediate insight into what Pauline was experiencing when she took her pregnancy test. I knew in the back of her mind she wanted it to be positive, despite claiming the opposite. Both of our hearts were beating ridiculously fast, and both of us were too anxious to speak but I felt like we were both experiencing the same thing and feeling the same emotions despite the fact I wasn't actually taking the pregnancy test. I could read her facial expressions and nervous hand movements, and felt like I could feel what she was feeling and think what she was thinking. The insight helped me empathise with her situation, as it allowed me to place myself in her position to know what she was going through. It probably happened because we're so close as friends, and I could see the difficult situation she was in and wanted to help but couldn't unless I really understood what she was experiencing. I didn't explicitly say to her that I had felt this, but she could see by how I was acting that I was experiencing the same difficulty as she was. (#20, resonance, whole)

For Louise's knowing to come about, she needs not to listen to her friend's experience. She also does not infer from her own heartbeat that her friend was probably nervous; or that her friend was nervous because nervous people tend to have

trembling hands. Her experience and percepts are immediately meaningful and revealing of her friend's experience.

In the beginning of her narrative, Louise declares that she knows her friend's unexpressed denied wish. Though she does not necessarily become perceptively aware of this thought, she indeed perceives the anxiety of her friend's gestures (or, better, 'reads' her nervousness). Secondly, she gives meaning to her friend's reception experience as a perceptive one ("*she could see by how I was acting*"). Hence, for her, resonance is partly an immediate perceptive experience.

This finding is corroborated by her reception account, where she starts precisely by explaining that, in that episode, her friend "*could see something was wrong immediately*". For Louise, her friend immediately saw, there-and-then, that something was not quite right with her. This is how her friend's resonance experience was interpreted - despite the text being about a non-immediate reception experience (*listening*). The implication is that, although sometimes reception texts did not illuminate the way immediate reception was lived, they nevertheless reinforced the idea that, for these participants, an insight was an immediate non-mediated way of knowing what someone was experiencing, via *perceiving* and/or *experiencing*.

In these texts, *perceiving* was not always about the seeing of an expressive behaviour or gesture, as with Louise's hand movement – the way most often this act is theoretically described (e.g., Zahavi, 2007). This is precisely what I see of importance in perceivers' texts. They recurrently illustrated a knowing that went beyond the perceiving of an expressive gesture. In certain cases, the perceived experience had a

gestalt quality; or it brought many facets of someone else's experience to the empathizer's awareness that could not be associated with any particular seen gesture.

Louise situates the insight in another's observed action (taking the pregnancy test), and highlights the temporal dimension of the event ('when'; the gerund), rather than its spatial dimension. Her experience happened precisely during an observational act, "*when*" her friend was taking the pregnancy test, or, better, it happens *while* her friend was taking the pregnancy test. Her knowing experience accompanies that of her friend's.

Perceivers were always observers or observers-participants to a scene. There was only one participant (#18) who described how she had an intuition about her friend's experience in a non-observational context. But this is a different matter altogether that will not be explored here, because it required a long digression. Imaginative variation strongly suggests that, despite this exception, the embodiment of another's experience, not necessarily translated into a specific gesture, is still validly considered as a structural quality of *perceiving*.

The embodied nature of immediate insights is much stronger in experiencers' texts. Indeed, the majority of Louise's text deals precisely with the experiential and personally experienced side of this episode. For her, they are "*both*" having a similar physical (heartbeat), emotional (anxiousness), behavioural (unable to speak) experience, and even thinking (having the same thoughts) experience. Then, her own and her friend's experience are embodied, in a felt-level sense that includes from physical to cognitive facets.

Self and other experiences are given to Louise as similar, to the point that the only recognized difference is the intentional object ("*taking the pregnancy test*"), which is definitely another's. Therefore, it is a shared experience, in the sense that it is a "we" experience, during which subject and object are having the "same" similar experience. The experience is located in a 'we'. However, the "both" in the 'we' implies that two people are involved, an 'I' similar to 'you', an 'I' and 'you' having the same experience. The known experience is also described as an intersubjective experience ("*I could feel what she was feeling*"). This leaves the impression that this is not a 'merging-with' fusional experience (oneness). Rather, it appears as an intersubjective experience ('feeling another's experience'), closer to the notion of direct empathy.

Finally, in Louise's understanding, this insight is a result of their closeness, and her desire to help and understand her friend. And, as described, the sequence of experiencing would be: 1st a context of closeness, and a desire to understand and help; 2nd perceive and experience the foreign experience; 3rd Perspective-taking; 4th Complete understanding. Therefore, Louise has a perceptive-experiential experience that acts as the basis of her knowledge of the foreign experience, and which supposedly is followed by an imaginative reasoned activity - immediate and non-immediate structures appearing as complementary for the empathizer's understanding and helping goal.

Although experiencers usually claimed a helping intention, this was not always the case, such as when one felt the happiness of a winner (#4: Molly). Immediately knowing someone's experience did not require any helping intention or action. The

importance of closeness, proposed by Louise, is however, another matter; to be discussed further on, in more depth.

Relationships between immediate and non-immediate essences

Overall, across resonance and reception texts (N=40), there were eleven narratives that described nothing but non-immediate essences, and two that illustrated nothing but immediate essences. Consequently, the co-occurrence of immediate and non-immediate essences was the most frequent observation. This is perhaps suggestive that these acts complement each other for the insight to become a meaningful knowing experience. Figure 12 illustrates the incidence of immediate (*experiencing, perceiving*) and non-immediate (*thinking, listening*) essences per perspective adopted (resonance/ reception).

Immediate essences were less characteristic of reception texts (11/20), when compared with resonance texts (18/20); and were never the single essence of reception texts (0/20), in contrast with what was observed with resonance texts (2/20). This incidence shows that immediate insights were a very common resonance experience, observed in the majority of these narratives, and a less common reception experience. This was because participants commonly described a reception experience that was possible via the *thinking* or *listening* structures, principally *listening*. Indeed,

the survey was quite successful in gathering of stories about immediate resonance experiences, though not quite so much in terms of immediate reception experiences.

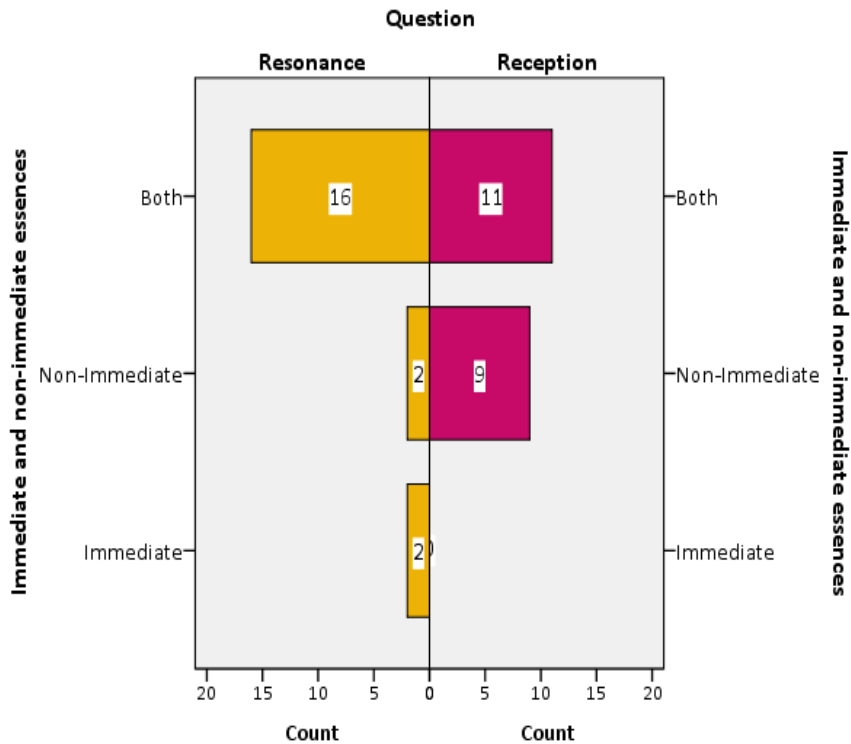


Figure 12: “Incidence of immediate and non-Immediate essences across answers (resonance/ reception)”

For reception³⁵, non-immediate acts had more weight. That is, ‘pure listeners’ and/or ‘pure thinkers’ (11/40), who described nothing but non-immediate essences, were more commonly found in reception texts (9/20). In reception narratives,

³⁵ For the conference paper, presented in 2009, at International Human Science Research Conference, I analyzed and reported upon the phenomenological features of resonance texts alone. Interestingly, resonance texts did not suggest that the *listening* essence should be isolated from the *thinking* essence. Both were mediated experiences, they often concurred in qualitatively similar texts. It was only with the analysis of reception texts that *listening* became an essence on its in right, because it was the single essence of a few of these reception texts. This also reinforced my impression that communication was a feature that was more important for reception than for resonance.

communication seemed to play a very significant part. For example, some participants described nothing but the content of the communicative act (e.g., Paul, Table 4), and its effects (feeling helped and understood). They elected another's discourse as the only phenomenon responsible for the writer's reception experience.

These texts were also sometimes impregnated by a felt sense of amazement at the empathizer's accuracy. This suggests that, there-and-then, the communicative act obfuscated everything else - probably contributing to the diversion of attention from what the empathizer was, or might be, experiencing in terms of resonance (beyond that which was said). It was almost as if the verbal content reduced the importance of alternative ways of knowing. In the presence of another's dialogue, participants did not usually relate to another's experience directly, choosing to concentrate instead upon the symbol of an experience, the word.

It is possible that verbal communication might be a core aspect of some reception experiences; and it justifies the inclusion of communication in Barrett-Lennard's empathy cycle, as an intermediary stage, between resonance and reception. However, Barrett-Lennard acknowledges that communication is not necessarily verbal, which leaves space for the emergence of more immediate ways of becoming aware that one's experience is known. These immediate ways of receiving were here called *resonant receivers*, an experience to be detailed further on.

Among immediate knowers, there were a few 'pure perceivers', who did not report experiencing the other's experience; and a few 'pure experiencers', who did associate their experiencing to a perceptive act. This established *perceiving* and *feeling*

as two distinctive forms of immediately knowing another’s experience, one experiential and another perceptive. The incidence of each of these immediate acts across questions is illustrated in Figure 13.

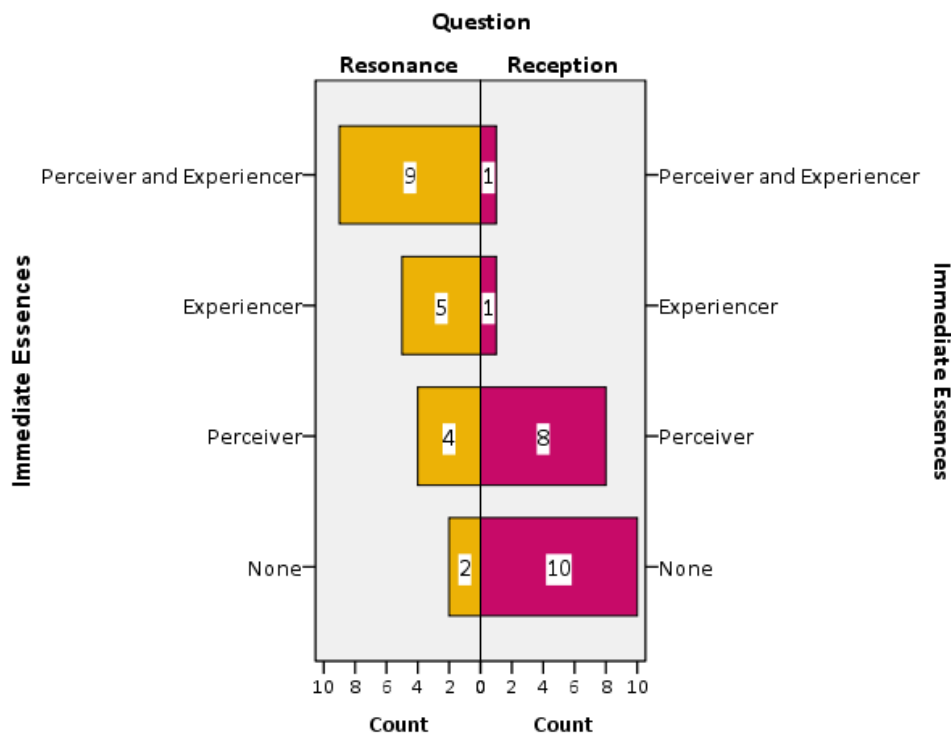


Figure 13: “Incidence of *perceiving* and *experiencing* across answers (resonance/reception)”

Experiencing was more important for the description of resonance experiences (14/20), than of reception experiences (2/20); and so was *perceiving* more important for describing resonance experiences (13/20) than reception experiences (9/20). As noted, reception was less commonly about immediate essences. However, these incidences also reveal that, when reception involved an immediate experience, it was more commonly a perceptive receptive experience. There were only two participants

involving *experiencing* in reception, whereas there were nine participants involving perceiving in reception.

In conclusion, resonance experiences commonly involved immediate essences or a combination of immediate and non-immediate essences. On the other hand, reception experiences commonly involved non-immediate essences; and, when immediate essences were involved, there was a preference for *perceiving* as an insightful receptive act.

Textural themes of participants' insightful experiences

I describe a few textural themes in more depth because they are relevant for the present thesis. *Appendix VI* includes additional textural themes (those which were commented upon in the preceding sections), such as the authenticity of the immediately known experience, and helping.

Textural themes allowed me to better understand how these immediate insights were lived by certain people, in certain circumstances. This was sometimes more revealing of the lived experience than the observation of structural themes; and the variability was a rich source of knowledge. Through them, I had a clearer idea about what it meant, for these participants, to immediately know another's experience, in a less structural, perhaps sterile, manner.

Closeness as the interpersonal context of empathy

In the literature, closeness and related concepts, such as familiarity, have been (controversially) proposed as essential features of 'empathy' (e.g., Kerem et al, 2001; Noller, 2006; Preston & Waal, 2002; Stinson & Ickes, 1992; Zaki et al., 2007). Theoretically, I find no reason to believe that closeness is a structural feature. Indeed, I gathered stories of empathy (Chapter II) about seemingly direct empathy-as-knowing experiences, and a few of these happened in-between strangers.

In this study, participants reported upon successful immediate experiences. Thus, I would be unable to realize whether *"the shared world and interdependence of the couple may thus facilitate the experience of empathy, as well as impeding it"* (Pistrang et al., 2002), simply because participants would not describe how, say, jealousy blinded them to what the other was actually experiencing. I only had at my disposal accounts in which there was a positive association between people's intimacy and the insight experience.

That is, the topic guide was framed in the context of close relationships, by allowing participants to choose, in the opening question of the survey, among one of three possible interpersonal contexts of experiencing: friendship, partnership, and kinship. In collected narratives, they chose, in descending order of frequency: a friend (N=19/40); a family member (N=11/40); and a romantic partner (N=10/40).

Consequently, empathy-as-knowing was more frequently described as happening in the context of a romantic relationship, than 'empathy' in general (Chapter II). This could be a by-product of asking participants to first chose a significant interpersonal relationship, and then describe insightful experiences. Nevertheless, it shows that choosing a romantic relationship did not prevent them from reporting upon a meaningful insightful experience that had taken place in such a context. Indeed, 25% of the total amount of narratives happened in this context.

Most participants were able to describe resonance and reception events within the same relational context (N=16/20). This means that most people remembered exemplary resonance and reception experiences within the same interpersonal context. Therefore, resonance and reception appeared as interchangeable roles across dyad members, in accordance with Barrett-Lennard's claim.

However, there were four people who changed the relationat context across questions. That is, the reception account occurred in a distinctive interpersonal context, as they indicated. There could be many reasons for this finding. One is proposed by Hannah (#2, reception), in the beginning of her reception narrative: *"Although I feel like I can read my boyfriend like a book, I don't think the reverse applies. I don't think he is as aware of my feelings as I am of his"*. For her, their relationship was asymmetrical (in terms of immediate empathy-as-knowing experiences). Of course, it is not possible to infer that her boyfriend was actually unaware of her feelings – but that was her impression, in the writing-up moment.

Finally, not surprisingly, partly due to the survey's structure, closeness was an ever-present theme. Described insights happened between two close people, with all that this interpersonal context entails. There were even those who established closeness as the cause (11/40) of the insight, in the sense that, for them, it could not have happened in a different context. Closeness was also nominated as a consequence of the narrated episode (4/40), or of the insightful act itself (4/40). In this last case, the insight was understood as a sign of the closeness of their relationship, it made them feel loved, close, or closer, to the other person – making closeness a consequence of the insight.

The importance of this theme can be observed in Molly's (#4, reception) text about an insightful experience with her twin sibling: *"The connection I had with my sibling because of my pain was very intimate (...) It was meaningful to know that my sibling cared about me that much. Such a close bond could not have been made if they didn't love me which meant a lot to me at the time"*. For Molly, closeness was both a cause and a consequence of the insight. Indeed, some participants described the relationship between knowing and closeness as an ascending spiral, with closeness being both the beginning and the end of the insight, in ever increasing levels of intimacy.

But even when the participants did not express themselves so explicitly about the importance of closeness (N=6), it was still an ever present theme. I cannot detach these episodes from this context. Implicitly or explicitly; closeness was fundamental in

all these narratives, for all these essences. These findings are about insights that were experienced within the context of close relationships.

Qualities of the known experience

‘Empathy’ is often associated with emotionally negative and disturbing events (Håkansson & Montgomery, 2003; Chapter II). Although in these narratives most insights happened in negatively valenced emotional experiencing contexts (N=31/40) as well, there were a few occurring within positively-valenced emotional ones (N=9/40). In comparison with Chapter II’s findings, ‘insights into’ were more frequently experienced in a positive emotional context, than the having of an ‘empathic’ experience in a positively valenced context. This suggests that the valence of the underlying emotions matters less for empathy-as-knowing experiences – whereas ‘empathy’, by being made synonymous with, say, pity, is more frequently limited to negatively valenced emotions.

I have also looked into the quality of the resonated content. Empathy-as-knowing is usually studied as the knowing of another’s emotions, or thoughts, as with Hancock and Ickes’ (1996) approach to empathic accuracy. On the other hand, a more phenomenologically coherent position would be that people immediately come to know foreign experiences regardless of their quality. That is, people would be able to

immediately know many distinctive qualities of experience, instead of just emotions, or just thoughts.

In these texts, I found insights into various aspects of other's experiences, such as sensations, intentions, emotions, judgements and thoughts. An example would be Paul's (#7, resonance) insight: "*when i saw the smile on his face i knew what joke he was going to say and oddly i felt the same sense of slight excitement*". What was important, in this experience, was the knowing of what his friend was about to verbally share with the group (intention). The felt emotion of excitement was an 'odd' side effect.

There were also foreign experiences which were described as a gestalt, by simultaneously including many of the above elements of experiencing, as with Louise's accent. In some cases, then, it makes little sense to say that participants resonated with pure emotions, or pure thoughts, because elements constitutive of the empathized experience were linked, in their writings, in a gestalt form; and contained many elements (e.g., #9: Michele, resonance: "*I knew that he was really upset as his car got written off and he loves his car but i could sense that he also felt guilty and responsible for hurting me even though it wasn't his fault.*")

Resonant receivers and communicative acts

Verbal communication was important for reception experiences, a finding that provides some support to those researching the effects of verbal communication for reception. Nevertheless, in some accounts (11/20), verbal communication was a secondary aspect, as proposed in the introduction to this chapter. These texts support Barrett-Lennard's views, in that that communication is not necessarily verbal, as usually studied in the context of psychotherapy research. Some people described immediately becoming aware of another's resonance experience, independently of any explicit verbal communicative effort, and usually perceptively. These are immediate reception experiences produced by 'resonant receivers'.

In their texts, reception appeared as a phenomenon no different from resonance. Suzy's (#6) text serves to illustrate this phenomenon:

(...) it was only after when i saw that she was in as much pain as me that for some reason that i can't really explain other than i just knew, i realised that she wasn't angry with me she realised how much i was hurting and how difficult it was for me and how i was angry at myself and the fact that she realised this and couldn't do anything hurt her, for some reason i just know she knew how i was feeling. (#6, reception)

In this narrative, Suzy illustrates, as in her resonance text, an immediate perceptive essence ("*i saw*"). The perceptive act brings to Suzy's awareness her

mother's immediate reception experience (*"i just know she knew how i was feeling"*), but also what appears to be her mother's present genuine feelings (*"she was in as much pain as me"; "that she (...) couldn't do anything hurt her"*). It is the knowing of all these qualities of her mother experience that makes her feel understood – not just her awareness of her mother's resonance experience. She is simultaneously receiving her mother's resonance, or empathic understanding of her grief, and knowing that her mother is also partly sympathetically hurt. These two knowing acts even appear as one and the same insightful act, one which reveals several aspects of the mother's experience, and one of which is a resonance experience.

Reception, after Barrett-Lennard, is bonded to a prior resonance experience, and this cyclical consideration distinguishes it from resonance. Suzy's narrative is about reception, in the sense that it is about 'knowing that the other knows one's experience'. But describing her experience as a resonance immediate knowing experience seems much more representative of her writings. Ultimately, in Suzy's text, these resonance and reception differentiation seems artificial, an exercise of the mind – not really representative of her lived experience.

There were more reception narratives where reception appeared to correspond to a resonance experience. In these examples, if communication took place, there-and-then, it was 'subliminal'. As Claire (#16) noted, when describing how she was able to know her sister's experience, from a distance, without the involvement of any verbal communicative act, *"I felt we had a strong connection at the time... although there was a large audience, we were communicating with each other regardless of them"*.

In conclusion, resonant receivers were an example of how “*it is impossible to consider an empathic pathway as one way*” (Tempel, 2007, p.260). In this sense, and in the context of immediate acts, the communication stage seems to be better conceived as an intersubjective two-way link between self-other experiences. This allows for one’s immediate knowing of another’s experience, whether of reception or resonance. These are, in the end, intersubjective experiences, that may, at times, be given to people at the same time, as they unfold, in an intergenerative dynamic way. This is a widespread phenomenological claim about direct empathy (e.g, Depraz, 2001; 2008; Gallagher, 2007; Stein, 1917/1989; Thompson, 2001).

Sympathy, empathy and the otherness of immediate essences

There was never any self-other confusion in *perceiving* acts. However, in experiencers’ texts, as with Louise’s, the experiential side of the experience was described as a ‘we’, an intersubjective, and an ‘I’ similar to ‘you’ experience. Consequently, via the multiple location of the experience, the otherness of it was sometimes harder to assess, less often collectively located in a one and only source.

There were also a few cases (4/16) where I wondered whether *experiencing* was more suitably understood as a non-empathic sympathetic reaction to another’s experience, rather than one which was empathically and experientially informative of another’s experience. These participants simply described one personal and one

foreign experience ('I' similar to 'you' location), possibly just coincidentally qualitatively similar (e.g., #11: "*I felt upset in seeing her so upset*"). This way of describing personal and foreign experiences does not seem enough for me to support that the experience is empathic, rather than sympathetic.

This sympathy-empathy discrimination, in the narratives, was a fine distinction. I attempted to formulate, based upon theoretical considerations, criteria that might allow for a clear distinction between that which was sympathy, and that which was empathy. However, for all criteria, such distinctions seemed to be artificial. John's account helps to illustrate this point. He produced a sympathy-like text for the resonance question, in which reasons (personal motives) for his personal response to his girlfriend's experience are enumerated (one of the criteria usually associated with the characterization of sympathetic experiences). I then started wondering what in his text was about sympathy.

But it is precisely at this point that he explains that what was appearing to me as a sympathetic personal experience, was, for him, an empathetic one, informative of the foreign experience and given meaning as an intersubjective feeling (#1: "*She was experiencing my pain, living through my loss, as if it was hers. She knew (...)*"). For him, it was an experience that was a way of knowing what the partner was experiencing, by means of an intersubjective feeling – which amounts to an empathic *experiencing* structure in this analysis.

This one of the reasons that led me to accept that the *experiencing* structure was sometimes better explained as a 'composite' experience, possibly involving both

empathetic and sympathetic structures of experiencing, as well as an analogical reliving of a past experience (#5: Peter, resonance: "*I was excited in response to his excitement and my memory*").

Composite or not, it was still, partly, suitably understood as an empathic immediate knowing. There was always an awareness of what the other person's experience was; and the experience was partly a knowing act, though never in inferential terms to determine another's experience. For these reasons, I concluded that the experiential side of an insight was fittingly conceived, at least partly, as an immediate empathetic experience (rather than an unconscious response, or a completely personal sympathetic one).

Conclusions, discussion and future research

In participants' insightful resonance and reception experiences, four essences were identified: *thinking*, *listening*, *perceiving*, and *experiencing*. These were embedded in the context of a significant close relationship, and were detected on their own ('pure' phenomena), as well as together. In most of the narratives more than one essence was usually found. The relationship of these appeared to be a complementary one, with these essences complementing each other for the participants' understanding experience.

Note that we must accept that some processes may have occurred during the actual event, which were not described in the participants' accounts. Participants may simply not have included these in their accounts, either because these were 1) irrelevant for their understanding of what an 'insight into' was; 2) or not salient, or inaccessible, in their memory of the event. Nevertheless, the essences which they did describe were those which were selected by participants as fundamental to the communication of their insight into a close other. And, having found 'pure' phenomena for each of these essences, we can hypothesise that each is a distinctive phenomenon, a distinctive lived experience of an 'insight into' experience.

Regardless of which acts 'really' happened, immediate experiences were very frequently described in these narratives. Participants interpreted and described their immediate insights in a very particular manner, in a non-mediated manner. These immediate experiences were about the feeling and/ or perceiving of another's experience, there-and-then. On the other hand, non-immediate experiences were described as being mediated (by available symbolic cues or words) ways of knowing another's experience, and were also the meaning of an insight for some participants.

This was important principally because, in *Chapter 1*, there was an effect associated with participants' area of studies, namely, evidence that psychologists more often defined 'empathy' as a perspective-taking intellectual act (*thinking* essence, in this study). Moreover, given that psychologists dedicate themselves to the study of psychological phenomena, they probably hold a (perhaps trained) tendency to rationalize experiences and present them in a group-specific manner, congruent with

the more common models of psychic functioning (cognitive, of which perspective-taking is an example). Therefore, it was reasonable to expect that, in this study too, the thinking essence would predominate – which was not the case. There were many accounts describing very experiential immediate forms of relating to others' experiences, along the lines of 'direct empathy'. This also suggests that the term 'insight into' was partly effective in its objective.

Perceiving and *feeling* may then be common everyday empathy-as-knowing experiences when their intentional object is another's 'genuine' experience (resonance). There were also a few examples of *resonant receivers*, that is, participants who described how they immediately received another's understanding of their experience (usually via a perceptive act), but, overall, for reception experiences, communication (*listening*) seemed to play a very important role. Reception texts less commonly described immediate essences. This suggested that the role (resonance, reception) may exert some influence on which act the knowing becomes grounded.

The objective of this study was partly to understand what made an empathy-as-knowing act appear as a direct knowing act; what was it that was important to define the concept of 'direct empathy-as-knowing'? The structural qualities of immediate essences found in these accounts were structurally more similar to each other, when compared with non-immediate acts. Both *perceiving* and *experiencing* were embedded immediate acts that, in the manner of attention, brought another's experience to the participants' awareness in a way that was described as non-mediated.

Participants immediately knew what was given as another's experience all along. Their doubts were never as to whether the empathee was experiencing 'so and so'. It is usually only in the neuropsychology field, and some rare interpretations of Husserl's 'paarung' (e.g., Finlay, 2005) and in some psychotherapeutic theories (Zepf & Hartmann, 2008), with the premise of self-other merging, that self-other discrimination becomes a puzzle hard to solve, or rather a platonic happening of becoming one with the missing half. In these texts, no-one described being one with the object of empathy, despite the sometimes very intimate context of experiencing of these insights.

Although this might be an artefact of the clear interpersonal context in which the survey contextualized the insightful act, the important is that the oneness experience was never part of these participants' empathy-as-knowing experiences. This otherness quality of the known experience, intrinsic to immediate essences, is a common claim in both phenomenological and psychotherapeutic theories of empathy (e.g, Barret-Lennard, 1981; Gallagher, 2007; Rogers, 1957/2007; Stein, 1917/1989; White, 1997).

Immediate essences were also experiences embedded in the here-and-now. Participants recalled the having of an immediate experience which had a temporal (now) and spatial (here) dimension, though the temporal aspect appeared to be more important than the spatial location itself. This was the reason for having capitalized the 'N' of 'Now' in Figure 11. The immediate insight was a contextualized action, spatially and temporally embedded, as it has been suggested in phenomenological and

psychotherapeutic works (e.g., Barrett-Lennard, 1981; Rogers, 1957; Scheler, 1913; Stein, 1917; White, 1997).

Moreover, there was always someone who was looking, resonating; and someone who was being looked at, receiving - even if only in the back of one's mind. Immediate insights were interpersonal experiences. However, this quality is better understood via phenomenological intentionality. That is, subject and object are linked intentionally, in consciousness. This self-other intentional link that puts in relation two (or possibly more) experiencing embodied embedded minds must be present even when an empathizer is not consciously and deliberately trying to decipher a foreign experience, as in therapeutic settings; when the insight comes as a surprise, as in some of these narratives. This is an assumption of most phenomenological and psychotherapeutic contemporary 'empathy-as-knowing' theories (Barrett-Lennard, 1981; Dessoy, 2000; Depraz, 2001; 2008; Finlay, 2005; Maturana, 1975; Thompson, 2001; White, 1997; Zahavi, 2007).

Finally, participants never nominated a mediator for their immediate knowing. There was neither a symbol, carrying a meaning that had to be subsequently decoded; nor an intermediary step.

For these reasons, immediate essences appeared to portray the phenomenological conception of direct empathy-as-knowing, one which was lived under the form of a feeling or a perceiving of another's experience. However, in four cases, it was difficult to understand whether experiencers were describing a sympathetic response or a direct empathic experiential knowing. I solved this dilemma

by proposing that experiences were composite, that is, that people might simultaneously have a sympathetic experience and a direct felt empathetic experience.

There would therefore be a benefit in clarifying definitions of sympathy and empathy, and their distinction both conceptually and experientially. The adoption of alternative data gathering methodologies, that prompted more detailed and reflective data than some of the texts gathered for this study (e.g., face-to-face in-depth interviews), would perhaps be more revealing. Moreover, this study's objective was to understand direct empathy as a concept that could be found in people's narratives. By reassuring me that this phenomenon accounted well for some people's lived experiences of an insights into someone else's experience, my conceptual questions were addressed.

I also realized that textural qualities were specially revealing, perhaps even more than essential qualities. In the following chapter, I draw upon some of these findings to study, in a more first-person, in-depth manner, the way that people lived and gave meaning to immediate empathic experiences. I will thus leave conceptual concerns aside. Clearly, there are lived experiences of empathy-as-knowing that coincide with direct empathy theories, and I wish to better understand how it feels, to directly know another's experience.

Here, to address the limitations imposed by the design of this study (online answers; indirect means of observation; short accounts), I have tried to stick with phenomena as they appear, to me, in the text (Epoche), attempting to *"understand and make sense of their experiences in terms of their relatedness to, and their*

engagement with" (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006, p. 109) the expression 'insight into'. I have also looked at texts collectively, de-constructed, and constructed them once more, switching constantly between an hermeneutics of faith and an hermeneutics of suspicion (Josselson, 2004). I have looked from different angles for very particular characteristics, until qualities started to emerge. However, I cannot give this reflection finished. In the end, "*no thing-perception is terminal and conclusive; space always remains for new perceptions (...)*" (Husserl, 1931, p.414, cf. Moustakas, 1994, p.72), and I keep myself open to such discovery.

CHAPTER FIVE

HAPPY STORIES:

INSTANTLY KNOWING ANOTHER'S EXPERIENCES THROUGH CUED RECALL

Chapter V

The aim of this chapter is to describe the interpretative phenomenological analysis of joint interviews about videotaped significant ways of knowing another's experiences.

“People face Sander’s camera (...) but their gaze is not intimate, revealing. Sander was not looking for secrets; he was observing the typical.”

Susan Sontag (1977/2008)



Figure 14: “Hanging out”

Photography by Roel van Tour (2007). Reproduced with the author’s permission.

Introduction

'Empathy' is generally studied as a face-to-face dyadic interpersonal phenomenon. Although this is not a necessary condition for empathy to be experienced (Boulanger & Lançon, 2006; Barrett-Lennard, 1981; Stein, 1917), this is the usual research setting, from neurocognitive to psychotherapeutic approaches. This is such a general research approach to 'empathy' that it has been defined via references to this particular context, that is, as an "*interaction between any two individuals*" (Decety & Jackson, 2006, p.54).

Étienne Dessoy, being a professor, researcher and family and systemic therapist, dedicated his life to the study of interpersonal relationships. He begins his considerations about a primordial level of existence (contact) as follows:

It is impossible not to communicate. This world is still the one where one experiences the proximal and the distant, the familiar and the frightening and also empathy – capacity for feeling sympathy or antipathy – by means of a contact which connects by inaugurating communication, perhaps the most human, where everything is already 'said' in the very same instant of the encounter, even though nothing was yet shown nor verbalized.³⁶ (Dessoy, 2000, p. 219/ 220)

The importance of his message here is that he situates empathic happenings in an inaugural communicative encounter between two people, one which is communicative

³⁶ Free translation from the original: "Il est impossible de ne pas communiquer". Ce monde est encore celui où s'éprouvent le proches et le lointain, le familier et l'effrayant ainsi que l'empathie – capacité d'éprouver de la sympathie et de l'antipathie – par le biais d'un contact qui fait lien en inaugurant la communication, peut-être la plus humaine, où tout est déjà 'dit' à l'instant même de la rencontre alors que rien n'a encore été ni montré ni mis en mot."

even before anything has been overtly shown or said. For him, 'empathy' is anchored in Heidegger's being-with-others, a Dasein that is inevitably a Dasein-with-others. Instead of saying 'I think, therefore I am', Dessoy is saying 'I am, therefore I communicate'. People communicate their experiences simply because they exist, feel, think, relate.

Consequently, it is this encounter that is fundamental; that allows for empathy-as-knowing to naturally happen. During this encounter, the empathic subject has laid before him another's experience. It is there to be read, received, as part of a basic "*everyday social understanding*" (Gallagher, 2007, p.354). It is there to be empathized with. In this sense, empathy is then the experience of an empathizer who naturally becomes aware of the naturally communicated empathee's experience, independently of that which is objectively said or done.

From Dessoy's systemic, hence partly objects relations, perspective³⁷, communication is very explicitly not necessarily a verbal act (Chapter IV), but rather a natural (perhaps empathic) form of relating to other people and their experiences. For phenomenologists, Dessoy's reflection could illustrate the happenings of an intersubjective context of experiencing (e.g., Zahavi, 2001). Moreover, the notion of *direct empathy* (phenomenological conception of empathy, Chapter III) is intrinsically an interpersonal and intersubjective concept, by being explained through the concept of pairing or coupling (Chapter III) and by being responsible for the empathizer's direct knowing of the empathee's experience. It is fundamentally a non-intellectual way of

³⁷ In more experimental settings, the object or target of the empathic act is often substituted by a photographs or videos, at best of real people, so as to minimize the effects of factors such as social desirability (e.g., Noller, 2006); and thereby the association between 'empathy', verbal commentary or communicative acts is less often investigated.

becoming aware of someone's present naturally intersubjectively communicated experience - a conception very close to Dessoy's description of this primordial form of communication that happens during interpersonal encounters.

The study in this chapter is dedicated to the qualitative investigation of the individual experiential qualities and hermeneutic 'hows' of a phenomenon which was described by participants as a natural intuitive way of coming to know someone else's experience in Chapters II and IV; and that resembles direct empathy and Dessoy's description of the communicative inter-exchange between individuals. I seek to reflect upon the experiential "*secrets*" (Sontag, 1977/2008, p.59) revealed by participants themselves, to each other and to me, about what immediate empathy 'feels like', about the lived experience and meaning of this immediate empathy-as-knowing experience.

Present study

In Chapters II and IV, immediate empathy appeared as a perceptive and/or felt knowing experience, occurring in-between strangers, as well as close others; in emotionally positive experiencing contexts, as well as emotionally negative experiencing contexts; and during seemingly troublesome emotional moments, as well as seemingly daily episodes. It even amounted to some participants' definitions of what empathy was. The design of this study is shaped in the light of the immediate empathy-as-knowing findings outlined above. For example, I assumed that immediate empathy was not

restricted to emotionally negative experiencing contexts – in contrast with the pity and the emotional distress meanings of ‘empathy’.

Here, I give some attention to the design due to its novel features. Through it, I aimed to reduce the *“‘explanatory gap’ in our understanding of how to relate first-person, phenomenological data to third-person, biobehavioural data”* (Lutz & Thompson, 2003) by choosing less indirect research methods, broadly consistent with the tenets of the neurophenomenology paradigm (Chapter III). There can be only benefits in the adoption of several angles of analysis at once.

This design involved the adoption of several distinctive methodological procedures, drawn from very distinctive research areas and had three separate stages. The first stage was a ‘pseudo-experimental’ dyadic situation, during which participants were asked to share a happiness story from their own experience with a partner they barely knew, while being videotaped. The second stage involved an instant recall survey, during which both partners were invited to individually describe in writing what had been experienced during the first stage. Finally, I invited them to discuss these experiences, with the help of the recordings, during a cued recall, same-day, in-depth, joint interview.

The ‘pseudo-experimental’ situation was inspired by Hess’ work on contagion, mimicry and empathic accuracy. Among her experiments, there was a study (Hess & Bourgeois, 2010) which investigated the occurrence of interpersonal mimicry and contagion (and supportive evidence of their occurrence was found), during a videotaped

dyadic mixed-gender interactive task. There were listeners and speakers; and speakers were responsible for sharing a story about anger or happiness events.

I adopted a similar procedure here. Participants were invited to participate in a videotaped dyadic interaction that involved the relating/ narrating of a personal story, about an episode during which happiness had been experienced, to another participant. Although an emotion other than happiness could have been chosen, this seemed a suitable choice. It reduced the possibility of leaving participants distressed by the conversation. If they were to have their feelings inspected like a laboratory mouse, they would be better off discussing a positive event. If they were to be contaminated, at least they would be contaminated by a positive feeling.

Hess and Bourgeois' study was very useful due to its detailed methodological explanation (e.g., the mean time participants took to tell their tales). I could therefore plan the situation in the light of their design, one which had been pre-tested for its efficacy, at least with regard to contagion and mimicry.

These authors did not adopt an interview procedure; but in-depth interviewing, in the present study, was fundamental. Wishing to reduce the explanatory, interpretative gap, get closer to people's immediate empathy-as-knowing experiences, and understand their meaning-making from a first person perspective: these were the centrepiece of the study.

For this interviewing stage, the method drew upon Kagan's (1963, 1990) *Interpersonal Process Recall* (IPR) technique, first developed as a counsellors' supervision and training tool, used to inspect the in-session "*dynamics of empathy*" (Kagan,

Krathwohl & Miller, 1963, p.237). In brief, this technique consists of an in-depth systematic process-focused exploration of recordings of therapeutic sessions, conducted during individual interviews with one of the video's protagonists (Larsen, Flesaker & Stege, 2008).

There are, however, many variations and adaptations of IPR. An example of a similar procedure, which also influenced the present study, is Elliot and Shapiro's (1988) *Brief Structured Recall* (BSR), presently part of what is called "*significant events research*" (Timulak, 2010). This technique addresses some of IPR's shortcomings by introducing a few changes. Namely, the lengthy duration of the detailed individual interviewing, associated with the comprehensive viewing, is dealt with by introducing individual surveys for instant recall feedback and an emphasis upon significant episodes³⁸ (meaningful for the protagonist). In BSR, interviews and surveys revolve around these significant moments, rather than the whole interaction.

IPR and BSR have been employed in the study of interpersonal relationships, usually therapeutic ones; both utilise participants' own insights to inform the researchers' analysis; and both do this by (usually) making recordings of a therapy session and then inviting participants to individually comment upon these recordings (cued recall), usually shortly after (maximum 48h) the therapy session, for recency effects.

³⁸ In this approach, an episode, or event, is the videotape's analysis unit, which is a "*discrete interactional episode centering on a given topic or piece of interaction work*" (Elliot, 2008, p.240).

These techniques are concerned with experiential and processual aspects of interviewees' spoken, and unspoken, experiences occurring during the videotaped interaction. They aim to assist with the process of remembering, reflecting and verbalizing these experiences on a one-to-one basis (Barkham & Shapiro, 1986; Bradbury-Jones, 2009; Darling & Clarke, 2009; Elliott & Shapiro, 1988; Larsen et al., 2008; Levenson & Gottman, 1983; Morris, 2001; Seale, Charteris-Black, Dumelow, Locock & Ziebland, 2008). It is a technique that is said to be a "*unique way of accessing aspects of human interaction that are difficult to approach via other research means (i.e., "conscious but undisclosed thoughts, feelings, and sensations"*)" (Larsen et al., 2008, p.31).

This was what was needed here for the in-depth first person investigation of recent immediate lived experiences of empathy-as-knowing, and the reduction of the explanatory gap. Since this phenomenon is thought to be a natural everyday way of knowing someone else's present experiences, a particular population (e.g., counsellors and their clients) was not required; and the absence of a therapeutic session recording, the typical centre of the interview discussion, was dealt with by creating the 'pseudo-experimental' situation previously described. Nevertheless, this study opted for the conduction of joint interviews, rather than individual ones. This interviewing technique is most unusual in this research context; and has pros and cons that are yet a source of debate.

Individual and joint interviews: to each its merits

What and how we remember and communicate an event is a door into our own particular way of making sense of the world, in that moment, for a particular purpose, in that context. Cued-recall individual interviews then reveal, in a situated manner, with the help of the interviewer, the experience and meaning of the recorded event, for that particular person, in that moment, in an in-depth, detailed and systematic manner. Individual interviews allow closer inspection of an 'individual' memory, of 'individual' views. They reveal the first person perspective, the one which is generally the focus of phenomenological approaches, as well as of IPR and its derivatives.

It has been said that "*counsellor and client might come away from the same interaction with vastly differing experiences*" (Larsen et al., 2008, p. 20). This is true of probably most interpersonal encounters. And individual interviewing will probably accentuate such differences (e.g., Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009; Morris, 2001; Seale et al., 2008).

On the other hand, joint interviews, in a more pronounced manner, are in-between the private and the public. Their outcome is more markedly a co-construction, rather than an expression of an individual voice. Then, joint interviews bear in themselves a greater risk of generating a consensual co-constructed shared meaning account, expressive of a homogenised meaning, non-expressive of any of the contributing individual voices, in their idiopathic difference (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009; Kaplowitz, 2000; Morris, 2001; Seale et al. 2008). For example, participants' may avoid

particular sensitive, taboo or highly individualized topics (Gould, Osborn, Krein & Mortenson, 2002; Rajaram, 2011; Seale et al., 2008) for the sake of the collective account.

Having acknowledged that joint or group interviews have this potential negative effect, it is important to note that they have not been found to necessarily extinguish the individual voice, quite the opposite. They have been found to stimulate the dialogue between participants and generate richer commentary; hence allowing for a better understanding of the phenomenon at hand (Beitin, 2008; Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009; Morris, 2001; Raingruber; 2003). That is, there may be a benefit in conducting joint interviews and one which is precisely the enhancement of the contribution of those sought individual voices. Hence, whilst there is the potential of gathering consensual accounts, the opposite effect has been observed. This risk, then, is not a good enough reason to belittle the joint interview technique, particularly given the growing conviction that empathy is a *relational* phenomenon, rather than an intra-psychic one.

Secondly, the belief that it is possible, and desirable, to obtain descriptions of 'pure' experiences, of a strictly individual "*uncontaminated*" (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009) voice, at best could be a tenet of Husserlian phenomenology – not so much of any psychotherapy approach that I profess; nor of IPR and derivatives; nor of hermeneutic approaches to inquiry and data analysis. These approaches recognize that, at a fundamental level, this individual voice is not there to be found (nor in individual neither in group interviews). We are in another's eyes; we are, to a considerable extent, what these observing others have seen in us throughout our lives, even when they are not

there anymore. Also, that which is shared about our experience, in a particular moment, by whatever means, is only a part of that mirrored ball called experience. An account is never 'complete', no matter how long it is. Consequently, joint interviews are not, at the outset, at odds with neither of the techniques that influenced the study; and it is useless to avoid the joint interview technique under such justification.

The shared meaning-making experience of joint interviews, centred around a lived interpersonal experience (the 'pseudo-experimental' situation), and focusing on an interpersonal, perhaps intersubjective, phenomenon (immediate empathy-as-knowing), could thus perhaps provide rich and revealing accounts. At once, joint interviews would bring the two concerned perspectives (resonance and reception) together, in a free-flow collaborative exploration of the same co-lived moment. This is the rationale for opting, in this study, for joint interviews, rather than individual ones.

The objective of joint interviews, at least in this study, was not achieving a consensual view, but rather a truly three-way constructed one, enlightened by the two perspectives that were living through the event together, with their convergent and divergent experiential happenings being brought to the discussion (Bradbury-Jones et al., 2009); as well as by my constraint, but still influential set of eyes and guidance. To achieve this, some interviewing art is required, so that the individual voice can manifest itself in this context and the two individuals can give meaning to their joint experience together, in a collaborative manner. The right balance between each individual contribution must be created. Both have to be allowed to share their individual viewpoint, even if that means disagreeing with one another.

These interviews were conducted immediately after the 'pseudo-experimental' situation had been lived. Participants' memory of it was still very fresh and malleable. The fact that their opinions were not yet solidified could increase the risks of a consensual account. For this reason, the instant recall surveys procedure, utilized by Elliot and Shapiro, and their emphasis upon significant events, was adopted here. It was inserted in-between the happy story interaction and the in-depth interview. It established a bridge between the three studies conducted for this thesis (that might be useful if their findings were very disparate), but principally it intended to give participants the opportunity to first express their own individual voice, to solidify and reflect upon their own experience and its meaning, prior to engaging in a three-way meaning construction.

Cued recall, joint interviews and embodied prereflective understandings

One relevant example of a study which adopted an overall similar design was described by Raingruber (2003). Raingruber described a phenomenological investigation method that involved pre-recorded nurse-client sessions; immediately followed by individual recall interviews (for the signalization of meaningful events, as with the surveys); and thereafter joint interviews.

I believe that the possibility of conducting an individual cued-recall interview did not even cross her mind. Although slightly misguided, in the sense that she cannot compare the richness of data obtained via immediate free-recall short individual

interviews with the richness of data obtained via cued-recall long joint interviews (if only for their dissimilar duration), she compares the outcomes of the two procedures. She observes that the cued-recall joint interview procedure was well accepted by participants; that it led to rich commentary, ranging from descriptions of another's expressive behaviour to past experiences' reflections; and, most importantly, that it revealed participants implicit "*somatic understandings and perceptual experiences*" (p.1165). That is, the procedure allowed for the emergence of commentary about pre-reflective understandings.

This is precisely the interest of this paper for the present study. It shows how the overall method, and the joint interviews in particular, seem suitable for the investigation of empathy as an immediate embodied interpersonal understanding - that is, in its direct or immediate phenomenological meaning (e.g., Finlay, 2005; Gallagher, 2007; Stein, 1917; Thompson, 2001; Zahavi, 2001).

The lived experience of 'empathy' and singing violins

There are examples of studies about lived empathic experiences that seem to describe the phenomenon of direct empathy, yet do not distinguish this experience as a phenomenon on its own right (Chapter IV). One of these was published by Kerem, et al. (2001). They take understanding to be synonymous with empathy, and, by means of a phenomenological inquiry method, interviewed participants about their experiences of

understanding and being understood by a significant other. It deserves to be explored, because their findings are similar to those obtained here.

The analysis of the interviewees' accounts revealed that 'empathic' understandings had two "*components*" (p.715), cognitive and affective (the most widespread binomial organization approach, Chapter I). In most cases, both cognitive and affective elements were involved in participants' everyday experiences of understanding and being understood.

The *cognitive* element appeared as perspective-taking, though most commonly, as a reasoned knowing, as a "*cognitive, rational*" (p.177) type of understanding that drew upon familiarity and closeness as sources of information (as with the studies in Chapters II and IV). It helped participants to "*infer what the other is thinking and feeling even though they think differently*" (p.718).

The *affective* component was explained in the introduction to their paper as a sympathetic responsive phenomenon, but also, in the light of some psychodynamic and experiential psychotherapeutic theories, as an immediate experiential resonance or knowing, closer to the notion of direct empathy. The analysis revealed that this affective component included experiences of "*shared emotion or identification*" (p.718). It seldom was the single way participants understood others; and there were even instances in which "*the fact that the others did not share their emotions seemed to be the core of their empathic experience*" (p.725). They explained these findings by proposing that the word understanding has perhaps a more cognitive nature (Chapter II), but also by arguing that "*affective empathy can reside in a nonverbal knowing of the other, which*

means that there is no language that denotes it” (p.724), and that consists of a *“type of feeling transferred without words”* (p.721), representative of a oneness experience.

I believe they were close to realizing that, amidst their commentary on affective experiences, there was something that was more about an immediate way of knowing (once more the phenomenon goes unnamed), than about a sympathetic responsive sharing (feeling similarly, ‘oneness’); and that perhaps the term ‘understanding’ prevented its more expressive appearance.

For me, this ‘nonverbal’ way of knowing is not really about feeling sympathy, nor a feeling of oneness – but about an intersubjective, intuitive, perceptive or ‘felt empathy-as-knowing’ experience. In Chapter IV’s study, participants described immediate insights that were not presented as responses, or affective reactions to another’s experience, but essentially as a way of knowing another’s experience. It felt more like the strings of a violin, vibrating to the sounds of the environment, resonating with it, not really being played or playing, but none of the less effectively feeling the environment – thereby knowing what this environment was all about. Hence, at the most, it was a very particular kind of response, because not necessarily about emotions, about personal responses, and given meaning as a knowing act. It was a knowing founded in an interpersonal encounter much closer to Dessoy’s understanding of communication.

This is my starting point. I did not set out to question about affective responses, even though these might transform the empathy-as-knowing experience into a *“fuller and more meaningful relational experience”* (p.727). Rather, I set out to understand knowing experiences alone.

In conclusion, this chapter is dedicated to the way that participants elaborate, verbalize and communicate a very recent interaction, and their experiences of the empathy-as-knowing which occurred there. Even given that what is revealed is a retrospective immediate empathy-as-knowing phenomenon, co-constructed during a cued-recall joint interview, I argue that this a very good, promising way of studying its lived experience; and thereby diminishing the explanatory and interpretative gap between lived experiences and behavioural data.

Methods

Participants

Eight participants (four dyads), with a mean age of 23.75 years old ($SD=3.28$), were interviewed. Participants were all strangers to the interviewer, and full-time students from the School of Psychology of the University of Birmingham. They were mainly young adults, women ($N=7$), postgraduate ($N=6$), British ($N=5$), and most had never seen each other before being paired up for this study ($N=6$). The dyads' closeness is schematized in Figure 15, along with the role (listener, teller), fictitious name and demographic features of each participant.

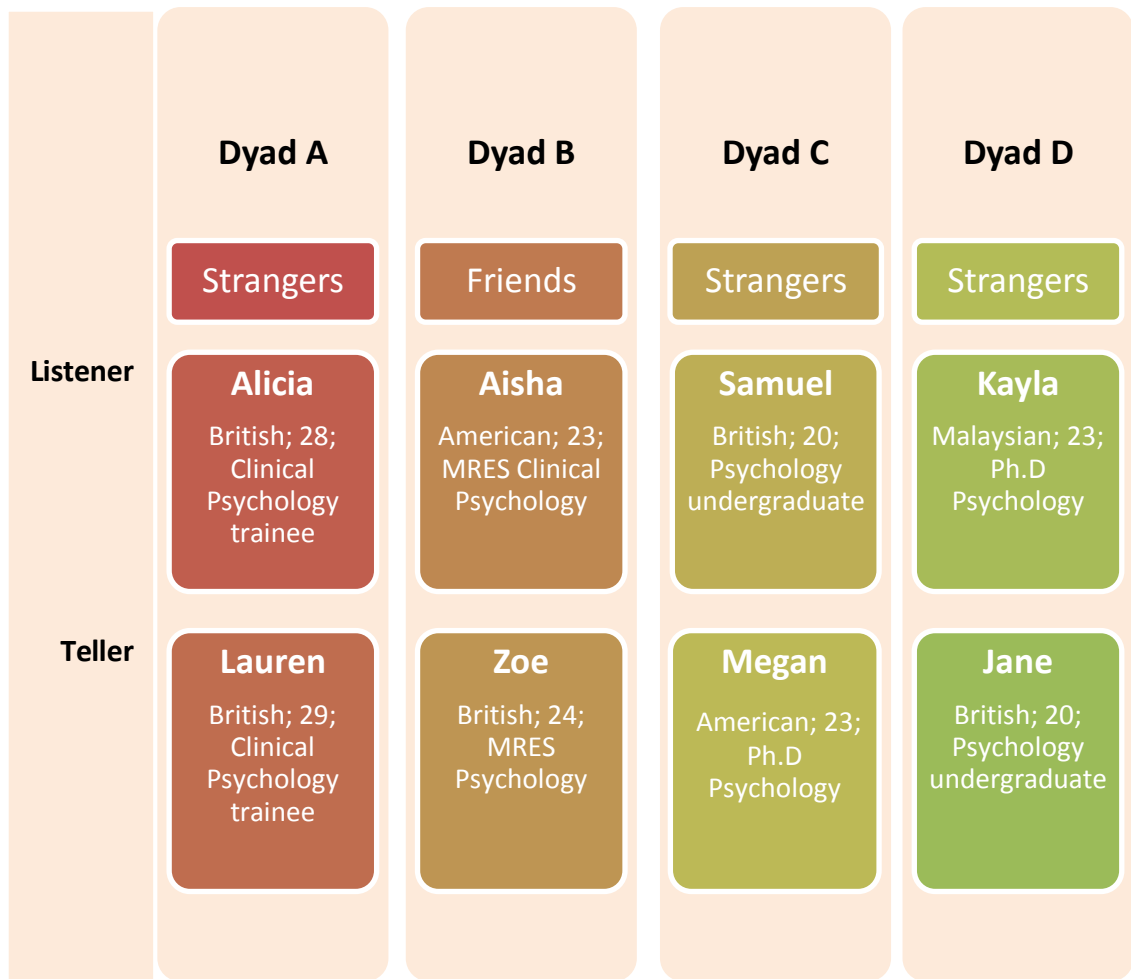


Figure 15: “Dyads’ characteristics *per* role (listener, teller)”

Procedures

The study was approved by the school’s ethics committee. A pilot of two dyads (credit-paid undergraduates) was conducted in February 2010. Its aims were testing the design, technical procedures and materials; and it originated several critical methodological changes and choices.

Participants were recruited, between April and December of 2010, by advertising the study via mail dissemination; and in the research participants’ recruitment website

of the school of psychology. In addition, two posters were placed in the clinical psychology trainees' information board of that same school; and word of mouth was used. Participants then volunteered and gave their consent. Two of them were credit-paid, four were monetarily rewarded and two did not ask for any compensation (money or credits), although aware of this possibility.

Pairing up participants was a decision left to chance, in the sense that the only intervention was for matching participants according to their schedule preferences, as communicated via email, prior to participation. However, given the unforeseen recruitment difficulties, it would probably be impossible to have any control over this aspect anyhow. Each dyad was seen on a separate day. These interviews lasted for an average of 1h40m (SD=20.3m); and the overall data gathering procedure approximately 2h40.

Design, procedures, and necessary materials

The data collection design consisted of three stages: happy story, instant recall survey and joint interview. Each involved distinctive aims, procedures and materials, and a distinctive consent form. *Per* stage, these are:

Happy story stage: The information sheet was provided in the beginning of this stage. It explained the study as being about experiences of engaging with a partner. This broad statement was to approximate the 'pseudo-experimental' situation to a naturalistic conversational setting. It was important to know whether these immediate

empathy-as-knowing experiences occurred spontaneously, without manipulation or pre-cueing participants' attention. This stage's consent form requested permission for key ethical issues, relevant across stages, as per standard format.

Participants' chairs, with an angle of approximately 135° between them, were positioned beside a long table. In the opposite side of the room, stood the principal camera, used to digitally record this stage, in mini-DV. This camera videotaped participants frontally, and waist-up. Behind participants stood, discretely, a small backup camera (one which was fortunately never necessary), that was recording from the beginning and was left recording until its memory was full.

Participants were then explained that there were two roles, 'teller' and 'listener'. Telling involved sharing a personal story about an episode from their experience during which happiness had been felt, and that they felt comfortable in sharing in this setting. Listening involved engaging with the teller and the narrated story. It was emphasised that the interaction should be seen as dialogue, sometimes using the metaphor of party conversations; and that they could end-up swapping roles, as long as the teller was given time to 'finish' the story. Thus, any sort of verbal comments and questions, on the behalf of the listener, were allowed. The only dyad with which I did not highlight twice or thrice this instruction experienced a greater amount of task-related anxiety.

They were then asked to volunteer for one of these roles; and left alone for a 15³⁹ minutes videotaped interaction with the partner. The principal camera was set recording

³⁹ BSR was created partly because the duration of a therapy session is usually 50 minutes, and the usual associated individual cued-recall interview lasts 2 to 3 hours (Larsen et al., 2008). In non-therapeutic settings, the mean length of the videotaped event is much smaller. Namely, with dyads of couples, Darling and Clarke (2009) videotaped a 5 minutes interaction; Long, Angera and Hakoyama (2006) videotape a 8 to 10 minutes interaction; and Levenson and Gottman (1983) a 15 minutes interaction. On the other hand, in

right before I left the room. That is, it was not concealed by any means; just accepted for its presence and justified purpose.

Instant Recall: After 15 minutes, I re-entered the room, and immediately participants were invited, without any additional instructions, to individually fill in a brief questionnaire. There were two laptops, behind participants' backs during the happy story stage, switched on before their entrance, with the survey ready for completion, and labelled visibly by the role (listener and teller). The surveys were presented as a rich-text word document.

These were purpose-built semi-structured surveys (*Appendix VII* contains an example of the tellers' survey), inspired by BSR materials available online⁴⁰, and changed to linguistically accommodate the differences in role. Participants were required to answer to four sections, composed mainly of open-ended questions. First, they were asked about their overall story telling experience in terms of events, thoughts, feelings and intentions. The next two sections requested them to describe significant events, if any and up until three, during which they immediately sensed the partner's experience (immediate resonance); and then moments when the partner immediately sensed theirs (immediate reception). The final section was dedicated to demographics (age, nationality, gender, education level, occupation, and relationship with the partner, in a five-point scale, from 'I have never seen him/ her before' to 'we are very close friends').

Hess and Bourgeois (2010), the maximum length of time participants (96 dyads) took to narrate their recalled story (anger or happy event) was 10.41 minutes. It is true that most of these studies were using dyads of couples, whilst in this study participants were generally strangers to each other, and this context might change the optimal time necessary. The time had to be just right. Extending the interaction in excess might have the non-desired effect of increasing participants discomfort with each other; and shortening it in excess could prevent the occurrence of immediate knowing experiences. In the pilot study, the duration of 15 minutes was effective, and was adopted here.

⁴⁰ <http://www.experiential-researchers.org/index.html>

The adopted prompt to “*sense*” was inspired by Rogers’ definition of empathy; and aimed to direct the participants’ attention to less intellectual or cognitive empathy-as-knowing experiences. While they were answering the survey, I prepared the room and the materials required for the next stage. When they both had finished answering the survey, they signed this stage’s consent form, requesting permission for use of the tape during the interview, with actual knowledge of its content.

Cued-recall joint interview: The cued-recall joint interview started immediately after the surveys’ stage. An additional laptop was required for viewing the recordings gathered during the happy story stage; and a digital audio-recorder was used for registering the conversation (part of which was also videotaped by the backup camera). This stage’s consent form released gathered data for dissemination procedures. It was possible for participants to take part in the study without agreeing to the use of the video and audio material in dissemination, and/ or future studies – though no-one ever refused.

Two viewings were necessary. The first refreshed participants’ memory, while allowing me to have an idea of what had happened during the happy story stage. For the second viewing, participants were invited to ask for the tape to be paused whenever they spotted a significant moment during which they were able to know or sense what the partner was experiencing, there-and-then, regardless of whether it amount to a significant moment signalized in the survey. They usually spontaneously commented upon that moment as soon as the tape was paused, being prompted so that richer commentary, balanced across protagonists, was provided. Refreshments were available;

and the interview finished when none of the participants wished to add anything else (or, most frequently, fatigue).

This implies that the room where these three stages happened was arranged prior to participants' arrival, so that the transitions between stages succeeded each other uneventfully and non-disruptively. A sketch of the room and materials' disposition can be seen in Figure 16.

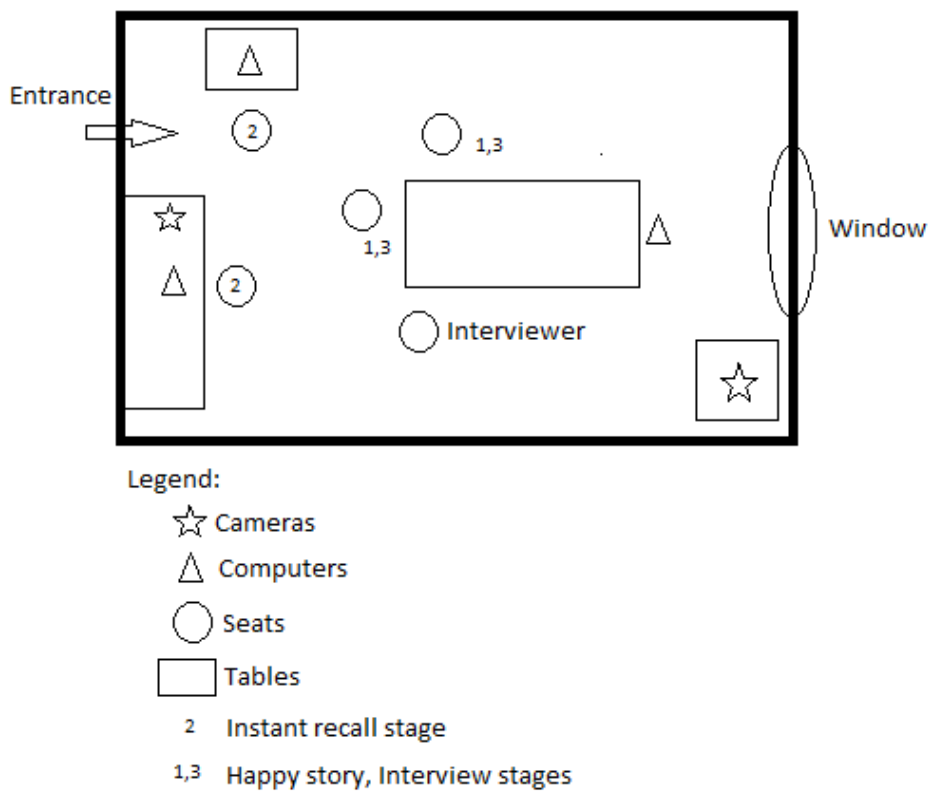


Figure 16: “Room and materials’ disposition, per data collection stage”

As the sketch shows, participants only changed their seats for the completion of the instant recall surveys (number 2). Otherwise, they were close to each other, in full

view of the camera for the happy story stage; and, for the interviewing stage, with a discrete rearrangement, the three interview participants, or co-researchers, were equally distanced and close to each other. There were two cameras; 3 computers and several tables and chairs. An effort was made so that the materials necessary for one stage would be out of the participants' direct sight in the other stages. For example, one of the computers in Figure 16 is placed outside the long table, to the right, because up until the interview stage, during which it was used for playback, it was hidden under the table. This was important because an excessive amount of apparatus can have an oppressing effect and distract participants (or so it is said for psychodynamic psychotherapy settings).

Inquiry Method

At the outset, I was quite wary about these interviews. I was trained with psychodynamic and experiential interviewing techniques, such as Hobson's conversational model (e.g., Graham et al., 2008; Hobson, 1985); my experience was, in its vast majority, particular to individual therapy sessions; and, for a few years, I was supervised by psychoanalytic and psychodynamic clinicians, some more orthodox than others.

This interviewing technique is partly engrained in me. In many circumstances, it is not exercised consciously and effortfully, but it is rather part of my being-in-the world. It works as implicit knowledge, just like driving, it becomes automatic. I do not prepare for

sessions, I just hope and trust that the engine is running, and that, on that day, on that hour, with those people, I am able to deal with any bump in the road. For example, in a blank canvas sort of manner, Freud's screen-therapist, always says hi. That is, I refrain, in every interviewing situation, from giving 'opinions' - and every time I incur that 'mistake', all my alarms fire. I am to serve the purpose of a projection canvas, up until an interpretation, that expands, reformulates or enlightens the 'projector's' experience, perspective and meaning, arises. I am a tool. This is to say that this inquiry attitude manifested itself throughout these interviews, whether or not I wished it to.

But I have spent the last few years of my life using phenomenological methods. I was very focused on my phenomenological goal of understanding the lived experience of immediate empathy-as-knowing. I wanted to be challenged and challenge, foment a fruitful balanced discussion about these experiences. I wished to listen to participants and understand their viewpoints and experiences, there-and-then, in a hermeneutic sense. I was also informed about, and briefly trained with, the Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA; Smith, Flowers & Larkin, 2009/2010) interviewing technique.

Finally, I followed Larsen et al.'s (2008) instructions for the conduction of cued-recall interviews. It was this inquiry method that was in the forefront of my attention. Inevitably, all three interviewing techniques shaped the inquiry method adopted in this study: IPR; psychodynamic; and IPA.

As I see it, the attention that each of these techniques dedicates to particular events and the way these are interpreted may differ, but, as techniques that aim to

guide and stimulate a conversation about a particular theme, there-and-then, they resemble each other to a great extent. For example, the screen-therapist is part of IPA's interviewing technique, as it is the interpretative activity: "*the researcher is trying to make sense of the participants trying to make sense of their world*" (Eatough & Smith, 2006, p.485). And, most importantly, these inquiry techniques relate to the experiential material being disclosed in very similar manners, they are keen on listening (rather than directing); and none of them argues that there is such thing as a pure non-relational non-interpretative experience, demanding for a separation or an avoidance of a 'contamination' between participants' experiences.

The interview schedule was produced in the light of the above techniques. These guidelines served principally as a memory aid, being revised prior to each interview. There-and-then, participants' leads were usually followed, and the themes brought by them to the discussion were explored.

This schedule listed a few issues (selected from the findings in Chapter V) that I could explore, given the opportunity. In addition, it pre-defined instructions and information that should be conveyed to participants, whenever possible and relevant. For example, it stated that I should emphasise that the videotape's purpose was simply helping participants to remember what had been experienced during the happy story stage; and that we were all co-researchers trying to understand the happy story stage experience (IPR's guidelines, congruent with IPA and psychodynamic techniques). It also pre-defined an interviewing routine, one which was improved throughout data collection, in the light of new observations. For instance, it pre-defined some starting

points, namely: address participants' anxieties relative to the viewing experience, and their understanding of the expression 'to sense'; pass the message that any type of 'sensing' could be explored, as long as it acted as an immediate knowing experience; and that the interview's objective was not to achieve a consensual agreement about these experiences, but rather get acquainted with their own individual experiences, regardless of their similarity.

Participants were also allowed to offer comments, at any time, at will, whenever they had an insight to offer relative to the happy story stage's experience and meaning. Then, the interview included comments as they came in their felt, sensed or thought form. In conclusion, the interview was slightly semi-structured due to the existence of a schedule, but, there-and-then, even with regard to the viewing and analysis of significant episodes, it was generally very flexible, and participant-led (with a few bumps in the road).

Data Analysis

This chapter describes the results of the qualitative analysis of the manually transcribed cued-recall joint interviews. These interviews covered several aspects, including detailed descriptions of knowing the partner's experience, and of the meaning of this knowing.

The adopted data analysis method was IPA (Smith et al., 2009). IPA is an analytical approach most suitable for the in-depth qualitative psychological analysis of long

accounts about experiences and their meaning - precisely the character of the material at hand. Secondly, the aim of this study was describing the qualities of participants' immediate empathy-as-knowing lived experiences, from their viewpoint; and how these qualities were related to one another and to theoretical issues. This is precisely the outcome of IPA. IPA is, for me, an applied hermeneutic "*dialogue*" (p.79) between several perspectives, from background knowledge to participants' opinions, that contextualizes data throughout data analysis. This reinforced the suitability of this technique for the present study.

The steps followed occurred against this background dialogue; and were developed in an iterative and inductive manner, that involved four main steps:

Coding: line-by-line coding of the four interviews, at several levels of analysis (descriptive, interpretative, in-vivo, conceptual, linguistic, and even related to the impact of a particular excerpt upon the researcher's analytical experience). This coding dealt with individual, second and third-person experiential and hermeneutic perspectives upon the happy story and the interview stages.

Themes identification: during coding, individual and collective patterns started to emerge. These themes and subthemes were identified *per* interview, and then across multiple cases, with help of NVivo 9, a software which speeded up the process. It memorizes codes and their developing thematic organization; it allows for the comprehensive viewing of the text coded in a particular manner, thereby improving its overall refinement and consistency; it facilitates the comparison within and across

accounts; and it supports quick and flexible rearrangements of the structure and relationship between data, codes and themes.

Themes' structure: The relationship between codes, subthemes and themes (*structure*) was born out of the thematic analysis. Themes were only 'solidified' in their final structure after a thorough continuous iterative analysis of the four interviews. The theme *significant ways of knowing another's experience*, related to participants' immediate 'empathy-as-knowing' experience. There were three additional themes, recurrently reappearing across narratives (*contexts of experiencing and butterfly effects; experiencing not really 'now' or 'then'; and the intersubjective communicative flow of coming-to-know*), which contributed to the cross-comparison of immediate ways of knowing.

Interpretative Narrative: the interpretative account descriptive of findings and their meaning, organized theme-by-theme in accordance with the developed structure, was produced by means of the dialogue that accompanied the analysis. Nevertheless, the background knowledge served principally as a guide, a source of reflection and understanding, a breeze of fresh air into the meaning of participants' claims. This was because it was always participants' expressed understandings that set the tone of the themes' experiential quality and interpretation. They were the ones with "*experiential expertise*" (Smith et al., 2009, p.64), and their viewpoints hence were more determinant.

Trustworthiness

To improve the overall trustworthiness of the study, IPA recommends that all the steps and materials of the analysis are organized in a manner which allows for a third party to trace down the findings, from initial codes and comments, through clustering and thematic development, into the final thematic. It is also recommended the use of supervision, collaboration, audit, or other *processes of triangulation* and credibility checking, so that the coherence and plausibility of the interpretation is enhanced. It is also essential that the analysis is performed with a heightened "*sensitivity to context*" (Smith et al., 2009, p.180); and dedication, rigour and coherence.

For this study, for practical reasons, it was not possible to adopt any additional trustworthiness procedures, besides the use of supervision for triangulation, one which was confirmative of the plausibility of the findings of the lived account. Furthermore, there was a sensitivity to these interviews' context (the theme *contexts of experiencing and butterfly effects* is precisely a result of this attention), and data was organized in such a way that it is possible to link themes back to the original text (a procedure made relatively easy with NVivo9). In *Appendix VIII*, exemplary transcripts for each subtheme and theme were included so as to exemplify these data-theme links. Finally, since this study builds upon previous research, for which distinctive methodological approaches were adopted (Chapters II and IV), such indirect triangulation perhaps increases these findings' trustworthiness.

Findings

Figure 17 shows the visual guide to the interpretative narrative account described in this section, and it includes the four identified themes, and their subthemes.

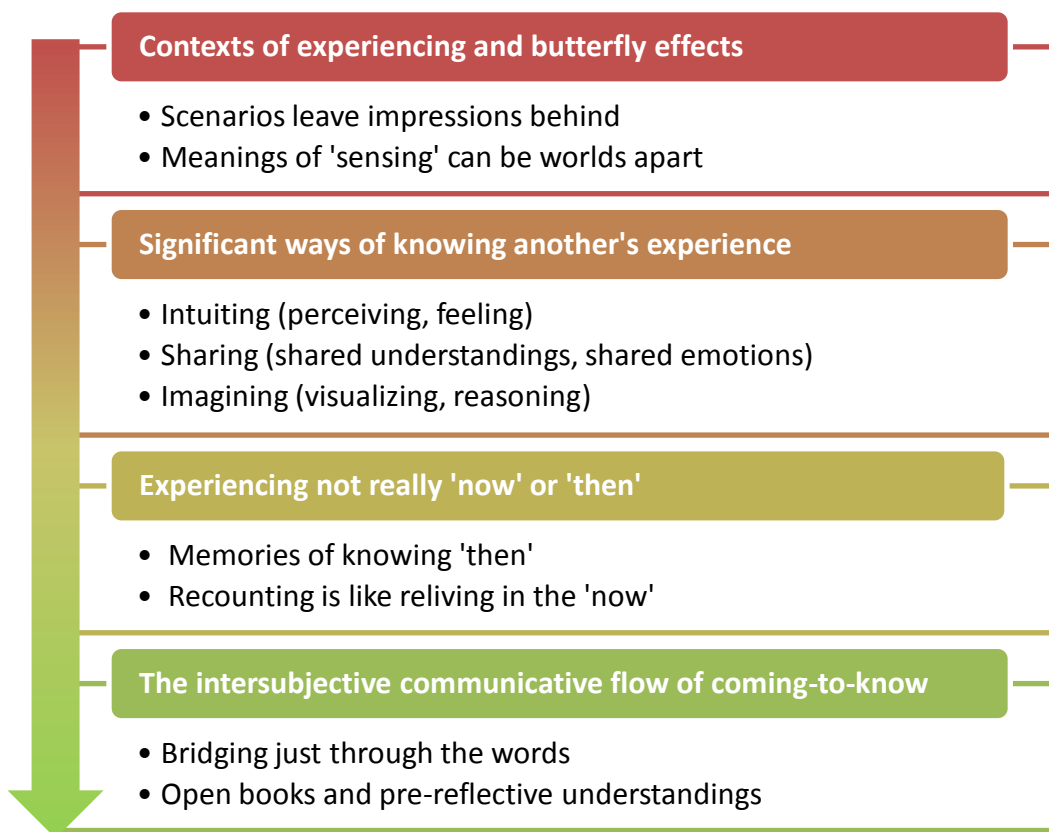


Figure 17: “Structure of themes and subthemes of immediate empathy-as-knowing experiences”

The first, *contexts of experiencing and butterfly effects*, regarded the influence of methodological choices upon participants’ experiences and discourse. One of its subthemes, *scenarios leave impressions behind*, illustrated the impact of the happy story stage and the viewing procedures on participants’ experiences and discourse. The

second, *meanings of 'sensing' can be worlds apart*, related to the way participants' spontaneously and idiosyncratically interpreted the expression 'to sense' (the initial interview prompt, used also in the surveys). These subthemes contextualize findings in the overall research context, and provide insight for those interested in adopting similar procedures.

The second theme, *significant ways of knowing another's experience*, answered to the main objective of this investigation. There were three subthemes, that is, three types of immediate empathy-as-knowing experiences: intuiting; sharing; and imagining. This reference to their immediacy highlighted their instant experiential character; it is not a reference to the lack of mediation of the experience, which was the meaning of 'immediacy' in Chapter IV.

Following this, comes the theme *experiencing not really 'now' nor then'*. This showed how all these knowing acts were a *memory of knowing 'then'* (during the happy story stage), and how *recounting is like reliving in the 'now'*, that is, the act of sharing a still presently personally significant story involved, to a certain extent, a reliving of those 'past' feelings and/or of their significance. Then, every known experience was at least partly happening in the 'now'; and the choice of the emotion of happiness was a sensible one, preventive of the re-enactment of emotionally negative states.

Finally, there was *the intersubjective communicative flow of coming-to-know* theme. Participants often related their knowing experiences with the verbal and non-verbal dimensions of their communicative interpersonal context. The subtheme *bridging just through the words* suggested that the content, and verbal narrative context, were

very important for sharing and imagining experiences, whereas intuiting was more strongly associated with the non-verbal side of the communicative context (*open books and pre-reflective understandings*).

Contexts of experiencing and butterfly effects

Before discussing significant empathy-as-knowing experiences, a certain interview routine was adopted. This was because there were design-related issues that were disturbing participants, and attracting their immediate attention. These discussions vividly suggested that various aspects of the background context, from a word to the cued-recall procedure, shaped considerably that which was experienced during the happy story stage, and that which was said during the interview and the survey. Like a butterfly effect, participants' experiences, and consequently these findings were by-products of these various contextual details.

Those context-related effects that were noticed during the interview were dealt with there-and-then. I tried to clarify meanings and address participants' anxieties and concerns, so that we could all better concentrate on the reflective task at hand. The research scenario, in the end, was nothing but an excuse for immediate empathic experiences to happen and be discussed in a more systematic manner. This was the message I tried to convey. Participants needed to accommodate the research scenario as if it were a support table; rather than it becoming the centre of the discussion in itself.

This generated interesting material that illustrated the impact of this study's design and procedures upon their overall experience and these findings. It showed how little choices may have an unexpected effect.

Scenarios leave impressions behind

Although some may think that it is the person that leaves impressions in the landscape, this is not always the case. Rather, people and scenarios shape each other. For this subtheme I was interested in how the scenario (research setting) left its impressions in participants' experiences. In brief, the happy story stage had an acknowledged, but surmountable artificiality; and viewing changed the focus of the attention to non-behavioural aspects of the interaction.

During the happy story stage, participants' most common concern was related with their pre-assigned roles. Each role had its inherent stresses, partly derived from the instructions, the dyad in question, and the way these roles were interpreted by participants themselves. The extremes were Jane and Kayla, who felt no tension at all as to whether they were properly fulfilling their roles or as to whether the conversation was heading towards the 'right' direction; and Megan and Sam, who believed that a conversation is normally a "50-50" split of 'antenna time' and, by having pre-assigned tasks, the natural flow was jeopardized, the conversation becoming 'formal', unnatural and unilateral. Most tellers felt that they were in the "spotlight" (Sam), having the responsibility of 'filling in' the 15 minutes, keeping the conversation on topic without

boring the other person. Paired listeners avoided interrupting in excess and refrained from sharing personal stories, because, in the end, *“this is about her, this is her story”* (Aisha).

Despite this overall artificiality of this stage, there were usually two turning points, around the one minute (e.g., forgetting about the camera) and the 10 minutes (e.g., forgetting about the role), give or take, in which the conversation became more fluid and natural.

As for the *viewing procedure*, most spontaneous comments were related to an increase in their self-awareness. Being confronted by one’s own self-image created a mixture of interest, embarrassment and/or awkwardness, which apparently soon dissolved with the continuation of the interview.

In most cases, viewing had an apparently positive influence, by bringing the happy story experiences to the participants’ attention, and allowing participants to *“put words into”* some type of implicit knowing that had happened more *“subconsciously”* during the story telling stage. In this case, recordings sometimes illustrated participants’ experiences, as recalled, and brought to light certain sides of their experiences that could otherwise go unnoticed and uncommented upon. This allowed

Nevertheless, the tape was not always a faithful registry of every single lived experience (e.g., Alicia: *“I definitely didn’t notice a point oh this is where she is feeling awkward now...”*). That is, their experiences were sometimes invisible on tape, in such a way that the recordings could not be used to explain, nor illustrate, their experience.

This is interesting because it shows how experiences and recorded visible behaviour are two distinctive things from a first person perspective.

As long as participants trust these two angles as distinctive but inter-related aspects of their experience, these in itself does not bias the findings in any particular direction. This was not always the case. In particular, Lauren, mid-through the interview, stopped using the recordings as a memory-aid. She was sometimes confused about whether reality was best reflected in recalling or viewing, with both experiences suffering a “*kind of an intermerge*” that she could no longer separate. For example, recorded visible behaviour was used to explain Alicia’s knowing of her experience from a viewer-perspective alone:

Lauren: But you picked it out well, because I am looking at my expression there now, and I don’t know if I kind of fully expressed it with my expression, but maybe there is just something there.

Here, Lauren used the tape to point out that she did not knowingly or recognizably ‘show’ her experience, but “*maybe*” she expressed it behaviourally. There is nothing in this comment about her moment-to-moment happy story stage lived experience. She was moving away from the lived experiences (the intended focus of the discussion) towards an account of a new experience, the viewer/ observer experience.

This example also shows how viewing might have overinflated the importance of behaviour, one which often became the centrepiece of participants’ explications and interpretations; and how these behaviour-based explications sometimes seemed to be remotely or imprecisely related to the experiential memory. Thus, viewing enriched, but

it is also impoverished the participants' experiential accounts about there-and-then interpersonal understandings. Hence, it is important to keep reminding participants, as Sontag (1977, p.9) points out about photography, that, although the video can be seen as a way of "*certifying experiences*", it is also a way of "*refusing it – of limiting*" it, to what is outwardly expressed and thereby observed there. Either way, "*watching it back, it does give it a different slant, doesn't it?*" (Lauren). That is, that viewing changes one's memory and opinion about a lived past experience.

Meanings of 'sensing' can be worlds apart

Participants gave meaning to the experience of sensing another's experience in varied ways, in such a way that these meanings sometimes seemed to be worlds apart. For them, sensing was about: shared understandings (Lauren: "*Just a kind of a connection, a common understanding*"); feeling another's experience for oneself, or shared emotions (Zoe: "*It is just not nearly the same intensity as the way that I am feeling it. Just maybe feeling a very a much weaker version of the emotion that I am feeling*"); imagining another's experience (Kayla: "*Putting ourselves in another's person's shoes and trying to go through what they actually went through whilst we get a description*"); and intuiting another experience (Jane: "*You just kind of know, you can sense what they are thinking or feeling*"). These meanings were joined, in the light of participants' remarks, into three main empathy-as-knowing types: *sharing* (shared understandings and shared emotions); *imagining* and *intuiting*.

This was the range of phenomena that was discussed during these interviews, as significant ways of knowing another's experience. There was not a single interview which investigated a one and only phenomenon, as intended, partly because most dyads did not understand the prompt similarly in-between themselves, and had different knowing experiences. Sensing was then a word with many meanings.

It was important for me to address this issue here, so as to point out here that these interviews were not that consensual after all. They did not culminate in a consensual shared meaning account of a unitary phenomenon. There was usually enough space to express one's individual voice, even when this implied a disagreement with the partner, and this lack of consensual agreement started with the meaning of 'sensing'.

Significant ways of knowing another's experience

Participants described three main significant immediate ways of knowing the partner's experience: intuiting (sensitive awareness), sharing ('we' sympathetic experience), and imagining (ideational acts).

These worked (also) as immediate interpersonal ways of 'knowing' or 'sensing' another's experience. Each episode sometimes involved more than one knowing experience. That is, participants' reception and resonance experiences were sometimes multi-layered and composed of more than one knowing experience.

The inter-relationships between knowing experiences appeared to be episode-specific, contextualized, situated. For example, intuiting sometimes happened while two participants' were having a shared experience already, but it was also sometimes responsible for the occurrence of a shared moment. Secondly, the selected inspected episodes were like photographs of an overall continuous interaction. There-and-then, knowing acts built upon each other, allowing them to progressively better know the partner and the partner's experiential perspective. Therefore, the study of cause-consequence inter-relationships between these acts was only of marginal interest for this study.

On the other hand, understanding the particular qualities of each of these subthemes or knowing acts was the objective of this study, and is explored the following subsections..

Intuitively knowing another's experience: perceiving, feeling

Intuitively perceiving

Perceiving-as-knowing was a sensitive awareness of the partner's experience. Participants commonly "*knew*", "*sensed*" or "*saw*" the partner's experience, but they also "*picked*", "*recognized*", "*registered*", "*understood*", were able to "*tell*" or "*hear*"... There was not a single consensual verb which consensually described the act responsible for this knowing across participants, perhaps because the least discussed; or,

alternatively, because it is lived and given meaning differently by each individual, each verb accentuating these individual nuances.

This intuitive, perceptive knowing experience seemed to be grounded in another's observed behaviour. Sometimes participants nominated one or more meaningful behaviour as expressive of another's experience; or reinforced the idea that it was another's overall dynamic behaviour that created the perceptive impression (Zoe: *"There was this sort of eye contact while you were making these sort of gestures, or compassion movements."*).

But what was most frequently commented upon was not the 'quantity' of someone's behaviour, that is, its overt objective features. Instead, it was its 'quality'. For example, Jane could *"hear automatically that that is something she likes, I could hear that that was something she was passionate about. I could just tell. I don't know... The tone is different."* That is, via a perceptive act (listening), Kayla's passion was immediately revealed to Jane. This knowing was anchored by Jane in Kayla's *"way"* of speaking, in a particular 'different' quality of Kayla's 'tone of voice'. Quantity (tone) and quality (different) together were responsible for Jane's immediate awareness of Kayla's passion. Note that the particular sense organ of the participants' choice did not seem to matter. For example, Kayla *"can see passion in the eyes"*.

Behaviour mattered insofar that it had an expressive quality, and carried an experiential meaning. It was this intuited meaning that made the behaviour qualitatively different from any other superficially and objectively similar behaviour. Every participant turned towards the *"way"* the partner was acting to describe these experiences (e.g.,

Megan: *“But the way he delivered the question I think. He sounded like he was genuinely interested and curious”*). The *“way”* the partner behaved was such a recurrent comment that it created the impression that the existence of a genuine experience qualitatively changed it; that the behaviour became expressive, from the inside out (e.g., Aisha: *“When you did the physical relief”*).

Just like when we want to express an idea but have a hard time finding the ‘right’ words to express it, participants sometimes had difficulties with finding the *“words”* to describe the perceived quality of the partner’s experience. They intuited its meaning, but were not quite immediately able to find the suitable verbal description that, in their view, was an accurate translation of the intuited experience. This reinforced the idea that the possible-to-transmit interpretation, this possible-to-communicate verbal interpretation of one’s intuition was a distinctive act, an individual additional act, that was not always part of the perceiving experience itself. Perceiving brought to their awareness an already ‘interpreted’ (with a meaning) experience, even when this interpretation was somehow difficult to put into words.

There were examples of ‘resonant receivers’ (Chapter IV), who perceived another’s resonance experience (Kayla: *“When someone understands what you are talking about, they have this hard moment that strikes the other person. I think that was what I saw in her during that time”*). For Aisha, as soon as these resonance and reception understandings were mutually, non-verbally, recognized by both partners (i.e., when both participants were simultaneously, non-verbally, aware of each other’s understandings; e.g., Aisha: *“For that moment, you looked at me and I looked at you,*

and we recognized"), they became a shared experience - two people with a common understanding in-between them. But shared understandings, in the sense outlined above, were not to be confused with the intuitive act:

Aisha: I don't think it is the bit about me recognizing what she is feeling and her knowing that I have recognized it. It is not so much that. I think that the sharing part is just us both (...) that we both know.

Here, Aisha was clarifying that it is the 'we' (both knowing) that was responsible for the experience of sharing, rather than the knowing act itself. Secondly, for her, this knowing did not require her to feel for herself either Zoe's experience, or anyone else's (e.g., Aisha: *"I am trying to recall my immediate responses to... to feel the feeling. Because I don't know if I do that"*). Thus, for some participants more than for others, perceiving simply translated a sensitive awareness of another's present experience, and was not accompanied by the feeling of the partner's experience. This accentuated the difference between perceiving and feeling, the two subthemes of intuiting.

In this discussion with Aisha and Zoe, the *"way"* of looking at another person, or eye contact, was fundamental. Susan Sontag (1977), while reflecting about Sander's photography, noticed that *"people face Sander's camera (...) but their gaze is not intimate, revealing. Sander was not looking for secrets; he was observing the typical"*. Between this dyad the opposite was observed. They looked at each other's 'revealing' eyes, looking for secrets, for idiosyncrasies, for another's experiential truths.

But there was something in this valuing of the *"eye contact"* that reminded me of little children asking for candy; of an attempt to invoke sympathy in another. Zoe was

“looking for a reaction” because she had the *“hope”* that Aisha would sympathize with her, and thereby validate her experience. Thus, the eye contact might have become fundamental in their interaction for more than one reason. They would be looking for secrets, but Zoe was also looking for compassion, for a sympathetic *“reassuring”* understanding. And she succeeded.

In conclusion, perceiving was claimed to be responsible for one’s sensitive knowing of the partner’s experience. It was about the immediate sensing of a set of dynamic, qualitatively different, and meaningful behaviours-in-action, in conjunction, in their (narrative, relational, historical) context (e.g., Lauren: *“It was her body language and just the way she looked at me (...) and what she said, that she felt a bit embarrassed”*). It was observed across dyads, in resonance and reception acts, and was differentiated from shared experiences and intuitive feelings.

Intuitively Feeling

Intuiting was commonly a feeling that one felt for oneself. This intuitive feeling, this *“gut feeling”*, this *“sort of sense, or intuition”* was qualitatively different from other types of feelings (e.g., Megan: *“It is obviously not... some feeling that I would have normally”*), and it was *“informative”* of another’s experience.

In the view of the dyad of clinical psychology trainees, gut feelings must be tamed, *“domesticated”*, so that they can perform their counselling role properly. It was however after-the-fact that this knowing was transformed into a conjectural assumption, in a self-

control exercise. For them, intuitive feelings must be taken as a “*little*” silenced hypothesis, one of the many possible interpretations, patiently awaiting for the clients’ spontaneous verbal confirmation. This doubting was extremely important because, in some cases, the intuited experience was not recognized by clients as their own. Nevertheless, the question of accuracy is not so easily resolved:

Megan: That is a really good question, because I think I am [right], but I am often told (giggles) that I am not, so it is really funny (giggles). Because obviously, who is the objective one in that, you don’t really know! Because people don’t really want to hurt your feelings. Like I say, was that boring, and someone might say, ‘no, no, it’s fine’, and you go, ‘yeah, bullshit’ (R, L laugh). I think I am right but...

In her daily experiences with this intuitive feeling, Megan often encountered herself in a paradoxical situation. The lived experience of her intuitive feelings had the quality of certainty, of authenticity. And this was so much an integral part of her intuitive feelings that another’s verbal rejection of her intuition as accurate did not reassure her about its inaccuracy. Although this could be a result of her own insecurity, one must acknowledge that politeness is an important social rule. Then one validly asks: “*who is the objective*” person in that exchange?

Most intuitive ‘feelers’ estranged the idea that perceiving contributed to the development of this knowing. Nevertheless, their cued-recall interview reflections subsequently led them to theorize that perceiving might be involved via the condition of it being a “*quick*”, “*subconscious*” and implicit perceiving of multiple “*microexpressions*”,

“tiny cues”, or “subtle things”, in a particular context⁴¹ (narrative, relational and other). For example, Jane hesitated, when asked whether her description of Kayla’s qualitatively different actions could be described as Kayla’s expressive behaviour, then remarked that she *“maybe noticed it subconsciously, or something”*. Jane only accepted that Kayla’s behaviour could be summarized as expressive under the condition that the associated perceptive act was a ‘subconscious’ act.

This ‘subconscious’ condition was more important for those who primarily lived the intuition as a feeling, probably because, there-and-then, as the knowing unfolded, they were not actively attending to or aware of the partner’s behaviour (e.g., Jane: *“I wasn’t aware of the gestures at the time.”*). It was the cued-recall reflection that sometimes brought another’s expressive behavioural quality into their commentary; into the forefront of their awareness and discussion. Therefore, even though intuitive feelers’ discourse was full of references to the *“way” of “being and doing”* of their partners, this knowing, for them, there-and-then, was less evidently grounded in another’s particular expressive actions, in the perceiving or sensing of a set of revealing expressive qualities. This was the main difference between perceptive and intuitive feelings.

For example, Alicia was commenting upon her intuitive knowing of Lauren’s recurrent fear of running out of things to say, one which translated into a feeling of *“pressure”* and was associated with a slower speech rate:

Alicia: I think it was the times when you slowed down a little bit... so, something like that....oh she is running out of things to say (laughs, T: That is

⁴¹ Broadly equivalent to Theodor Reik’s (1948, p.137) *“minute stimuli”*, those which are partly responsible for the ability to ‘listen with the third ear’, and thereby be able to gain intuitive access to another’s psychic organization and dynamics.

right) and then I feel like, I just, I wasn't consciously feeling (...). I felt that, I sensed that from you, that, on occasion, you thought, oh we are running out of things to say, but I sensed that from you. It felt like a little bit of a pressure, and even though neither of us can see it, in fact, at the time, yeah, I certainly had that sense from you, I sensed that from you. It felt like a little bit of a pressure.

Alicia was never confused about who was thinking what or who was feeling what. The agent of each of these experiences was very clear. She also made references to Lauren's decreasing speech rate, though the importance of Lauren's actions is so minimal that these moments were invisible in the recordings. Consequently, there-and-then, as a lived experience, this feeling was not lived as a perceptive experience; it was not even such a "*conscious feeling*" – it was just a little meaningful 'pressure' that revealed Lauren's fear to her.

In conclusion, there were two main lived experiences of intuiting another's experience, feeling and perceiving. *Perceiving* was an intuitive sensitive awareness of someone's experience, grounded in the quality of another expressive behaviour; and *feeling* was a qualitatively different felt-feeling, informative of the partner's experience. Their interrelationship, as well as the process that lead to their occurrence, was generally difficult to explain, but almost all of them, in one or another point of the interview, partly perhaps due to the cued-recall procedure, turned towards the "*way*" the partner was acting and engaging with them as a relevant revealing feature.

Then, through reflection, for most participants, these two acts were plausibly related to one another. There were even those who tentatively proposed one or another

type of inter-relationship. For instance, Megan proposed that the intuitive feeling was subsequently and concomitantly “*informed*” by what was seen; whilst Kayla proposed that the “*taking in of sensitive information*” came first, and that, such as with the flight or flee instinct, one would respond with a felt feeling in a “*feedback and feedforward*” fashion. These explanations suggested once more that there were those who primarily lived this intuition as a feeling (experience first), and those who primarily lived it as a perceiving (perception first). Either way, the lived experience did not seem to reassure participants about the underlying process (e.g., Megan: “*I think it is both! I first see it... I feel it!*”). It just inexplicably happened, “*somehow*”.

Sharing another’s experiences: shared understandings, shared emotions

Sharing was generally described as precisely that, a “*shared*” experience. Among these shared experiences, there were those more intellectual in nature, such as when two people find a common interest during a conversation (*shared understandings*); and those more emotional in nature, as when two people feel they are experiencing similar emotions, an interpersonal emotional connection (*shared emotions*).

Shared emotions meant that the partners were “*both experiencing the same emotion at the same time*”, even if only a temporary and “*weaker version*” of the partner’s experience. These emotional sharing experiences were apparently synchronic emotional responses, being described as two separate “*personal*” experiences that were “*similar*” to each other, or the “*same*” as the partner’s. They were ‘we’ emotionally

similar experiences (Lauren: *"We were happy, just some sort of share in that common experience."*).

Although Lauren was there-and-then aware of her sharing experience, some of these shared emotions were only brought to participants' awareness through viewing. In one particular instance, viewing generated a reflection of an experience which resembled the phenomenon of contagion: *"If you think more about the interaction, throughout I picked up from him a sort of ease, this 'I guess it doesn't really matter'"*. With this reflection, Megan, described the catching of Sam's ease, a responsive experience of which she was not aware of there-and-then and that was a direct consequence of Sam's experience. She was only aware of it due to the cued-recall interviewing experience. This felt contaminated ease was also not a feeling described as informative of Sam's present experience, as Megan's intuitions were. There-and-then, she was simply contaminated and, without thinking about this feeling or living it as a revealing intuitive feeling, acted under its 'spell'.

Participants' cognitive shared experience, their *"shared understanding"*, was experienced when the dyad understood a particular issue in a similar manner, or found a conversation topic of mutual interest. During these experiences, both partners knew what was being discussed, as well as its importance and emotional significance. It was a shared understanding, experienced as an intellectual sharing, but it was not deployed of an emotional value. Shared understandings involved a personal emotional dimension for both respondents, even when this emotional side was less important for them than the intellectual side of the sharing. These were intellectual commonalities that *"ran a little*

bit deeper". Both teller and listener related emotionally with the common topic, both *"thought it was terrible as well"*. Shared understandings meant that *"you all of the sudden are both on the same side"*.

When the emotional valuing of the shared understanding was not emotional enough for the experience to be lived as an emotional sharing, participants highlighted its intellectual nature, instead of its emotional nature. But without this similarity in the emotional value of the topic being discussed, I argue that sharing would not be experienced.

Sharing, in either of its forms, was about the finding of similarities or commonalities between partners. Sharing occurred when there was *"something that we, personally, had in common"*, from a present feeling to an understanding of a situation. Found similarities came in all forms and shapes, say, believing in *"fairies"*, a felt sensation of *"ease"* or *"occupation group"*; and were found during the happy story stage or became evident through the interviewing procedure, as Megan's contagion-like comment illustrates. As soon as this commonality was presumed, or found, the two partners became a *"we"* (e.g., Megan: *"I picked up from him (...) we were on the same page"*). They became a group. A group of two, but nevertheless a group, with its identity defined in the light of the similarity in question.

In these interviews, it seemed that it was the constitution of this 'we', of this collective identity, that transformed sharing into (also) a way of knowing another's experience. Finding a similarity, and thereby forming a group identity was a source of knowledge, of interviewees' presumptions of the partner's experience. Knowing through

sharing was taking for granted that the other elements of the group were similar to oneself, that they shared their feelings, their opinions, or at least a certain understanding of a certain opinion (Jane: *"They are the same as you, you know what they are thinking, you know what"*).

For instance, Lauren predicts Alicia's opinion in regards to Lord Layard based on the group identity 'clinical-psychology-trainees-from-the-same-course':

Lauren: I just kind of assumed also that Alicia would think that way, because the majority of clinical psychologists tend to really criticize him? On the course here it is a question kind of open to criticism.

Although 'assumption' was Lauren's favourite word, applicable to any type of interpersonal knowing, in the case of shared understandings, as with the example above, sharing-as-knowing was always an experience described as a reasoned knowing, deduced from the 'we' identity (a 'we' made 'you', as with Lauren's example, hence an analogical projected-we movement), or generalized from the experience of the 'I' (an 'I' made 'we', as with Megan's example, hence an analogical generalization movement). Sharing-as-knowing was always determined in the light of a presumed or found similarity, in the light of a presumed or found 'we'. Consequently, knowing through sharing involved an intellectual act. Knowing was a result of an inference (from the 'I') or deduction (from the 'we'). This type of intellectual knowing resembles the one described relatively to the analogy-as-knowing meaning of 'empathy' (Chapter I).

To review, then, as soon as a similarity between participants was found or presumed, a 'we' identity was formed and then used to predict, or assume, someone

else's experience (related or unrelated with the "*common point*"). Shared emotions and shared understandings both had an emotional dimension to them, as they were also both intellectual acts when used to determine the partner's experience.

Sharing-as-knowing was described as an "*easy*" and useful way of predicting another's experience and views, and a very good substitute for familiarity in the context of a relationship with a stranger. Nevertheless, sharing was not important for them as a way of knowing. Rather, this knowing worked in "*background*", in the back of one's mind. The significance of sharing was way beyond this premise and promise of knowing another's experience.

Rather, what mattered was that, through sharing, participants had a sense of "*being emotional together*", they felt "*connected*" or 'bonded' to another person, a very reassuring sense of togetherness and closeness. Its importance and significance was that it was a way of "*relationship building*", of personally "*participating*" in another's story, and feeling connected to the partner. This was what was fundamental in the experience of sharing, what made it a very significant and personally meaningful experience. The interest of sharing was principally the feeling of togetherness thereby created. This was what defined the nature of sharing, the experience of having a "*special*" bond, the very safe 'we'. This was what every participant emphasised. Sharing was in essence an emotional response to another's experience, even when it became a useful source of interpersonal knowledge – hence, very close to Scheler's sympathy.

Finally, this individual feeling of togetherness was not necessarily a mutual feeling, experienced by both partners. The feeling of togetherness was, at least once, unilateral,

hence, representative of a non-shared experience. In particular, Aisha described how a memory (similar past experience, analogical remembering) was “*triggered*” by Zoe’s discourse, and made her feel that she was sharing Zoe’s experience. However, this evoked memory pulled Aisha towards an introspective act. Simultaneously, Zoe was also concerned with her reminiscence act, “*focused on my own thing*”, not even aware of Aisha’s experience of connectedness and sharing.

During the interview, when faced with these two accounts of two individual introspective experiences, Aisha concluded that they were not, after all, “*connected*”, as she first thought. They were “*actually in separate places. Probably in the same place, but very separately*”. They weren’t “*really sharing*”. It was, paradoxically for her, a one-sided sharing experience. And in this one-sidedness lies its danger, its potential of becoming an inaccurate projective way of knowing.

Imaginatively knowing another’s experience: visualizing, reasoning

Imaginative experiences could have a more reasoned evidence-based logical approach to them (*reasoning*), or a more fantasy-like creative approach to them (*visualizing*), but both served the purpose of imagining another’s experience at once, or first imagining another’s situation, and then figuring out what the partner’s experience hypothetically was, through an additional perspective-taking act.

These acts were very useful as a substitute for sharing-as-knowing (similarity-based assumptions). When participants could not turn towards familiarity or sharing to

conjure the partner's experience, then imagining was a very handy resource (Kayla: *"Some things, I guess, you have not experience but you can imagine from things maybe like television or books or stories or seeing pictures and those things work as a replacement for the memory"*). The experience of imagining was a qualitatively different experience, a *"different kind of imagination"*, when compared with sharing, and one which drew upon a kind of past knowledge not fittingly described as a 'similar past experience'. These experiences were motivated by a desire to know, participants *"wanted to see first of all"* (for visualizing experiences), they wanted to *"figure out"* the partner's experience (for reasoning).

Imaginatively knowing was an intellectual experience, it was a *"train of thought"*, sometimes explained as putting the *"pieces"* of a puzzle together, It was an active act that required some *"effort"*. For example, Megan illustrated how she used an imagined-self act, in conjunction with her past knowledge about how people usually feel in *"artificial settings"*, to predict what Sam was probably experiencing:

Megan: It wasn't so much a realization so much as an expected feeling. I would expected it, if I sit there, 'uh, what should I talk about', that he is feeling a bit awkward as well. Yeah. So I think I just expected. It is the natural response to feel sort of awkward because of this artificial setting.

That is, Megan predicted Sam's probable present experience, by combining two sources of information: imagine-self and past knowledge. They both interact, informing each other, for the imaginative reasoned prediction to come about. Secondly, Sam's moment-to-moment presence only mattered as the 'objective' piece of information of

'sitting' there, in front of her, while she struggled to find something to say. The quality of this sitting is not even mentioned. Imaginative acts were simply the by-product of the way one, individually and imaginatively, was able to put the relevant pieces of information together.

According to Megan, whereas imagining was grounded in one's own past knowledge and reasoning, more evidently a personal intellectual experience; intuitions were less evidently personal, reasoned or conjectural experiences, more evidently an instant result "*of him being and doing things in a certain way*". That is, imagining was lived as an individual knowing act, a result of one's own initiative and reasoning, whilst intuiting was not.

The more rational intellectual nature of imaginative acts did not mean that they were not immediate or "*natural*". Both reasoning (e.g., Aisha: "*My immediate thought was, 'oh my God, what would I do if I was in her shoes'.*") and visualizing (e.g., Zoe: "*Immediately a load of images would pop up*") were described as immediate natural experiences, "*because I didn't consciously said, oh, I'll put some leaves, I wanted it to be green. I just pictured it that way.*"

Imaginative ways of knowing were illustrated as simultaneously effortful and spontaneous; simultaneously a construction and immediate. This apparently paradoxical nature was explained by Aisha and Zoe. For them, "*there are things that come to you straight away. And you do just imagine as it comes*". However, this immediate imaginative experience will be permanently under active intellectual re-construction, in the light of unfolding "*input*" or one's "*own preferences*". Sometimes, it felt as if they

were “*moving to*” another’s discourse, ever-adapting to newly revealed information, pace-by-pace.

This “*structure*” imposed by the partner, and the continuous adaptation of the content of the imagination to that structure, suggested that imaginative acts were also not exclusively personal and individual acts. They were shaped in the light of objective cues disclosed by the partner. Despite being constructed in this interpersonal manner, imagining was still largely an individual experience, majorly informed by one’s past knowledge and imaginative abilities. Participants partly “*lost the connection*” of sharing acts, and turned inwards, they “*got caught up in my own image as well, I was kind just picturing this place*”.

This was the experience about which less material was gathered. Beyond Aisha and Zoe’s interview, during which visualization experiences were explored in detail, in the rest of the interviews imagining was only briefly mentioned – partly because I did not foment the discussion about these experiences, whenever the lead was there. Nevertheless, it was an important way of knowing another’s experience, and even one of the most significant in Zoe’s and Aisha’s recollection of the happy story stage.

Experiencing not really ‘now’ or ‘then’

At first, I thought that experiences could be located in the present, when they involved experiences responsive to the happy story stage; or in the past, when they related to narrated stories. For example, feeling “*really excited about this topic, let’s talk*

about it some more” would be a present experience; and describing how one feared being “kicked for anti-social” behaviour during the narrated episode would be a past experience. It was very simple; and it would help me to reflect about Stein’s claims relative to the here-and-now essential quality of intuitive acts. However, these interviews tell a different tale, in regards to a few angles of analysis.

First, there is the temporal location of the *knowing act* itself. Participants generally claimed that the act happened in the present (during the happy story stage). They imagined, shared and intuited while the interaction unfolded. With the exception of a few of Lauren’s comments (her confusion about the lived and the viewing experiences) and shared experiences which were not used as knowing acts (e.g., Megan’s contagion-like experience), these were said to be either present consciously lived knowing experiences, or implicit knowing experiences, being brought into the forefront of awareness by viewing.

Nevertheless, none of these acts can be properly described as a present act because they were being reflectively described. They were participants’ *memories of knowing ‘then’*. Despite the aided-recall and the recency of the experience, this study is not an investigation of present acts, just of recent acts described as present by participants themselves. In a way, it is possible that Lauren’s acknowledged confusion between the viewing and the happy story stage experience was a fruit of a heightened awareness about the fact that she was, after all, describing ‘then’ (happy story) acts in a ‘now’ (interview) sense. In the process of doubting her judgement, her memory, she sometimes ended-up giving more weight to the tape as evidence of her experience, than

to her memory of the event. She gave more weight to the 'now' quality of the interview's task. This is suggestive of the possibility of reconstruction that lies in the act of remembering, even with cued-recall techniques.

The second angle of observation was relative to the temporal location of the *target's experiences*. Interviewees argued that these occurred there-and-then. Participants experienced "*discomfort*", feared "*running out of things to say*", became "*interested*" in another's conversation, and so forth. These 'present' experiences were the object of any of the three knowing acts described here. For example, Megan shared Sam's sense of time past ("*shared experience or same emotion or same sense of 'oh, this is so strange, how much time has passed'*"), but she also intuited Sam's amusement ("*he looked like amused, kind of, that that was the case, do you understand what I mean? It was apparent that he was*"), and imagined Sam's tension towards the situation ("*I would expected it if I seat there, 'uh, what should I talk about', that he is feeling a bit awkward.*"). Therefore, any of these acts appeared in these interviews as useful for the knowing of someone else's 'present' experience.

Nevertheless, participants were also sharing a story from their past experience. They were remembering and discussing experiences that, in principle, were "*gone and past*". Past experiences were at the centre of their attention, they were the 'excuse' for the interaction, their task. However, these past experiences were not neatly located in the past, forgotten and locked away in an attic, bearing no effect on the participants' present experience. The starting topics chosen by tellers were always emotionally-significant, meaningful past events (an interesting cultural festival; an intense job

experience in another country, the engagement day, and the positive news of having been accepted by the university). And, most importantly, these events were still significant in a present tense. These were episodes that still 'rocked' the tellers' world in a 'now' sense.

Sharing a story sometimes affected participants' present experiences to a great extent: *"the act of recounting it... brought back the emotion"* (Zoe). By sharing a significant emotional story, participants were partly reliving the narrated experience, experiencing past emotions, with less intensity perhaps, *"not quite the same as the original emotion"*, but none of the less, experiencing them. Chosen episodes were simultaneously past and present as a consequence of the act of recounting. This showed that there was an intensified relationship between 'then' (narrated story) and 'now' (happy story), the past bursting into the present, with varying degrees of intensity. In brief, it can be said that *recounting is like reliving in the 'now'*.

Interestingly, Zoe and Lauren were two participants who denied partly experiencing the narrated experience, in the 'present', in one instance each; and both in relation to a particular part of the story that curiously revolved around emotionally negative experiences (panic for Lauren, grief for Zoe). But this negation was somehow not enough for considering that these experiences were not partly located in the present. For example, in Zoe's case, it appeared so much as a negation, a defence mechanism, that I tactfully and very carefully, as if tiptoeing for a long time around her resistance, insisted on clarifying the temporal location of her experience.

Mid-through the interview, Zoe explained that *“it is still remembering a bad experience. But when I think back to it, I think more of the happy bit afterwards.”* But the fact the she was repressing the negative side of her experience does not mean that it did not exist, or that she did not partly relive it. Even during the visualization experience, during which Aisha visualized the swimming pool described by Zoe (i.e., Zoe’s past situation), Zoe had *“the image here”*, in her head. Then, experiences that, at a first glance, could be said to be past, were rather ‘past’ (relived, significant, partly present) experiences. And the partners got hold of these past experiences through intuitive, shared and imaginative acts.

In conclusion, knowing acts and known experiences were neither in the ‘now’ nor in the ‘then’, for different motives perhaps, but, nevertheless, not neatly in either of these temporal locations. This suggests that these acts cannot be distinguished based on the temporal location criterion (of the act, or of the known experience) in this study - a fundamental characteristic of intuiting for Stein.

The intersubjective communicative flow of coming-to-know

Knowing acts studied here were not decontextualized acts. They were rather embedded in an interpersonal communicative context of experiencing (sharing and engaging with a story). Although most of these participants were strangers to each other, they spent fifteen minutes sustaining a dialogue. They wanted to *“connect”* with this stranger. They were *“trying to leave gaps for you to talk...”, “thinking is there*

somewhere I can pick up where she left it, or that I can offer for her to continue the conversation?”, concerned with *“being boring”*, wanted to have a *“really nice juicy engagement in a kind of conversation”*, and so forth. Participants were motivated to get involved, engage, communicate, relate. Furthermore, participants’ choices of starting topics set a relatively personally meaningful tone to the overall interaction.

Consequently, knowing acts were situated in an unfolding communicative narrative background; an evolving relationship; and a motivation to know, relate and share personally meaningful experiences. These acts were contextualized in a personally significant communicative relational background.

Communicative acts are naturally multi-layered experiences involving many communication spheres. Although these are usually divided into two main dimensions (verbal and nonverbal communication), phenomenologically speaking, there was no reason to separate these here. However, the way participants related aspects of their communicative interactions with each knowing act seemed distinctive, and interestingly enough, somehow suggested a verbal/ non-verbal division.

That is, communication was a theme frequently brought to these interviews by participants themselves, to illustrate the relationship between their knowing acts and the verbal (*bridging just through the words*) and non-verbal (*open books and pre-reflective understandings*) communication spheres. Their analysis suggested that these were perhaps two co-existing dimensions that simultaneously passed on sometimes convergent meanings, one reinforcing the other; and sometimes distinctive sets of

information. These spheres seemed to be dealt with differently by participants during their *intersubjective communicative flow of coming-to-know*.

Bridging just through the words

The verbal narrative context was sometimes proposed as partly responsible for their interpersonal knowing to come about, and principally for the genesis of sharing and imagining.

For sharing experiences, it was often the verbal discourse that was said to allow the finding of a commonality. Shared experiences were often the result of comparison between the listener's personal opinion or experience and the one being verbally described by the teller. For example, Aisha explained that the two known experiences (Zoe's, as verbally described; and her own) represented a commonality, and therefore sharing was experienced (Aisha: *"Because of the way she told it, and in general, if somebody is treating me badly, that is a negative thing"*). Note that, in this example, the *"way"* Zoe is describing referred to the overall *"coherence"* of the verbal narrative context (e.g., how Zoe had *"laid the scene out"*), rather than a nonverbal expressive communicative feature. It was an objective quality of Zoe's discourse that mattered. That is, sharing was an act frequently founded upon another's objective verbal discourse, it happened *"just through the words. I wasn't conscious at all of her actions, or of her physical anything, at that moment"*.

Secondly, most importantly, and regardless of the way commonalities were found, their verbal discussion "*sealed the bond*", the relationship bond between partners. Verbal commentary about a "*you felt that way. I felt that way too*" made of sharing "*something really solid*". From that point onwards, the experience became a confirmed two-sided shared experience, and one stopped considering whether the partner was yellow or green. One just assumed it to be of the particular 'we' colour under discussion: "*you don't have to use your imagination any more. You know what it is*" (Jane). Kayla offered a very effective metaphor to illustrate the importance of the verbal communication sphere for sharing experiences:

Kayla: I always see the conversation as building a bridge. So you have a person in either side and when you are empathizing [remembering similar past experiences] with someone you are building a little bit more of the bridge, consequence towards each other, but when you find something in common [communicated similarity] puff (makes gesture of unison; all laugh). You used to be putting each one of these plaques of wood, but when you find something in common the piles overlap, and the bond becomes more complete.

Kayla, who was able to "*appreciate people for their differences*", was, nevertheless, in pursuit of a 'complete' self-other connection, a fully bridged interpersonal relationship - and talking about a commonality was a way of achieving this goal. That is, the quest for similarities was impelled by the desire for togetherness, bonding, being "*the same together!*" By verbally discussing the similarity, this was achieved, and the partners felt that they were "*on the same page*", "*on the same side*", "*experiencing the same*". Thus,

verbal communication played a central role in sharing experiences, both for its genesis as well as for increasing their sense of self-other similarity and closeness.

The relationship between imaginative acts and the verbal communicative dimension was of a different nature. Aisha visualized the pool being verbally described by Zoe in such an immediate way that the experience had, for her, a foreseeing quality (Aisha: *"Before you even said it was on the edge, I pictured it that way myself?"*). Although Zoe remarked that this foreseeing quality was consequent of her *"gestures"*, for Aisha, this was not seen as important for visualization to happen. What mattered to her was the verbal discourse, that she *"did it quick before you said it"*.

Visualizations were said to continuously adapt to the unfolding verbal narrative context, so that the image could match the additionally disclosed information. The choice of words, their repetition, the detail of the description, these were a few of the 'objective' features repeatedly mentioned as of relevance for imagining experiences. For example:

Aisha: You repeated the word amazing twice, I think, when she talked about it. And from there it lead up to her description of this pool (...) and filled that with detail, and she just made a picture for me and I visualized it.

Aisha's visualization experience was grounded by her in the narrative context (*"from there it lead"*) and in the verbal content of the description (repetition, choice of words, detail). In brief, imaginative acts were said to be shaped or a by-product of the partner's overt verbal discourse (Zoe: *"You said hospital, and I imagined the hospital"*).

The words-as-symbols of experience created a bridge, not an emotional sharing bridge, but nevertheless a bridge between that which one imagined and the partner's recalled and described experience. The establishment of this imaginative interpersonal link could be as important for the empathizer as it was for the empathee (Zoe: "*I set you up. (...) I was imagining, but I was trying to bring you in to it. (...) I wanted her to be as happy as I was then, I wanted her to know how good it was*"). Finally, visualizations were not made more meaningful just because one discussed the imagined picture with the partner, as with sharing experiences.

In summary, participants commonly mentioned that another's words acted as an interpersonal bridge for their sharing or imaginative experiences. However, in contrast with sharing, which was a certified two-sided experience through talking, the extent of the importance of the verbal communicative act in imaginative experiences did not seem to require a second step, a verbal acknowledgment of 'I imaged it this way, and so did you'.

Conversely, intuitions were not commonly grounded in the content of partner's discourse. These were not experiences during which one made an imagined table round just to "*fit*" another's description, as with imaginative acts; or which required the partner's experience to be verbally described and discussed for the knowing act to come about. Instead, it was the expressive quality of the communicative act, that is, its non-verbal communicative dimension. At best, participants' verbal commentary served to confirmed or disconfirmed that which one had come to intuitively know; or it contextualized the intuition (and thereby perhaps making it more intelligible).

Moreover, the verbal discussion of these intuitions was not always seen as beneficial, as it was sometimes subjected to certain rules. An example of one of these rules, though there a few, was avoiding the discussion of anything that could cause offense (politeness rule):

Alicia: If I said something like ‘oh dear, you obviously are running out of things to say’ then I think I would feel, that would be, that wouldn’t be good to say that. Whereas if you said to me I can see you are quite embarrassed by this story, I think that would make it worse for me, I think.

This politeness rule determined that, when the intuited experience was a sensitive issue, only the experiencer could offer it for discussion – precisely what was observed between Megan and Sam. Megan was experiencing the ‘running out of things to say’ type of experience and decided to overtly expose what she was feeling. This decision had a beneficial unblocking impact upon their interaction.

Thus, the genesis of intuitive knowing experiences was not commonly associated with the verbal content of the communicative act, as verbally discussing these intuitions was a rule-bonded and limited activity. Hence, the verbal dimension was less important for intuitive knowing acts.

Finally, verbal communication, in itself, was not as meaningful as when it was associated with a significant way of knowing (intuiting, sharing, imagining). For example, Zoe was the only participant who chose an episode when Aisha reiterated what she was saying. This was a communication-only act, of little interpersonal significance, though nonetheless one which meant that Aisha was understanding her:

Aisha: This one was just communicating, like just talking to each other about something not so intense (T: yeah) not so close to home or something, just something like 'oh yeah!' (...) This was just reiterating what she was saying.

That is, communication for the sake of communication was important for the conversation to evolve in a pleasant continuous manner, but it did not transform that moment into a significant one, it did not transform the verbal comment into a significant one. It was just a "*superficial*" engagement with another's discourse, a non-significant cross-checking of each other's understandings.

In conclusion, the verbal narrative context affected each of these acts, albeit in different forms. Words established a bridge between partners that informed and shaped their knowing experiences. Sharing and imagining were frequently partly a consequence of another's explicit verbal discourse; whereas intuiting was at best confirmed or interpreted in the light of this narrative context. Secondly, discussing shared experiences had a beneficial impact upon the relationship (in this context) and intensified the sharing experience itself; though the discussion of one's imagination was not an observed occurrence, and the discussion of intuitive experiences was not always regarded as beneficial. Finally, the communication-only act was of little personal and interpersonal significance.

Open books and pre-reflective understandings

Intuitive experiences were often associated with the qualitative character of another's expressive behaviour or with the particular quality of one's felt-feeling. Hence, they were in essence nonverbal forms of communication. For example, Megan (*"If somebody says that just like that, manifesting nothing but the question itself"*) remarked that there were two ways of making a question: one which looked like an authentic manifestation of interest, and one which sounded *"fake"*. For her, it was not the verbal question itself that allowed her to intuitively feel someone else's genuine interest – it was rather the way the question was made, its nonverbal qualities. Thus, intuitions acted as a form of nonverbal communication, via which participant got hold of each other's present experiences beyond that which was said, beyond the word-as-symbol or evidence of experience.

Consequently, intuitive experiences sometimes made oneself feel *"transparent"*, made other people look transparent. Experiences were out there, in the open, rather than hidden under one's skin, in a closed box inside one's mind: *"and the way she expressed it, she showed how she felt about it with no barriers. Open. As an open book"* (Jane). Thus, intuiting created the impression that one got to know the partner's genuine transparent experiences, that the empathee was transparent as an open book – what was not always a pleasant feeling for the empathee. For example, Lauren *"didn't realize how much you kind of picked up on it"*, and was surprised by the revelation that her experience had been *intuited*, despite her hiding efforts.

Intuitively known experiences were not necessarily very concrete, defined and reflective, such as *“some kind of emotion”* for which one the descriptive verbal label is not readily available. They even sometimes were just an impression about *“an overall thing hanging in the air”*, barely a thought, let alone a discussed thought. They were sometimes pre-reflective understandings, implicitly taken as authentic knowing.

Intuitive understandings, prereflective understandings included, triggered a certain amount of actions. Intuiting was responsible for an *“unsaid kind of the dynamics”*. For example, Alicia and Lauren, in two separate episodes, *“noticed that the other person was feeling uncomfortable, or worried, about the conversation, and we felt that we needed to try and recue”*. They were both *“cooperating”* for the goal of sustaining a fluid conversation, without having ever once *“discussed the process”*. They simply intuited an experience, and there-and-then acted *“in response of that”*.

Intuiting shaped their actions before its authenticity was questioned. It also guided the conversation, it determined the particulars of the content under discussion, both for the intuitive listener (Kayla: *“If passion in her eyes, I try to keep the conversation going”*), as well as for the intuitive teller (Megan: *“If I find that someone is bored or anything with something that I am talking about I will definitely use that to guide what I am... So I am constantly adjusting my behavior”*).

In summary, intuitions are in themselves a nonverbal form of communication, a sometimes pre-reflective understanding of another’s present experience, that is lived as the knowing of another’s authentic experience and which determines that which is said and done during an interaction.

As for the relationship between nonverbal communication and imaginative experiences, nonverbal behaviour sometimes was claimed to inform one's imagination, it sometimes acted as an objective "input" that fuelled the imaginative act. Although sometimes of assistance, for the imagined knowing to come about the nonverbal sphere was less important than the verbal dimension.

Finally, viewing sometimes made participants realize that they were having a shared experience, and non-verbally manifesting it (e.g., Lauren: "*Sometimes we are both kind of laughing*"). However, participants did not describe sharing as a consequence of nonverbal behaviour. Commonalities were not found, in this study, in the light of another's nonverbal behaviour. There was perhaps an exception. Megan and Sam reacted to one of Megan's remarks with a simultaneous laugh. In this episode, Megan intuited Sam's experience but the simultaneous laughter made Sam's experience "*more explicit*", it confirmed that they "*both agreed that we were off topic*"; and Megan finally felt at ease with the decision of allowing the conversation to unfold in a more natural manner. Therefore, in this one instance, laughing (nonverbal behaviour) served as a confirmation that her intuition was correct; and informed her that hers was a shared experience. The similarity between the partners' nonverbal behaviour and her own provoked a sharing experience; and one which also determined the direction of Megan's experience and actions-to-be.

In conclusion, intuitions were commonly described as the reception of another's nonverbal interpersonal communication and shaped the overall interaction. There was also an instance during which sharing was experienced as a consequence of nonverbal

communicative behaviour. On the other hand, in these interviews, the nonverbal dimension of the communication mattered little for imaginative experiences to come about and be meaningful (but remember that there is less commentary about these experiences).

Conclusions

The IPA of cued-recall joint interviews about recently experienced immediate interpersonal understandings yield several interesting results. These were organized into four main themes.

Contexts of experiencing and butterfly effects proposed that these joint interviews were successful in obtaining personal non-consensual accounts about several different lived experiences of sensing someone's experience. They also showed that the overall adopted procedures were well accepted by the majority, since any discomfort that the design caused was surmounted, both during the happy story stage; and the interview.

Nevertheless, that which was experienced and verbalized during these two stages was affected by the research settings. For example, tellers frequently feared running out of things to say (happy story stage design) because they felt they should direct the conversation throughout the 15 minutes. Viewing (cued-recall procedure) brought about commentary about implicit experiences; sometimes made of nonverbal behaviour the centrepiece of attention and meaning-making; once became the focus of the participant's experiential reflections and partly substituted the memory of the happy

story stage lived experience; and it was not always a faithful registry of participants' experiences – only of what was more overtly said or done. It therefore both enriched and impoverished participants' commentary.

This is one of the benefits of conducting interviews. Some influential 'effects' can be managed, and participants' attention re-directed towards the objective of the study. With other procedures, say, surveying, little details go unnoticed and unstudied. The understanding of these influences was important in that it helped to understand some recurrent experiences and meaning-making.

Three immediate *significant ways of knowing another's experience* were found: sharing, intuiting and imagining. Sharing consisted of a 'we' experience, during which the two partners had a similar understanding or a similar emotional experience. Sharing was always partly an emotional experience, significant because of its effects upon the partners' relationship and their sense of belonging. It was sometimes used to intellectually presuppose what another's experience was. Intuiting was a sensitive awareness of the partner's experience, that could be experience as a perception or a feeling and that was immediately revealing of another's experience, without requiring an additional intellectual knowing act. It was the result of a process difficult to explain, but usually grounded in the quality of another's discourse or actions, or of one's feelings. Imagining was about the reasoning or visualization of another's situation or experience. It drew upon available cues and past knowledge, though one which was not apparently suitably described as a 'similar past experience' (as it was observed for sharing experiences).

Discussed episodes involved an *experiencing* that *was not really 'now' nor 'then'*, neither as a knowing act or as an experience. This was because these interviews were about their memories of experiencing and knowing 'then' (during the happy story stage), and because the act of sharing a story about a past event re-enacted, with varying degrees of emotional intensity, those past experiences.

Finally, the happy story stage was an *intersubjective communicative flow of coming-to-know* that put in relationship two partners. Partners were willing to relate, to get to know and reveal their experiences. The verbal and nonverbal communicative sides of this interaction related differently to each knowing act. The verbal discourse was extremely important for imagining, by shaping its content; and for sharing experiences, by allowing the finding of similarities, and thereby enhancing their feelings of closeness and togetherness. On the other hand, intuiting was in itself a nonverbal form of communication that made people's experiences reflectively or pre-reflectively transparent to one another and conditioned their interactions-to-be.

Discussion and future research

So much work and care was put into the planning and design of this study that I was slightly disappointed for not having more people interested in participating; principally more clinical trainees. This was perhaps partly my fault, since I could have been more pro-active or creative in terms of recruitment. Despite this difficulty, I believe

that it was worth it, and nothing was lost. However few, it was most interesting and revealing, listening and interviewing participants, clinical psychology trainees and other.

They taught me to be a better researcher-interviewer. For example, the first dyad taught me that intuiting was not always the experience one wished to discuss in this setting. Rather, discussing sharing experiences was important - perhaps partly because of the information sheet, which described the research as about experiences of engagement; and partly because they were in an unusual disempowering place, being video-recorded, under scrutiny. As Kerem et al. noted, the relationship between participants became fuller through sharing, and discussing these successful positive sharing moments re-empowered them, from an interpersonal perspective, in the view of us all.

Overall, I believe that the choice of a joint interview was most beneficial. Participants contested each other, they expanded upon each other's views, and did not always feel the need to be intra and interpersonally consensual and consistent. This increased the variety and depth of discussed aspects. There was only one interview, with Megan and Sam, during which I experienced considerable difficulties. This was because Sam was acting as a block, preventing the organic progression of the conversation. He wanted to talk of nothing but his own recorded observable experience, never frontally disagreed, never once discussed Megan's experience except by means of a 'we' confirmable by the tape... After half an hour, I was drained by the effort of managing the interview in a fruitful rewarding way for those involved. I was unable to deal with Sam effectively, so that he would join a collaborative discussion about lived experiences –

rather than defending himself against I do not know what threat. Luckily, Megan was incredibly direct and outspoken, compensating for Sam's reduced contribution. Individual interviews, in this particular case, on this day, for me, with these participants, would have been a better option.

Viewing influenced interview accounts to a considerable extent, similarly to what was described by Long, Angera and Hakoyama (2006). As they argued, it is an overall beneficial interviewing technique that increases the depth of our understanding of participants' experiences, with there-and-then surmountable negative effects. However, for me, some of the effects detected in this study, unmentioned by them, were less positive. Namely, the central role given to behaviour, one which is probably not representative of what happens during naturalistic interpersonal encounters. Secondly, viewing once confused and distanced the participant from the memory of what had been lived - the one that should be under discussion (Larsen et al., 2008).

The objective of this study was investigating people's ways of immediately knowing another's experience, there-and-then. The design succeeded in that three significant ways of knowing were found. These forms of interpersonal understanding were similar to those identified by Kerem et al. (2001). A parallel can be drawn between their cognitive component and imagining and sharing-as-knowing; and between their affective component and sharing-as-responding and intuiting.

In this study, sharing, as a way of knowing, was always an intellectual act, but one which was closer to the notion of analogy, and associated with identification and contamination sympathetic responses. As an intellectual act, it appeared to be

distinctive from perspective-taking, associated with a distinctive psychological experience and a distinctive kind of intellectual knowing mechanism.

Secondly, there were many examples of intuiting-as-knowing, an experience that should be differentiated from sharing experiences, in mine, and in participants' views. I propose that intuiting and sharing amount to distinctive psychological experiences of interpersonal understanding, and that intuiting is suitably seen as the lived experience of the phenomenological conception of direct empathy. It should perhaps not be merged with other types of 'affective' phenomena, as the cognitive-affective binomial approach professes.

This additional finding was not unexpected, unsought, or unprovoked. Indeed, the prompt sense and the emphasis on immediacy and knowing were not innocent. They aimed precisely to gather accounts about this particular experience. This study was designed to investigate the lived experience of this particular kind of knowing, and, consequently, I always developed leads that were related with intuitive acts; and less when these concerned imaginative acts (sharing experiences were always an important part of the discussion, as previously acknowledged). This justifies the incidence of each act.

This study expanded upon the knowledge of the qualities of intuiting. For example, it was very interesting to listen to their views and experiences relative to the nonverbal communicative dimension. I believe that an echo of Dessoy's views is found in these interviews, when participants involved intuiting in an "*unsaid kind of dynamics*" (Alicia), when they felt (too) "*transparent*" and their hiding efforts unsuccessful (Lauren), when

they described the partner as an open book, communicating without “*barriers*” (Jane), when they adapted ‘instinctively’ their actions to what they intuited (Megan), when they looked at each other’s eyes and just knew (Aisha and Zoe). All these are examples of experiences that illustrate how ‘one is, and therefore one communicates’.

Participants intuited the experiential meaning of another’s “*way of being and doing*” (Megan), felt that what had been intuitively revealed amounted to another’s genuine experience, and acted upon this at times reflective, at times pre-reflective knowledge sometimes without giving it a second thought, without ‘putting it into words’. This sort of dynamics was born out of these participants’ being-with, and dealt with that which was not said. According to Reik, “*what is often most telling about a phenomenon or discourse is what has been excluded or minimized*” (Arnold, 2006, p.758). Attending and reflecting about these intuitions then bears a great personal and interpersonal understanding potential. Hence, Gallagher (2007) and Zahavi (2001) are perhaps right when highlighting that people tend to relate via this more “*archaic means of communication*” (Reik, 1948, p.139); and only use more reasoned forms of interpersonal understanding when intuiting for some reason ceases to enlighten them about another’s intentions and experiences.

In this study, and in contrast with Chapter IV, the ‘immediacy’ quality referred to a sudden natural quality of the beginning of these acts; and it was found in each significant knowing act, rather than intuiting alone. Nevertheless, imagining and sharing were more clearly personal acts that involved a considerable personal input for their occurrence (e.g., ‘I felt that too, so I know how you feel’; ‘I saw it a movie, so I have an idea of how it

feels’); whilst intuitive experiences seemed to be less influenced by one’s personal experiences and past knowing (e.g., ‘I saw that he felt so and so’). What was personal, in intuiting, was the knowing act. The known experience was not evidently the result of one’s personal input, opinion, past knowledge or life experiences. The lived experience of not personally contributing for intuitive knowing to come about could perhaps translate the ‘direct’ non-mediated quality of intuitive experiences.

This communicative encounter between individuals is the object of research of, for example, studies on nonverbal communication. For them, knowing acts put in relation a decoder (empathizer) and an encoder (empathee). They send nonverbal messages to each other, a process which is described from a cognitive perspective. Noller’s (2006) suggests that there are sometimes reasons to dissimulate one’s experience (as when Lauren tried to hide her fear of having nothing to say); as well as reasons to make accuracy mistakes, or ‘distortions of perception’ as she put it, in which that which is perceived suffers the interference of particular biasing cognitive processes (e.g., tendency to ignore or misread threatening messages; sensitivity to rejection).

Participants were for the majority of the time, discussing positive experiences and motivated to relate to and understand the partner, perhaps a context fit for enhanced accuracy (Noller, 2006). Perhaps this, in conjunction with the fact that accounts were obtained during joint interviews, explains why, in this study, there were not many examples of knowing ‘inaccuracies’. But there were still a few, as acknowledged by participants. In accordance with the empathee’s view, these ‘inaccuracies’ occurred

when participants abusively generalized a 'we' supposedly 'shared' experience; and twice when the intuiting of another's negative experiences.

Given the complexity of social contexts such as these, such claims of accuracy or lack of it are questionable, as Megan suggested; and wanting to determine its accuracy in this manner a result of a belief that there is an ultimate universal truth. For the phenomenological and the humanistic perspectives (e.g., Rogers, 1957/2007), it is more reasonable to acknowledge that there might be a bit of truth in both sides, in both of the partner's claims, even when the empathizer at first disconfirms the empathized's communicated understanding. At the outset, in accuracy studies, from these perspectives, one should not aim to find the ultimate winner, the holder of an universal truth, the one and only accurate description of an experience.

The clinical psychology trainees commented that they dealt with intuitions by silencing them until solid verbal confirmation had been produced by the client. In the light of this study, the therapists' 'hiding' attempts can at times be intuited as well and they can sometimes generate the impression that the therapist is 'faking' (Megan). Silencing, faking and disguising are perhaps sometimes limited psychotherapeutic tools when it comes to intuitive interpersonal understandings, for both of the involved people. There were also instances when this knowing was pre-reflective and pre-reflectively affected their actions-to-be. One cannot silence a barely a thought interpersonal knowing, nor prevent the pre-reflective reaction thereby instigated. Secondly, as the resonant receivers showed (those who intuited another's resonant

understanding), an authentic understanding is an experience like any other and one which may be intuited by the empathee.

Reiteration is often seen as an empathy-enhancing communicative tool (Bachelor, 1988; Pistrang et al., 2002). The only example of reiteration, that is, a verbal communicative act performed *“just to check that we were both understanding each other”* (Zoe), was belittled by Aisha as non-meaningful. Thus, it is perhaps valued only by certain people (*“cognitive-style client”*, for Bachelor); or it is the ‘how’ (Arnold, 2006; Bachelor, 1988; Hobson, 1985; Reik, 1948) that makes the difference. In what comes to intuitive communicative exchanges, this ‘how’, or the *“way”* people acted, seemed to correspond to the existence of an experiential quality, perhaps of an at least partly genuine experience.

Consequently, the sentence in itself is of little relevance: *“statements can feel the breach and supplement where empathy fails. Possibly they may even serve as points of departure for further empathy. But in principle they cannot substitute for empathy”* (Stein, 1917, p.65). The focus upon on external aspects alone (the therapists outward interventions and the clients’ manifest behaviour), can even have negative consequences, contrary to those intended. The client may even see perhaps denied the experience of intuitively feeling understood, and one’s individuality recognized (Geist, 2009). It is this attentiveness to genuine experiences, this authentic and open way of relating, that is, I believe, a key aspect of therapy.

Not everyone was similarly *“hypersensitive”* to another’s present experience; not everyone, in every circumstance, detected every single of another’s experience; and the

way one expressed that which was known was not always the best descriptive verbal expression, from the empathee's eyes. But every single dyad was able to identify, through reflection and/or viewing, at least one moment, of a fifteen minutes conversation, during which they intuitively came to know another's experience. This is what matters.

Hence, in these final reflections, I propose that the design, IPA and these participants allowed the intuitive phenomenon to emerge in more clarity than ever (for me, and hopefully for you too) – a line of investigation that deserves to continue.

CHAPTER SIX

EMPATHY-AS-KNOWING:

AN OVERVIEW

Chapter VI

The aim of this chapter is to describe three types of interpersonal understandings (sympathetic, intellectual, and intuitive) and review the argument and findings regarding intuitive understandings.

“He hadn’t believed in it in the way that he believed in dining tables, or streets, or stomach upsets. It hadn’t been real in the way that love was real, or unhappiness, or fear. It was only real in the way that stories were real while you were reading them, or heat mirages before you got too close to them, or dreams while you were dreaming.”

Salman Rushdie (2010)

Introduction

Empathy is frequently an umbrella term – for experts and non-experts alike. Regardless of its meaning, it is a core aspect of interpersonal relationships. The first objective of this thesis was to clarify some of these meanings, as offered by the psychology literature and folk psychology; a felt necessity consequent of the confusion found within the empathy research field. While answering to these more conceptual questions, I hope that Kerem et al.’s (2002, p.713), “*fear that adopting this line of research might result in losing the very meaning of empathy*” did not come true. I hope to have kept you with me, allowing you to follow the argument developed here.

This issue was first addressed in two chapters, where the field’s multiplicity was organized via a knowing-responding distinction that is not the most common in psychology – where it is usually affective, against cognitive empathy. I proposed that empathy-as-responding phenomena amounted to the phenomenon of sympathy. Examples of these were affective *empathy-as-responding* experiences such as sharing; identification, contamination, or feeling similarly; emotional distress; fellow-feeling or

feeling for another; and altruistic experiences and empathic concern. On the other hand, *empathy-as-knowing* phenomena amounted to social understandings, in a goal or outcome sense. Examples of these were direct empathy; intuitively feeling; perspective-taking; reasoning; and analogy. That is, 'empathy-as-responding' could perhaps be investigated under the label *sympathy*; whereas empathy-as-knowing could be investigated under the label *empathy* – more in line with the oxford dictionary online. Chapters I and II showed how this knowing-responding criterion was applicable to current theoretical and folk psychology meanings of empathy; and moderately efficient.

This is a way of organizing academic psychology research that has been related to 'empathy'. Through this strategy, I hope to contribute to the clarification of the empathy research field, and thereby improve the dialogue across research areas. Feeling a distress reaction may be related to imagining someone's perspective, but they are not the same thing. Clarity in language is fundamental for science to advance.

This strategy allowed me to concentrate exclusively upon interpersonal understandings from there onwards, from the experiential and the conceptual standpoints.

The rule of experiences and methodological choices

Investigating those phenomena that have been called empathy (Chapters I and II) provided the necessary contextual, theoretical and empirical background for the

election of one of those meanings as my research object. Direct empathy was my principal research object and concern thereafter, and with this choice came the preference for a phenomenological approach. Phenomenology, in contrast with psychology, has dedicated considerable attention to intuitive interpersonal understandings; and this approach is interested in the study of lived experiences.

I became increasingly more comfortable with this perspective after finding Hess and Blairy's (2001) study (Chapter III). They tested Lipps' model and found that evidence spoke against it. That is, the neurocognitive explanation (the mainstream explanation), that proposes that we know another's experience by means of an inference from a contaminated mimicked feeling, did not hold true at an empirical level. Consequently, the way we know what other people are thinking and feeling in a particular moment must be explained in a different manner – and phenomenology provides an alternative viable explanation.

In the empirical chapters, I have gathered descriptions of lived experiences of empathy-as-knowing, both in its oral and written forms; and largely analysed them with phenomenological methods. As I see it, studying lived experiences is not studying illusions or false knowledge. Rather, studying the lived experience, through self-reports, is accessing the experiences of the embodied, situated mind.

Lived experiences often have a character analogous to reality; one experiences, and hence 'believes in love and tables and stomach upsets' (Salman Rushdie). It is a valuable source of knowledge, even if not the most important in our daily lives. This is the knowledge to which we have access to and can promptly use; it is the knowledge

that pragmatically informs our decisions, from which we learn what the world is, what it means, and make sense of it. Experiential accounts illustrate the work of the embodied mind, as it goes about its living.

I am therefore proposing that there is some relevant psychological truth in these experiential accounts about how one directly and normally understands someone else's experiences, at least for that individual, for the empathizer; and that studying these accounts allows me to understand something of what that truth is. I am interested in what works, in ordinary events – and not so much in extraordinary events, in exceptions to the rule, or in perceptive mistakes, such as mirages. I have studied what I conceive as ordinary acts of perception, interpersonal perceptions, intuitive ways of knowing another's experience, as these are lived and remembered. Through their study, I hope to make contributions to the interpersonal processes literature in regards to intuiting-as-knowing experiences, from a positive psychology perspective (Seligman, 2002; Seligman & Csikszentmihalyi, 2000).

The detailed interview accounts obtained for the study in Chapter V were decisive in that they provided extensive material about how intuiting was lived and given meaning by participants, as they went about their living. It was the lived experience of others and their first-person interpretation that showed me that the phenomenon at the centre of my attention was indeed part of these participants' interpersonal understandings; and it was not lived as an intellectual, projective, or analogical act, which are the psychology literature's most common arguments.

As a consequence of the journey illustrated in these pages, and the consistent application of the knowing-responding division, I feel now enabled to better comprehend in what ways people believe they understand others. This final chapter offers an additional answer to the ‘meanings of empathy’ dilemma, by systematizing three types of interpersonal understandings: intuitive, intellectual and sympathetic.

Three types of understanding: intuitive, intellectual and sympathetic

The first concluding observation is that psychological cognitive models of empathy-as-knowing vary in the degree to which they emphasise one of two mechanisms, as exemplified by Batson (2009). The first mechanism, ‘intellectual empathy’, emphasises explicit simulation. This process is usually conceived as a higher-order process that allows people to think about other people’s experiences, and attempt an understanding of their viewpoint. There were echoes of this mechanism in descriptions and explications of interpersonal understandings provided by participants in this research; and it is in line with the meaning and processes of cognitive empathy – hereby, *intellectual understandings*.

The second model, ‘sympathetic empathy’, emphasises lower-level implicit simulation, reliant upon emotional activation. From the perspective that everything that people experience is a response to the environment-as-stimulus, ‘empathy-as-knowing’ is yet another example of ‘empathy-as-responding’. Consequently, knowing and responding phenomena have a less separate nature than the one assumed

throughout this thesis. Examples of this perspective were Aisha (Chapter V) and Barrett-Lennard (1981, p.93), who argued that empathic understandings are “responsive” experiences; and, Davis (2009; 1983), for whom perspective-taking is a response to the perception of another’s present experience. This is the reason for considering the knowing-responding binomial strategy to be useful, albeit imperfect. It does not accommodate everyone’s views.

I was already aware of this in Chapter I. I addressed this contention by nominating the goal or outcome of the activity as the discriminating criterion. Phenomena which involved the goal or outcome of knowing or understanding someone else’s experience were suitably conceived as a form of empathy-as-knowing. Then, sympathy would amount to a knowing act only when this was its outcome or purpose. Examples of these were the pair *contamination-inference from felt-feeling* (implicit simulation theories, e.g., Hatfield et al., 2009); and the pair *identification-analogy* (e.g., psychotherapeutic theories, Zepf & Hartmann, 2008).

In my research, although the emotional resonance aspect bore an echo of participants’ experience, there was little evidence suggesting that this was experienced as a mediated social understanding, involving the processes outlined by implicit simulation theories⁴². It was not possible find examples of how an emotional reaction was the basis of one’s reasoned knowledge of another’s present experience.

⁴² Note that unconscious mechanisms were not investigated for this thesis. Implicit simulation and projection theorists can always argue that the process is as they describe it, although one which, at an experiential level, sometimes assumes the qualities identified in this thesis. This does not, however, affect the relevance of these findings at the level of the lived experience (one which, to my knowledge, is absent from implicit simulation current investigations).

Rather, on the one hand, when an emotional resonance was described, it was presented clearly as a sympathetic reaction, and associated with sympathetic feelings and actions. These accounts resonated well with developmental models, which are dedicated to empathy-as-responding, sympathetic phenomena (Batson, 2009; Scheler, 2013). There was also evidence of analogical experiences, of how participants used their experiences to understand the empathee, usually in association with descriptions of a similar past experiences or feelings of identification. This resonated well with analogy theories (Chapter I).

As Scheler (1913, p.3) remarked, sympathy is first and foremost a response. Yet, during sympathetic experiences “*we seem to have an immediate ‘understanding’ of another’s experiences, while also ‘participating’ in them*”. Then, sympathetic experiences may leave the impression that the sympathizer immediately and emotionally understands another’s present experience. Some people feel that they know another’s experience as a consequence of their sympathetic responses to it; they have the lived experience of sympathetically understanding another.

Sympathetic understandings appeared as a distinctive kind of psychological experience (emotional, personal and reactive), and deserve to be separated from more non-reactive intellectual understandings. Sympathetic understandings were ‘intellectual’ in a very analogical manner. Tito Mukhopadhyay (2003/ 2007, p.154), a writer with diagnosed autism, provides a wonderful description of what it means to sympathetically understand other people and their experiences:

If your heart aches when you see a tear in someone's eye, if your eyes burn when someone is wrongly accused, if you feel the pain, which a person who has lost his mind bears, if you are ready to accept such a person and help him, you can be sure that you have sheltered sorrow in your heart. So you feel it and understand it.

This was precisely how 'sharing' appeared in Chapter V. Sympathetic shared experiences were the result of having "*sheltered sorrow*" during the course of one's life (similar past experience). They were a personal sympathetic response of the 'I' to the 'you' experience that the past experience predisposed oneself to have. Sharing was about two people having something in common. This response was sometimes associated with a comparative or analogical reasoned act (generalizing the 'I' experience to the 'We'; projecting the 'We' experience to the 'You'): 'So you feel it and understand it'. Then, the basis of sympathetic understandings was at most a non-merged collective person ($1+1=2$), rather than of a merged single person ($1+1=1$).

The finding of these sympathetic understandings also provides an explanation for the current confusion between empathy and sympathy. Indeed, there is one form of interpersonal understanding that is associated with a sympathetic affective response. These terms might be seen as partially overlapping with regards to this type of understanding.

Finally, there was also evidence, in participants' accounts, of an emotional resonance experience which was presented as informative of the other's experience at

the outset, in a sensory, intuitive, perceptive manner. This empathic understanding had a character that was distinctive from both sympathetic and intellectual understandings, and that was consistent with the phenomenological and existentialist-humanist psychotherapeutic models. That is, *at an experiential level*, direct empathy, or one's immediate understanding of another's experience, seemed to be a better descriptive construct, and underlying process, for this kind of experience, than inference from felt-feeling (implicit simulation) or inference from behaviour and other available cues (explicit simulation).

Therefore, this thesis gathered evidence for a third, new, and distinctive experiential and conceptual category for the description of people's interpersonal understandings, namely, direct empathy or *intuitive understandings*. The uniqueness of this category is predicated upon some theoretical models provided by phenomenology, and some psychotherapy trends such as the existentialist-humanist; and upon people's descriptions of their own understanding experiences. It is at these levels that evidence for this unique category was gathered in Chapters III, IV and V.

An example

I here propose that there are three types of interpersonal understanding: intellectual, sympathetic and intuitive. Each of these understandings illustrates distinctive psychological empathy-as-knowing phenomena and generates a particular kind of interpersonal knowledge (respectively, intellectual, projective and sensitive),

apparently via distinctive mechanisms. It is curious how these understandings were recurrent in these studies.

Table 5 includes a description of its lived experience (discrimination criteria for written accounts); some associated research constructs; the hypothetical associated mechanism; and exemplary quotes from Amber’s story text as gathered for the Folk Psychology study (Chapter II).

Table 5: “Three types of interpersonal understanding”

	Intellectual Understanding	Intuitive Understanding	Sympathy (sympathetic understandings)
Lived experience	Reasoned, imaginative, speculative, predictive, probabilistic	Sensory, perceptive, felt, intuited, experienced	Emotional personal reactions (we-projective, generalized, analogical)
Research constructs	Perspective-taking, Inference from behaviour, theory of mind, empathic accuracy	Direct empathy, Direct perception	Pity, Emotional distress, Contagion, Identification
Hypothetical process	Intellectual	Direct	Affectively responsive
Example	Amber: “I felt astounded and lucky that - as I emailed my father - none of us can be got rid of so suddenly. I cannot imagine how dreadful I would feel in a similar situation.”	Amber: “He also described apologising to the stolen generation and watching them walk into the same place/building in which he was standing speaking and how they were frightened. He said 'our job...' and he was unable to go on talking from emotion, for a few moments.”	Amber: “This was a great act of social justice that as he said was a long time coming. I felt deeply sorry for him as he is a good man who cared deeply about the people who had elected him and the unexpectedness of his removal by the factional party machine within 12 hours was shocking.”

The same lived experience text (Amber's) was chosen to show how it was frequently easy to distinguish between these phenomena when confronted with the overall text itself. *Intellectual understanding* was the outcome of an imaginative, simulative, logical and/or conjectural reasoning activity (Amber's imagine-self). *Intuitive understanding* was based on a sensitive, perceptive or felt, experience of another's (Amber's 'unable to talk from emotion'); and *sympathy* was a response, a consequence of this knowing (Amber's pity) – though one which also sometimes resulted in a *sympathetic understanding*. For example, one would fill in some unknown blanks of the other's experience in the light of one's personal recalled past experience.

The point here is that one does not need to argue against what is said about the colour pink (theories that define empathy via contamination or *sympathy* and *sympathetic understandings*), because the yellow (perspective-taking or *intellectual understandings*) and the green (direct empathy or *intuitive understandings*) are different. To each, its corner; and, instead of shouting, we might perhaps start combining these three colours in a more useful manner; and save a considerable amount of time and effort in the process.

Hence, a sympathetic understanding may then hypothetically be sometimes related to a sympathetic feeling of oneness (e.g., Davis, C., 1990; Hart, 1999; Decety & Jackson, 2006; Scheler, 1913). In this thesis, this feeling was not, however, described by participants as an actual merging of identities, but rather as a special "*emotional bonding*" (Gladstein, 1983, p.469) between two distinctive people, hence a 'we'. On the other hand, intellectual and intuitive understandings were not so strongly or

directly associated with this interpersonal emotional experience sometimes called a feeling of 'oneness' in psychology literature. Thus, although these understandings might be related to each other, and propel each other, they appear to be differently associated with certain experiential qualities and processes.

By accepting these three types of understanding as distinctive phenomena, it thus becomes unnecessary to insist that empathy is not about "*being in the corresponding emotional state yourself*" (Zahavi, 2008b, p.517). There is nothing inconsistent with current neurocognitive explanations of contamination - except perhaps their failure to recognize that some people are aware of the contamination experience as it unfolds (and hence the 'unconsciousness' is not a defining attribute); and that 'oneness' is not lived as an actual self-other merging. Consequently, sympathetic understandings are perhaps not that reliant upon self-other discrimination or agency recognition acts either.

In conclusion, each model should perhaps leave some space for alternative colours – at least in the light of experiential data. When each of the acts is finally better understood on their own, then we might finally be able to better understand their inter-relationships. This is a practical future research implication of these findings; and one which might also propel the cross-speciality's dialogue. I will do my part by offering an overview of the argument and findings related to intuitive understandings.

Overview of intuiting-as-knowing experiences

The objective of this thesis was not to elect a single meaning of empathy as the one that should prevail above all, or my one true empathy. Words change throughout time, adapting to those who make use of them, gaining new meanings, becoming embedded in new layers of meanings, so what was once an object of positive awe (awful), is no longer. Even the dictionary will change, in the end. If everyone says empathy is synonymous with sympathy, who am I to disagree? The point is that the word empathy will become what people make of it; and the same will happen to the name with which I can baptize this particular meaning of empathy.

Nevertheless, for scientific and communication purposes, this issue must be systematically addressed. Since I wish to do as I preach, I should attend to this matter once more, in this chapter, in what comes to the core part of this thesis' investigations. The phenomenological meaning of empathy-as-knowing was named *direct empathy* in Chapters I and III. I argued that this meaning of empathy could be understood in the light of Edith Stein's phenomenological description of how people naturally and directly understand another's experience via an intersubjective non-intellectual process.

In empirical studies, I have, however, avoided the *direct empathy* designation. This was because these studies investigated *experiences*, and therefore could not reassure other researchers that, at a subpersonal, neural or unconscious/ automatic level, the experience was literally direct at that level too. Indeed, I can only conclude

from the studies conducted here that there was an interpersonal form of understanding that had an instant experiential character to it, as commented upon by participants themselves. I can also remark that this phenomenon resembles the phenomenological conception of direct empathy; that the phenomenological argument is a possible and plausible explanation, consistent with the gathered evidence.

Consequently, this phenomenon assumed alternative labels in every chapter which dealt with empirical data (Chapters II, IV and V). These labels were: *immediately knowing*, a category which had two subcategories: *feeling* and *perceiving* (Chapter II); *non-mediated insights* into someone's experience, described by *perceivers* and *experiencers* (Chapter IV); and *intuiting*, an interpersonal knowledge gained via a perceptive and/or felt experience (Chapter V). Overall then, I described this phenomenon as direct empathy, immediate knowing, non-mediated knowing, perceiving, feeling, and intuiting.

So far, I have not made it my own responsibility to decide what this experience should be called. In a way, this diversity does little for the overall confusing state of affairs of the empathy field.

I hope that I was able to transmit the idea that, although named differently, it is still, for me, the same phenomenon. I have refrained from setting its name in stone because I was sensitive to the way it appeared in each chapter, study method and narrative, sometimes from a slightly different angle, and hence with a different name. Yet, as I see it, I investigated the same phenomenon throughout these chapters and it

kept reappearing, in different lights, in different forms, with different names, but manifesting its presence in what is given to me as essentially the same thing.

Naming the experience is not a simple task. For example, intuiting was used by participants as well as by Edith Stein, Theodor Reik and Waldinger et al.⁴³, though it is odd, for me, to consider that there is such a thing as a sense-perceptive intuition. In my eyes, referring to the experience of immediately listening to the sarcasm of a laugh as 'intuitive knowledge' seems somehow far-fetched. Similarly, some participants, whose lived experience was closer to a feeling rather than a perceiving, were initially surprised with the thought that feeling and perceiving were related.

But since I must make a stand, I tentatively offer intuiting as a possibility. *Intuiting-as-knowing* would translate the experience of being able to know (immediately, perhaps directly, via perceiving and/or experiencing) another's current experience, moment-to-moment, as it unfolds in the present. That is, it would amount to direct empathy, as portrayed here.

The three empirical studies (Chapters II, IV and V) then work in conjunction. Spread along these studies there was strong evidence of people's intuitive knowing of other people's experiences. They experienced an intuitive interpersonal form of understanding of others in a manner that was congruent with phenomenological views. This is what is important to retain from this thesis.

⁴³ In Waldinger et al. (2004), and in the light of Rogers' definition, empathy is defined as a perceptive understanding or recognition. They use the term 'intuitive judgments' to describe the act of judging people's emotions, from an observer standpoint.

Intuiting is a type of interpersonal understanding usually absent from psychological literature on empathy, and one which I wished to introduce as a valuable, meaningful, experiential, useful and ordinary type of understanding. By being the least known, I dedicated a considerable attention to conceptual issues. For example, Chapters III and IV were intended to provide answers and explications for intuiting from an empirical *and* a theoretical standpoint. I have searched for the precise meaning of this phenomenon, for its conceptually defining features. Indeed, I only freed myself from conceptual worries in the last study (Chapter V), the most insightful and promising of them all. It took the journey described in Chapters I, II, III, IV to get there, and hopefully for your benefit too.

This was the phenomenon I was originally interested in, as a consequence of my psychotherapeutic background (humanistic and psychodynamic). It was also the most understudied phenomenon, and, when it made its appearance, it was often scattered around under different domains. For instance, whilst Kerem et al. included this experience in the affective empathy drawer, alongside say pity experiences, Elliott et al. (2011) remark that direct empathy is most often regarded as an example of cognitive empathy. Indeed, direct empathy does not suitably accommodate in any of these two categories. Then, for me, there are benefits in accepting this additional category, such as increasing the homogeneity of the affective (sympathy) and cognitive (perspective-taking) categories across approaches, and making each category more clearly illustrative of the respective lived experience.

I recurrently divided intuitive phenomena into two similar subcategories, essences or subthemes: *perceiving*, or one's sensitive awareness of another's experience; and *feeling*, or one's experiencing of another's experience with varied degrees of 'responsiveness'. I have also always joined them in the same group of experiences, possibly illustrative of direct understandings.

The following subsections compare the intuiting-as-knowing experiential accounts gathered for the 'folk psychology' study (Chapter II), for the 'insights' study (Chapter IV), and for the 'happy stories' study (Chapter V). Through this comparison, I reflect upon this presumption that feeling and perceiving are suitably understood as illustrative of the same intuitive experience, representative of direct empathy.

Folk psychology and Insights studies: a comparison

The folk psychology and the insights studies are methodologically similar, in terms of data collection procedures (online purpose-built surveys); and type of data (written texts). Nevertheless, the main prompt (empathy, for the folk psychology study; and 'insights into', for the insights study); the data analysis methods (QCA, for the folk psychology study; and a combination of IPA and DPA for the insights study); and interests (possible meanings of empathy, for the folk psychology study; and the essence of non-mediated understandings, for the insights study) differed. I here compare the perceiving and feeling experiences gathered for each of these studies, to illustrate how these seem to be the same phenomena across studies.

Intuitive perceptions

Examples of the lived experience of intuitive perceptions, assembled for the folk psychology and the insights studies, are included in Table 6. These are framed within a broader narrative context than the one provided in Chapter II, because observing their situatedness also contributed to my overall understanding of what perceiving was.

Table 6: “Contextualized examples of narratives involving *intuitive perceptions*”

Study	
Folk Psychology	Insights
<p>Nina (#40): “I bumped into an elderly man who lives in my street. (...) This day, however, he was stumbling over his words but almost enthusiastically so. His voice was also huskier than I recall, but he was as friendly as usual but seemed a little vulnerable, and trying too hard to be normal. It struck me that he is probably on some form of medication, just like my father is for Parkinson's disease. I instinctively felt protective towards him, almost maternal. I relaxed from my usual 'speaking to the neighbours charade' and just warmed to him, and gave him time. (...)”</p>	<p>Suzy (#6): “(...) I had been getting closer to my nan ever since my granddad got ill, and was proud at how well she had been coping throughout his illness and his death, it was only when she was going through bills and papers etc., that i saw just how much she was hurting, how she had lost the love of her life the person she had spent 60 years married to and had two children with. it was only when she found a diagram of how to write a check out, as she couldn't write check, my granddads had left this in with other documents that he knew she would have to go through, i realised the extent to how much she was in pain, and that even though she wouldn't show it she would be in pain for the rest of her life, she didn't cry, or say anything it was all in her face.”</p>

Nina (folk psychology, to the left) started with a description of a few of the qualities of her neighbour’s experiences that she intuitively perceived during that

particular encounter (e.g., 'stumbling unenthusiastically', 'seemed vulnerable'). She then tried to confirm her intuition in reasoned manner, by comparing these perceived qualities with her memory of her neighbour's past behaviour ('huskier voice than recalled'). In addition, she analogically fabricated an imagined plausible explanation for these perceived qualities (he is perhaps under some sort of medication, as her father was).

Therefore, besides perceiving her neighbour's experience, she reasoned about it as well, she tried to intellectually understand her intuitive knowledge. In this text, intellectual processes complemented, informed and expanded her intuitive knowledge; and helped her make sense of it. She could just have seen that, on that encounter, he was not feeling that well, and leave it at that, keep on walking. Instead, she tried to understand his qualitative behavioural change.

There were a few examples as this one, in which intellectual and perceptive understandings appeared to complement each other, for the goal of better understanding someone's experience. But each of these two acts, intellectual and intuitive, had a different quality to them; and their contrast, made visible via this wider context quotation, was also partly responsible for their demarcation as understandings of very particular natures. They were usually easily differentiated in these two studies. Intellectual understandings were always described as reasoning, an imagination, a conjectural thought – becoming analogical intellectual understandings when analogy was involved. Similarly, Nina's reactions to the perceived and reflected upon experience (protective, relaxed, patient and warm attitude) were described precisely

as that, sympathetic reactions. These were not informative of the neighbour's experience, as perceptive and intellectual understandings were.

The relationship between intellectual and intuitive understandings is of a different sort in Suzy's text (*Insights, to the right*). She described how her imagined assumption about her grandmother's experience (coping well) was disconfirmed by her perceptive understanding (overwhelmed with grief). Intuiting thus informed and transformed the intellectual act. But this intuition would probably be much less significant or important for her, were it not for the existence of an initial divergent opinion. It would not have the impact that it had, nor perhaps have arrived to my hands.

In their context, these two lived experiences show how intellectual understandings precede (Stein, 1917, p.65) or succeed (Depraz, 2001; Stein, 1917, p.27) a perceptive intuition; though the overall relationship between these two acts is better described as one of complementarity. Their complementary use also always showed how what was perceived had the value of authenticity, of truth. The intuition was never questioned as false, even when it was puzzling or unexpected, as with Nina and Suzy's texts. Intuiting was lived as an accurate knowing of another's present experience. On the other hand, reasoning had the weight of a plausible explanation, something which made sense of the overall available information and of the intuition. It was sometimes an activity used to expand an interpersonal knowledge that was intuitively gained and assumed as precise.

For Gallagher (2007, p.354), intellectual understandings are an exception to the rule (intuitive understandings), and are only adopted for making sense of someone's "*puzzling*" experience. This strangeness can perhaps indicate that the empathizer did not, for that moment, intuit the empathee's experience; or refer to an overall contextual ambiguity, with available cues and one's intuition appearing contradictory to the empathee (Noller, 2006; Stein, 1917). Indeed, Suzy and Nina's texts, the empathees were trying to conceal or disguise their present experience (the neighbour was 'trying to be normal', the grandmother 'wouldn't show'), and these attempts might have created an overall ambiguous context that set the intellectual activity in motion (Noller, 2006).

Perceiving appeared to be associated with a temporal dimension, with a particular moment of an interpersonal encounter. For example, Nina perceived that her neighbour was not feeling well when they 'bump into' each other; and Suzy perceived her grandmother's grief in a single revealing moment, when she was going through some papers. Perceiving was born there-and-then, in that particular situated interpersonal encounter. It was a moment-specific and situation-specific act.

This situatedness of an account partly shaped my findings in the insights study. If this is not my own interpretative bias, the presence of here-and-know references could be a useful indicator of this type of understandings, when the basis of the analysis is a written account. On reflection, when thinking about a particular knowing experience, if one finds oneself conferring a considerable importance to particularities of the here-and-now encounter, and principally to a very particular moment of a more

extended interaction, then one should consider the hypothesis that the described knowing is intuitive.

Nina and Suzy's perceptive experience seem to be distinctive in terms of what was immediately given to them. Nina had an overall impression of her neighbour's experience, and one which she clearly associated with her neighbour's expressive behaviour. On the other hand, Suzy described a very specific type of experience and never really identified a particular behaviour. She merely embedded her knowing act in the overall action of going through some papers.

'Going through some papers', at least for me, does not conventionally mean that one is suffering tremendously. But perhaps the way one sorts the papers, say, trembling, may leave that impression. A behaviour which could be read along the lines of an inference from a behavioural 'cue' (after Batson, 2009), seems a far less likely interpretation of Suzy's lived experience. She seems to describe the experience of, immediately and non-intellectually, becoming perceptively aware of another's present experience. This observation therefore favours the phenomenological reading of events.

Across studies, 'perceivers' were observers, sometimes observers-participants to a scene that involved an empathee. During this observational act they got to know another's present experience, in a way that seemed to involve their senses. Perceiving was a sensitive awareness about another's current experience.

The description of this particular phenomenon was brought about via different prompts and methodologies; and for distinctive purposes. And it kept reappearing, as

a perceptive intuitive understanding, a direct empathy-as-knowing experience, not to be confused with the sympathetic or intellectual understandings. It was described by many participants regardless of their age, education, and gender; it happened in particular situated encounters of varied shapes and forms, in varied experiencing contexts (emotionally positive or negative; ordinary or personally significant); it was helpful in both poles of the interpersonal interaction (while resonating and receiving someone else's understanding); and it was not limited to a particular relational context (there were examples of perceiving experiences of a stranger, an acquaintance, a family member and a partner).

Intuitive feelings

'Feeling' shared most of the perceiving's detected qualities. It was not limited to particular relational contexts; nor to a particular valence or intensity of experiencing context; it happened there-and-then, as part of a partly observational act; and sometimes worked in parallel with more intellectual ways of knowing (e.g., Louise, Chapter IV).

Perceiving and feeling were distinguished because intuitive feelings involved an experiential felt-level resonance, whereas perceiving did not involve feeling for oneself, in any reported way, the object's experience (e.g., Suzy, Table 6). Narratives about intuitive feelings (Table 7) were about being able to feel for oneself an experience that was informative of another person's experience, with varying degrees

of personal physical responsive resonance, from a heartbeat to the simple use of the expression ‘feel another’s experience’.

For instance, Eve (right column, insights study) described her insight as about feeling for herself her boyfriend’s experience, and immediately added that this was a knowing experience (‘knew’). She never mentioned any particular seen behaviour, just like Suzy. More than that, there is nothing in this text to remind me that perceiving could be a suitable interpretation. She simply described feeling her boyfriend’s emotional state. Note how the otherness of this experience is never an issue, despite involving the lived experience of temporarily “*being*” her boyfriend.

Table 7: “Contextualized examples of narratives involving *intuitive feelings*”

Study	
Folk Psychology	Insights
<p>Carmen (#54): “(...) As the mother told me all this, tears started to well up in her eyes and I suddenly felt the urge to cry myself not because I had experienced such a loss personally (I have actually been very lucky in this regard), but because the feelings of both the mother (and her child) were so palpable. I could almost feel what the mother was feeling; concern for her daughter, sadness at her loss and the fact that her daughter had tried to protect her feelings. I managed not to cry; I felt that it would seem odd and somehow detract from the mother's own feelings. I told her that I would keep an eye on her daughter and, when she apologised for crying reassured her that this wasn't a problem. This was something that happened a few years ago but I have always remembered it vividly, in fact, it never fails to make me feel like crying. (...)”</p>	<p>Eve (#11): “He had an argument with parents who told him they never wanted to see him again. I felt how he felt - upset angry etc. - knew what he was going through yes this insight was meaningful as I understood more about him this may have happened due to us having such a close relationship. I did not express this due to the seriousness of the situation. It was like being him for a short while.”</p>

In comparison with Eve's experience, Carmen's (left column) intuitive feeling is more similar to an intuitive perception. Carmen "*almost*" feels for herself the mother's "*palpable*" state. There is a sensitive side in this 'palpable', in-between feeling and sensing, just as when we feel/sense someone's hands caressing us. We touch and are touched in that gesture (Merleau-Ponty?). By claiming that she did not really, but only as-if (after Rogers, 1957), feel the mother's experience, the experiential side of this phenomenon becomes less literal, and the distinction between feeling and perceiving becomes almost senseless.

This intuitive feeling is indeed a special type of feeling, and one which was also described as another's experience, which was lived with its otherness. It was an experiential knowing that Carmen herself distinguishes from her emotional sympathetic response, her urge to cry for the mother's loss. It was not lived as a personal, affective, sympathetic reactive experience - but rather lived as the experience of another.

Perceiving and feeling seemed to be very similar phenomena in terms of overall characterizing features, and even difficult to distinguish in particular texts (e.g., Carmen). However, some participants described a very strong perceptive side, very distant from a feeling (e.g., Suzy, Nina), or strongly emphasised the feeling experience, leaving perceived elements aside (e.g., Eve). Therefore, the perceiving-feeling distinction seems pertinent.

Tables 6 and 7 show how the empathy prompt (folk psychology study) frequently generated richer accounts, descriptive of longer sequences of events – amidst which

intuiting was found. In Nina's text (Table 6), there is a sentence about her instinctive maternal response; and the great amount of text, excluded from the table, described her responses and further reflections relative to her neighbour and herself. The same was observed with Carmen's text (Table 7). On the other hand, Suzy (Table 6) and Eve's (Table 7) accounts of their insightful experiences terminated precisely as shown. Insight narratives rarely mentioned any aspects that went beyond the knowing experience itself. Then, the insights study, and its comparison with the folk psychology study, supports the conclusion that there is such a thing as an intuitive knowing of another's experience that involves an experiential resonant side, with a nature that is not described as a personal sympathetic response.

In conclusion, the prompt of 'empathy' more frequently generated a wider narrative that included knowing and responding events. The prompt 'insight into' was more effective for the purpose of investigating empathy-as-knowing experiences alone. This provides some support for the binomial strategy (empathy-as-knowing against empathy-as-responding) adopted in this thesis; and is evidence of the efficacy of avoiding the term empathy when interested in empathy-as-knowing phenomena.

Intuiting in the light of the three studies

The unity of analysis, in the 'folk psychology' and the 'insights into' studies, was a small amount of text, sometimes even a single word. Perhaps as a consequence of this, perceiving and feeling were more arguably one and the same phenomenon. It could

even be argued that they were joined together under the label 'immediate' or 'non-mediated' understandings as a consequence of my existing interest in phenomenological theories about direct empathy.

Nevertheless, integral texts (those which I read), frequently generated the impression that perceiving and feeling, methodologically isolated in the first two studies, could be associated experiences or two manifestations of the same intuitive phenomenon. But it was through the 'happy stories' study (Chapter V) that this interpretation became more solid.

In this study, the unit of analysis was participants' commentaries about particular episodes (discrete empathy-as-knowing moments), from the resonance and reception perspectives; and their overall commentaries about particular types of understandings. These wider units of analysis proposed that perceiving and feeling were part of the same type of understanding, albeit one which was perhaps lived or communicated by participants in different manners (as a felt intuition and/ or as a perceptive intuition).

To illustrate this, a transcript of the interview with Jane (teller) and Kayla (listener) centred about the episode 'hopefully, there is more to everything', is transcribed here. It is a very long excerpt, but bear with me. I have presented it in this broader context to illustrate how Jane's seemingly sensitive awareness of Kayla's passion for her work, was not, for her, lived as a perceptive way of knowing (though viewing opens up this explanative possibility). It was rather lived as an intuitive feeling (*"so I felt what she experienced, felt, there."*). This one remark, that suddenly gave meaning to Jane's experience along the lines of an intuitive feeling, was expressed only

after a very long discussion about her sensitive perceptive awareness of Kayla's passion and about her sympathetic reactions to this known passion:

Jane: We can stop it here. That it was something that she enjoyed doing, that she was happy, I thought that she liked dance. There was something about her. (...)

R: Is there a more important moment than another one? (silence)

Kayla: I guess the beginning is really important when she describes how, when she describes how actually she is going to do it in psychology, how movement, how we all move, subconsciously and non-subconsciously, without having to say anything and things like that. So that was important for me I guess because I do Psychology I knew why that would be important? So that was kind of cool.

R: That was important how? In terms of content? Was it important in the way you were able to know what her own experience?

Jane: Yeah, I thought I understood who she was a bit more because it was something that she was passionate about. And I was, oh, isn't that nice? It is not often that you see someone, what makes them... that is why she is here, there was something rewarding to have come into Birmingham, and I thought that was a good reason. (R: laugh, Kayla: Cool)

R: How could you tell that she had a passion? How are you so sure that she was passionate about it?

Jane: I think now, watching it, I think she had that look about her, her body language, she spoke confidently about it, and if we watch it again, when she describes, you can see that she is doing motion talk with dance and the way she describes it is very detailed, she could have talked about it for longer. That is what she does! (giggles)

R: So you had the impression that, one, she had a passion; two, that she could talk for longer (Jane: Yeah). But then you also said, that 'now

watching it I had the impression that she made all these movements'... So when you were there...

Jane: Yeah, I was not aware about it. (...) I was thinking...like, I hope one day I am like that. Because I like Psychology but I don't mix school and other things together. Especially when she talks about ballroom, because that is what she likes, but then she mixes it with Psychology, and I thought that is so cool, I would. That would be nice to be like that one day (Kayla, R laughs).

R: Beautiful. And did you feel any emotion, did you feel anything.

Jane: I guess it was excitement. (Kayla: sighted) That is a good word.

R: Where you excited for her (Kayla: yeah), or for you?

Jane: Excited just hearing the situation.

Kayla: Didn't know these things could actually come true.

Jane: Yeah! To hear this could happen. Because you wouldn't have to relate to anything if you didn't want to. So yeah, excited to know there is more to everything. (...) I don't know if during the time...No. I wasn't aware of the gestures at the time. I don't know where the division was, but when you can hear automatically that that is something she likes, I could hear that that was something she was passionate about. I could just tell. I don't know... The tone is different. Because before I was talking about me, so I wasn't really, I wasn't really like... I don't know, that is the first time I was finally finding out about her for the first time, 'oh, she is like that!' So that is where the excitement came from as well.

R: A sense of discovery. (Jane: Yeah, a sense of discovery, perfect) Ok. But this sense of discovery is yours again (T: uh uh). So how can you hear the passion?

Jane: I think it is to do with tone. Like the weightful way to telling the story. I guess it is about information, but information that is said in a certain way, with certain tones, like precisely, like she has said it before, or... it was like concrete information, it wasn't like hums and offs, but it was just (makes

gesture of cadence) tururu. This is what I do, this is what I like. I don't know....

R: That is beautiful. That is OK. What is concrete information, for you, can you try to tell me?

Jane: Yeah, so. It's like information that... it's like a science, it's like, this is the way it is. The movement is this, and we don't have to tell each other anything. But the way she said it was confident and she knew what she was doing: this is actually how we dance and that is facts. But she said it with a light tone and that was something that she enjoyed talking about. And you could tell that because of her tone, because there were no hesitations or anything it was just...

R: Would you agree if I say that the way she said it was just very expressive of her passion?

Jane: Thank you. Yes! (R, Kayla, Jane: laughs) That's it. That is not what I imagined... No, because... (R: Yes, please, come on!) No actually, it was expressive, because expressive is like all these sort of things put together, because her gestures did change, and maybe I noticed it subconsciously, or something, and her tone was lighter, and I thought it was light, and there was no hesitations, and you could tell that she was passionate about it, and enthusiastic herself, so the enthusiasm, so I felt what she experienced, felt, there.

R: So you think that you also felt in this experience part of her excit... her enthusiasm?

Jane: Yes, because when people are happy about something... If it makes you happy, then I feel. Because you are not supposed to be happy, so I feel how she feels about what she does. Like, I can't relate but I understand. Like why that makes you happy, and I can be happy for you. (...) Because it is about how she expressed how she felt. And the way she expressed it she showed how she felt about it with no barriers. Open. As an open book. (...)

And you go, 'oh I'm happy for you'. That is really good. That is the feeling that I am used to. That is what it is.

This discussion about Jane's intuitive awareness was very enlightening in several ways, and very revealing of the experience during which she got to know what Kayla was passionate about. First, despite the references to perceptive acts and expressive behaviour, for Jane, conceiving this experience as a perceptive one was a somehow strange thought. It made her hesitate and, after having provided a subconscious 'perception' rationale, she accepted this perspective.

Secondly, this intuition provoked a sympathetic reaction. She sympathized because she wanted to relate, this was her choice (*"because you wouldn't have to relate to anything if you didn't want to"*). Jane sympathized with Kayla's enjoyment of psychology; with the subject Kayla was researching; with the person that Kayla appeared to be in the light of that intuition; with the idea that there was a hopeful future ahead of her... and so forth. These were many of the reasons for Jane's sympathetic sharing of Kayla's passion.

Thirdly, amidst these sympathetic felt-level responses, Jane isolated an intuitive feeling for Kayla's passion – one which was paradoxically (considering the sympathetic reasons listed in the preceding paragraph) justified through the argument that she had no reason whatsoever to feel happy in that moment, were it not for Kayla's present experience.

Either way, Jane intuited Kayla's experience in some manner, sensitive in the light of her detailed account about Kayla's behaviour; and felt, in the light of her

opinion about her lived experience. Jane's experience appears to me as a *composite experience* (Chapter IV), one which included both felt sympathetic and felt empathetic elements. Accepting that her knowing was intuitive and experiential (i.e., an intuitive feeling), when her cued-recall account was, for its majority, about sensitive knowing elements (partly as a consequence of the cued-recall technique), implies that perceiving and feeling should perhaps be conceived, in essence, as two aspects of a one and only intuitive understanding phenomenon.

Proposed relationship between feeling, perceiving and intuiting

The proposition is that feeling and perceiving both represent an intuitive understanding. This was what participants' commentary suggested. In some circumstances, intuiting was lived as a sensitive experience, a perceptive interpersonal form of knowing someone else's present experience, and one which was not necessarily accompanied by an experiential felt-level resonance experience. For other people, or in other circumstances, intuiting brought another's present experience to one's experience under the form of a felt-intuition, and one which did not, at least at a first glance, seem to be related to any perceptive act.

Viewing and discussing intuitive feelings suggested that these were plausibly associated with an implicit perceptive act. This type of intuitive experience, is summarized in Figure 18, as resulting from a combination of a subliminal perceptive act with a conscious lived intuitively feeling (first circle, to the left).

The alternative way of living one's intuitive interpersonal knowledge involves a perceptive 'conscious' sensitive awareness of someone else's experience (middle circle). Participants were actively attending to another's actions and present expressive behaviour, and, there-and-then fully aware of these qualitatively expressive perceptive features.



Figure 18: "Proposed relationship: perceiving and feeling as the same intuitive empathy-as-knowing phenomenon"

The argument here is that the two perceptive and felt-experiential modes refer to the same intuitive phenomenon; and that intuiting is possibly composed by a felt and a perceptive side in every circumstance (implicit or not). Hence, a resonance feeling would also be experienced during perceptive intuitions, perhaps only in the background of experience, but, nevertheless, there. However, there was no clear evidence in these studies pointing in this direction; and therefore this hypothesis is excluded from Figure 18.

The idea of implicit processing (situated, quick, subconscious processing of a foreign gestalt experience) is present in, for example, Reik's work (1948). However, phenomenological models are concerned with lived experiences, to which one may have a reflective access. Turning towards an implicit (hence, non-conscious) act to explain intuitive experiences, is not a phenomenological type of explanation. Nevertheless, this subliminal character, or background of experiencing as it should be described from a phenomenological viewpoint, is also not fated to forever be implicit, at least from the phenomenological psychodynamic and humanistic viewpoints. An implicit experience can become the focus of attention (i.e., become conscious; Jane's account is evidence of that). For me, the proposal in Figure 18 is not incompatible with phenomenological theories.

Figure 18 is explanatory - as the psychologist that I am, I am also interested in explanations, in whys, in processes. It explains the reason for having considered, in this thesis, that these two experiences were two sides of the same phenomenon, that they were two facets or aspects of direct empathy. But, most importantly, as a lived experience, we do find these two types of experiences: feeling and perceiving.

It is possible that the differences between feeling and perceiving are situation-specific (and everyone would be able to have these two experiences). For example, perceiving was the intuitive knowing of choice in reception texts in Chapter IV. Then, while receiving or resonantly receiving, one would tend to have a perceptive experience rather than a felt intuition.

It may as well be the case that there are people who are more perceptive, and tend to experience their intuitions as being about perceiving; whereas others are more sensitive to their experiential resonance experiences and tend to experience their intuitions as a felt-feeling. Then, these differences would be person-specific, as Churchill and Bayne (1998) proposed via Jung's typology, and Stein (1917, p.62) via her *"life-long habits of intuiting and thinking"*. They can also be encounter-specific, that is, dependent upon the 'chemistry' between two people, some becoming more perceptively or experientially readable than others to oneself, as implicit to Stein's (1917/1989, p.59) reflection upon the human *"types"* and to Barrett-Lennard's (1981, p.93) *"finite range of natural frequencies"*; and to Aisha's remark about people's *"readability"*.

These are possibilities. Further investigation is necessary to understand each of these experiences, when and where and why they happen, whether the model above is a suitable explanation, whether an experiential resonance is always involved if only one was mindfully aware of one's experiential resonance experience throughout perceptive intuitive experiences, and had access to these memories.

Summary of findings about intuiting-as-knowing

There seems to be two possible, slightly distinctive ways, of experiencing intuitive interpersonal understandings: perceiving and experiencing. There were

examples of feeling and perceiving in each side of Barrett-Lennard's empathy cycle, although feeling might perhaps be a less common reception experience.

Through these acts, participants had the impression of accessing another's genuine sometimes unexpected experience. The intuitive knowledge was seldom doubted, and, when it was, it was always after-the-fact, as the clinical psychology trainees remarked. Secondly, whenever one questioned the alterity of one's lived experience (thrice across studies), one also used the lived experience to dismiss the doubt in a reflective manner.

These intuitions were studied exclusively in interpersonal contexts, though theoretically intuiting is not restricted to the knowing of people's experiences (e.g., Stein, 1917; Thompson, 2001). Indeed, we gathered an example of an intuition that concerned the pet's experience in the folk psychology study. In the happy stories study, intuiting appeared as a non-verbal communicative way of interacting with other people; and it shaped participants' actions in a sometimes pre-reflective manner.

Intuitions were not limited by the experiential type of content. Participants described intuiting experiences of varied natures (e.g., thoughts; emotions; sensations; attitudes; intentions; gestalt experiences, with many sides to them; overall 'ambiance' qualities, those things "*hanging in the air*"; and difficult-to-define experiences).

Phenomenologically speaking, experiences are embedded body-mind gestalt phenomena. A thought manifests itself at least by activating a neural circuit, but its content and function are in-relation-to the world, and manifested in the network of nerves and blood and so forth. A thought is embodied. A happy thought can make us

feel happy, our hearts pumping quicker like obedient musicians. Similarly, emotions are minded, a sudden feeling of happiness can literally change the way we think about the world, making us look on the bright side of life, as if brand new pink look-through lenses were being worn. Accepting this conception leads to the consideration that intuiting another's experience is to know it in its embedded embodiment, to be given at once the emotion, the thought, the behaviour, the sensation, and so forth. After all, these are different aspects of the same mirrored ball called present experience:

It involves processes which we habitually separate as 'thinking', 'emotion' and 'action'. Such watertight compartments are inappropriate to an experience which is apprehended as a 'whole'; an experience that is created in the 'space' between persons. (Hobson, 1985, p.7)

One may be more sensitive to a particular kind of content. One may be given only a partial aspect of that which composes another's experience (Zahavi). One may intuit only the foreground of the other's experience (Barrett-Lennard). There may be a sphere of absolute privacy (Scheler). One may only have a vague gestalt overall impression of another's experience, an intuitive type of experience which was found across the three studies, such as that 'something is wrong' with another person (Chapters II and IV). But even if we do not intuit everything, what we do intuit is important. It helps us make sense of all those who surround us and their experiences in a more immediate manner. It facilitates everyday understandings. The main findings gathered in this thesis relative to intuitive understandings are summarized in table 8.

Table 8: “Intuitive understandings: summary of findings”

Intuiting...

- ❖ Is possible to discriminate from, and works alongside with sympathetic and intellectual interpersonal understandings.
 - ❖ Is better studied avoiding the prompt ‘empathy’.
 - ❖ Is unrestricted to a single relational context (e.g., kinship or strangers).
 - ❖ Is unrestricted to a single emotional valence of participants’ experiencing contexts.
 - ❖ Is unrestricted to very personally significant events.
 - ❖ Is unrestricted to a particular aspect of another’s experience (involves the knowing of thoughts, emotions, attitudes, intentions, sensations....)
 - ❖ Is a here-and-now experience that reveals to the empathizer at least a facet of another’s current experience.
 - ❖ It is lived as another’s experience, not a personal one.
 - ❖ Has two possible experiential modes: perceiving (sensitive awareness about another’s experience), and feeling (experiencing for oneself another’s experience).
 - ❖ Does not necessarily involve a perceptive conscious act (intuitive feelings), or an felt-level side (intuitive perceptions)
 - ❖ Is very often described by including references to ‘here-and-now’.
 - ❖ Is unrestricted to a role in the interaction (resonance or reception).
 - ❖ Is frequently experienced as the instant knowing of another’s authentic experience.
 - ❖ Can be experienced as a non-verbal way of communicating and interacting with others.
 - ❖ Can happen pre-reflectively and reflectively.
-

Past experiences and intellectual characters

Intuiting was a knowledge that was not gained in a reasoned intellectual manner, but rather in an intuitive perceptive and felt manner. I have often described it as a non-intellectual act, a non-intellectual experience – in contrast with other forms of understanding. Note that this is different from claiming that one's past experiences and knowledge do not shape what people intuitively know. Saying that intuitions are a non-intellectual act is not saying that such acts are not informed by past knowledge in any way. I have often quoted Stein's remark about people's intuiting habits, precisely to pass on this message. But this is different from having an intellectual knowing experience. I will unpack this here.

Anderson (2003) describes an experiment with kittens raised in the dark. There were two groups of kittens, both attached to a basket, and exposed to the same amount and sort of visual stimuli. While the first group was allowed to roam freely when they were exposed to light, despite being tied to a basket; the second group was tied to a basket in such a way that only their heads could move. Both groups developed the same motor capacities and physical repertoire. However, the restrained second group was more likely to bump into walls, fall off the edges of things, and to fail to stretch their paws in the anticipation of the floor. Their perceptive experience did not translate into the expected action. As Anderson argues, they were the kittens who knew not what the visual stimuli fully meant; they did not recognize the visual significance of the visual stimuli. Without such a perception-action previous

interaction, at least the kittens were unable to make their visual perceptions whole and meaningful (better, their meaning was idiographic).

Therefore, the meaning of what we see is partly shaped by our past experiences. And if what we've seen-felt-experienced in the past determines the meaning of what we now see, at a very fundamental level, intuiting-as-knowing is no exception. But this does not make the intuitive experience less direct, or meaningful; nor does it make intuitive experiences intellectual or sympathetic ones. The influence of the 'personal experience' in intuiting is one of a different sort, more in line with the kitten's example; than with that which is usually meant by personal in the 'understanding someone is the light of one's personal experience or personal knowledge' sense. This is, I believe, Prinz's (2006) argument.

Where to draw the line: knowing and responding

There are two theoretical explanations of empathy-as-knowing that involve, to a certain degree, feeling for oneself another's experience (Chapter III): the *contamination-as-knowing neurocognitive* explanation; and the *coupling-as-knowing neurophenomenological* explanation. Contamination here stands for the lived experience of personally responding to another's experience by feeling it as one's own (sympathetic sharing experience, in accordance with Scheler's stance, and in this thesis); whilst coupling stands for the lived experience of directly knowing another's experience via the intersubjective intuitively-feeling experience.

Theoretically, and even empirically, it is simple to distinguish contamination-as-knowing from coupling-as-knowing experiences: either one feels happy as a consequence of another's happiness, and thereby assumes that the other person is probably happy too (contamination); or one has a feeling of another's happiness, feels another's happiness (coupling). Nevertheless, principally when the narrative was short and lacked information, and the feeling described was similar to the empathee's described experience, my decision was not a confident one. These were resonance experiences which could validly be interpreted in either of the two ways (contamination/ coupling). The question was never, however, whether the knowing occurred through the non-observed inference from felt-feeling⁴⁴. Rather, the question was always whether participants' felt-level experience was in essence an empathy-as-intuitively-feeling experience (Stein, 1917), a coupling that acted as an intuitive understanding; or an empathy-as-sympathetically-responding experience (Scheler, 1913).

The question here is where to draw the line between that which is an intuitive feeling, and that which is a contamination response. To serve as a point of comparison, there is, for instance, Nicky's story text (#19, Folk Psychology study). It was considered to be a description of a sympathetic contamination/ sharing responsive experience, though one which was experienced within awareness:

I was sitting watching someone do a practice project talk earlier today. I could tell that she was really nervous, because she was blushing bright red

⁴⁴ This explanation bore little echo in these studies, except for the projective generalization movement observed with sympathetic understandings, which is not the explanation put forward by contamination-as-knowing theories.

everywhere and her hands were shaking slightly. She looked flustered and fell over some of her longer words. I became aware during her practice talk that I was starting to feel nervous too, my heartbeat and breathing seemed to increase watching her and I had this overall sense of anxiety, when there was no need for me to feel nervous. I had already done my practice talk). This nervousness only ended when she finished.

Nicky gives meaning to her anxiety as a personal responsive felt-level experience, and one which is experienced within awareness as such. Moreover, the knowing is described as an inference from behaviour, rather than an inference from felt-feeling. This knowing, in the text, precedes her response. That is, Nicky responds to the observed known anxiety of her friend with a similar experience of anxiety (Scheler's cause-effect model).

It was considered as an example of a sympathetic experience (contamination/sharing) because Nicky conceptualizes it as a response, she relates the perceptive and the felt act in a cause-effect manner. However, contamination is often said to be an automatic unconscious response. Moreover, it was an experience during which there was no impression of oneness, or of merging. Self and other were differentiated selves throughout the experience. Finally, the response was not used as the basis of an inference. The knowledge was rather gained via an inference from behaviour. These are all features which are incongruent with the phenomenon of contamination as theoretically described in neurocognitive psychology. Secondly, some argue that intuitively-feeling is a responsive resonance.

My question then is why Nicky's responsive experience should be considered as a sympathetic response, rather than an empathetic intuitive feeling. I thus turned towards the literature to answer this question, and tested a few discrimination hypotheses against available data. First, I conjectured that perhaps *intuitively-feeling and contamination were the same phenomenon*, although being explained in different manners by different theoretical approaches; and participants' meaning-making was reflecting these two possible interpretations. For example, Thompson (2001) and Gallagher (2007) use the evidence adopted in neurocognitive psychology to support the coupling-as-knowing hypothesis, whereas neurocognitive psychology (e.g., Preston & Waal, 2002) usually uses this evidence to support the contamination-as-knowing hypothesis. Moreover, in contemporary empathy psychology literature, contamination, sympathy and intuiting are usually phenomena that are put in the same bag (e.g., Boulanger & Lançon, 2006; Kerem et al., 2001, Tarnopolsky, 1995; Zepf & Hartmann, 2008), joined together as an affective type of empathy (but then again, this is a very big bag).

Nevertheless, Stein, Scheler and Zahavi (2008b) all acknowledge that there is such a thing as a contamination phenomenon, and that this phenomenon must be distinguished from intuiting. Whilst contamination is often said to be an automatic unconscious response (in neurocognitive trends; and in extreme cases, for Scheler), an intuitive empathizer is said to be aware of the intuitive experience. However, contamination is *not* necessarily an 'unconscious' response (e.g., Scheler, Zahavi).

Therefore, contamination and intuiting are two different phenomena, and not simply because of 'consciousness' criterion. Hence, I rejected this hypothesis.

Then there is the *knowing-responding distinction*. This distinction, and the inter-relationship between these two acts, is controversial. Knowing is either the trigger for a response (Scheler); a phenomenon to be distinguished from responding though related to it in a non-linear manner (Depraz); or a response in itself (e.g., Barrett-Lennard). Furthermore, when confronted with participants' texts, this was precisely the most common doubt. It was not always easy to apply this criterion so as to distinguish between that which was intuitively-feeling and that which was a contaminated feeling, reflectively accessible to awareness. The criterion did not seem to work very well in every circumstance.

Imagine that you are in front of a happy person and you feel happy. Is this happiness sympathetic, so that you are happy for another person's happiness and sympathetically understanding it? Is it an intuitive feeling of another's happiness that simply "*informs*" (Geist, 2009, p.67) you by revealing to you what the other person is experiencing? As Jane paradoxically explained, after all those nominated sympathetic reasons, she really had no reason to feel any passion, she was simply having an intuitive feeling.

Perhaps the line is drawn precisely in the lived experience of each of these phenomena. Sympathetic understandings, when derived from a contaminated or shared feeling, are always lived as personal responses to another's experience, a personal way of relating with another person's experience. They are not lived as

'another's experience'. In sympathy, contamination included, I personally feel a similar state, it is mine, it is my 'propriety', to use Stein's expression.

On the other hand, intuitive feelings are not really experienced as personal responses or as consequent of one's personal input, say, what I feel and think towards your situation (the personal input is at a fundamental level, at the kittens-in-the-dark level). I do not have to think that 'it is terrible too' to know that you are in pain. I do not have to relate in any personal way to what I intuitively understand, as Jane argued. Intuitions, felt intuitions inclusively, or coupling-as-knowing, are more clearly simply immediately informative, responsively informative perhaps, under the 'everything is a response' standpoint, but, in essence, foreign feelings, other people's feelings, and a way of knowing. As Stein argues, intuiting is personal insofar that it is the 'I' that performs the knowing act; but it is not personal in the sense that it is an experience born exclusively in the 'I'. The spring of the emotion lies elsewhere, in another person, and one is aware of this. Otherness is a constitutive characteristic of intuitive experiences.

Through this reflection, I may perhaps draw a line between contamination-as-knowing and coupling-as-knowing. These phenomena would be intersubjective experiences, perhaps possible via the same intersubjective mechanism, but nevertheless, two different experiences. As long as the 'responsive' feeling is informative and experienced as another's, we are dealing with an empathetic intuitive, sometimes prereflective, experience. On the other hand, we would be facing contamination when these conditions were not fulfilled, when the responsive feeling

was lived as a personal feeling, my feelings towards your situation, lived as mine, and as responsive. This is how I now draw the line between contamination and coupling: the otherness or selfness of the felt experience.

However, there-and-then, when dealing with the empathizer's experience, or descriptions of it, I still found composite experiences, inclusively Jane's. These were about moments in which sympathy and intuiting together determined the empathizer's experience. The participant felt sympathetically and intuitively happy at the same time, or the happiness one felt was the outcome of both an intuition and a sympathetic experience.

Arguing that they co-occur (as I did in Chapter IV) is putting them in the same bag, while asserting that there is a difference. It is an agglomeration-differentiation strategy that does little to clarify the nature of each phenomenon and their interrelationship. This means that the experiential distinction used so far requires further empirical study; and so does the underlying intersubjective mechanism of each. When people simultaneously experience a sympathetic response and an empathic intuitive feeling, are these two co-existing phenomena? To my disappointment, I still do not have a confident answer to this.

I here make a tentative silent offer, but I believe that it is better to try and do our best rising up to the challenge, rather than bypassing the issue, or giving up, at the outset, by simply qualifying it as "*complex*" (e.g., Greenberg et al., 2001).

Implications and future research

There are reflections spread throughout these pages that put forward unanswered questions and tentative interpretative and explanative hypotheses. Moreover, the discussion section of each study points towards a few directions more closely connected with that particular study. Here, I expand upon a few of these, so that they may serve as points of departure for future research.

I proposed that the scientific dialogue could benefit from the adoption of a distinction between studies on sympathy (interpersonal responses) and studies on empathy (interpersonal understandings). I also proposed that the knowing-responding criterion is not always theoretical and empirically free from criticism, and thereby merits further reflection.

Three types of empathy-as-knowing phenomena came forward in this concluding chapter: intuitive, sympathetic and intellectual. This was an answer that was only possible to achieve after having conducted an extensive literature review and three empirical studies; and in itself this proposal addresses a few of the knowing-responding criterion shortcomings. These appeared as distinctive psychological phenomena that were associated with distinctive knowing mechanisms, as three of the “*myriad of methods*” (Geist, 2009, p.67) at our disposal for the here-and-now understanding of another person.

With regard to neurocognitive explanations, I suggested that these would benefit from revising their sympathy-as-knowing models. First, the ‘unconscious’

criterion associated with their conception of contamination should be dropped, and so should the self-other merging assumption and the inference from felt-feeling explanation. Sympathetic understandings seemed to be associated with at the most we-projective knowing acts: not quite a dissolution of identities, nor an inference from the 'I' experience. Studies about contagion, sympathy and sympathetic understandings, even in this area, could perhaps more often introduce techniques that investigate participants' lived experiences, so that the interpretation of the mirror neuron activation may be more clearly informed by the experiencing person's input. There are only benefits in introducing these techniques, as I see it.

In regards to phenomenological explanations, I suggested that they could perhaps dedicate themselves to the study of what direct empathy is and refine their evidence-based explanations, so that coupling (intuitively feeling) and contamination can be theoretically and experientially differentiated in a more explicit manner, inclusively in an evidence-based manner.

These measures would settle some of my theoretical concerns in regards to contemporary empathy psychology research and their explanative models. Since science does not advance without a clear 'universal' use of scientific jargon, these are for me fundamental and practical suggestions.

Intuitive understandings were the main concern of this thesis; and only these were given more considered attention. As a consequence of my academic and psychotherapeutic background, I have related many of the practical consequences of these studies to the practice of psychotherapy. I have been concerned with ways of

helping psychotherapists perform their tasks, and thereby improve the quality of the therapeutic work offered to clients.

If we accept that we have at least three psychotherapeutic tools for the understanding of the person in front of us, then we should get acquainted with their deceptions and limits; their potentials; when, where and how these can be used to enhance the outcomes of therapy; and how each of these is received by the empathee. If we keep merging all of them in the general 'empathy' bag we will never achieve this. A cross-comparison, within or outside a therapeutic context, is most beneficial in any area of research. With this, the importance of studying inter-individual differences is born once more.

Along the lines of a practice-based approach (Margison et al., 2000), reflecting upon one's preferential ways of 'empathically' relating with others and training one's prompt moment-to-moment distinction between that which is a sympathetic, intuitive or intellectual understanding seems, beneficial and possible, in the light of Stein's writings.

Viewing past interactions is a perceptive act, and the one which was guiding participants' attention and reflection in the happy stories study's interviews. It was a good method for investigating there-and-then, implicit, perceptive experiences, to enhance awareness of the perceptive elements that perhaps created the impression that the empathee was feeling 'so and so'. However, this method was less effective for the investigation of the hypothetical experiential side of perceiving (if there is one).

To understand whether perceiving is always associated with an 'implicit' intuitive feeling (e.g., an experiential coupling mechanism), one should perhaps use alternative methods. Rather than continuing the unsuccessful pursuit of a 'naturalistic setting', a good starting point would be observing how the findings in Chapter V would change by priming participants' attention, prior to the 'pseudo-experimental situation'; or recruiting participants trained in mindfulness techniques (Hart, 1999) or introspection (Boring, 1953).

Either way, for the study of intuitive experiences, it is fundamental that the empathizer is genuinely experiencing a 'state'. A picture of a muscular contraction resembling a smile does not count as an experience of happiness. At the most, one may intellectually interpret what that contraction probably, or conventionally, means. Direct empathy is concerned with genuine experiences – not their mere visible seen facet (overt behaviour). The stimulus must be non-artificial, for the intuitive knowing act to be possible. For example, for me, Jabbi et al.'s (2007, p.1745) photographs and Völlm et al.'s (2005) cartoon strips are, for me, largely illustrative, not expressive. There is a great difference between illustrations of emotions, say, a smiley (symbol); and a genuine experience-in-context. One can intellectually understand the meaning of an illustration, but one cannot intuit its in-existent or distorted experiential meaning.

There have been increased attempts to approximate the quality of the stimuli used to research social understandings to naturalistic situations (e.g., Heavey, Phillips, Baron-Cohen & Rutter, 2000; Hess & Blair, 2001). Despite this, experimental situations and tests such as Baron-Cohen's continue to target intellectual

understandings of a single faceted pre-defined portrayed experience. There are choices, decontextualized body parts, and the like. Socially understanding another person becomes a mind game, a guess work. Although intellectual understandings are important, and so is their study, in the light of this thesis, social understandings are not limited to this type of experience.

Intuiting is a here-and-now immediate sensitive and experiential understanding that happens naturally during social encounters, and often in a pre-reflective manner. Thus, tests and experimental situations that target intuitive understandings have to allow for the happening of more sensitive and experiential interactions, in regards to the empathee *and* the empathizer's experiences (e.g., recordings of psychotherapeutic sessions, as with IPR).

With regard to psychotherapy, I have some reservations about the potentials of sympathetic understandings. We are still a person in front of another person, with our own personal experiences of the world, engaged in a conversation that seeks to foster understanding (Hobson, 1985). But therapy is not a place to find 'buddies', to have a "*warm feeling of togetherness*" (Tarnopolsky, 1995). We cannot forget our place, our role as a therapist. I once had watery eyes in front of a patient of mine, whose grief moved me to such a point that day, for some unexpected reason, and although I realized that she was feeling sympathetically understood, I also felt her doubt about whether I would have the strength to stare at her grief in the face, along with her, and thereby help her. My sympathy was ambivalently received. Thereafter, I monitored more closely my sympathetic reactions.

Despite this, there are those who found ways of using our sympathetic reactions in a useful manner in psychotherapeutic contexts. This concerns the study of counter-transference mechanism, that is, in simple terms, the therapists' reactions to the clients' projections (e.g., Hobson & Kapur, 2005). Counter-transferential (sympathetic, as called in this thesis; sometime called 'empathic', Tarnopolsky, 1995; Zepf & Hartmann, 2008) reactions to the clients can be of many kinds, but those easiest to understand here are based upon an identification mechanism.

For example, the therapist feels despair and hopelessness when dealing with depressed people; an urge to talk when dealing with histrionic traits; and ego fragmentation and isolation when dealing with schizophrenic people. Most of these associations are put forward within a practice-based paradigm; it was the clinicians' reflection upon their experiences that allowed for the establishment of these pathology-reactions associations. They inform the therapist, in an indirect manner, about the patient's dilemma. Reik (1948) describes wonderfully how his reactions were sometimes fundamental and indirectly revealing of the patient's conflicts.

The point here is that some of these tools are being studied in fields other than those empathy-related, and a clearer, more uniform language could enable us to draw upon all this valuable knowledge produced in other speciality areas, and instigate the dialogue at least across psychological areas. This issue must be addressed once and for all, if we want to call ourselves a science. In parallel, exploring these understandings has potential benefits in any area that deals with interpersonal relationships, such as supervision, teaching, public relationships, communication,

marketing, advertising, performance, and law, just to name a few. More than that, we live in a social world, we are social beings. Effectively communicating with others is of transversal primordial importance; and an effective dialogue possibly instrument of 'peace' and social agreement.

Eckman (1996), emotions researcher, saw this potential when he observed that particular groups of people (e.g., abused children) were better than others (e.g., policemen) at spotting someone else's emotions and 'lies'. He proceeded to develop the F.A.C.E. training course, with which he trains people at spotting overall facial "*micro*"⁴⁵ expressive emotional behaviour. This program is used in a wide range of fields, from law enforcement to emotion psychology research. It would be interesting to understand if what is being trained through this program is partly people's awareness of their intuitive experiences, or exclusively people's intellectual 'inference from behaviour' abilities, the intellectual act that probably enhances the accuracy of the interpretation of the intuition (Stein, 1917).

All these suggestions are my yet silent opinion, because I still feel that this is the beginning of something which might, or not at all, be a very interesting and useful way of thinking about 'empathy', a very interesting line of research.

⁴⁵ <http://face.paulekman.com/about.aspx>

New beginnings

This thesis intended to make a contribution to the general empathy literature, but also provided a ‘positive psychology’ perspective on the interpersonal process literature about social understandings. The interest was upon what worked, upon the descriptions, qualities and meaning of intuitive knowing experiences from the empathizers and the empathees’ perspectives. For me, at least, this is a step forward, in that intuiting is brought into the empathy psychology literature, as a common, clearly theoretically and experientially defined, form of understanding others, of being-with and relating with others.

This concluding chapter delineates three types of understanding: intellectual, sympathetic and intuitive. This simple conclusion appears to me as a wonderful starting point for future research. Indeed, if I had this answer from the beginning, this would be precisely my opening sentence. It will, however, be my last:

I understood that all things are real and different from each other
I understood this with the eyes, never with the mind
To understand this with the mind would be finding them all equal

Fernando Pessoa⁴⁶

⁴⁶ Free and less beautiful translation of a part of Fernando Pessoa’s poem “Se, depois de eu morrer” (‘If, after I dye’), in Pessoa (1995/2001):

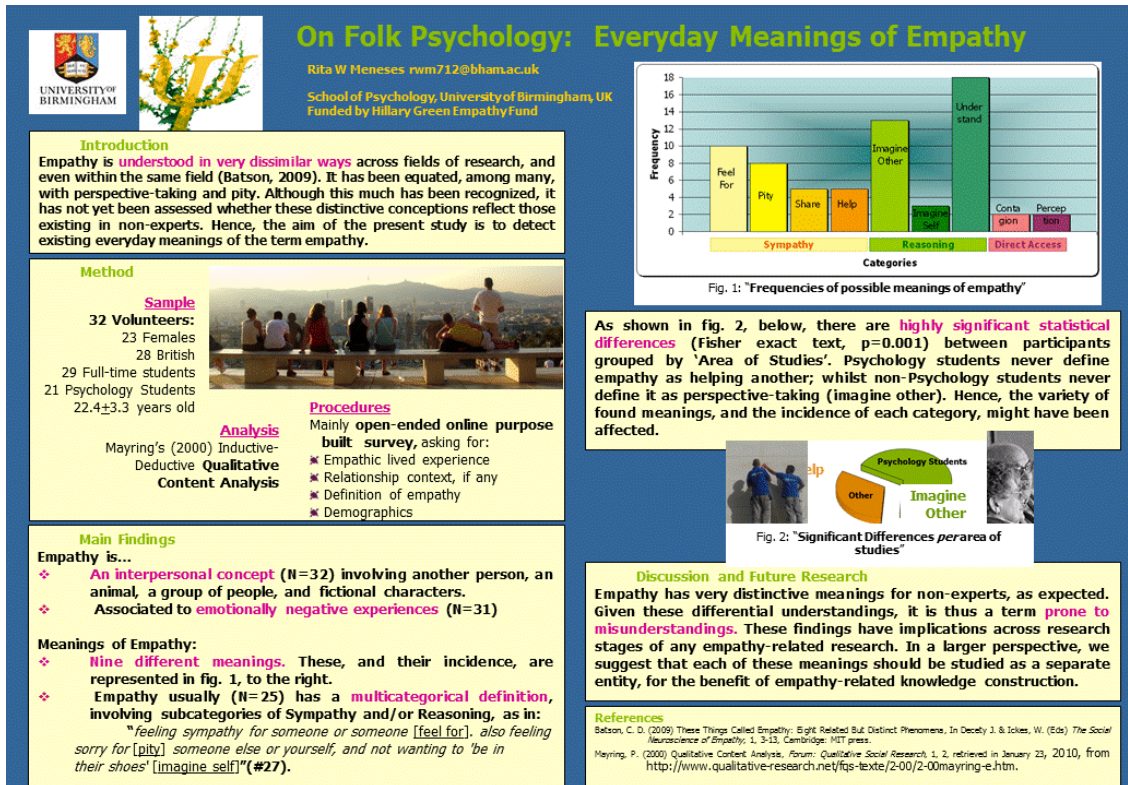
Compreendi que as cousas são reais e todas diferentes umas das outras
Compreendi isto com os olhos, nunca com o pensamento.
Compreender isto com o pensamento seria achá-las todas iguais.

APPENDICES

Appendix I

Folk Psychology Study: Exemplary Poster

Figure I.a: “Meneses, R.W. (2010) On Folk Psychology: Everyday Meanings of Empathy, Poster presented in the British Science Festival, Birmingham, United Kingdom; and in the 4th Annual Graduate School Research Poster Conference, University of Birmingham, Birmingham, UK.”



Appendix II

Folk Psychology Study: Survey

Table II.a: “Survey developed for the Folk Psychology study”

1. General Information

INFORMATION BOX

"Stories of Empathy"

University of Birmingham, School of Psychology

Funded by: Hillary Green Empathy Fund

Research student:

Rita W Meneses

Supervisor:

Michael Larkin

Welcome to our WRITTEN INTERVIEW. The main AIM is to collect your own story of a lived empathic experience. We will do so mainly by open-ended questions.

Your participation in this study is completely VOLUNTARY and you do not have to take part if you do not wish to. You are free to WITHDRAW, without giving a reason.

There are no known RISKS associated to your participation and you will receive no direct benefit from taking part in this study, besides 1 research credit, or whatever has been previously accorded with the researchers. Nevertheless, if you encounter any unexpected effect, you can always get in touch with the researchers to request for help or information, through the contacts provided in the end of this section.

VERBATIM EXTRACTS from your account may be included in dissemination. We will never use your true name, or whatever details included on your writings that may lead to an identification of the author (e.g., names of places and people). This is, pseudonyms will be used and the account will be fully ANONYMIZED. Every effort will be taken to protect the names of participants. All information you provide will be kept CONFIDENTIAL, except as governed by law; and it may be looked at I understand that data collected during the study may be looked at by individuals from the University of Birmingham, and from regulatory authorities where it is relevant to my taking part in this research. The interview should take no more than 30 minutes to complete. It has 10 questions, spread along 4 pages. Six of these questions concern demographics and are concentrated on the last page.

We hope that you find it interesting and rewarding.

If you AGREE to participate in the above conditions, please give you CONSENT by ticking the box below.

I GIVE my consent

I DO NOT GIVE my consent

2. A Story

INFORMATION BOX

Here are some tips to help you to answer the next two questions:

- Choose RECENT situations, if possible;
- If you can, try to RE-CAPTURE or re-imagine the event. This may help to recall the situation more VIVIDLY and in DETAIL.

Please DO NOT WORRY about:

- Giving a “correct answer” - this isn't a test!
- Getting the “facts absolutely right” - we are interested in how you now recall the event;
- How much you have written - please write as much as you need to, in order for us to understand what happened accurately;
- Spelling or grammar.

Please DO include any relevant CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION that you are able to remember. For example:

- When did it happened?
- Where were you?
- What were you doing?
- What was going on?

2. Please tell us a story of empathy from your own experience, that is, about a time when you have experienced empathy.

[The box below does not limit the length of your answer. Please write as much as you like]

3. A Person

3. If you have described an event involving someone in particular, is this person...

- Acquaintance
- A Family Member
- A Friend
- No-one
- A Partner
- A Stranger

Please, tell us a bit about your relationship.

4. A Concept

4. Could you please define empathy? What is empathy for you?
[The box below does not limit the length of your answer. Please write as much as you like].

5. Demographics

This is the last page. Thank you for your collaboration. You make this research possible.
If you find that you feel upset by your participation, or if you would like to discuss any issues relating to your participation in the research, you can find us here: Rita Meneses - [redacted]; Michael Larkin - [redacted].
Alternatively, you can contact the Student Counselling Service: [redacted].

5. Please, leave a COMMENT about the experience of doing this interview online.
For instance, tell us whether
.....it was boring, or, instead, you enjoyed it,
.....the questions were clear, or, instead, unclear,
.....you did not quite know what to answer, or it was easy to answer,
.....there was too much, or too little, information
.....there was a party going on next door and you couldn't quite concentrate
.....you were in a hurry
.....and so forth. ANYTHING that you might have felt or thought.

[The box below does not limit the length of your answer. Please write as much as you like].

6. Age (years)

7. Gender

- Female
- Male

8. Nationality

9. First Language

Appendix III

Folk Psychology Study: Non-comprehensive Coding Agenda

Table III.a: “Folk Psychology study: non-comprehensive coding agenda for *empathy-as-knowing* categories (knowing the chosen object’s experiences)

Mid-order Categories	Lower-order categories	Lived Experience Meaning units	Definition Meaning units
<p>General Knowledge: Identifying another’s experience, but not how the knowing came about.</p> <p>When no other category, and no other procedure, can be applied to better represent the meaning unit.</p> <p>Lived Experience: #2; #3; #8; #13; #17; #22; #24; #47; #48; #59; #60, N=11</p>		<p>#2: “I did this and he was happy with his new present”;</p> <p>#3: “She was clearly upset and confused by the situation”;</p> <p>#13: “He had to have an operation and was in a lot of pain”;</p> <p>#24: “At first she was quite calm about it”</p> <p>#47: “Pleased that she felt she could tell me because I would understand.”</p> <p>#59: “The lady had not long had an operation on her knee, so was still in pain”</p>	
<p>Communicated Knowledge The content of subject-object conversation is explicitly said to include descriptions of another’s experience</p> <p>Lived: #4; #6; #9; #16; #24; #28; #31; #33; #34; #36; #41; #42; #44; #54 N=14</p>		<p>#4: “he called me back. His whole family was organizing the funeral and he was under a lot of pressure to be the ‘man’ and trying to be stronger than the female family members. The only thing I could do is listening”</p> <p>#9: “I was on the train to university about a month ago and was sat next to a really nice lady who opened up to me and told me about how she has just been through the worst 18 months of her life”</p> <p>#31: “This upset him greatly (...) I found out the information from him whilst at work (behind a bar) as he came down to have a chat.”</p> <p>#42: “when my housemate talked about her dad having a brain tumour. how when he had it she did not want to talk</p>	

		<p>about it, either to her family, who were a part of it too, or her friends, who did not understand”</p> <p>#54: “She said that her daughter had been feeling quite upset about the recent death of a grandparent and that she just wanted to keep me informed of the situation. It transpired that the death had actually occurred two months earlier but that the little girl had not mentioned how she had been feeling until the night before her mother told me what was happening because she didn't want to make her mum feel more upset than she already was.”</p>	
<p>Perceiving The immediate knowing of another's experience is associated with a perceptive experience.</p> <p>Lived: #8; #11; #12; #14; #15; #16; #17;#18; #20; #24; #29; #35; #37; #40; #50; #51; #53; #55; #56; #59, N=20</p> <p>Definition: #14; #24; #30; #50; #51; #53, N=6</p>	<p>Perception of experience: Use of perception-related word as access to foreign</p> <p>Appearances of Experience: Chosen object leaves the visual impression of having a given experience</p> <p>Expressive behaviour: Identifying a particular behaviour as expressive of a particular emotion.</p> <p>Behaviour and Experience: Identification of both a behaviour and an experience, without inter-relating these two aspects in an</p>	<p>Perception of experience: #11: “to see my mum go through so much pain”</p> <p>#51: “I felt empathy for the parents in the family as they were finding it difficult to do their jobs with a needy toddler on hand!”</p> <p>#59: “I could see she was getting worked up and in the end sat back down”</p> <p>Appearances of experience: #29: “The dog apparently felt very uncomfortable about its conditions”;</p> <p>#40: “he was as friendly as usual but seemed a little vulnerable, and trying too hard to be normal”</p> <p>#56: “he did not look in pain at the time”</p> <p>Expressive behaviour: #8: “pained voices”</p> <p>#40: “This day, however, he was stumbling over his words but almost enthusiastically so.”</p>	<p>Perception of experience: #14: “For instance if my little sister cries I feel like crying, because it is painful watching someone in pain (physical or emotional)”</p> <p>#51: “For me, empathy is seeing someone in a difficult situation”;</p> <p>Expressive behaviour: #50: “awareness of the experience of another person or living being”;</p>

	explicit form.	<p>#55: “when my housemate called me in a panic and distress”</p> <p>Behaviour and experience: #12: “the speaker stumbled and lost their place and became flustered”</p> <p>#15: “I appreciated how alone she was feeling and how she was questioning her own behaviour”</p> <p>#17: “and could see the tears in his eyes as he tried to get his brimming talkative boss off the phone (...) I heard his voice crack as he was finally saying goodbye”</p> <p>#53: “Well she was sitting there, with a friend I presume, and she was becoming quite upset about it, but didn't do anything because of feeling intimidated, like the rest of us at the front (...) feeling so incensed about the whole facade, the victim got off the bus two stops early (mine, in fact)”</p>	<p>Behaviour and experience: #24: “or you are upset because someone you love is crying and upset”</p> <p>#53: “For me, empathy is being able to tell how a person feels in a particular situation”;</p>
<p>Feeling The immediate knowing of another's experience is associated with the experience of 'feeling another's'.</p> <p>Lived: #4; #8; #18; #19; #30; #43; #54 N=8</p> <p>Definition: #1; #3; #4; #5; #13; #16; #18; #19; #22; #23;</p>	<p>Feeling another's 'Feeling another's' experience</p> <p>Lived #5; #8; #18; #30; #54</p> <p>Definition #5; #18; #54</p>	<p>#5: “A lady-cleaner was following behind and without any ask directed me to the right way”</p> <p>#8: “I feel their desperation in their pained voices”</p> <p>#18:” After a few minutes I looked up and glanced at her back and just had the feeling that all was not well with her, so I sent her an email just asking her if she was Ok”;</p> <p>54: “because the feelings of both the mother (and her child) were so palpable. I could almost feel what the mother was feeling; concern for her</p>	<p>#5: “Empathy for me means that another person feels what I want, or what I feel”</p> <p>#18: “Empathy for me is when you kind of get a feeling of how someone's feeling without them having to say anything”;</p> <p>#54 “to feel (...) what they are feeling”;</p>

<p>#24; #35; #45; #54; #57; #61, N=16</p>		<p>daughter, sadness at her loss and the fact that her daughter had tried to protect her feelings”;</p>	
<p>Imagining. Intellectually imagining another’s experience via perspective-taking</p> <p>Lived: #1; #2; #4; #6; #12; #16; #17; #21; #22; #35; #38; #50; #52; #56; #59; #61 N=16</p> <p>Definition: #2; #3; #4; #6; #7; #8; #9; #10; #12; #13; #14; #15; #16; #19; #21; #23; #27; #38; #39; #46; #49; #50; #54; #59; #60, N=25</p>	<p>Imagine self: explicitly putting oneself in another’s shoes to imagine how one would feel</p> <p>Lived: #2; #6; #35; #50, N=4</p> <p>Definition: #2; #6; #27; #39; #46; #50; #54, N=6</p> <p>Imagine other: Explicitly to put oneself in the other’s shoes to imagine another’s point of view/ experience; or simply to imagine the other’s feelings.</p> <p>Lived: #2; #4; #12; #17; #21; #22; #52; #56; #59, N=10</p> <p>Definition: #2; #4; #7; #12; #10; #15; #19; #21; #23; #59; #60, N=10</p> <p>General: Whenever it is unclear which meaning, and it is not possible to inform the definition with the lived experience.</p> <p>Lived:</p>	<p>Imagined-Self: #2: “I thought that, in his position I would not have come to a work place each day in which I was so unfairly treated, and that I would have handled the situation differently to the way he did”</p> <p>#6: “and led to me considering the feeling she was going through and how I would cope in that situation”</p> <p>#50: “I cannot imagine how dreadful I would feel in a similar situation”</p> <p>Imagined-Other: #2: “if I had not done this, then maybe he wouldn’t have gotten into trouble”;</p> <p>#17: “I knew how bad this would be for his confidence in his abilities (...). I empathised with him and his feelings as I knew he would be gutted and scared, he’s just taken on a mortgage and due to the previous redundancy, now has a patchy cv. (...) and now, for the foreseeable, he wasn’t going to be happy”;</p> <p>#22: “that I can’t imagine what I’m going to be like when he actually gets the job!”;</p> <p>#52: “As she comes from a large traditional Asian family where relatives tend to flock to your house at happy and sad times (no matter how inconvenient), I knew she would like to see some friendly faces, and went to her house to keep her company”;</p>	<p>Imagined-Self: #2: “A feeling that you can imagine (...) that you would not want to be in that situation yourself”</p> <p>#6: “Being able to put yourself into someone else’s situation and attempt to grasp the emotions that they are experiencing at that time”</p> <p>#46: “Could put myself in the shoes of these children and try to imagine these horrible things happening to me!!!”</p> <p>Imagined-Other: #2: “A feeling that you can imagine what it would be like for them in a particular situation, that you imagine it would not feel good for them to be in this situation”;</p> <p>#4: “It creates a safe environment, the ability to put oneself into the mental shoes of another person”;</p> <p>#7: “For me empathy is understanding the feelings and thoughts of others from their perspective. It is relating to the situation the person is experiencing and putting yourself in their shoes”;</p> <p>#19: “It is 'putting yourself in someone else’s shoes' and seeing the world from their point of view”</p> <p>#23: “When (...) you can imagine how they are feeling if something bad has happened to them or upset them”</p>

	<p>#1; #4; #16; #38; #52, N=5</p> <p>Definition: #3; #8; #9; #13; #14; #16; #38; #49 N=11</p> <p>Imagined Feeling Feel another's by imaginative processes</p> <p>Lived: #35; N=1</p> <p>Definition: #1; #3; #13; #16; #35; N=6</p>	<p>#59: "i could imagine that in her shoes she had changed from being largely independent, to reliant on people helping her stand, and she felt very down about it";</p> <p>General: #1: "I had empathy for her as I was trying to imagine what it would be like not to have access to parental care when it is needed"</p> <p>#16: "and I really had a strong sense of what that must have been like"; #38: "The feeling of uncertainty engendered by the conversation has stayed with me for the rest of the morning - I very much put myself into his shoes"</p> <p>Imagined Feeling: #35: "The language she was using was emotive and strong and I couldn't help but reflect what she was feeling."</p>	<p>#60: "being able to imagine someone's feelings or to be able to put yourself in their position"</p> <p>General: #3: "by putting yourself hypothetically in their situation." ##16: "For me empathy is about walking a mile in another FFDV persons shoes." #49: "Empathy is literally being able to put yourself into someone else's shoes in a particular situation"</p> <p>Imagined feeling: #1: "Empathy is about being able to experience or feel something that someone else has been through" #3: "Empathy for me is trying to understand how another person feels, by putting yourself hypothetically in their situation (...) you simply are trying to feel what they feel"</p>
<p>Analogy: The intellectual knowing is associated with a self-other comparison act</p> <p>Lived: #1; #2; #7; #12; #15; #20; #21; #22; #28; #34; #36; #38; #39; #40; #41; #42; #43; #44; #47; #49; #53; #55; #57; #60; #61; #62 N=26</p>	<p>Literal: Similarities in past experiences are highlighted</p> <p>Lived: #2; #12; #15; #20; #21; #28; #34; #36; #39; #40; #42; #43; #44; #47; #55; #60; #61; #62, N=18</p> <p>Definition: #12; #26; #28; #36; #41; #42; #43; #55, N=8</p>	<p>Literal: #2: "I was particularly aware that he was only imitating what I had been doing and if I had not done this, then maybe he wouldn't have gotten into trouble"</p> <p>#12: "I could empathise with the speaker as I have recently had to do a talk in which towards the end I had a moment of confusion because I had talked about a point too early which 'threw me' when it was written on the next slide.";</p> <p>#21: "The reason for this is that</p>	<p>Literal: #12: "This is most likely to happen when you have experienced the situation previously yourself"; #41: "Empathy is having a substantial understanding (essentially first-hand experience) of a situation and recognising that it is experienced by other people too" #43: "Empathy to me only occurs after the same event has happened to you directly (...) In order to be empathetic</p>

<p>Definition: #12; #26; #28; #36; #40; #41; #42; #43; #47; #55; #57; #61 N=12</p>	<p>Non-literal Differences in past experiences are accentuated</p> <p>Lived: #1; #7; #38; #41; #49, N=5</p> <p>Definition: #40; #47, N=2</p> <p>Identification: Self is similar to other, in general terms; one identifies with another's identity trait</p> <p>Lived: #22; #53; #57, N=3</p> <p>Definition: #57, N=1</p> <p>Analogical Feeling: 'Feeling another's' experience in the light of the lived experience</p> <p>Lived: #43, N=1</p> <p>Definition: #61, N=1</p>	<p>when I was 14 I lost my best friend, and whenever I used to get upset about it I used to get a tight feeling in my chest, a small pain with a feeling of breathlessness just because i found the situation overwhelmingly sad (...) I felt like I wanted to cry, even though I had never even met her brother but just because I felt so bad that she was going through what i struggled through and hated to think that she might feel alone"; 28: "I had gone through her exact same problem a few months ago (both of our boyfriends felt we planned our lives too much) so I felt I could empathise with her";</p> <p>#36: "I had been through a very similar experience a couple of years back and the words she was saying echoed my thoughts from back then"</p> <p>#47: "Also she was longing to tell someone but didn't want to appear to be boasting and I knew exactly how she felt, having been in similar positions when my daughter was accepted at Cambridge and then, later, successfully completed a PhD";</p> <p>#60: "I myself went to a very small school in the middle of the countryside so I feel great empathy for him because he doesn't have many friends at school"</p> <p>Non-literal: #7: "I felt that although i could empathize with her because i have had family members who have been sick and others who have died, i couldn't fully understand her situation</p>	<p>the exact same situation must have happened or very similar"; #55: "Empathy is understanding how another person feels due to your own experience of life (...) In a way I see it as a way of relating to others due to a common experience";</p> <p>Non-literal: #40: "Empathy to me means the understanding of the situation of others by having experienced similar oneself. This may be by being able to translate one situation into</p>
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		<p>because i have not lost any close family members”</p> <p>#49: “Although the deaths were difference it was the feeling of loss, and in a sense relief was very very similar, they also occurred at roughly the same time. My grandfather died just before Christmas. he had been in hospital for a couple of weeks before he passed away in his sleep. He was very old, but until his stay in hospital had been an average 90 year old man, with ok health and no need for real medical health. However, while in hospital his health deteriorated so greatly he wouldn’t have been able to come home from the hospital without full time medical help. He passed away in his sleep, after having his morning wash and cup of tea. It was peaceful, painless and something i think we would all wish for. On the other hand my friends grandmother had been ill for some time and had been in pain. My friend had to watch her deteriorate, it was painful and slow. The fact they happened at similar times meant i could completely empathise with, it was other our first experience of loss”;</p> <p>Identification: #53: “didn’t do anything because of feeling intimidated, like the rest of us at the front”</p> <p>#57: “As a mother found myself empathising with her because she had tried for all those years to get a diagnosis for her daughter”;</p> <p>Analogical feeling: #43: “It wasn’t until I was 18 and felt true empathy when I myself became ill with chronic</p>	<p>another”</p> <p>#47: “and is based on having had an experience oneself which is roughly (sometimes very remotely) comparable”</p> <p>Identification: #57: “empathy is when I identify with someone else’s feelings to the extent that I almost feel their pain myself”</p> <p>Analogical feeling: #61: “Feeling someone else’s pain and understanding it to the extent you feel it yourself”</p>
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		anxiety and depression that I knew exactly how she felt. To feel empathy I think not only do you have to be near them, you have to feel those symptoms they were going through.”	
<p>Reasoned Reasoned intellectual knowing of another’s experience. That is, the knowledge of another’s is gained by rationally and logically connecting information about the other person such as familiarity and observed behaviour. *It excludes, for redundancy sake, those classified intellectual knowledge, namely, imagined and analogy.</p>	<p>Reasoned Lived: #4; #13; #18; #19; #26; #27; #29; #40; #45; #53; #54; #61, N=10 Definition: #26, N=1 Reasoned Feeling Feeling another’s experience by reasoning about it Definition: #45</p>	<p>Reasoning: #4: “I was calling him back but there was no reply. This was not a surprise to me; it is rather common that he deals with difficult situations in such a manner” #19: “I could tell that she was really nervous, because she was blushing bright red everywhere and her hands were shaking slightly. She looked flustered and fell over some of her longer words” #26: “As I had been in lectures with him and were assisting each other in doing the practical based coursework, I knew how much had gone into it and how much work he had lost” #53: “On this particular afternoon, the people at the back were throwing various items (food, mostly) towards people at the front - I don’t know why, maybe because they wanted to liven up the journey or they wanted to give out the impression they were tough, whatever”</p>	<p>Reasoning: #26: “Empathy is the realisation and acknowledgment of another person’s current bad situation. Knowing what has happened to them through close contact or personal experience of a similar problem myself” Reasoned feeling: #45: “Simply "The act of being able to feel what others are feeling, and understanding their situation”</p>
<p>Understanding: In-vivo quote, including the words understand and relate, appearing usually as an output or goal of an intellectual act.</p>	<p>Understand: Literally “understand” another’s experience Lived: #3; #6; #7; #38; #40; #45; #47; #49 Definition: #1; #3; #4; #6; #7;</p>	<p>Understand: #3: “and I was trying to understand how she felt” #6: “My friend recently suffered a miscarriage and during a telephone call to her I was able to try to understand the feelings she was experiencing” #40: “That feeling of being vulnerable and put on medication to make me better</p>	<p>Understand: #3:” Empathy for me is trying to understand how another person feels, by putting yourself hypothetically in their situation. This allows you to understand the person’s feelings and thoughts, in a way that you couldn’t otherwise. Empathy is different to sympathy in that you do not feel badly for the person, you simply are trying to feel what</p>

	<p>#9; #12; #13; #15; #16; #17; #19; #21; #23; #24; #28; #34; #35; #36; #40; #41; #42; #44; #45; #47; #48; #49; #55; #59; #61; #62, N=32</p> <p>Relate Literally, to “<i>relate</i>” to another’s experience</p> <p>Definition: #7; #21; #22; #28; #36; #44; #55 N=7</p>	<p>from an unseen illness, being reliant on others, but hiding what the matter was, trying to be normal. You'd have to have been there to understand”</p> <p>#47: “So I was very pleased for her and for him and also pleased that she felt she could tell me because I would understand. Also grateful to my daughter who had made me able to empathise”; #49: “I think because we knew each of us knew the pain the other felt, it was hard to sit and talk about it to each other”</p> <p>Relate: Only twice, never in a as a meaning of empathy, rather used for narrative purposes: #32; #61</p>	<p>they feel”;</p> <p>#12: “Empathy is when you can understand how a person is feeling in a certain situation and put yourself in their shoes. This is most likely to happen when you have experienced the situation previously yourself”</p> <p>#17: Empathy is when you intellectually understand what someone is going through but you have not got personal experience of their situation”</p> <p>#34: Empathy for me is when you understand (somewhat) the emotions someone else is going through and feel something for them”;</p> <p>Relate: #22: “Being able to relate to how someone feels, regardless of whether its good or bad, almost as if you feel their emotions yourself”</p> <p>#55: “In a way I see it as a way of relating to others due to a common experience”</p>
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Table III.b: “Folk Psychology study: non-comprehensive coding agenda for *empathy-as-responding* categories (personal responses to another’s experience/ situation, regardless of their nature)”

Mid-order Categories	Lower-order Category	Lived experience Examples	Definition Examples
<p>Sympathy for: Feeling ‘empathy’ or ‘sympathy’ for another’s known experience</p> <p>Lived: #1; #2; #6; #8; #9; #14; #17; #20; #23; #25; #26; #27; #30; #31; #33; #34; #35; #43; #45; #49; #50; #51; #56; #59; #60; #61; #62, N=29</p> <p>#50; #56; Definition: #1; #2; #8; #10; #11; #14; #27; #29; #30; #31; #33; #34; #40; #56, N=14</p>	<p>Pity: To experience a negative emotion “for” the other’s experience/ intentional object.</p> <p>Lived: #2; #8; #14; #17; #20; #23; #25; #26; #30; #31; #33; #35; #43; #50; #56; #62 N=16</p> <p>Definition: #2; #8; #14; #27; #29; #30; #33; #56, N=8</p> <p>Sympathetic Joy To experience a positive emotion “for” another’s emotionally positive experience/ intentional object.</p> <p>Lived: #22; #47 N=2</p> <p>Definition: N=0</p> <p>Sympathy for Unspecified feelings experienced “for” the other person, (“feeling for”/ “sympathy for”/ “empathy for”)</p> <p>Lived: #1; #6; #8; #9; #27; #34; #45; #49; #50; #51; #56; #59; #60;</p>	<p>Pity: #2: “I remember feeling very bad for the staff member”</p> <p>#14: “For some strange reason I felt really, really sorry for him when I saw him walking around the restaurant and eating (...) I felt so sorry for him”</p> <p>#17: “I was devastated for him”</p> <p>#20: “I felt really sorry for her”</p> <p>#26: “I felt absolutely gutted for him”</p> <p>#31: “and I felt quite sorry for him”;</p> <p>#43: “My mum felt hopeless, and I felt hopeless for her”;</p> <p>Sympathetic joy: #22: “so hearing he had got through made me so happy for him... possibly happier than he was himself”</p> <p>#47: “So I was very pleased for her”;</p> <p>Sympathy for: #1: “I experienced strong feelings of empathy on Friday night (...) I had empathy for her as I was trying to imagine”;</p> <p>#6: “and the sympathy towards her”</p> <p>#49: “i had full empathy for her”</p>	<p>Pity: #2: “Empathy Is a feeling of sadness for someone else”</p> <p>#8: “Empathy Is when you feel sorry for someone or a group of people”</p> <p>#14: “Feeling sorry for someone ...not like pity”;</p> <p>#29: “and feel very sorry to the man/animal, who is experiencing a bad/sad things”</p> <p>#30: “It is when that 'something' hasn't happened to you but you can't help but feel sorry for that person”</p> <p>#56: “Empathy, for me, is when you feel deeply sorry for someone”;</p> <p>Sympathy for: #1: “Feeling for the other person”;</p> <p>#27: “Feeling sympathy for someone.”</p> <p>#31: “Empathy is the emotion of feeling for another”.</p>

	#61, N=14 Definition: #1; #10; #11; #27; #31; #34; #40 N=7	#51: "I felt empathy for the parents"; #61: "I feel empathy for my friend everyday"	
Share Sharing another's experience, or feeling as another does, towards another's intentional object or situation, usually partly motivated by personal reasons. Lived: #4; #19; #22; #24; #38; #39; #44; #50; #57; #58 N=10 Definition: #4; #19; #20; #22; #23; #24; #25; #35; #38; #39; #50; #52; #57; #58; #62, N= 15	Share To 'share' another's experience Feeling similarly To feel, or think, like the chosen object Connection To be connected to another person, or in the same wave length Shared feeling Feeling another's experience is the manifest content Lived: #4; #19; #22; #24; #57 Definition: #4; #19; #22; #23; #24; #57	Share: #4: "I was in shock and even that I only met him few times I could feel the pain my boyfriend was experiencing" #24: "and i shared her feelings of uncertainty for her, for we were very close" #44: "The entire group in fact appeared to share at least some of her experiences/concerns in their own relationships" #57: "I had shared in her pain and desperation as she felt she was being ignored. When her daughter died I shared her sense of shock, grief and anger" Feel similarly: #19: "I became aware during her practice talk that I was starting to feel nervous too, my heartbeat and breathing seemed to increase watching her and I had this overall sense of anxiety, when there was no need for me to feel nervous I had already done my practice talk). This nervousness only ended when she finished" #22: "possibly happier than he was himself" Connection: #58: "(...) allowed profound change and immediate connection to all the moments and interconnected whole that ego packaged into bodies, nations and days, there was the seeing, the feeling without the division."	Share: #4: "It means to share, to experience the feelings of another person" #20: "the ability share another person's emotions or feelings and how it impacts on you" #24: "It is also like sharing an emotion or the reason of an emotion with someone. For example, you and your sister are both upset because your dog died, or you are upset because someone you love is crying and upset" #52: "Sharing someone else's feeling" Feel similarly: #19: "Empathy is feeling what another person is feeling. So if someone was really sad about something, you would feel sad too for [because of] them" #22: "almost as if you feel their emotions yourself" #23: "When you experience similar feelings to someone else (...) if something bad has happened to them or upset them, you too experience these feelings." Connection: #24: "Empathy for me is when you are on the same wavelength as someone else on an emotional level. You feel what they feel."

			#25: "Empathy is a feeling of emotion from one person to another and I see it is similar to sympathy in a way."; #58: "Intimate emotional connection"
<p>Emotional distress and other forms of impact</p> <p>Personal experiences provoked by the known experience, including thoughts; opinions; judgements; emotions; feelings; physical reactions; and behavioural intentions.</p> <p>*Not overall value-laden judgement about the other person, as in fondness, but particular to the discussed known situation.</p> <p>*Not better explained by any other responding or knowing category</p> <p>Lived: #2; #4; #8; #9; #10; #11; #14; #15; #17; #20; #21; #22; #24; #27; #30; #35; #38; #43; #47; #50; #52; #54; #56, N=23</p> <p>Definition:</p>	<p>Emotional distress</p> <p>To feel personally emotionally and physically distressed because of another's known experience</p> <p>Lived: #14; #20; #21; #24; #43; #50; #54, N=7</p> <p>Definition: #14, N=1</p> <p>Impact</p> <p>Any form of reaction, in any level of experiencing, to the knowledge of the foreign experience; or the way it affects the subject's experience</p> <p>Lived: #2; #4; #8; #9; #10; #11; #15; #17; #20; ##22; #27; #35; #38; #47; #52; #56, N=16</p> <p>Definition: #2; #11; #15; #20; #27; #29; #30; #37; #47; #56, N=10</p>	<p>Emotional distress:</p> <p>#14: "I felt so sorry for him that I almost felt sick and couldn't eat my own food."</p> <p>#20: "Seeing her cry made me really upset, on the verge of making me cry too"</p> <p>#24: "A lump was brought to my throat"</p> <p>#30: "I started to cry (...) 3 days later, and I still can't get over the shock of it! (...) and I really didn't feel like eating for the rest of the evening!";</p> <p>#50: "He began to cry at one moment and I wept for him myself; and so I wept for him as I watched (...) his removal by the factional party machine within 12 hours was shocking.";</p> <p>Impact:</p> <p>#2: "I remember feeling very bad (...) about how he was being unfairly treated"; #4: "I was in shock and even that I only met him few times";</p> <p>#9: "and most importantly i think what stuck with me is that she was really looking forward to the new year so she could put all this behind her. she was really nice and somebody who you could admire"</p> <p>#15: "I had similar experiences with him myself and so I felt annoyed with him that he is still treating people in this way. She is not manipulative at all and is very much a team player so his</p>	<p>Emotional distress:</p> <p>#14: "For instance if my little sister cries I feel like crying"</p> <p>Impact:</p> <p>#2: "and that you would not want to be in that situation yourself"</p> <p>#15: "I don't necessarily feel the same emotions that they were feeling at the time but I have a strong emotional reaction to their experience, such as feeling angry when someone has been hurt and upset"</p> <p>#20: "and how it impacts on you"</p> <p>#29: "Empathy means someone has a kind of reaction to the man/animal, who is experiencing a bad/sad things"</p> <p>#47: "This usually involves</p>

<p>#2;#11; #14; #15; #20; #27; #29; #30; #37; #47; #56 N=11</p>		<p>comments are completely unjustified”;</p> <p>#17: “I heard his voice crack as he was finally saying goodbye and tears welled up in my eyes. I remembered last time he was out of work and he just wants so much to work hard and do well and it seems so unfair”;</p> <p>#22: “I felt really proud. So proud in fact, that I can't imagine what I'm going to be like when he actually gets the job!”</p> <p>#35: “I felt some strong feelings, one being pity. Others included sadness, anger and frustration.”</p>	<p>some kind of emotional response”; #56: “In this case, I also felt grateful that this person had put his life on the line for our country”</p>
<p>Altruistic experiences: Altruistic attitudes, intentions and behaviours, including helping behaviour</p>	<p>Lived: #4; #5; #6; #7; #15; #17; #18; #20; #24; #28; #30; #32; #36; #40; #43; #45; #48; #52; #53; #54; #55; #61; #62 N=23</p> <p>Definition: #4; #27; #28; #29; #30; #32; #43; #45; #48; #51; #54; #56; #59 N=13</p>	<p>#6: “This helped in the advice I was able to give”</p> <p>#7: “I decided not to go into work and went to her house to offer support. I went to hers and talked to her and asked if she needed anything”;</p> <p>#20: “It was good in a way because I could help and possibly explain things but it generally made me feel bad about what had happened in the past”</p> <p>#30: “I really felt like giving him a huge hug”</p> <p>#36: “i tried to reassure her that she would come through it ok and listened to her talking it through”;</p> <p>#40: “I instinctively felt protective towards him, almost maternal. I relaxed from my usual 'speaking to the neighbours charade' and just warmed to him, and gave him time”</p>	<p>#28: “Provide genuine support to them in order to help them out due to your life experience”;</p> <p>#29: “Empathy means I show my kindness (...) If possible, I would like to offer some help to the unlucky man/animal”</p> <p>#32: “Empathy is the action of showing kindness to a person”;</p> <p>#45: “and perhaps includes the actions taken which you believe will make them feel more positive or different”;</p> <p>#51: “and wanting to help them out of that situation”;</p> <p>#54: “Empathy ought to be motivating, it ought to make you want to behave in a certain way; a way which respects the feelings of others”; #56: “For me, the amazing thing about empathy is when it inspires you to take some sort of step to prevent someone feeling such pain</p>

		#61: "My friend calls me when everyone is asleep and just cries down the phone to me and there is nothing i can do but tell her i am here for her and try calm her down"	again"
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Table III.c: "Folk Psychology study: non-comprehensive coding agenda for *contextual* categories (contextual dimensions, that is, not relative to meanings of empathy)"

Dimension	Definition	Lived experience Meaning units	Definition Meaning units
<p>Closeness, Familiarity, Fondness</p> <p>Contributing questions: Stories of empathy and meanings of empathy</p> <p>Definition: #10; #19; #24; #26; #40; #54, N=6</p> <p>Lived: #2; #4; #6; #9; #14; #15; #17; #18; #20; #22; #24; #26; #27; #28; #29; #30; #31; #34; #39; #40; #41; #43; #45; #46; #47; #48; #49; #50; #52; #55; #57; #58; #60; #61, N=34</p>	<p>Fondness: Direct references to the subject's affective appreciation of the object</p> <p>Closeness: Explicit reference to the degree of closeness to the chosen object.</p> <p>Familiarity: Explicit reference to one's knowledge about the chosen object and its life experiences, prior to the empathic event.</p>	<p>Fondness: #9: "I really felt for her and she was a lovely lady and most importantly i think what stuck with me is that she was really looking forward to the new year so she could put all this behind her. She was really nice and somebody who you could admire" 29:"I like this dog very much"; #40:" He's a very nice man whose name I do not know but has always been really bubbly and friendly and articulate";</p> <p>Closeness: #18:" We are pretty close friends so maybe I just picked up on some sort of body language from her"; #24:" i shared her feelings of uncertainty for her, for we were very close"</p> <p>Familiarity: #20: "My housemates boyfriend recently broke up with her a couple of days ago"</p>	<p>Fondness: #24: "or you are upset because someone you love is crying and upset" #40: "I think an element of likeability comes into this, if a dangerous criminal with a penchant for the torturing or murdering of other people was in a similar situation, I think that knowledge would prevent me from empathising with him" #54: "you don't even have to like them very much"</p> <p>Closeness: #10: "Empathy (...) is highly important in close relationships" #19: "For me, empathy is about connecting to other people, both people close and not close to you"</p> <p>Familiarity: #26: "Knowing what has happened to them through close contact"</p>

		#61: "It has been ongoing since i have known my friend, and is trouble with her parents and family"	#54: "I don't think you need to know someone in order to experience empathy,"
Target's role	<p>Reception Descriptions of how the participant is the target of another's empathic act, or simultaneously an empathizer and an empathee</p> <p>Definition: #11; #25; #58, 49; #58, N=5</p> <p>Lived experience: #5; #25; #32; #N=3</p>	<p>#5: "I was in a hotel looking for a swimming pool. Could not find and was distressed. A lady-cleaner was following behind and without any ask directed me to the right way. Felt very helpful";</p> <p>#25: "I received empathy from my family then, and then from various friends and especially at the funeral"</p> <p>#49: "The fact they happened at similar times meant i could completely empathises with, it was other our first experience of loss"</p>	<p>#11: "Empathy for me is sadness and sympathy"</p> <p>#25: "Empathy is a feeling of emotion from one person to another"</p> <p>#58: "Intimate emotional connection"</p>
	<p>Resonance Descriptions of how the participant empathized with the other.</p> <p>Definition: all the remainder, N=57</p> <p>Lived Experience: all the remainder, N=59</p>	#24: "i shared her feelings of uncertainty for her, for we were very close"	#24: "You feel what they feel and understand why they feel that way"
Emotional Valence	<p>Positive Emotionally positive (or positive AND negative) contexts of experiencing.</p> <p>Definition: #3; #22; #25; #50; #52; #62, N=6</p> <p>Lived experience #22; #47; #58</p>	<p>#22: "hearing he had got through made me so happy for him."</p> <p>#47: "Pausing in cleaning the village primary school a few days ago to be told by one of the teachers that her son had just had his finals results and he'd got a first (...) So I was very pleased for her and for him"</p> <p>#58: "Profound and beautiful, moments from distant past and recent present were equally accessible and radiant, whether the smile of a stranger or the hug from a friend, or the dew</p>	<p>#3: "Empathy is different to sympathy in that you do not feel badly for the person";</p> <p>#22: "regardless of whether its good or bad"</p> <p>#50: "This may be good or bad"</p> <p>#62: "Feeling a similar emotion (Usually sadness, anger, frustration although it could be joy or contentment"</p>

		drops on grass blades”	
	<p>Negative Emotionally negative contexts of experiencing</p> <p>Definition: #2; #8; #11; #14; #15; #19; #23; #24; #26; #27; #29; #30; #33; #37; #43; #46; #48; #51; #55; #56; #57; #61, N=22</p> <p>Lived experience: all the remainder, N=59</p>	<p>#48: “Out of work I like to think I'm empathetic to anyone - family and friends who have a difficult situation to deal with - bereavement; ill health/hospital appointments; job loss; relationship break down etc.”</p>	<p>#2: “Empathy is a feeling of sadness for someone else”</p> <p>#11:” Empathy for me is sadness”</p> <p>#19: “So if someone was really sad about something, you would feel sad too”</p> <p>#37: “It’s a sad feeling. Something that makes me feel low”</p> <p>#48: “someone else's difficult situation”; #51: “For me, empathy is seeing someone in a difficult situation”</p> <p>#55: “This could be bereavement, suffering from an illness, a breakup of a relationship or failing an exam”</p>
Observed behaviour	<p>References to behaviour, observed during the empathic experience. Empathizer as observer of behaviour.</p> <p>Definition: #14, #24; N=2</p> <p>Lived: #2; #4; #5; #8; #11; #12; #13; #14; #16; #17; #18; #19; #20; #24; #26; #27; #29; #30; #32; #35; #36; #40; #43; #45; #50; #51; #52;#53; #54; #55; #56; #59; #61, N=33</p>	<p>#8: “when a police officer came out of nowhere and starting hitting the beggars as if they were rag dolls”</p> <p>#43: “my mum was out of work as all she was doing was being sick and locking herself away in her bedroom.”</p> <p>#52: “A few of the older women had even forced her to look at her dead mother before the body was taken away, even though she explicitly said that she'd rather remember her mum as she was when she was alive”</p>	<p>#14: “if my little sister cries”; #24: “someone you love is crying”</p>
Verbal information	Reference to verbal information about another’s situation.	#1: “I was reading the book (...). It detailed how one female serial killer had an awful	#4: “way of listening and responding to another person that improves

	<p>Empathizer a listener or a reader.</p> <p>Definition: #4, N=1</p> <p>Lived: #1; #2; #3; #4; #6; #7; #8; #9; #10; #15; #16; #17; #20; #21; #22; #23; #24; #25; #28; #31; #32; #33; #34; #35; #36; #37; #38; #40; #41; #42; #44; #45; #47; #50; #52; #54; #55; #59; #62, N=39</p>	<p>upbringing with parents who were less than caring and ideal. Her father was imprisoned for sexual deviance and her mother abandoned her when she was 6 months old (...) I had empathy for her as I was trying to imagine what it would be like not to have access to parental care”</p> <p>#4: “He wrote that his nephew just died that morning as he was involved in a car crash. His birthday was due to take place in two weeks’ time”</p> <p>#44: “I was able to empathise with her situation having been in a similar position myself some years ago.”</p>	<p>mutual understanding and trust and respect”</p>
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Appendix IV

Folk Psychology Study: Exemplary Categorized Paired Narratives

Table IV.a: “Folk Psychology study: Examples of categorized of paired stories and definition texts (chosen randomly by SPSS v.16; ‘exactly’ 10 out of 62 cases, with the help of SPSS v.16, incredibly leading to a selection of only nine)”

Nr.	Lived Experience (L)	Definition (D)	Categories
1	<p>I experienced strong feelings of empathy on Friday night whilst reading a book about the lives of serial killers. I was reading the book whilst getting ready to go out for the weekend. Everyone else was out visiting friends in hospital. It detailed how one female serial killer had an awful upbringing with parents who were less than caring and ideal. Her father was imprisoned for sexual deviance and her mother abandoned her when she was 6 months old [Verbal information; Emotionally negative]. It struck me how very different her life must have been to my own growing up [Analogy Non-literal]. I had empathy for her as I was trying to imagine what it would be like not to have access to parental care when it is needed [Imagined general; Sympathy for; Resonance]</p>	<p>Empathy is about being able to experience or feel something that someone else has been through [Resonance; Feel another’s/ imagined]. It involves not just understanding [Understanding] but feeling for the other person [Sympathy for]. It is a complex feeling which I find quite difficult to truly appreciate at times [“complex feeling”]; Difficult to “appreciate”].</p>	<p><u>Empathy IS:</u> Knowing, Responding <u>Context:</u> D: Resonance L: Verbal Information, Emotionally negative, Resonance <u>Knowledge:</u> D: Understand, Feel another’s/ imagined L: Imagined general; Analogy Non-literal similarity <u>Response:</u> D: Sympathy for/ feel for L: Sympathy for /“empathy for”</p>
9	<p>I was on the train to university about a month ago and was sat next to a really nice lady who opened up to me and told me about how she has just been through the worst 18months of her life [Verbally Communicated Knowledge]. She had suffered from grade 3 cancer and she seemed so brave even after all that she had been through [Impact]. She’d had many operations and she was telling me how she felt; she wasn’t scared anymore because once you have had the first treatment you get over feeling scared, but she felt sad that she had put her family through such a traumatic time, especially losing out on her son’s young teenage years, she also felt angry that when she was checked 2 years ago, the consultant missed the growth. She was going for her last radiotherapy treatment and she was feeling uneasy because she wanted to make sure that it had all gone; she was struggling to take the</p>	<p>to me it is the power and the ability to put yourself in somebody’s situation so you can understand their feelings and what they have been through [Resonance; Imagined general; Understand by Perspective-taking].</p>	<p><u>Empathy IS:</u> Knowing <u>Context:</u> D: Resonance L: Verbal Information, Emotionally negative, Resonance; Fondness <u>Knowledge:</u> D: Imagined general, Understand by Perspective-taking L: Communicated <u>Response:</u> D: - L: Sympathy for, Impact</p> <p>1º Be told 2º Imagine 3º Understand 4º Sympathy for, Impact</p>

	word of her new consultant after her previously bad experience. i really felt for her and she was a lovely lady and most importantly i think what stuck with me is that she was really looking forward to the new year so she could put all this behind her. She was really nice and somebody who you could admire [Resonance; Emotionally negative; Sympathy for; Fondness; Impact].		
10	My friend and I met up and she told me that her boyfriend of 12 months had kissed another girl [Emotionally Negative; Verbal information]. He had taken her out to tell her about this and then left her there and drove off after revealing this. I thought it was a terrible thing to do, just to kiss someone else, but the fact he left her alone afterwards was even worse [Resonance; Impact]. This happened in November.	empathy is when you may not have been in that situation but u are able to feel for, imagine, the feelings or experience the person has gone through [NOT Analogy; Resonance; Sympathy for; Imagined General]. Empathy for me is a powerful thing when it is felt, and is highly important in close relationships [Powerful feeling; Closeness].	<u>Empathy IS:</u> Knowing, Responding <u>Context:</u> D: Resonance, Closeness L: Verbal Information, Emotionally negative, Resonance <u>Knowledge:</u> D: Imagined other L: - <u>Response:</u> D: Sympathy for L: Impact NOT Analogy: d Powerful: d 1º Be told 2º Imagine 3º Impact, sympathy for
20	My housemate's boyfriend recently broke up with her a couple of days ago [Familiarity]. Yesterday, he rang her at home and afterwards she was really upset and crying [Emotionally negative; Perception behaviour and experience; Observed behaviour]. Seeing her cry made me really upset, on the verge of making me cry too [Resonance; Impact]. I felt really sorry for her and we talked over the situation in the kitchen as to why he may of broken up with her [Pity; Verbal information]. About 6 months ago, my own boyfriend broke up with me for 2 weeks and then we got back together. The majority of what she was saying brought up bad memories and feelings for me [Analogy literal]. It was good in a way because I could help and possibly explain things but it generally made me feel bad about	the ability share another person's emotions or feelings and how it impacts on you [Share; Impact; Resonance].	<u>Empathy IS:</u> Responding <u>Context:</u> D: Resonance L: Observed behaviour; Verbal Information, Familiarity, Emotionally negative, Resonance <u>Knowledge:</u> D: - L: Perception of behaviour and experience; Analogy literal <u>Response:</u> D: Share, Impact L: Impact, Pity, Help action Reasons to justify Help (analogy): l

	what had happened in the past [Reasons to justify help: Help action; Impact].		1º Familiarity 2º Perception behaviour and experience; Share 2º Impact; pity 3º Analogy 4º Help
21	Recently I was told that my friend had lost her brother and would not be returning to Uni for a while so that she could grieve at home with her family [Emotionally negative; Verbal information] . When I heard, I felt a pain in my chest that I get whenever I hear that someone has just lost a loved one [Resonance; Impact] . The reason for this is that when I was 14 I lost my best friend, and whenever I used to get upset about it I used to get a tight feeling in my chest, a small pain with a feeling of breathlessness just because i found the situation overwhelmingly sad [Analogy literal; Reasons to justify Impact: Analogy] . So when I heard about my friends brother's death I really empathized with her because I had the ability to put myself in her shoes and imagine how she was feeling. I felt like I wanted to cry, even though I had never even met her brother but just because I felt so bad that she was going through what i struggled through and hated to think that she might feel alone [Impact; Imagined other; Reasons to justify Impact: imagined, analogy] .	Empathy is the ability to put yourself in someone else's shoes [Imagined general; Resonance] . To understand how they are feeling and thinking and to try and relate to the situation they are going through, even when you haven't been through that situation yourself [Understand; Relate; NOT Analogy Literal] . It's understanding why someone is feeling what they're feeling, so that if you ever go through it you can help to understand your own emotions [Understand improves future self-understanding] . Empathy is, in my opinion, the most virtuous human ability [“Virtuous human ability”] .	Empathy IS: Knowing Context: D: Resonance L: Verbal Information, Emotionally negative, Resonance Knowledge: D: Imagined general; Understand; Relate L: Imagined other, Analogy literal Response: D: - L: Impact NOT Analogy literal: d Understand improves future self-understanding: d <i>“Virtuous human ability”</i> : d Reasons to justify impact (analogy, imagine other): l 1º Be told 2º Analogy, impact 3º Imagine other; understand 4º Impact 5º Improved future self-understanding
29	One month ago, my dog hurt heavily [Emotionally negative] . It could not run as fast as usual [Familiarity; Observed behaviour; Reasoned Familiarity Observed behaviour] . The dog apparently felt very uncomfortable about its conditions [Resonance; Appearances of Experience “apparently”] . I like this dog very much [Fondness] . At that time, I had the experience of empathy.	Empathy means someone has a kind of reaction to the man/animal, who is experiencing a bad/sad things [Impact; Knowledge general; Person/ Animal object; Resonance; Emotionally negative] . For me, empathy means I show my kindness and feel very sorry to the man/animal, who is experiencing a bad/sad things [Altruistic	Empathy IS: Responding Context: D: Emotionally negative, Resonance; Person/Animal object; L: Observed behaviour, Familiarity, Emotionally negative, Resonance, Fondness Knowledge: D: General L: Reasoned familiarity observed behaviour; Appearances of experience; <i>“apparently”</i>

		experiences help action; Pity]. If possible, I would like to offer some help to the unlucky man/animal [Altruistic experiences help intention]	Response: D: Pity, Altruistic Experiences Help intention, action; Impact L: - 1º Know another's 2º impact, pity, help
32	Over the past few months my life has changed drastically and it is not because of the financial hardships I have been faced with, but the fact that I got to find a friend, companion and lover. This story relates to how she helped me recently [Reception; Help action as received] . A few days ago I was coming back from work and I got a call from some my landlord saying that he would be coming in an hour or so with removal contractors to get my things as I did not pay my rent. Well, the first person I rang after that news was my girlfriend [Help request; Verbal information] who came over and supported me [Help action] for three hours while I was waiting for the landlord in front of my house. It was really, really cold outside and my entrance key just broke into the lock a few weeks before that, so we had to stay outside and wait [Observed behaviour] . Now, you just cannot imagine how I was feeling just thinking about the fact that my things are going to be taken away [Emotionally negative] . Yet, she has managed to help me and make me look on the bright side [Help action, as received] . Now everything's solved and I know that apart from girlfriend, she is my best friend as well [Help enhances closeness; Closeness] .	Empathy is the action of showing kindness to a person [Resonance; Altruistic Experiences Help action] .	Empathy IS: Responding Context: D: Resonance L: Observed behaviour; Verbal Information, Emotionally negative, Reception, Closeness Knowledge: D: - L: - Response: D: Altruistic experiences Help action L: Altruistic experiences Help request, action, as received Help enhances closeness: I
43	My mother fell ill suddenly in 2002, I was 14 years old and having a pretty tough time trying to look after her. I was still in school, my dad was doing a degree course and my mum was out of work as all she was doing was being sick and locking herself away in her bedroom. I would finish school at 3:30 get a bus home, cook dinner, give mum her anti-sickness tablets,	Empathy to me only occurs after the same event has happened to you directly [Analogy literal] . Like my mother I fell ill and it was only then that I feel true empathy was displayed [Emotionally negative e.g.,; Altruistic	Empathy IS: Knowing and responding Context: D: Emotionally negative e.g., Resonance L: Observed behaviour, Familiarity, Emotionally negative, Resonance Knowledge: D: Analogy literal Similar

	<p>make a plain dinner for her to see if she would eat, make my dad dinner before he came home and try and get some homework done. Social life sadly could not happen, not enough hours in the day. I may sound like I'm droning on but it was a pretty tough time for me, and for my mum it was worse. I could on empathise how tough life was for her. She had no idea what was her illness, doctors misdiagnosed too many times. She would cry and cry and I couldn't help but cry with her, for her even. My mum felt hopeless, and I felt hopeless for her. I felt like no one could help her [Emotionally negative; Resonance; Familiarity; Altruistic experience Help action; Observed behaviour; Impact; Pity; ; Perception behaviour and experience]. My work of running back and forth the doctors to pick up prescriptions and making the early morning car journeys to Accident and Emergency because Dad was worried she was close to fainting due to being sick so much, it just was not enough. She got better after a better diagnosis of anxiety. It wasn't until I was 18 and felt true empathy when I myself became ill with chronic anxiety and depression that I knew exactly how she felt [Analogy Literal]. To feel empathy I think not only do you have to be near them, you have to feel those symptoms they were going through [Closeness; feel another's/ analogy; Reasons to justify empathy].</p>	<p>experience be empathetic]. In order to be empathetic the exact same situation must have happened or very similar [Resonance; Reasons to justify empathy; Analogy Literal; Retrospective empathy].</p>	<p>past L: Perception Behaviour and Experience; Analogy literal; Feel Another's/ analogy Response: D: Altruistic experiences "displayed"/ be empathetic L: Altruistic Experience help action; Pity; Impact.</p> <p>Retrospective empathy: d Reasons to justify empathy (Familiarity; Analogy; closeness): d, l</p> <p>1^o Familiarity, observed behaviour, Help 2^o Impact; Pity, 3^o Analogy similar past 4^o retrospective true empathy, feel another/ analogy, altruistic experience</p>
50	<p>Two nights ago I watched on the web the suddenly and unexpectedly and ruthlessly deposed prime minister of Australia give his last press conference at which he stood with his wife and children - one son visible on the screen [Unexpected experience; Resonance]. He described 'our' achievements in his brief term. He began to cry at one moment and I wept for him myself [Impact; Emotionally negative; Observed Behaviour; Verbal Information] - he also described apologizing to the</p>	<p>Fellow feeling [Share feel similarly, d+]- awareness of the experience of another person or living being and what is happening to them and how I would feel in their place ["awareness of experience"/ perception expressive behaviour d+; Resonance; Imagined self]. This may be good or bad [Emotionally positive/</p>	<p>Empathy IS: Knowing, Responding Context: D: Emotionally positive or negative, Resonance L: Observed behaviour, Verbal Information, Familiarity, Emotionally negative, Resonance; Fondness Knowledge: D: "awareness of experience"/ Perception Expressive behaviour d+;</p>

<p>stolen generation and watching them walk into the same place/building in which he was standing speaking and how they were frightened. He said 'our job...' and he was unable to go on talking from emotion, for a few moments <u>Perception Expressive behaviour</u>. 'was to take away that fear'. This was a great act of social justice that as he said was a long time coming <u>Share feel similarly</u>. I felt deeply sorry for him as he is a good man who cared deeply about the people who had elected him and the unexpectedness of his removal by the factional party machine within 12 hours was shocking <u>Pity; Reasons to justify pity; Fondness; Familiarity; Impact</u>. I felt astounded and lucky that - as I emailed my father - none of us can be got rid of so suddenly. I cannot imagine how dreadful I would feel in a similar situation and so I wept for him as I watched <u>Imagine self; Reasons to justify pity; Impact; Impact</u>. I felt empathy for him because I was so moved by his sense of what he wanted to achieve and what he had achieved <u>Sympathy for; Reasons to justify sympathy for; Impact, Knowledge general</u>. I was in my office at U Bham and had looked up the news to see what was happening having had an email from someone I work with in Australia. That led me to search for the speech online <u>Unexpected experience</u>.</p>	<p><u>negative</u>].</p>	<p>Imagined self L: Perception Expressive Behaviour; Imagined self <u>Response:</u> D: Share feel similarly L: Pity; Share feel similarly; Sympathy for/ "empathy" for; Impact "shocking", "moved", "cry for"</p> <p>Unexpected experience: I Reasons to justify responses (fondness, familiarity, imagine self, perception): I</p> <p>1° Awareness, Perception, Verbal information, Observed behaviour, Familiarity 2° Impact 3° imagine-self 4° Sympathy for, Pity, Share,</p>
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Appendix V

Insights Study: Survey

Table V.a: “Survey developed for the Insights study”

Interpersonal Insights

1. Significant Person and Interpersonal Insights

INFORMATION BOX

Welcome to our WRITTEN interview.

Thank you for your participation. We hope that you find it interesting and rewarding.

The interview should take around 45 minutes, and no more than 1h30, to complete. It has 4 pages and 9 questions.

On this page, we ask you to choose a person significant to you, and with whom you have experienced insights which you can be described on page 2 (your insight into the other's experience) and page 3 (the other's insight into your experience). It may be helpful to first recall a situation where this has happened, BEFORE DECIDING on a person.

The last page has a couple of demographics questions.

Enjoy!

1. Significant Person and Interpersonal Insights

1. Choose a significant person in your life, with whom you have a close and intimate relationship. This person can be your partner, a close friend or a family member. You will answer the following questions bearing his person in mind. Who have you chosen? (please, tick the correct answer)

- Close friend
- Partner
- Family member

Who (please specify)

2. Can you describe briefly how you two get along, telling us a little bit about what may be characteristic of your relationship? (e.g., for how long have you known each other, whether you live together, how close you are, etc.)

[The box below does not limit the length of your answer. You can write as much as you like].

INFORMATION BOX

Here are some tips to help you to answer the next two questions:

- Choose RECENT situations, if possible;
- If you can try to RE-CAPTURE or re-imagine the event, this may help to recall a more VIVID and RICH description.

Please DO NOT WORRY about:

- Giving a “correct answer” - this isn't a test!
- Getting the “facts absolutely right” - we are interested in how you recall the event now;
- How much you have written - please write as much as you need to, in order for us to understand what happened;
- Spelling or grammar.

Please DO include any relevant CONTEXTUAL INFORMATION that you are able to remember. For example:

- When did it happen?
- Where were you?
- What were you doing?
- What was going on?

2. My insights

3. Bearing the person of your choice in mind, can you tell us about a situation where YOU HAD AN IMMEDIATE INSIGHT INTO what your chosen person was experiencing, while the experience was taking place?

We are looking for things such as:

- What happened?
- What did you sense, feel and/or know about the other person's experience?
- Was the “insight” meaningful?
- What, if any, is the reason for this to have happened?
- Did you communicate in any way that experience to the chosen person? And if yes, how? Was there a reaction to what you expressed?
- What would you call, if anything, this type of interpersonal experience?

[The box below does not limit how much you can write. Please write as much as you like].

3. The Other's Insights

3. Bearing the same person in mind, can you tell us about a situation where the opposite happened - that is, where that PERSON HAD AN IMMEDIATE INSIGHT INTO what you were experiencing, while you were experiencing it?

We are looking for things such as:

- What happened?
- What did the person sense, feel and/or know about your experience?
- How did you know the person was having an “insight”?
- Did it have any meaning for you?
- Do you think there is any particular reason for this to have happened?

If for some reason you pick a DIFFERENT PERSON, please inform us on the beginning of your answer.

[The box below does not limit the length of your answer. Please write as much as you like].

5. I have chosen...

- I have chosen... Another Partner
- Another Friend
- Another Family Member
- The same person

Who (please specify)

4. Demographics

This is the last page. Thank you for your collaboration. You make this research possible.

If you find that you feel upset by your participation, or if you would like to discuss any issues relating to your participation in the research, you can find us here: Rita Meneses - [REDACTED]; Michael Larkin - [REDACTED].

Alternatively, you can contact the Student Counselling Service: [REDACTED]

6. Age (years)

7. Gender

- Male
- Female

8. Nationality

9. Education Level

- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate
- None of the above

Appendix VI

Insights Study: Themes and Examples

Table VI.a: “Insights Study: themes, subthemes, examples and associated essences”

Theme	Subtheme	Example	Associated Essence
Givenness	Thinking	<p>a: resonance b: reception</p> <p>“Until then I had been feeling anxious, worried and stressed for her, because she had put a lot of effort and time into this exam throughout the year.” (#1a)</p> <p>“Often if I'm upset or something is on my mind he won't know until I'm literally crying!” (#2b)</p> <p>“Anyway whilst telling me the story i could completely understand what she was going through as i too split up with a partner for no reasons of our own” (#13a)</p>	Thinking
	Listening	<p>“My boyfriend said he could feel my pain and sense in a way what i was going thorough although it had never happened to him” (#11b)</p> <p>“When he got off the phone he told me in a really disappointing way.” (#15a)</p> <p>“As she told me everything that happened it almost felt as if it was my nan it was happening to again.” (#17a)</p>	Listening
	Feeling	<p>“She was experiencing my pain, living through my loss, as if it was hers.” (#1b)</p> <p>“I am sure that I experienced the same rush of emotion. It was incredibly intense” (#4a)</p> <p>“He said that he was excited, and i remember saying that i agreed. But you could also see it on his face and i was excited by this too.” (#5a)</p>	Experiencing
	Perceiving	<p>“It's as if I can read his mind! Even the simplest things like when we went out for a meal for my birthday; when we walked into the restaurant he immediately stiffened up which means that he feels scrutinised and watched and he feels the need to 'puff out' his chest and act more manly. “ (#2a)</p> <p>“I felt like she was sensing my emotions and they were also influencing her.” (#3b)</p>	Perceiving

Location	Another's experience	<p>"When i saw the smile on his face i knew what joke he was going to say" (#7a)</p> <p>"Seeing her so upset" (#10a)</p> <p>"i could understand how disappointed and let down he felt" (#15a)</p> <p>"She told me about her experiences when she lost her grandparents, so I knew she had felt the same" (#19b)</p>	<p>Perceivers</p> <p>Experiencers</p> <p>Listeners</p> <p>Thinkers</p>
	Personal experience	<p>"I had this immense pain in my shoulder, nothing compared to what he was going through, but it was a definite twinge of pain." (#8a)</p> <p>"I feel that he momentarily felt what i felt as we were both so relieved that we could stay together" (#9b)</p> <p>"It also made me very emotional, seeing and hearing her so upset" (#17a)</p> <p>"I seemed to be able to feel when these events were going to occur (...). There was a sick feeling, I suppose you'd say." (#18a)</p>	<p>Experiencers</p>
	'We' experience	<p>"They were participating in the event and I was in the audience but as soon as they crossed the finish line, I am sure that I experienced the same rush of emotion." (#4a)</p> <p>"So we sort of felt a guilt towards not forming a bond or relationship with that member of our family." (#12b)</p> <p>"I felt we had a strong connection at the time" (#16a)</p> <p>"both of us were too anxious to speak" (#20a)</p>	<p>Experiencers</p> <p>Thinkers</p>
	Intersubjective experience	<p>"In my head all I was experiencing was my happiness of my sibling" (#4a)</p> <p>"I felt as though I shared her experience, because I could feel her pain when she thought she lost him. We talked, and automatically i felt her pain" (#12a)</p>	<p>Experiencers</p>
Immediacy		<p>"I just started crying. As I did that, I could hear her whimper on the other end. She was experiencing my pain, living through my loss" (#1b)</p>	<p>Perceivers</p> <p>Experiencers</p>

		<p>"We talked, and automatically i felt her pain" (#12a)</p> <p>"She could tell on my face as i opened the envelope" (#17b)</p>	
Reasoning	Inference from similar past experience	<p>"My experience of studying on exchange here at Birmingham University for this academic year gave me some insight to my brother's experience." (#5a)</p> <p>"I think this happened because the day before she had done the same thing, and found it funny that the tables were turned but knew how I felt." (#14b)</p>	Thinkers
	Inference from self-other similarity	<p>"And seen as we are so close (me and my friend) we have this understand where i know exactly what frustrates her, makes her upset and happy, as the same things make me upset, frustrated and happy..." (#13a)</p> <p>"She has met my family so knows what their like and how we work, and she comes from a similar background of traditional values etc..." (#13b)</p>	Thinkers
	Inference from familiarity	<p>"Until then I had been feeling anxious, worried and stressed for her, because she had put a lot of effort and time into this exam throughout the year." (#1a)</p> <p>"I understood how he was feeling because many times before his dad had promised the same thing and never done it." (#15a)</p>	Thinkers
	Inference from behaviour	<p>"I know that they were experiencing this because, even though they knew that I was scared, they were not offering word of comfort to help me, they were frightened as well" (#4b)</p> <p>"She could tell on my face as i opened the envelope that i had done well due to the huge grin and emotions i displayed as she had done exactly the same around 15mins previous." (#17b)</p>	Thinkers
	Inference from own present experience	<p>"You could really feel what the other person was going through because i could feel it myself." (#9a)</p>	Thinkers
Understanding	Understanding (outcome, goal)	<p>"I guess this shared sense of excitement was meaningful because i could kind of understand what my brother was going through, and encourage him to be excited about it." (#5a)</p>	Thinkers

		<p>"Anyway whilst telling me the story i could completely understand what she was going through" (#13a)</p> <p>"i could relate to her feeling of 'having mind blank'." (#16a)</p> <p>"I wanted to help but couldn't unless I really understood what she was experiencing." (#20a)</p>	
	Feeling understood	<p>"Me and a close friend at Uni both discovered that we had glandular fever at the same time last year. (...) It comforted me that i knew someone else had felt the way i had and understood." (#15b)</p> <p>"He talked to me and said he knew how i was feeling. And it was odd because all the emotions and thought processes i thought and went through, he actually named and mentioned (...) It was nice that someone understood me completely and that i didn't have to explain any intricacies for them to even understand." (#7b)</p>	Thinkers Listeners
Communication	Listening	<p>"I remember him telling me of what was going to be happening on his mission trip in China and he was very excited about it." (#5a)</p> <p>"He walked into my room, sat on my bed and just started asking me all these questions, but before i could even respond, he'd answered them in exactly the same way i was going to. He seemed to know what was going on inside my head, like he had an insight of the troubles I was experiencing." (#8b)</p> <p>"...anyway when i told her i remember her saying her mums the same and not to worry and how she was on my side and would have done the same" (#13b)</p>	Listeners
Attention	Self	<p>"Recently, my best friend split up with her boyfriend for a short duration. I felt as though I shared her experience, because I could feel her pain when she thought she lost him. We talked, and automatically i felt her pain, and it came to me without any thought." (#12a)</p>	Experiencers
	Other	<p>"During a talent contest in secondary school my sister was extremely nervous about performing her song. My whole</p>	Perceivers

		family went to watch her, and she forgot the words. After a while of silence i called out the start of the next line to her because I could feel how embarrassed and upset she was, and could relate to her feeling of 'having mind blank'" (#16a)	
Embedment	here	"We walked into the restaurant" (#2a) "He walked into my room, sat on my bed" (#8b) "In secondary school" (#16a)	Perceivers Experiencers
	Now	"2 months ago, my sister rang me" (#1b) "After the operation they needed to remove a tube from my back without anaesthetic which was very scary for me." (#4a) "At the Christmas Carol event" (#14a)	Perceivers Experiencers
	Vague, absent	"Once i had a really frustrating encounter with my mum, i was quite young" (#13a) "She came around to sit with me, and even though she didn't say much, I knew she cared" (#19b)	Listeners Thinkers
Embodiment	Physically felt experience	"And oddly i felt the same sense of slight excitement about being able to make a witty joke as he did" (#7a) "He was simply sitting in the kitchen shaking in pain, and suddenly i felt all light headed and collapsed. When I came to, I had this immense pain in my shoulder, nothing compared to what he was going through, but it was a definite twinge of pain. However, the next day, it was gone. I don't know whether I was experienced a part of his pain, but it definitely felt like it." (#8a) "I felt like i was feeling the emotions of the experience as it happened" (#17a)	
	Observed scene	"You could tell just from her concern and facial expression that she knew what i meant and cared." (#5b) "There was one occasion when her was talking to a friend of ours and she was recalling how she lost her earrings saying "I've lost my studs", for some reason when i saw the smile on his face i knew what joke	

		<p>he was going to say” (#7a)</p> <p>“I watched my sister perform at the Christmas Carol event where she was in the choir. I went with my mum to watch her and you could tell that she was really proud of herself but really embarrassed at the same time.(...) We kept waving to her and she would pretend that she didn't really see us” (#14a)</p> <p>“I could tell by the look on her face and the emotion of happiness and the hug she gave me that i knew how she felt.” (#17b)</p>	
Help	Intention	<p>"I knew that she herself was worried and I tried to be as supportive as possible throughout this difficult period" (#1a)</p> <p>"I felt very upset as I was in Birmingham and couldn't be there for him." (#19a)</p> <p>"I could see the difficult situation she was in and wanted to help but couldn't unless I really understood what she was experiencing" (#20a)</p>	
	Feeling helped	<p>"When a friend died my sister was really supportive" (#10b)</p> <p>"It comforted me that i knew someone else had felt the way i had" (#15b)</p>	
	Helping through talking	<p>"We could talk about it. Exchanging our views and emotions and I feel like I was a great help to her." (#3a)</p> <p>"But definitely sharing this experience with Kate helped." (#5b)</p> <p>"But I'm so grateful that he gave me a chat about my attitudes, because if he hadn't, I'd probably be on the search for a full time job." (#8b)</p> <p>"As we had both experienced the same accident so we could talk about it together and help each other get through it. we talked about the crash a lot as i kept having nightmares about it and had to keep going to the doctors because i hurt my neck and talking about it definitely helped." (#9a)</p>	Listening Thinking
	Context-specific action	<p>"They had even adjusted the position of their body in a way that it seemed like they were trying to make it less painful." (#4b)</p>	

		"We still talk about the event and how grateful she was for me to call out the words" (#16a)	
Accuracy	Amazement at	<p>"And it was odd because all the emotions and thought processes i thought and went through, he actually named and mentioned" (#7b)</p> <p>"He walked into my room, sat on my bed and just started asking me all these questions, but before i could even respond, he'd answered them in exactly the same way i was going to. He seemed to know what was going on inside my head, like he had an insight of the troubles I was experiencing. (...) I don't know why this happened" (#8b)</p>	Listening
	Confirmation sought	<p>"I knew that he had sent the message on purpose just to spark up a conversation with me. He denied sending it on purpose until it came up in conversation last night and he admitted it." (#2a)</p> <p>"So at the end we asked her whether she enjoyed it and she said yes... We then asked if she was a bit embarrassed and she just ignored the question..." (#14a)</p>	
Matter of fact	Weight of high probability	<p>"What she must have been experiencing" (#1a)</p> <p>"As i felt i knew how she was feeling" (#16a)</p>	
	Weight of proof, of confirmed fact	<p>"He'd answered them in exactly the same way i was going to" (#8b)</p> <p>"We then asked if she was a bit embarrassed and she just ignored the question, I knew exactly what she felt, was just weird..." (#14a)</p>	
	Weight of authenticity, of accepted truth	<p>"It was only after when i saw that she was in as much pain as me (...). For some reason i just know she knew how i was feeling" (#6b)</p> <p>"She felt sad seeing me upset" (#10b)</p> <p>"Her fear was almost transposed onto my being" (#18a)</p>	
Closeness	Cause	"This may have happened due to us having such a close relationship" (#11a)	

		"I just think we are so close she can hear it in my voice if something is wrong. She said that she can look at me and tell if I'm feeling well or not. Apparently I look different in the eyes. So, it's the closeness that has developed these instincts for one another." (#18b)	
	Consequence	"For me, those moments strengthen the relationship with the person and showed that we could be there for each other for the good and for the bad." (#3b) "Seeing how happy she was for me had a real meaning for me, as it showed she is a true friend who did care about my feelings and was glad to share this type of experience with such a special and true person in my life." (#17b)	
Types of known experiences	Sensations	"Both of our hearts were beating ridiculously fast" (#20a) "He was simply sitting in the kitchen shaking in pain" (#8a)	
	Emotions	"I could see the excitement on his face as we talked on Skype" (#5a) "You could tell that she was really proud of herself but really embarrassed at the same time." (#14a)	
	Thoughts, opinions, judgments	"They were thinking of me" (#4a) "He seemed to know what was going on inside my head" (#8b)	
	Intentions	"She could sense how much I wanted to help her" (#16b)	
	Gestalt	"I knew that he was really upset as his car got written off and he loves his car but i could sense that he also felt guilty and responsible for hurting me even though it wasn't his fault."" (#9a) "He feels scrutinized and watched, and he feels the need to 'puff out' his chest and act more manly" (#2a) "She can hear it in my voice if something is wrong. She said that she can look at me and tell if I'm feeling well or not. Apparently I look different in the eyes." (#18a)	


Appendix VII

Happy Stories Study: Instant Recall Survey for the Teller Role

Table VII.a: “Survey developed for the Happy Stories study”

Dyad N.+ Participant Letter

Happy Stories Teller



UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM

2. Overview

This is a brief interview to help you REFLECT UPON your recent interaction. It has three pages with questions about this experience, and one concerned with demographics.

As you write, please DO NOT WORRY about:
Giving a “correct answer” - this isn't a test!
Getting the “facts absolutely right” - we are interested in how you now recall the event.
Spelling or grammar – we are more interested in the ‘what’ you have to say, than in formal aspects

And please bear in mind that the blank space provided below for each question is not limitative in any way - write as much as you like.

3. Overall Experience

This section is about your overall experience during the interaction you just had. In general terms, please describe your experience during the encounter.

What happened?

What were you feeling?

What were you thinking?

What were you doing/ trying to do?

4. Significant Events

On the following pages, you are asked to choose and describe UP TO THREE significant moments related to particular aspects of the videotaped interaction.

If you don't recall any significant event on a particular question, just leave it blank and move to the next one.

5. Knowing

There are moments during which I COULD SENSE what the listener's inner experience was.

- Yes
- No

On the following boxes, please describe up to three moments during which you could sense what the listener was experiencing.

Episode I

Episode II

Episode III

Did you feel that you were both empathizing with each other on any of the above moments?

- Yes
- No

If the answer is YES, please specify which (I, II, or/ and III):

6. Being known

There are moments during which the LISTENER COULD SENSE what my inner experience was.

- Yes
 No

On the following boxes, please describe up to three moments during which the LISTENER COULD SENSE what you were experiencing.

Episode I

Episode II

Episode III

Did you feel that you were both empathizing with each other on any of the above moments?

- Yes
 No

If the answer is YES, please specify which (I, II, or/and III):

7. Demographics

Age

Nationality

- British
 Non-British

If non-British, please specify

Gender

- Female
 Male

Education Level

- Undergraduate
- Postgraduate
- None of these

Area of Studies

Occupation

- Full-time student
- Part-time student
- Non-student

For part-time and non-students, please specify professional area on the box below

Please choose the answer that better describes your relationship to the listener:

- I had never seen him/ her before
- I had seen him/her before but never had a conversation with him/ her
- We have held occasional conversations before as colleagues or acquaintances
- We are friends
- We are very close friends

8. The End

Thank you for participating. As soon as you both finish the survey, we will start our final stage.

Appendix VIII

Happy Stories Study: Themes and Analysis Examples

Table VIII.a: “Happy Stories Study: themes, subthemes and examples”

Theme	Subthemes and exemplary qualities	Quotes
Contextual Influences	Procedures' demystification:	
	Roles inherent stresses	<p>Lauren: I was a little bit nervous, I think I was a little bit nervous that I was just like talking about my own thing.” Alicia: In case I felt, so boring (laughing, pretends to yawn) Lauren: (laughs) A little bit, yeah.”</p>
	Roles inherent stresses	<p>Aisha: I think I was trying not to talk too much. There were points when I wanted to say something but then I was like this is about her, this is her story.</p>
	Confront with own image	<p>Zoe: Slightly embarrassing! (...) It’s just strange watching it back on the video because obviously you don’t, your voice doesn’t sound the same, and your head as it does coming from video, and that kind of thing. I never realized I used my hands so much...</p>
	Lived experienced invisible on tape	<p>Lauren: “As we were doing it I felt like a little bit awkward (...) But actually watching it, like later on in the thing, we actually seem to become really comfortable in each other’s company, and just chatting and joking, I though (pauses looking at teller)</p>
	Memory aid	<p>Sam: I remembered everything that happened, the sequence of events, but there were some small details of things that she had said, or things that I had said, that I did not remember precisely has they happened.</p>
Behaviour as centrepiece of explanation	<p>Lauren: “Can we watch the clip again? I am just trying to check Alicia’s reactions. [Viewing in silence] I think that both of our faces really light up? (pause) I just sort of knew that you knew who he was, and it would be a quite good talking point....and then you were sort of like ‘oh, really?!’. And so it must have been in our expressions.... (looks at researcher looking</p>	

	<p>Tape used to illustrate experience</p> <p>Self-awareness of sides of the experience</p> <p>Self-awareness of sides of the experience</p>	<p>for confirmation, short silence)</p> <p>Megan: I got more at ease because I could feel that he was not bored at all. R: Can you tell me where did you feel that? T: (pause) yeah. If you go back a little. In the beginning I was a little bit like... (R does as told). Right there. And then you sort of say something like "oh! That is interesting! [playback] So he started engaging with me and asking questions and I felt genuinely that he was interested. So there is a moment there I guessed I could stop rushing over everything.</p> <p>Zoe: Because I didn't realize I used sarcastic cueing.... that I probably was not aware of when I was doing the questionnaire.</p> <p>Aisha: I think there is just some little things that I didn't pick up, where (looks to window), like little things that I hadn't really written down. Like, I mean, some moments that we were really, we were both clearly amused (looks to teller) by a certain thing</p>
	<p>Meanings of the word to sense can be worlds apart</p> <p>Intuiting</p> <p>Sharing</p> <p>Imagining</p>	<p>Aisha: To feel, to, like, gather from, from their body language and the way they are using words to kind of have a feeling of what they are saying, or what they are going through, or what they went through.</p> <p>Lauren: Just a kind of a connection, a common understanding.... uh...</p> <p>Kayla: I think it is a lot of being... uhhh... putting ourselves in another's person's shoes and trying to go through what they actually went through whilst we get a description. So if they tell us about an experience we imagine ourselves being in</p>

		<p>that situation and we can empathize... with the other person. (...) I guess that through the description of the situation, so verbal words and we attach those feelings to what we know and try to imagine ourselves being there? (silence)</p>
<p>Intuiting: to know another's experience in what appeared to be an intuitive perceptive or felt immediately act</p>	<p>Perceiving and/or feeling:</p> <p>Is to feel one knows another's experience</p> <p>Is knowing without verbally discussing Known experience</p> <p>Is knowing what another is thinking Though was recurrent</p> <p>Knowing is feeling Knowing feels like "pressure" Knowing is invisible on tape Knowing is assumed to be shared</p> <p>Knowing of another's passion Knowing grounded in "something about her" Is listening automatically to another's experience</p> <p>Is difficult to explain</p> <p>Grounded in quality of tone of voice Feels like one knows the other person better Feels like authentic knowing Felt excitement is at least partly personal</p>	<p>Alicia: Then I was watching and then I was thinking but what's the important bits were I really felt that I knew what she was thinking, or what her experience was... That was what I was thinking when I was watching. And that is what made me think that is was very interesting that there were times were you didn't even said anything about the process, 'oh, we are running out of things to say', but I felt that, I sensed that from you, that, on occasion, you thought, 'oh we are running out of things to say', but I sensed that from you. It felt like a little bit of a pressure, and even though neither of us can see it, in fact, at the time, yeah, I certainly had that sense from you, and you had that sense me, yeah, how we were going to... yeah?" [#3: Running out of things to say]</p> <p>Jane: We can stop it here. That it was something that she enjoyed doing, that she was happy, I thought that she liked dance. There was something about her. When you can hear automatically that that is something she likes, I could hear that that was something she was passionate about. I could just tell. I don't know... (R: That is beautiful. You could just hear how). The tone is different. Because before I was talking about me, so I wasn't really, I wasn't really like... I don't know, that is the first time I was finally finding out about her for the first time, 'oh, she is like that!' So that is where the excitement came from as well. [#6: Hopefully, there is more to everything]</p>
	<p>Recognizing:</p>	

	<p>Is seeing another's recognition of one's experience</p> <p>Is registering another's experience</p> <p>Grounded in perceiving of "face"</p> <p>Grounded in behaviour (nod, smile)</p> <p>Grounded in narrative context</p> <p>Perceiving in another's "face"</p> <p>Grounded in narrative context</p> <p>Grounding in behaviour becomes more "little", less important</p> <p>Feels like another knows one's experience</p>	<p>Aisha: (short silence) I think there was recognition in her face. R: What do you mean, recognition? Aisha: That what I was feeling was registered with her. R: How can you tell? Aisha: Because her face just like like... You know when someone understands what you are talking about they go like this, and maybe nod a little bit more, and smile? Maybe eye contact. And continuing the story, there is more. Like there is more to it, not said, but there is more. You understand? (...) My shock was registered on her face. She continued talking and then, kind of a little nod maybe... (giggles) I don't know, I felt like she got what I got what she was feeling. (R: OK, L: uh) I think. [#4: Seeing the shock]</p>
<p>Sharing: Assumption or experiencing being similar to, sharing with, or connecting with another person</p>	<p>Shared understandings:</p> <p>Generates assumption about another's understanding</p> <p>Feels like having a common point</p> <p>Is a way of connecting</p> <p>Is a shared understanding</p> <p>Is a 'we' experience</p> <p>Is a shared understanding</p> <p>Is having a common interest</p> <p>Is having common values</p> <p>Is being similar to another person</p>	<p>Lauren: Thought that I could make a joke and that you would understand that I don't like he's approach. And you would kind of understand where I was coming from. It felt like a common point that we could connect on, and have a shared understanding about something, which felt quite good. (...) They kind of matched, in a way, 'cause they are a sort of a shared understanding about something. We were both interested in Lord Layard, and we both have that thing that the fire would be bad and causing some anxiety? So what is similar are our values, or our personality... [#3: Lord Layard's disappointment]</p>
	<p>Shared experiences:</p> <p>Viewing brings to light shared experiences</p> <p>is a 'we' experience</p> <p>Is a similar experience towards common intentional object</p> <p>Grounded in visible behaviour</p> <p>Viewing increases self-awareness about behaviour</p>	<p>Alicia: Uh, I don't know, I think there is just some little things that I didn't pick up, where (looks to window), like little things that I hadn't really written down. Like, I mean, some moments that we were really, we were both clearly amused (looks to teller) by a certain thing. I can't remember, probably about the sausages, or something... [L, T, R: laugh] Lauren: I thought about that... 'cause I</p>

	<p>Is a 'we' experience Grounded in visible behaviour</p> <p>Is two people feeling "the same"</p> <p>Is an overall negative experience There are reason for the experience</p> <p>Is a personal experience</p> <p>Grounding experiences is subsequent events...</p> <p>Is a personal experience</p>	<p>didn't realize I used sarcastic cueing.... that I probably was not aware of when I was doing the questionnaire. Yes, sometimes we are both kind of laughing, as it when I was talking about the cooking and the main coals and all the man (swings arm) [#3: Sausages and sexism]</p> <p>Sam: Oh! But I believe that we were both feeling quite the same? Megan: yeah, what you are calling the second moment, yeah. That was awkward. Or just like, a bit tense, yeah. Sam: Nothing to talk about, a little time. R: So, for your own reasons, you were having a similar experience, correct me if I am wrong. (T: yeah!) But you had your own reasons for feeling this awkwardness (L, T: yeah!) Sam: You can tell when our experiences are exactly the same, it was when you broke the ice, which felt quite nice, and you don't have to say anything else, you just direct the conversation into a different way. R: The same? Megan: Yes, definitely. I felt awkward and just a little bit unsure as to what was going to happen next. [#5: Comparison II]</p>
<p>Imagining: Fantasize or reason about another's experience</p>	<p>Visualizing:</p> <p>Imagine-self not always necessary</p> <p>Imagine-self not always necessary or desirable Grounded in another's discourse</p> <p>Imagine-self is an "immediate thought"</p> <p>Imagine-self is not always desirable Grounded in discourse</p> <p>Is having a picture about another's situation</p>	<p>Aisha: I was able to, I just understood. Not even seeing myself in that situation, not even picturing myself being in that position. Just the horror of someone treating someone that way, it's just... Like I didn't necessarily need to be in her shoes just to be able to understand because she described it so well. (...): Just the idea of someone else treating someone in such a way, it is like... My immediate thought was, 'oh my God, what would I do if I was in her shoes'. I didn't even like... (pause) I didn't even go there. I just... (pause) 'cause, as you describe, everyone did what they wanted to. I have never been to Madrid, so I got kind of a picture in my head as to what it was like. You know, I imagined</p>

	<p>Grounded in one's past knowledge and imagined picture</p> <p>Is taking imagined experience as another's</p> <p>Feels good to be accurate Grounded in discourse (repetition, choice of words)</p> <p>Grounded in narrative context</p> <p>Grounded in discourse (detail) Reaction towards visualization along the lines of aesthetic emphasis</p> <p>Feeling another's experience is informed by imagination</p> <p>Grounded in discourse Grounded in past knowledge (schemas)</p> <p>Is an automatic experience As a foreseeing "funny" quality</p> <p>Foreseeing quality is inexplicable</p> <p>Visualization adapted to discourse</p>	<p>someone being very barbaric and treating a person in such a way, and as you were saying, the costumers themselves were so... It just feels crazy that her, being a woman, in such an environment and be treated that way by these costumers, and her boss. I just had this negative feeling, just too people, one person being bad, and the other person being brutalized. [#4: Comparison I and II]</p> <p>Aisha: Good! 'Cause you said that you had the best day, and you said that is was awesome, and you said that it was amazingly beautiful. And you repeated the word amazing twice, I think, when she talked about it. And from there it lead up to her description of this pool, and I really found that description to be so... Like. She could have just said that it was a pool. But she described it, and filled that with detail, and she just made a picture for me and I visualized it, yeah (T: giggles). It looked beautiful, it looked really really cool. And I felt that that was probably a really, really good happy thing for her. (...) But the words that she used, I guess and my own ... my own... (sights) Like...'Cause you have schemas in our head, basically, so I kind of just pictured it automatically. It was so funny, because before you even said it was on the edge, I pictured it that way myself? (T. uh; R: yes, it is ok) I don't know why, but I did picture it on the edge? (T: yeah!) And as you said that it was overlooking, and I just kind of pictured this really beautiful thing at the edge of a mountain (T: yeah!), on the top, kind of overlooking. [#4: Painting swimming pools]</p>
	<p>Reasoning:</p> <p>Is impelled by personal reaction</p> <p>Feeling pity towards another's discourse</p> <p>Imagine-self can immediately happen while listening</p>	<p>Zoe: I think it is also not just feeling bad for that person, because they went through it. But also being kind of horrified that an human being can act in that way. When... 'Cause when you are listening a story about one person who has done bad to another person, yeah, you do feel sorry for</p>

	<p>Impelled by desire to understand Is reasoning about another's motives imagining another's experience in a reasoned manner Imagine other can be preferable to imagine-self</p> <p>Impelled by desire to understand Grounded in behaviour, "body language" Reasoning necessary because another's experience unknown Knowing is grounded in overall context Reasoning is not enough to determined authenticity of experience Reasoning needs to be grounds in unfolding gestures Grounding in "way" of moving silenced Is constructing a puzzle Inference from behaviour-in-context as first contradictory explanation</p>	<p>the victim. And you can just suddenly find yourself putting yourself in their shoes and think, 'oh, I would feel badly'. But possibly even more I think, 'oh, how come the person has done it?'. What is going on in their mind that makes them behave in that way. That would probably be more... I would probably think that before putting myself in the shoes of the other person who is being hurt. [#4: Comparison I and II]</p> <p>Kayla: If we have the purpose of wanting to figure out what that person is feeling, that I think I can. You use their expressions, their body language uhh... (T: yeah!) (...) I would attach some sort of meaning to the body language because you don't know what the person is thinking at the moment? (...) I guess we can't take a thing out of context. It has to be seen as a whole. If you just see the smile you might not know if it's genuine. Or if that person is really happy at that moment. But if you see it through the other gestures, the way the arms uh uh and so you can put these three or four features together and decide that this person was feeling really happy. So just to see a smile as a smile on its own... [#6: The holocaust]</p>
<p>Temporal location of the known experience</p>	<p>Present experiences:</p> <p>Experience is difficult to describe Is feeling that another is listening Present experience is feeling listened to Is feeling another's opinion</p> <p>Another's experience is a listening understanding attitude Another's experience is not an emotion</p>	<p>Present Experiences _ intuitive acts:</p> <p>Alicia: I think I kind of didn't noticed a feeling, I didn't notice an emotion, I felt that you were listening. You were using a... I kind of, I felt that you were listening to what I was saying. I felt listened to and heard. I felt that you knew that I felt a bit silly, I knew that you didn't come across as you were thinking. You were just listening to my own story, and trying to understand where it is coming from, really (T: uh uh). So but couldn't put an emotional label on it (R: It is OK). It is more like you turn, while you are telling your story, oh, I can see she is happy about this, or disappointed about this.... But during that moment I think that</p>

	<p>Knowing is accurate</p> <p>Present 'we' experience about topic</p> <p>Present 'we' experience of interest is shared</p> <p>Present common experience of happiness is shared</p> <p>Present experience of tension</p> <p>Another's present experience is known through reasoning</p> <p>Accurate knowing</p>	<p>you just changed, I was the story teller then, and you just changed to a kind of listener, really.</p> <p>Lauren: I think I was really interested because I was liking the exchange, I was liking to learn. I was doing a lot of talking so I was kind of liking to listen to your stories. Yes, I guess I was generally very interested, just listening [#3: Fairies and Gnomes]</p> <p>Present Experiences _Sharing acts:</p> <p>Lauren: They kind of matched, in a way, because they are a sort of a shared understanding about something. We were both interested in Lord Layard, and we both have that thing that the fire would be bad and causing some anxiety? So what is similar are our values, or our personality (...) That was very... Because we were happy, just some sort of share in that common experience (L: yeah!)” [#3: Lord Layard’s disappointment]</p> <p>Present Experiences _ Imaginative acts:</p> <p>Sam: Yes, on that moment where the conversation was slowing down bit off track but it wasn’t up until then, no. But I didn’t feel awkward until then.</p> <p>R: OK. Did you realize that he was also feeling awkward?</p> <p>Megan: I... I... It wasn’t so much a realization so much as an expected feeling. I would expected it if I seat there, uh, what should I talk about, that he is feeling a bit awkward as well. Yeah. So I think I just expected. It is the natural response to feel sort of awkward because of this artificial setting. [#5: Before Ice breaker]</p> <p>R: In relation to that, she said that the other’s discourse becomes just words. Would you say that that happens when you have not had a similar experience?</p> <p>Kayla: Not really words, some things, I guess, you have not experience but you can imagine from things maybe like</p>
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		<p>television or books or stories or seeing pictures and those things work as a replacement for the memory. Not necessarily words but I can imagine them to be visual or auditory input, not necessarily just words but.....</p> <p>R: So what you are telling me is that when you listen to someone you have all this sort of information, all this knowledge that you use that can be, in a way, linked to what the other person is thinking or telling you. (...)</p> <p>Jane: If you are there you know them, and probably just the fact that they're listening should be enough. But if it is a stranger you can't really tell if they are bored, you can't tell.... Oh yeah! So, I talk to get a reaction. But I can assum... guess what the reaction is in regards to people I know. So if I was talking to mama in a coma, I would keep talking because I would know what would interest her, what would make her laugh. But if it was a stranger I wouldn't know if they were not interested anymore but just couldn't tell me." [#6: The holocaust]</p>
	<p>Past (relived) experiences</p> <p>Experiences can be "made", overtly and evidently expressed behaviourally</p> <p>Telling another's relief</p> <p>Feeling another's past experience</p> <p>Perceiving of gestalt moving body more important than eye contact</p> <p>Is grasping a past experience</p> <p>Experience feels like it was past but relived</p> <p>Relived experience differs from "original" emotion</p>	<p>Relieved Experiences_ Intuitive acts:</p> <p>Alicia: There was an important bit there. When you made the relief (sights)? I could tell in your body movements with your hands and your body just going like relaxed, I felt how much relief you felt from that. And although we are looking at each other the entire time, yet I think still the movements that you made me helped me tell. (R: to grasp, understand) To grasp how much relief she felt, from that day of walking away.</p> <p>R: Did you somehow staged, that is, overacted the relief, to be sure that the message came across?</p> <p>Zoe: uh (pause, L: coffs). I don't think... I don't think it was overreacting. Because I think it was it felt like I was really reliving it.</p> <p>R: Did you feel relieved when talking about it? Were you feeling relieved?</p> <p>Zoe: (pause) Almost! It was obviously not quite the same as the original emotion, but</p>

	<p>Is reliving experience</p> <p>Remembering and reliving emotion at the same time</p> <p>Relived emotion is at a different "level"</p> <p>Recounting generates reliving</p> <p>Experience was not overacted, exaggerated</p> <p>Experience was relived by remembering</p> <p>Grounded in another's discourse</p> <p>Discourse triggers memory of similar past experience</p> <p>Is feeling another's experience</p> <p>Another's experience is past</p> <p>Known experience is simultaneously past and present</p> <p>Feeling another's experience is reliving one's past experience</p> <p>Sharing experience is personal past relieved experience</p> <p>Personal experience used to "relate" to another's experience, to emotionally personally understand another's experience</p> <p>Memory is in the background,</p>	<p>it was sort of reliving it at some point. I was remembering when it happened and feeling this emotion at the same time. Obviously, not at the same level as when it originally happened, but I think I was feeling relief, again.</p> <p>R: Less intense than the first time, off course (L: giggles, T: giggle)</p> <p>Zoe: Yeah, yeah. But the act of recounting it (pause) brought back the emotion. So I think I didn't do that so much as communication, I think. Or not consciously anyway. I think I was just remembering how it really worked. Uh. Yeah. I think so. "[#4: This is not a staged relief]"</p> <p>Relieved Experiences _ Sharing acts:</p> <p>Kayla: I chose talking about the sequence of events, when she got the good news, and sharing it with family and friends, and having a meal at the end of the day, it was something that I went through as well? So it was easy I would say to be able to feel the happiness and the joy that she also felt, through that experience. (...)</p> <p>Jane: yeah, I was happy because you don't really tell that story to people and I because they don't really care? Everyone has the same story. So yeah, I like telling that story. Yes, happiness (laughs) (...)</p> <p>R. What is this to feel, can you try to explain it?</p> <p>Kayla: uh... I guess I was relieving my own experience? uh. When she was talking about it. So, that happiness and that sense of achievement I was thinking back of my own experience upon seeing my results.</p> <p>R: So that it was your own happiness that you were thinking of, or hers?</p> <p>Kayla: I was in a sense pulling that memory in order to relate to that experience? (...) I think the memory is something that happens in the background. I was more focused on her story, because I wanted to know more about what she was telling. So consciously I think I was focusing on her story and herself but at the back of my</p>
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	<p>informs shared understanding</p> <p>Absence of similar past experience</p> <p>Knowing grounded in another's discourse ("way")</p> <p>Knowing grounded in one personal valuing of another's situation</p> <p>Imagine-self is an immediate thought</p> <p>Imagine-self is not always necessary</p> <p>Absence of similar past experience</p> <p>Imagine other situation</p> <p>Imagine other situation and experience</p> <p>Another's experience is past</p> <p>Knowing grounded in one personal valuing of another's situation</p> <p>Knowing generates a negative feeling</p> <p>Hesitation</p> <p>Feels "more" positive suggestive of feeling negative too</p> <p>Reasons for feeling positive towards experience</p> <p>Experience is past</p> <p>Experience is relieved past negative experience</p> <p>Focusing on the positive side of the experience</p>	<p>mind my memory was feeding on these emotions for me to live whatever she was telling me. (...). [#6: I felt it too]</p> <p>Relieved Experiences_ imaginative acts:</p> <p>Aisha: Yeah. Because I have never been in that position, that she was in. So I don't have any kind of personal... I have never had this sort of experiences before, but because of the way she told it, and in general, if somebody is treating me badly, that is a negative thing. (...) Just the idea of someone else treating someone in such a way, it is like... My immediate thought was, 'oh my God, what would I do if I was in her shoes'. I didn't even like... (pause) I didn't even go there. I just... (pause) 'cause, as you describe, everyone did what they wanted to. I have never been to Madrid, so I got kind of a picture in my head as to what it was like. You know, I imagined someone being very barbaric and treating a person in such a way, and as you were saying, the costumers themselves were so... It is just feels crazy that her, being a woman, in such an environment and be treated that way by these costumers, and her boss. I just had this negative feeling, just too people, one person being bad, and the other person being brutalized. (...)</p> <p>Zoe: uh (pause) Yeah. I think it is still (pause) I don't know, I... (pause) I don't feel... I still feel more positive when I think back to it, just because I am looking back. I know that it is finished. And I know that I have learnt from it. And in a way I am quite proud of the way that I dealt with it. So I don't think I have any kind of negative emotion linked to it anymore.</p> <p>R: Intense, you would say? Because in a way it is still a negative experience.</p> <p>Zoe: Yeah. It is still remembering a bad experience. But when I think back to it, I think more of the happy bit afterwards. And the things that I got out of it. Rather than dwelling on how unhappy I was or</p>
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	Experience is past	anything like that.[#4: Seeing the shock]
Communication	<p>Verbal Communicative acts</p> <p>Is seeing passion in another's eyes, perceiving</p> <p>Is a seeing grounded with its meaning in familiarity with perceived experience</p> <p>Is intuitively feeling Is intuitively feeling what another person is verbally describing</p> <p>Is a feeling not always grounded in familiarity Is a feeling that might be hardwired</p> <p>Is a knowing that one attends to, even if implicitly only Is a knowing that can generate an action, one chooses to pay attention or not</p> <p>Is seeing another's passion in contextualized action</p> <p>Is a seeing that can lead to feeling another's experience</p> <p>Is a knowing that can be ignored Is a feeling that generates an action, ignoring it or not</p> <p>Sharing is grounded in another's verbal discourse</p>	<p>Verbal communication _ intuiting:</p> <p>Kayla: You know how people say you can see passion in the eyes? There are just no ways of measuring that, or even describe it. But most of it we have experienced ourselves. We know what enthusiasm is, even though we can't describe it. We know what happiness is, we know what excitement is, we know what passion and dedication is, so we are able to feel intuitively when people talk about something all these things. (...) I think that some feelings we might actually intuitively know. I don't know if we are born with such things, if it is hardwired, but sometimes we can feel something without having gone through it. But I don't know if this one is one of it. (...) I think that some parts of the brain do pay attention to it. But whether or not we choose, at that point in time, to pay attention to that, that is the question, I guess. What state we are at that moment, and what are our motives are for that particular moment. So if I am just walking on the street and if I see someone really passionate just playing the guitar and singing their heart on the street, I will stop and look and enjoy the enjoyment that that person is feeling. But if I am rushing to return a book to the library I will get there at once and not care about someone who is playing the guitar (R, L, T: all laugh). R: But you had registered it in a way? You think that in a way you would go through the busking guy and register, oh, there it is a passionate guy (L: yes), and keep on rushing. (L: yes!) you think (L: yes) .[#6: Seeing the passion]</p> <p>Verbal communication _ sharing:</p> <p>Lauren: Yes. I would be interested to hear what her experience was. Because when</p>

	<p>Sharing is remembering a similar past experience</p> <p>Verbal remark motivated by sharing experience</p> <p>Fear of having been rude brought about by viewing</p> <p>Sharing a story grounded in another's verbal discourse</p> <p>Feels like an attempt to connect with another person</p> <p>Need to reassure another that one has understood the verbally telling a story as a sharing attempt brought about in interview</p> <p>Motivation for sharing similar story is bonding</p> <p>Bonding achieved by sharing a similar past experience</p> <p>Visualization is grounded in language used (choice of words, repetition)</p> <p>Visualization is grounded in narrative context</p> <p>Visualization is grounded in language use (detail)</p>	<p>you told me that you believed in fairies, it was making me, it reminded me of believing in Santa Claus (L: uh uh) and remember feeling just really deceived? And you end up [end visuals] (L: yeah, yeah!) feeling like a little bit of an idiot, I mean, by not realizing they were just deceiving you? And so. But when I kind of said, oh, you're still looking for gnomes and fairies, now I was a little bit worried that you thought that I was taking a piss? When no, I wasn't, at all, I was probably just having a bit of a joke? (...) I understand that you find it quite a stupid story, but my experience was that it was totally relevant, because I was the one that said that the forests were kind of magical (L: yeah, yeah, that is true). I felt that you were telling a story that really connected with what I was trying to say. I could sense, maybe, and I didn't actually write this on the questionnaire or judge it down here but talking about it is coming out. You may think it is quite silly but I wanted you to know that I don't think that that was silly, but I was not able to communicate that to you....</p> <p>Alicia: (laughs) I think I might have written down on that thing there that that was one of the moments when I thought it was.... I don't know... This was after I told the story that I thought it was a silly story. But, at the time, the reason I told you, it was because I was trying to kind of connect. That we both had the same experience, we had this shared experience, the experience of the forest being quite magical... [#3: Fairies and Gnomes]</p> <p>Communication _ imagining:</p> <p>Aisha: Because you said that you had the best day, and you said that is was awesome, and you said that it was amazingly beautiful. And you repeated the word amazing twice, I think, when she talked about it. And from there it lead up to her description of this pool, and I really found that description to be so... Like. She</p>
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	<p>Visualization is shaped by another's discourse Visualization informs knowing of another's happiness</p>	<p>could have just said that it was a pool. But she described it, and filled that with detail, and she just made a picture for me and I visualized it, yeah (T: giggles). It looked beautiful, it looked really really cool. And I felt that that was probably a really, really good happy thing for her.[#3: Running out of things to say]</p>
	<p>Non-verbal Communicative acts</p> <p>Intuiting is an unsaid kind of dynamics Useless hiding attempts Two episodes with complementary pattern, roles inversed Knowing generates need to protect and rescue</p> <p>Is a non-verbally discussed knowing assumed to be correct, authentic, accurate It generates immediate reaction prior to confirmation</p> <p>Is a "certain" knowledge</p> <p>Doubts arise a posteriori</p> <p>Feels accurate</p> <p>Some people are less certain of the otherness of the experience</p> <p>Is a gut feeling that is perhaps related to the implicit perception of "microexpressions", minimal expressive behaviour</p>	<p>Non-verbal communication _ intuiting:</p> <p>Lauren: It is a bit unsaid, an unsaid kind of the dynamics (L: yeah yeah) Maybe you were trying to cover the feeling that it was a silly thing to say, and I was feeling a bit protective. I didn't want you to feel...</p> <p>Alicia: It's funny, that we both felt quite protective of each other, in a way, if I did sense that you.... Running out of things to say.... At the same time, you were, oh, she has embarrassed herself....Don't worry about that. I'll just try to show her that she didn't, but I don't think... (...) When we are actually having a conversation? (short silence) Well, I suppose that the running out of things to say, I think that I... and the fairy one, I think that we had made this assumption... I didn't think....Is it important? (pause) I just felt that it was true (giggles). I didn't need to test it, I just knew. So I reacted on response of that. I didn't go oh, she... yeah, there was no uncertainty. 'Cause I just... It was only afterwards, when we were discussing it, that I thought that I asked if that was what you were thinking, and you said yes. But at the time (giggles), it felt like fact, right? (giggles) I don't know if it makes sense. 'Cause the fairies one, did it feel like facts to you, that I felt uncomfortable?</p> <p>Zoe: (pause) I just had a sort of a sense, really. Not necessarily a fact, I wasn't sure whether that came from you (L: yeah, yeah, that is true). (...) I do really find that feeling in the gut. I've just mention that of micro-expressions? People have all these facial expressions (L: yeah...) some sort of timing. An unconscious sense of how someone by these tiny cues. I think that we</p>

	<p>Is feeling another's interest</p> <p>Shapes actions</p> <p>Is feeling another's interest due to another's questions</p> <p>Is feeling another's genuine interest</p> <p>Is knowing due to the "way" someone verbally expresses oneself</p> <p>Is manifesting more than the question itself</p> <p>Feels more immediate question</p> <p>Feels like spontaneous question</p> <p>Feels like more natural question</p> <p>Is intuiting another's interest</p> <p>Shapes future behaviour</p> <p>Is feeling connected</p> <p>One does not need to verbally communicate felt connection</p> <p>Is feeling connected due to a similar past experience</p> <p>Teller has no reception</p>	<p>have this intuitive gut" [#3: Running out of things to say]</p> <p>Megan: He started engaging with me and asking questions and I felt genuinely that he was interested. So there is a moment there I guessed I could stop rushing over everything. Because I was just going about, this is what happened bla bla bla, this is not really interesting. But then when he asked the question, I would be like oh, ok! I can tell a little bit more about that. And it happened throughout, I think. Every time he asked the question it got easier because I felt that he was genuinely interested in what I was talking about.</p> <p>R: Just because of the questions?</p> <p>Megan: But the way he delivered the question I think. He sounded like he was genuinely interested and curious about. (...) If somebody says that just like that, manifesting nothing but the question itself... but him, his reaction, just immediate. It didn't feel controlled. You know, when you are controlling how you act that to me feels more fake. Whereas when you just sort of go like, oh yes, ok! Then that to me is more natural (...) If I find that someone is bored or anything with something that I am talking about I will definitely use that to guide what I am... So I am constantly adjusting my behaviour to the person I am engaging with. [#5: Foreigner's fascination]</p> <p>Non-verbal communication _ Sharing:</p> <p>Aisha: I have one moment where I kind of felt connected. I don't know if it registered with you because I was not very overtly about it. When she said she questioned herself (T: uh), you're boring and you questioned whether if it is really you (T: uh)? That registered with me, but I wasn't going to talk about it. 'Cause I'm... I'm kind of went through a similar experience, so that registered with me? (...)</p> <p>Zoe: I didn't notice, I didn't realize that you</p>
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	<p>experience, not mutually acknowledged sharing</p> <p>Teller only notices behaviour</p> <p>Teller is pulled inwards, remembering</p> <p>Telling can be a selfish act</p> <p>Teller is focus in the memory</p> <p>Both focused in the memory</p> <p>Viewing highlight behaviour denunciative of experience, of introspective pull</p> <p>Lack of reception awareness justified by introspective pull</p> <p>Is sharing but sharing because</p> <p>It is not sharing because there is no mutual recognition</p> <p>It is not sharing because both 'selfish', pulled inwards towards their own memories</p> <p>Is is not sharing because it inot communicated</p> <p>Knowing is a conjecture</p> <p>Knowing grounded in another's observed situation and imaginative act</p>	<p>stopped, recorded, but I did noticed that you like talked a lot more about that and you starting talking about how it was like (pause) telling me how good it was actually I got, that I kind of got over that. I did notice that you had lots to say about that, but it didn't clock that it was because you had a similar experience.</p> <p>I guess I was being more selfish, 'cause I think I was thinking about, I was remembering how I felt and (short silence). Yeah, I guess I was thinking of myself actually at that point that is probably why... No, not in a bad way, but I was focusing on my own thing?</p> <p>L: I think maybe I did the same.</p> <p>T: Now that I see it, I was looking down at the table (pause). I think I went into my own little word, that is probably why I missed that she had related to that.(...)</p> <p>L: (long silence) We kind of went into our own world. When you have your own moment! I think that was... We shared it but we didn't really shared it? It was out there but I don't think we really (R: you were not sharing, T: No) We weren't recognizing. It was more for ourselves. I think that her talking about it was more for herself, me thinking about it, it was more for myself. Rather than (R: connected?) than us hanging on how 'you felt that way. I felt that way too'. [#4: Self-questioning]</p> <p>Non-verbal communication _ Imagining:</p> <p>Megan: I... I... It wasn't so much a realization so much as an expected feeling. I would expected it if I seat there, uh, what should I talk about, that he is feeling a bit awkward as well. Yeah. So I think I just expected. It is the natural response to feel sort of awkward because of this artificial setting. [#5: Comparison I and II]</p>
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