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From Defining Empathy to Mapping Empathy

M.A. thesis

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1. INTRODUCTION

Interest in empathy is growing in many fields including philosophy, psychology, and neurosciences. This vast research is overshadowed by a long ongoing debate over what empathy is and an agreement does not seem forthcoming. Thus, some researchers prefer to avoid the term empathy and most contemporary articles that deal with empathy begin with a remark about the vagueness of the term and a proposal for a working definition of empathy or of some subspecies of empathy.

The term 'empathy' was first introduced into the English language by an Amercian psychologist Edward Titchener in 1909 as a translation of Theodor Lipps' term 'Einfühlung'. Johann Gottfried Herder wrote of *sich einfühlen* in his philosophy of history in the second half of 18th century and both David Hume and Adam Smith used the term 'sympathy' to mean something that might be called empathy today. However, 'empathy' is a relatively new artificial term that was first invented for philosophical and psychological investigation. Only later has it become a frequently used concept in ordinary language where it is used in various meanings depending on the contexts in which it is being used. Ever since the introduction of the term, philosophers and scientists have come up with different meanings for it. C. Daniel Batson has claimed that there are as many as eight phenomena that have been termed 'empathy' across literature which are not different features or components of one thing that is empathy but rather conceptually distinct psychological states or interactions between minds that have each been called empathy (Batson, 2009). Different combinations of these (and other) phenomena are also often called empathy or referred to as subspecies of it (e.g. Coplan 2011, de Vignemont & Singer 2006, Goldie 2002, Snow 2000, Sober & Wilson 1998, etc).

In my thesis I will evaluate Amy Coplan's suggestion that we need a narrow conceptualization of empathy as presented in her 2011 paper „Will the real empathy please stand up? A case for a narrow conceptulization". The proposal is that since the wide variety of things called empathy are not relevantly similar to talk about instances of one phenomenon, we should distinguish *empathy proper* from other processes that are being called empathy and reserve the term 'empathy' for that phenomenon exclusively. I will raise some worries with Coplan's suggestion and propose a different approach to clearing up the

terminological issues in the empathy research. More precisely, I will argue that the term 'empathy' does not refer to a single natural kind but we can sensibly talk about a plurality of kinds of empathy and that there are motivating reasons for choosing this approach instead of opting for narrow conceptualization or eliminativism about empathy. I will argue that the best way forward for empathy research is to work out a clear conceptual framework of kinds of empathy and their interrelations without the assumption that any combination of these phenomena counts as empathy proper. I suggest that the best-suited tool for this job is a map on which different empathy related processes and their interrelations are presented. I will call this tool an *empathy map* and I will provide a preliminary version of it. How the map will eventually look like will be decided by future research.

I will return to Amy Coplan's view in the second part of my thesis to re-evaluate its real contribution to empathy research. Using Coplan's account as an example, I will demonstrate the principles by which we can decide how to place kinds of empathy on the map. I will argue that Coplan's account is plausibly of a sepcific type of empathy which plays an essential role in our social lives and in building relationships. Because of its role in our daily interactions with others, I will refer to it as interactional empathy. If that is the function of the phenomenon that Coplan calls empathy proper, a successful account of this subspecies of empathy would be a valuable part of the empathy map. However, I will show that Coplan's account conceived in this way, fails to deliver. The problem that Coplan's account has, namely that it sets too high standards for successful empathizing (from here on the *high standard problem*), is shared by a wide range of accounts of empathy and is especially characteristic of philosophical accounts (e.g. Goldie 2000, 2011; Snow 2000, etc) but also of psychological accounts (e.g. Singer & de Vignemont 2006). It follows that Coplan's account should either be revised or it could hold a different place on the map. I will schematize a possible way to overcome the high standards problem and to include interactional empathy on the map in the final part of my thesis.

The thesis proceeds as follows. In chapter 2 I will provide necessary terminology for understanding the discussion that follows. In chapter 3 I will investigate the terminological problems in empathy research that Coplan's narrow conceptualization is proposed as a solution to and I will discuss alternative solutions. In chapter 4 I will argue that the alternative solutions are preferrable to Coplan's solution and I will propose that creating an empathy map is the best way forward for empathy research. In chapter 5 I will illustrate how the map could take shape by re-evaluating the role of Coplan's account of emapthy and discussing its placement on the map.

2. DEFINITIONS AND THE TERMINOLOGICAL DISPUTE

In this chapter I will give a brief overview of some of the most commonly talked about processes that have been referred to as empathy, as subspecies of empathy, or as empathetic processes which contribute to empathy. The function of this chapter is to familiarize the reader with some of the phenomena that are widely discussed in empathy research and to introduce the terminology needed to understand the discussion that follows.

'Empathy' is a term used to mean different things in different contexts both in scientific and philosophical inquiry and in everyday life. It is mostly used to mean specific things but different ones, thus its meaning is often context sensitive rather than vague. However, there are also philosophical and scientific accounts that define empathy very broadly, so that many different combinations of different processes count as empathy (e.g. Hoffman 2000, Preston & de Waal 2002, de Waal 2008). In some cases, the term 'empathy' is also used in research papers without providing any clear definition, thus, leaving the meaning of the term vague (e.g. Barraza and Zak 2009).

In science, the assigned meaning of the term normally depends on the goal of the research. In everyday situations how the meaning gets determined is a matter of debate, but it means different things in different situations. For example, people may say that they feel empathy for the mentally ill, meaning that they are sorry for them. Or they might say that they have empathy for a friend who has to pack for a long trip, meaning that they would be annoyed if they had to do it. Or they might ask someone to empathize with them, wanting the other person to imagine what it is like for them to fly with a plane, considering that they are afraid of flying.

In the following list I have summerized the descriptions of the states that have been called empathy accross the philosophical and scientific literature on empathy[1]:

1. Emotional contagion – automatically / reflexively catching another's emotion without recognizing that the source of the emotion is another and without the requirement for self-other distinction (e.g. Darwall 1998: 264-6)

2. Facial empathy – automatically / reflexively catching another's emotion by way of mimicking another's facial expression (e.g. Gordon 1995: 729)

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[1] The list is in most aspects compatible with Batson's list in his 2009 article and it is most likely inconclusive.

3. Empathy for pain – the same areas in brain are activated when the subject receives pain and when she gets a signal that a another is receiving a painful stimulus or observes another who is receiving a painful stimulus (e.g. Singer et al. 2004, 2006; Singer & Hein, 2008)

4. Neural response matching, mirroring – perceiving another in some situation leads to having a matching neural state with the one observed (e.g. Iacoboni et al. 2005)

5. Cognitive empathy – mindreading by way of some cognitive process (such as perspective-taking, imagination, simulation, ToM, etc) (e.g. Smith 2009)

6. Phenomenological account of empathy – mindreading by way of observation without the mediation of cognitive processes (Zahavi 2014)

7. Emotional empathy/ affective empathy – coming to feel what the other feels by way of reflexive, nonconscious processes or cognitive processes (e.g Smith 2009)

8. Self-oriented perspective taking – imagining what it would be like to be in another's position (e.g. Coplan 2011)

9. Other-oriented perspective taking or empathetic perspective taking – imagining what it is like for another to be in another's position (Goldie 2002, 2011, Coplan 2011)

10. Sympathy, emotional concern – caring about what the other feels, e.g. feeling sorry *for* another. (Darwall 1998, Goldie 2002, Decety & Cowell 2014, de Waal 2008)

11. Basic empathy – recognizing others as mental beings (as opposed to inanimate objects) (e.g. Stueber 2006, Zahavi 2014)

Note that although I have here used different terms rather than just 'empathy' to refer to these phenomena, as is being often done, they are all sometimes called empathy both in scientific research and plausibly in ordinary language. For each of these phenomena there are contexts in which it makes sense to call them empathy. Thus, they are all empathy-related terms.

Since so many different phenomena are being called empathy, many theorists provide definitions of what they take empathy to be or stipulate a working definition for a research paper, in order to avoid confusion. These definitions do not overlap. As is clear from the list above, even the narrower phenomena are defined differently (e.g. sometimes 'emotional empathy' refers to a process that includes cognition and sometimes to processes that do not). Unfortunately, there is very little communication between researchers, and everyone just goes by their own definition. Philosophers sometimes argue for some definition over others to be able to capture the *real empathy*, but there is just as little consensus between philosophers as to what that definition should be.

The ordinary folk seem to do just fine using the context sensitive term and mean whatever they mean by it. The philosophical and scientific research is in trouble, however, for this vagueness in terminology and its use creates a lot of unnecessary confusion and leads to talking past each other. A deeper discussion of this point about confusingness and examples will follow in section 3.2.

3. AMY COPLAN'S CASE FOR A NARROW CONCEPTUALIZATION

Amy Coplan has argued that the terminological issues in empathy research should be solved by providing a narrow conceptualization of empathy. In this chapter I will provide a close analysis of Coplan's proposal. I will show that there is tension between the two main goals of Coplan's project. The first of these goals is to work out a clear conceptual framework that makes apparent the differences between distinct phenomena that get called empathy. The second goal is to show that this can only be achieved by defining empathy narrowly. I will argue that there are other options available that Coplan has not considered and that these other approaches may be better suited for the task.

3.1 Amy Coplan's proposal for a narrow conceptualization of empathy

In the 2011 paper „Will the real empathy please stand up? A case for a narrow conceptualization" Coplan argues that the term 'empathy' is too broad for fruitful research on empathic processes and hinders studying relations between these different processes. She argues that we need a framework of narrower terms, yet, she does not go as far as to abandon the term 'empathy' altogether but suggests that we should include it in the framework as one specific process among the many narrow processes.

> To summarize, the goal of my discussion here is to help to show why we need to refine our conceptual framework of empathy so as to distinguish clearly several related processes that too often get confused, conflated, or ignored. Complaining that there are too many things that get called empathy or that the concept is unclear is nothing new. Indeed, many, if not most, of the articles published on the topic of empathy in recent decades begin by acknowledging the slipperiness of the concept and stipulating a definition. (2011: 44)

If research of empathy-related processes proceeds as Coplan argues it should, then some things that have been previously thought of and talked of as subspecies of empathy, no longer get to be called types of empathy, while one mental process will be exclusively called empathy. Coplan calls the latter 'real empathy' or 'empathy proper' while stressing that other empathy-related processes are also very much research worthy, except not as empathy. Coplan posits a cognitive process that she calls other-oriented perspective taking, which is a process of trying to figure out what *the other person* feels in her situation. In contrast, one could try to empathize with another by way of self-oriented perspective taking, which is a process of trying to figure out what *oneself* would feel in that situation. On Coplan's account, the former is necessary for empathizing. Though Coplan is not completely explicit about it,

many paragraphs in her paper suggest that her view is that a phenomenon counts as empathy, only if it leads to an *understanding* of another person's experience. She writes:

> /---/ in some cases, self-oriented perspective taking provides *some understanding* of the other's experience. But though it can lead to quasi-empathic experiences, it does so only in cases where there is a great deal of overlap between self and other or where the situation is the type that would lead to a fairly universal response. (2011: 54; my emphasis)
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> In my view, this process [empathy proper] is the only one that can *provide experiential understanding* of another person, or understanding of another from the "inside." (ibid.: 58; my emphasis)

Thus, the function of empathy, on Coplan's view is to provide experiential understanding of another's experience *as another's experience*. Should we join her in demanding this outcome from anything that deserves to be called empathy? Perhaps not, some researchers of empathy would say. Dan Zahavi, for one, argues in his 2014 monograph „Self and Other: Exploring Subjectivity, Empathy, and Shame" that at least one function of empathy is simply to make us experience other beings with mental lives as mental beings as opposed to non-living objects. Another necessary condition for something to count as empathy proper, on Coplan's account, is matching of the empathizer's and the target person's affective states. This requirement, again, is not accepted by all empathy researchers, and as I will argue in the 5th chapter of the thesis, there are good reasons for rejecting affective matching as a necessary condition for the kind of concept of empathy that Coplan is defending. For my purposes here, it is enough to point out that Coplan's definition of empathy proper is not uncontroversial and other empathy researchers might question both her proposed function of empathy and the requirements she postulates as necessary for serving that function. I agree with Coplan's observation that:

> We need greater precision in our conceptualizations of the myriad processes that get called empathy, and we need to specify as clearly and systematically as possible what the different processes are, how each one works, and why each one matters. (2011: 44)

Yet, I am not convinced that proposing a definition of empathy will get us much closer to this goal.

Coplan observes that "/---/ many, if not most, of the articles published on the topic of empathy in recent decades begin by acknowledging the slipperiness of the concept and stipulating a definition" (ibid.: 44). Christian Miller has criticised Coplan's paper for setting out to do the job that has been done, already, in philosophical discussion of empathy (Miller 2011). Namely, Coplan is not the first to provide a narrow definition of empathy, and thus her project is not as original as she presents it as being. To give an example, Nancy E. Snow

has proposed a narrow definition of empathy in her paper "Empathy" (2000) in philosophical literature.[2] On Snow's account S empathizes with O's experience of emotion E if and only if: (i) O feels E, (ii) S feels E because O feels E, and (iii) S knows or understands that O feels E (2000: 68). Perhaps the best known narrow definition of empathy in the field of psychology is De Vignemont's and Singer's (2006) account. On this account one is empathetic if and only if "(i) one is in an affective state, (ii) this state is isomorphic to another person's affective state; (iii) this state is elicited by the observation or imagination of another person's affective state; (iv) one knows that the other person is the source of one's own affective state." Thus, an argument in favour of Coplan's account of empathy and against other narrow conceptualizations of empathy is in order. Otherwise it is hard to see why one should adopt Coplan's definition rather than some other definition. Coplan does give reasons why the phenomenon that she calls real empathy is the appropriate referent for the term ʿempathyʾ and this will be discussed in chapter 5 of the thesis. Nevertheless, Coplan does not address other narrow definitions of empathy that can be found in the empathy literature. Nor does she show that these other things are *not* appropriately called empathy. Furthermore, given that many narrow definitions of empathy and subspecies of empathy are actually available, providing yet another one does not do the clarifying work that Coplan hopes it would do. Providing another definition does little to disrupt the current practice of proposing different definitions for empathy. Paragraphs in Coplan's paper suggest that she sees a need for a disruption.

> There are currently numerous competing conceptualizations of empathy circulating the literature, which makes it difficult to keep track of which process or mental state the term is being used to refer to in any given discussion. (2011: 42)

Thus, there is tension between the two things that Coplan aims to accomplish with her paper: creating a theoretical framework that makes salient the relevant interrelations between the multiple processes that get referred to as empathy, on the one hand, and proposing a narrow definition of empathy that strictly limits the use of the term ʿempathyʾ to a specific process, on the other. While I am very sympathetic to Coplan's quest for a clearer framework of processes that get to be called empathy, it is evident that proposing a definition of real empathy or empathy proper is not likely to serve this purpose. I will return to this pont in chapter 4.

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[2] Elliott Sober & David Sloan Wilson (1998), Peter Goldie (2002), Darwall (1998).

3.2 Three ways of narrowing down the terminology

To better understand why Coplan proposes narrow conceptualization of empathy, in the first place, a consideration of her criticism's target is in order. Coplan's project is motivated by a worry that a Russian doll model of empathy presented and defended in Stephanie Preston's and Frans de Waal's 2002 paper "Empathy: Its ultimate and proximate basis" leads to confusion in empathy research. Roughly, the view is that any empathetic processes, such as emotional contagion and perspective-taking, count as having (some) empathy. De Waal defines empathy as:

> /---/ the capacity to a) be affected by and share the emotional state of another, b) assess the reasons for the other's state, and c) identify with the other, adopting his or her perspective. This definition extends beyond what exists in many animals, but I employ the term "empathy" even if only the first criterion is met as I believe all of these elements are evolutionarily connected.[3]

Coplan states that broad conceptualization has become a norm in current empathy research. As an example she lists Hoffman's account among others. An empathetic response, according to Hoffman, requires "the involvement of *psychological processes* that make a person have feelings that are more congruent with another's situation than with his own situation" (Hoffman 2000: 30; my emphasis). Hoffman defines empathy in terms of outcome, but does not specify which are the necessary processes for achieving empathy. These processes can be either lower-level processes like emotional contagion, that do not involve consciousness, or higher-level processes like perspective taking that do. That is why Hoffman's account allows for many things to count as empathy. Coplan's worry is that all accounts that take the umbrella-term approach feed the problems that arise from the lack of clear terminological distinctions such as confusing and conflating different phenomena with each other.

Is Coplan right in her observation that using an umbrella-term leads to confusion and talking past each other? I believe that there is some truth to it. In Frans de Waal's book "The Age of Empathy: Nature's Lessons for a Kinder Society" the reader finds comments on primate's behaviour like "It's just awful to watch others in pain, which is, of course, the whole point of empathy" (2009: 75). De Waal's loose use of the term, which allows him to call different processes empathy, makes it difficult to agree with his claim here or to oppose it. Perhaps partly because of the recent growing popularity of empathy as a research object, the term 'empathy' is often included in neuroscience and psychology papers too lightly, without sufficient care and consideration. See, for example, the paper by Barraza and Zak

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[3] http://www.emory.edu/LIVING_LINKS/empathy/faq.html (12.04.2016)

(2009), where the relation between oxytocin levels and empathy is studied. You will find that empathy lacks any clear definition in the paper, which makes it hard to evaluate the results of the study. A wide or vague definition allows using formulations that may lead to some confusion and conflating of different processes. I think that we can agree that it makes it harder to keep track of empathy research and harder to have a content-rich dialogue between researchers.

However, allowing that there are different subtypes of empathy does not necessarily mean that these types are not being clearly distinguished from each other. Researchers tend to distinguish between many narrower empathy-related phenomena such as emotional contagion, affective empathy and cognitive empathy and there is at least some consistency in the use of these terms (e.g. Smith 2009, de Vignemont and Singer 2006, Rogers et al. 2007, Decety and Cowell 2014,) There is also consistency in the differentiation between sympathetic and empathetic responses (Darwall 1998, Goldie 2000, Decety 2010a, Batson 2009, Decety & Cowell 2014). In fact, many if not most influential contemporary empathy theorists, including those researchers who think of ʿempathyʾ as a broad umbrella-term, use narrow terminology and differentiate between empathetic processes, that contribute to empathy, or between subspecies of empathy. Jean Decety, perhaps the most productive and best known neuroscientist who studies empathy, recognizes the need for making a clear distinction between narrower processes and writes:

> Given the complexity of what encompasses the phenomenological experience of empathy, investigation of its neurobiological underpinnings would be worthless without breaking down this construct into component processes. In spite of reports in the popular press that give the appealing, yet wrong, notion that the organization of psychological phenomena maps in a 1: 1 fashion into the organization of the underlying neural substrate, in reality, empathy, like other social cognitive processes, draws on a large array of brain structures and systems. (2010b: 2)

I will discuss Coplan's reason for not accepting this more specific terminology of subtypes of empathy and empathetic processes, shortly. Before that, however, a clarification concerning the different senses in which the object of empathy research can be narrowed down, would be helpful. To do this I have divided the ways in which researchers narrow down the phenomena they study into three categories. I will refer to these approaches as the *kinds view*, the *construct view*, and the *narrow view*.

1. *Kinds view*

   There are different subspecies of empathy, which do not make up one thing that is empathy. An example is emotional empathy/ affective empathy and cognitive empathy. As defined in most papers, to have emotional empathy the empathizer

necessarily has to be in an *affective state* that is caused by another's real or imagined mental states but this state does not necessarily have to be achieved by a cognitive process. To have cognitive empathy the empathizer needs to be in some cognitive state, or employ some cognitive process to achieve understanding of another's mental states but an affective component is not necessary. This type of narrowing the concepts is especially common in the field of psychology. This approach differs from de Waal's in that kinds of empathy do not make up one thing that is empathy. (See e.g. Darwall, 1998)

2. *Construct view*

   There are different empathetic processes that make up one multilayered thing that is empathy. All there is to study in empathy research are the underlying empathetic processes that contribute to our empathetic experiences and abilities. The goal is to clearly distinguish between processes that our ability for empathy relies on, to study the distinct qualities of these processes and their interrelations. The assumption is that there is something that is empathy, but it cannot be studied as a whole and does not need to be strictly limited to some processes and not others. This approach is most common to neuroscientific empathy research but can also be found in papers from other fields. (See e.g. Decety 2010b)

3. *Narrow view*

   *S*trictly limiting the use of the term 'empathy' to a combination of specific processes and not others. (Coplan 2010)

Those who prefer the second approach, do not usually drop the idea that there is something that is empathy, that needs to be explained by way of explaining a collection of processes that make up empathy (see e.g. Decety 2010b: 4). Decety also defines empathy as "the ability to recognize the emotions and feelings of others with a minimal distinction between self and other (ibid.: 2)". Decety's definition differs from Coplan's in that it does not specify which processes are responsible for achieving empathy or necessary for it, while Coplan's account does. This is what makes Coplan's conceptualization a narrow one. It defines empathy in terms of necessary processes, not just in terms of outcome. The Russian Doll model of empathy, proposed by de Waal, suggests that his approach falls under the construct view category. On de Waal's account:

> Empathy covers all the ways in which one individual's emotional state affects another's, with
> simple mechanisms at its core and more complex mechanisms and perspective-taking abilities
> as its outer layers. Because of this layered nature of the capacities involved, we speak of the

Russian doll model, in which higher cognitive levels of empathy build upon a firm, hard-wired basis /---/. (2008: 287)

His view differs from the classic examples of multi-layered construct view in that he allows that levels of empathy or empathetic processes may be called empathy, too. He proposes that all these processes are evolutionarily connected, and thus having any of these processes working in you counts as having some empathy. This is perhaps not something that Decety would be likely to agree with. In fact, Decety and de Waal might not agree over what the exact layers of empathy are. Even so, they share the general picture of the structure of empathy and they are both interested in studying the layers of empathy and their development in humans (Decety) and in animals (de Waal).

Darwall falls under the kinds approach category on my list. He makes a clear distinction between emotional contagion and empathy that involves perspective-taking, which he calls projective empathy, as does Coplan. Differently from Coplan, however, emotional contagion is a primitive kind of empathy on Darwall's account, while projective empathy is a more sophisticated kind of empathy.

Emotional contagion is only a primitive form of empathy, involving no projection into the other's standpoint nor even, necessarily, any awareness of the other as a distinct self. /---/ Early on, however, infants begin to develop the rudiments of perspective taking that underlie more sophisticated forms of empathy. (Darwall 1998: 266-7)

The difference between the construct view and the kinds view has not gained attention in empathy research. If we want to have a clear framework of the phenomena that get referred to as empathy, this is an important distinction, however, as will be demonstrated in the next chapter. To make that distinction clear, from here on, I will be speaking of *empathetic processes* or *levels* of empathy when I am referring to processes that make up a multilayered thing that is empathy or a kind of empathy. I will be speaking of *subspecies* of empathy, or *kinds* of empathy, or *types* of empathy when I am referring to independent phenomena that are not levels or layers of one thing that is empathy. This difference is usually not made explicit or researchers talk about empathetic processes and kinds of empathy interchangeably.[4]

3.2.1 Coplan's no uniformity objection and a response

I will now consider Coplan's reasons for thinking that the first and the second approach are not suitable for clearing up the empathy-related terminology. Coplan addresses this

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[4] See e.g. Zahavi's summary of Stueber's account of empathy. (2014: 102 & 154)

question only briefy in a footnote (2011: 51, fn 17), where she offers two reasons for rejecting these solutions. Firstly, she points out that these narrower terms that refer to subspecies of empathy or empathetic processes are not used uniformly. While some researchers allow that emotional empathy does not need to include cognition (like emotional contagion), others refer with the term 'emotional empathy' to more advanced processes that require the involvement of cognitive processes. Is this creating confusion as Coplan suggests, it is? Coplan does not provide examples, but they can be found. For instance, orbitofrontal cortex is usually thought to play a role in our cognitive capacities but recently neuroscientists have started to look for evidence of its involvement in affective empathy (Brink et al. 2011, etc). The experiments designed to measure brain activity during affective empathy tasks have given rise to inconsistent results. A possible reason for this is that researchers define 'affective empathy' differently and thereby measure different things. This possibility is acknowledged by Brink and collegues:

> It still remains an open question why other studies on the same issue did not find OFC activations for affective and cognitive empathy (see Hein and Singer, 2008). /---/ there are several ways of defining and assessing empathy and the relationship of its components. For example, "affective ToM," "affective perspective-taking," and "affective empathy" are often used synonymously, but do not always really describe and measure the same process, as these concepts can focus on different aspects. Thus, it can be discussed whether the notion of affective empathy in terms of a social cognition process differs from the notion of affective empathy in terms of pain in others (e.g. Decety et al., 2008; Hein and Singer, 2008). (2011, p 10)

As it is, the narrower terminology should be more precise to avoid the researchers from talking past one another. But this does not mean that it *couldn't* be. Perhaps the problems in narrower terminology are present not due to the *nature* of the phenomena that these terms refer to but rather due to some practical issues in the way the research is carried out. If the latter is the case, as I will show that it plausibly is in chapter 4, the problems could be overcome by making slight changes to the practice. For now, however, the takeaway point is that the current situation should not be enough to abandon the construct or kinds approach for not using uniform terminology without first showing that it could not be approved.

3.2.2 Coplan's no essential similarity objection

In his critical review of Coplan's paper Miller expresses concern that Coplan's disagreement with her opponents may be only terminological. Coplan prefers a taxonomy which includes one kind of empathy (empathy proper) and other kinds of nonempathetic processes (emotional contagion, self-oriented perspective taking) while her opponents have

been distinguishing between different kinds of empathy so that one kind is empathy proper (in Coplan's sense), a second kind is emotional contagion, a third kind is self-oriented perspective taking, and so on. Thus, Coplan's suggestion for a narrower conceptualization might be a practical one, but philosophically uninteresting. As I will explain next, this criticism is unfair.

The second claim that Coplan makes, though in passing, for rejecting the talk of subtypes of empathy is that the processes that get referred to as kinds of empathy are different enough in their causes, effects, phenomenology and underlying processes in the brain, that they should not be thought of as subspecies of the same thing. (Coplan 2011: 44-5 and 51) It follows that according to Coplan research that uses an umbrella term (research that adopts the construct view) and research that uses specific terms to refer to subtypes of empathy (kinds view) are guilty of the same mistake. The mistake is the following. Using the umbrella term allows referring to any empathetic process as empathy. When specific terminology is used to refer to narrow processes, then formulations like 'x kind of empathy' or 'empathetic process x' are used, instead. Coplan's criticism is that both taxonomies endorse the view that processes like emotional contagion, affective empathy and mindreading have something essential in common and they do not. This criticism might not apply to a rigorous kinds view as I will argue, in the next section. For now, however, we need to get clear on Coplan's criticism which is that both terminologies endorse the view that these phenomena have something essential in common and, therefore, are misleading and should be abandoned. Instead, we should determine one thing that is empathy and reserve the term 'empathy' to that thing exclusively. This claim is much more than just a statement about preference of word use. Indeed, the implicit claim appears to be that the term 'empathy' does not refer to a single (natural or constructed) kind, and that if we want to have a research in social cognition, it should. Thus, we ought to single out one (natural or constructed) kind and call only the instances of that kind empathy. I agree with Coplan in that 'empathy' refers to many different phenomena. I want to argue, however, that the solution offered by Coplan is not our only option, nor is it our best option. In the following section I will provide an alternative solution and in chapter 4 I will argue that this is the solution we should opt for.

3.2.3 Should we be eliminativists about empathy? An alternative approach to the no similarity objection

On an alternative approach, a rigorous kinds view is not subject to the no similarity objection. This approach comes from emotion research and refers back to memory research.

Thus, I will begin by giving two analogies from emotion and memory terminology to demonstrate the relevant similarities between the terminological issues in empathy research, emotion research, and memory research.

Fear of spiders, for example, which can be automatic and almost entirely experienced as physical is plausibly different from fear of failure in all aspects that Coplan lists, but we can still sensibly call these things fear in English. We routinely say things like 'I am afraid of spiders' or 'I am afraid of thunder' and 'I am afraid of giving public speeches' or 'I am afraid of failing the exam', etc. Jesse Prinz, for example, has suggested that both types of emotions are instances of fear, but differ in their inner causes, so that fear of snakes is triggered by perceptual states, while fear of exams is more likely to be triggered by cognitive states (Prinz 2004: 74–5). Barrett (2006), on the other hand, has similarly to Coplan argued that there is no one-to-one correspondence between any response-profile and/or underlying mechanisms, and say the instances emotion of fear. I.e., there are no causes, effects, phenomenological characteristics, or underlying neural processes that apply to all and only instances of what we call 'fear' in the English language and, thus, fear is not a natural kind.

Another example comes from memory research. The terminology that is used in memory research is analogical to the one used in empathy research. In memory research subspecies of memory are distinguihed, such as explicit and implicit memory. Explicit memory includes the memories we are consciously aware of having and implicit memory includes our unconscious memory of skills like tying shoelaces. People can lose one sort of memory while retaining the other. For example, patients with damage to temporal lobe, parahippocampal cortex and ventromedial prefrontal cortex show sever deficits in explicit memory while they can efficiently perform tasks like buttoning their shirt or even learning new skills without remembering ever having learned them. On the other hand, some patients with dementia lose their ability to recall how to turn on the lights while being able to recall their past life events fairly well. (see e.g. Kolb & Whishaw 2009: 494-5) Experiments have shown that the cerebellum is responsible for classical conditioning for motor reactions. For example rabbits who are being blown air into their eyes after a signal, learn to blink their eyes after the signal even if there is no air. They fail to do so, if their cerebellum is lesioned. (Lee & Thompson 2006) There is also a distinction between semantic and episodic memory, which means that a person has separate neural systems responsible for the recollection of facts and detailed autobiographical memories (Tulving 2002). In addition to these distinctions, researchers separate emotional memory from other kinds of memory which can include both explicit and implicit memory. For example, in case of classical conditioning of

fear, the amygdala rather than the cerebellum is responsible (see e.g. LaBar et al. 1998, Kolb & Whishaw 2009: 512-13). These are all considered memory processes or kinds of memory, although very different from each other in causes, effects, phenomenology, and underlying processes in the brain. The reason is plausibly that these processes relate in some way or another to our folk conception of memory and that these processes sometimes get called memory.

As we can see, what Coplan said in her criticism of empathy research, she could also say about emotion or memory research. Namely, if all instances that are referred to as fear, or as memory, or as empathy do not have at least some shared quality(ies), then there can't be a single (natural or social) kind that these terms refer to. In case of emotions this has been argued on several occasions (see e.g. Barrett 2006).

Having established that there is no single natural kind that the term 'empathy' refers to, a more natural approach than proposing a definition of empathy that narrows down the scope of the term to one natural kind, seems to be eliminativism about empathy. Coplan does not consider this option. While it may be impossible and unnecessary for the laypeople to drop the term 'empathy', it might be an available and, perhaps, the best option for the scientists. As I suggested above, Coplan's criticism does not necessarily apply to the kinds view and, I will continue to argue that another option would be that there is a pluarility of natural kinds of empathy. Andrea Scarantino has argued that this approach should be used in emotion research (2012). Scarantino's approach, though targeted at emotions, is well-suited for analysing empathy due to the relevant similarites between the two research fields as demonstrated with the analogies above. When Scarantino talks about natural kinds he does not mean ontologically independent categories that are discoverable, but not created by the human mind (as opposed to constructed kinds or social kinds). Instead, a natural kind is a "theoretically homogenous category for purposes of scientific extrapolation" (2012: 359). In this sense a category is a natural kind if a discovery about one instance of that kind is a discovery about all instances of that kind. In this sense a constructed kind (like money or monarchy) can also be a natural kind. Categories like "things taller than 1 meter" cannot, since they have arbitrary boundaries. For my purposes here, too, it is irrelevant whether kinds of empathy are natural or constructed. Rather a category counts as a *kind* of empathy as long as instances of that kind are instances of the same phenomenon. I could, thus, talk about natural kinds in the same sense as Scarantino does, but I prefer to use a more theory-neutral language and talk about kinds of empathy to stay out of the debate concerning the nature of natural kinds.

According to Scarantino, when phenomena get referred to as 'long term memory', there is a specific (natural) kind that they are instances of. The set of its instances is not the same set as the set of the members of memory category. On Scarantino's view, if all or most things that get referred to as long term memory are also the things that get referred to as memory in the English language, then it makes sense to count long term memory as a (natural) kind of memory. And there are other (natural) kinds of memory like explicit and implicit memory, etc. This approach could easily be applied to empathy research where the problems are very similar.

> The similarity condition spells out what it takes for a new category K to count as a natural kind *of* emotion/anger/fear/etcetera, as opposed to a natural kind having nothing to do with emotion/anger/fear/etcetera. The latter case is a distinct possibility. For instance, if *no* member of a natural kind K were a member of the traditional category of emotion/anger/fear/etcetera, it would make no sense to count K as a natural kind of emotion/anger/fear/etcetera. This would not detract in any way from the scientific importance of K. It would only detract from its ability to qualify as a natural kind of emotion/anger/fear/etcetera.. (ibid.: 366)

It follows that Coplan's criticism that was discussed in the previous section does not necessarily apply to the kinds view. On a rigorous kinds view there is no such thing as empathy, but many different processes which are similar enough to each other (and different enough from other mental processes) to be called 'kinds of empathy', but don't need to share any essential similarity. Analogically analytic and continental philosophy are similar enough to each other and different enough from other disciplines to be called 'kinds of philosophy', but they don't share anything essentially. Scarantino's approach is incompatible with the construct-view, but leaves the kinds-view as a live alternative.

The choice between eliminativism about empathy, on the one hand, and the view that there is a plurality of kinds of empathy, on the other, is essentially a terminological one. Either way there is no one thing that is taken to be empathy. Instead, there is a plurality of phenomena that may be interrelated in various ways but are not aspects or layers of one phenomenon. The question is, then, rather about whether there are any good reasons that would motivate linking these phenomena to the category of things that can be sensibly called 'empathy' in English. If we want to relate the research to the tradition of empathy research or folk psychology and perhaps study, among other phenomena, what it is that we expect from others when we ask them to empathize with us, keeping the term may be the preferable

choice. Other reasons have also been provided by empathy researchers (See e.g. Zahavi 2014).[5]

In the absence of any such motivating reasons, the term could certainly be dropped and replaced with a different kind of technical terminology. Within this thesis, however, I will assume that the reasons I provided are enough to justify the continuation of *empathy research*. Indeed, philosophically most interesting thing to study may be the things we expect from others, when we ask them to empathize with us. It seems that explaining these processes is what motivates most philosophical accounts of empathy – we want to learn about empathy's role in our relationships with others and its relevance to morality, etc.

Finally, one might wonder if Coplan's central aim is really incompatible with the rigorous kinds view that I have presented above. The main target of Coplan's criticism is the construct-view, so maybe the leading idea of her paper is rather that each of the phenomena, that Coplan distinguishes, is worthy of distinctive conceptualization, and that her proposal to call other-oriented perspective taking *real* empathy is only secondary to that aim. And hence, if it were shown that a kinds view is not subject to the objection that it endorses the view that all kinds of empathy share something essentially, Coplan could just as well opt for the plurality of kinds view. Perhaps Coplan would, indeed, accept this approach as a viable alternative to defining empathy narrowly. However, this possibility is made less plausible by the fact that Coplan devotes considerable amount of space in her paper to showing that her proposed phenomenon is the most appropriate referent for the term 'empathy'. Indeed, Coplan's position is that having a narrow concept of empathy is not only beneficial for the purposes of scientific research but also for building trust and relationships. Thus, it is implausible that for Coplan providing a narrow definition of empathy proper is only a matter of verbal preference. I will return to this point in chapter 5.

So far I have only pointed out that there are alternative ways to revise the terminology that Coplan has neglected. I have said little in opposition to Coplan's approach of narrow conceptualization. In the next chapter I will criticise Coplan's approach to clearing up the terminology more thoroughly and will propose an alternative way to continue empathy research. From this chapter, however, the main takeaway point is that Coplan's criticism of the current terminology of empathetic processes as being irreparably and necessarily

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[5] Dan Zahavi, for one, has suggested that a reason that would motivate keeping the term is that it would help us keep in mind the irreducible difference between our knowledge of external objects, our self-knowledge, and our knowledge of others as outlined in early phenomenological accounts of empathy. (See Zahavi 2014: 152)

confusing due to lack of unity and lack of similarity between things that are studied under the label of empathy is plausibly mistaken, or at least, needs more backing up than Coplan provides.

4. EMPATHY MAP

In the previous chapter I suggested that there is tension between the two goals of Coplan's project: building a clear conceptual framework of empathy, on the one hand, and providing a narrow conceptualization, on the other. I argued that Coplan's criticism of the practice of using an umbrella-concept of empathy is not only verbal in nature. I suggested that a better interpretation of Coplan's claim is that both the construct-view and the kinds-view endorse the position that the things that are referred to as empathy are instances of one phenomenon or one kind and they are not. Coplan proposes that this misleading impression should be eliminated by defining empathy narrowly. I have demonstrated that a rigorous kinds view is not subject to Coplan's criticism because it does not assume that the things called empathy must share any essential similarity. Thus, adopting the kinds view is an alternative way to continue the empathy research. In this chapter I will argue that it is the better way. I will propose a tool for avoiding conceptual confusion in empathy research and show how using this tool would lead to progress in the field.

4.1 Problems with narrow conceptualization: criticism of Coplan's approach

Providing new definitions for the term 'empathy' is what is at the root of terminological issues in empathy research. Thus, providing another one seems hardly a good way to fix the problem. There is no reason why other researchers should adopt Coplan's definition of empathy, even if they are wholeheartedly agreeing with Coplan in that different processes that get referred to as empathy should be clearly distinguished from each other. For instance, Dan Zahavi, whose philosophical work is in great proportion devoted to the phenomenon of empathy, argues for a rather different definition of empathy. Recall that on Coplan's account the three markers of empathy are other-oriented perspective taking, affective matching and clear self-other differentiation. On Zahavi's account (or the phenomenological account of empathy as he labels it), the first two of these are unnecessary for empathy. For acquiring empathetic understanding of another, one does not need to engage in any imaginative processes nor share the emotions of the target person. To be empathetically acquainted with one's friend's love for his wife, one does not need to share that love. To understand that someone who sees their loved one and smiles is happy, we do not have to imagine what they

would feel when meeting their loved one – we just see that they are happy without the mediation of our imagination. (Zahavi 2014)

Zahavi does not argue that the term 'empathy' should be singularly used to refer to the phenomenon that *he* refers to as empathy, but he would say that his account is as eligible for the label as Coplan's. In his own work Zahavi reserves the term 'empathy' for the process of (emotionally) understanding another without the aid of imagination nor sharing the other's emotion, but he stresses that he is not promoting the phenomenological account as the *right* account of empathy. Given that the notion of empathy has been used to designate very different phenomena in the decades of research, Zahavi suggetsts that the project of determining what empathy really is, might not make much sense (Zahavi 2014: 152). Zahavi also stresses that, on the phenomenological account, empathy is a many-layered phenomenon which "takes different forms, … has different stages or levels" (ibid.: 151).

Thus, Zahavi' account of empathy falls into the construct views' category in my categorization. But he seems also favourable of the approach that there are many kinds of empathy as long as what makes these different phenomena kinds of empathy is that they can all be sensibly called empathy in the English language. If this is the case, Zahavi's account is an account of one kind of empathy, which in turn is a many-layered construct. Perhaps a different categorisation would be more appropriate, but for the present purposes it does not matter. The main point I am trying to make is that there is no good reason for reserving the term 'empathy' for just one natural or social kind. In case of empathy we do not have many competing accounts of the same phenomenon, rather we have accounts of many distinct phenomena. The situation we are in is not one where we have found a thing in the world for which we are searching a name, rather we have found a name for which we are searching a thing to correspond to. It follows that calling some particular thing real empathy or limiting the use of the term 'empathy' would not make our empathy-talk carry any substantially new information or be in any way illuminating.

It will now become clearer why I think that it is important to distinguish between the construct view and the kinds view. Construct views, alike narrow views, postulate some definition of *empathy* and not of a *kind of empathy*. Though on the construct view the term 'empathy' is not necessarily reserved for a single kind (e.g de Waal's Russian Doll model), its application is limited and excludes phenomena like basic empathy – the ability to recognize others as minded beings (Stueber 2006: 131-71, Zahavi 2011: 552). Therefore, though broader in scope, it will have the same problem of arbitrariness as the narrow definition. If there are more than one broad definitions of empathy, there will be no

independent basis for deciding which one is the right one. If, however, a pluarility of kinds view is adopted, different definitions of kinds of empathy will not be competing definitions as long as they are definitions of different phenomena and they will not be incompatible with each other.[6]

A similar point is made by John Michael concerning shared emotions:

> /---/ different researchers have proposed to conceptualize shared emotions in different ways— and … at least some participants to the debate take these different proposals to be incompatible. In this brief discussion, I will be arguing that these different proposals are in fact not incompatible, and that they only appear to be incompatible if one assumes that there is just one natural kind for which the term "shared emotion" should be reserved. In the absence of any compelling argument in favor of adopting this assumption, I suggest that it should be dropped, and that we should acknowledge that the term "shared emotion" refers to a motley of overlapping phenomena that do not make up a single natural kind. In view of this, the most productive way forward is for researchers to be as clear as possible about *what they are trying to explain* in proposing a particular conception of shared emotions. (Michael 2016; my emphasis)

In line with Michael's proposal, I suggest that the right direction for empathy research to move in is determining kinds of empathy and empathetic processes and not conceptualizing empathy narrowly as suggested by Coplan nor defining empathy broadly as suggested by the construct view. I do, however, agree with Coplan that the terminology that is currently used to designate subspecies of empathy and empathetic processes needs to be tidied up. In the next section I will propose an alternative approach for achieving this goal.

4.2 Empathy map

In this section I will argue that the way forward for empathy research is to construct a taxonomy of kinds of empathy and their underlying empathetic processes and creating a map that depicts these phenomena and their interrelations. In other words I propose that we need a tool for systematising discoveries about kinds of empathy and that there is nothing that is over and above these kinds to study in empathy research.

I argued in section 3.2.1 that we have reason to think that Coplan is justified in claiming that there is no uniformity between definitions even on the level of specific concepts of empathetic processes and subspecies of empathy. This is also reflected in the list of empathy-related terms I have provided in the second chapter. I also pointed out that terminological disagreements and consequent confusions on the level of specific empathetic processes and subspecies of empathy can be overcome.

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[6] Unless they are incompatible for other reasons than for simply being different definitions of empathy.

Here is an example of how this may be done. If some kinds of empathy such as affective empathy turn out to be too broad for certain research goals, researchers should be aware of it and determine a narrower phenomenon that is the object of that given research project. I will use the example of affective empathy. Affective empathy can be defined as the process of coming to feel what the other feels (or is believed to feel) by way of cognition *or* automatically and without the involvement of cognition. Sometimes it is defined more narrowly, though, as a process that necessarily involves cognition *or* as a process that does not. Since the term is sometimes used in the broader sense, it would help if researchers were very clear about it when they used the term narrowly. Indeed, the best approach would be to assign a narrower term for each of these phenomena. In fact, Adam Smith (2009: 490-1) has distinguished respectively between indirect emotional empathy (cognition is involved) and direct emotional empathy (cognition is not involved). For other projects, however, where involvement of affect (and not the process by which it is achieved) is studied, a broader kind may be a better suited object of research. So, sometimes we might want to learn about affective empathy (in the broad sense) and sometimes we migh want to learn about indirect affective empathy. Analogically water is a natural kind H_2O and H_2O in turn is made up of natural kinds hydrogen atoms and oxygen atoms. Sometimes we want to find out new things about water and sometimes we want to find out new things about oxygen atoms.

To make the distinction between forms of empathy with different levels of complexity more clear, relying on the contemporary literature in the field, we can distinguish between three subcategories of empathy. There are processes that are sometimes referred to as *low-level empathy* – these are empathetic processes and subspecies of empathy that do not involve cognition (e.g. emotional contagion, mirroring of another's body position, etc.). Secondly, there are processes that fall under the *high-level empathy* category– these are empathetic processes and subspecies of empathy that do involve cognition (e.g. mindreading, perspective taking, etc.). Finally, there are kinds that I will be referring to as *combined* empathy. Combined kinds of empathy are phenomena that involve more than one specific high-level and/or low-level phenomenon (see e.g. Coplan 2011, P. Goldie 2002, Snow 2000, etc.). Low-level empathy, high-level empathy, and combined empathy are not meant to be understood as kinds of empathy themselves. If we can make scientifically illuminating discoveries about instances of low-level empathy that can be extrapolated to all instances of low-level empathy it might constitute a kind, though. This question, however, can be decided by future research in empathy. Here the distinction is only made to highlight the fact that

kinds of empathy can make up other kinds of empathy. To make the division clearer I have provided an illustrative table (*Figure 1*).

Kinds of low-level empathy	Kinds of high-level empathy	Kinds of combined empathy
direct emotional empathy	cognitive empathy (CE)	indirect emotional empathy (CE + affect)
empathy for pain	perspective-taking	empathetic perspective taking (other-oriented perspective taking + matching affect)
…	…	…

Figure 1

There is no real disagreement over whether only direct or indirect empathy should count as affective empathy among researchers. Rather, it is not acknowledged enough that the term 'affective empathy' is being used in these different senses and refers to three different kinds of empathy. This problem is present and persistent, but not insolvable.

If what I have argued for is true, then we need a new way of thinking about empathy. In place of the search for something that is *real* empathy, I propose creating a taxonomy of kinds of empathy and empathetic processes that underly these kinds (such as motor mimicry, perspective taking, etc.) and carefully marking down the connections between these phenomena without the assumption that any combination of them is empathy proper. The system of these phenomena and their interrelations could be drawn out as a map that would help researchers keep track of possible distinctions between kinds of empathy. I will call this proposed tool of research an *empathy map.* This will allow us to concentrate on finding out more about *putative* forms of empathy, without spending energy on the unnecessary debate over what empathy as such is. So far, philosophical theories of empathy are often (if not most of the time) proposed as competing with each other. Philosophers try to show that their theory can explain some phenomena that is or can be called empathy that other philosophical views on the nature of empthy cannot account for. A systematic study of different kinds of empathy would make it apparent where narrower terminology is needed to distinguish between phenomena that can be studied separately. Creating an empathy map would also open up the discussion concerning whether some previously distinguished phenomena may be reducible to others. As an example, the question whether direct emotional empathy and emotional contagion have essential differences in their causes, effects, phenomenology, and

underlying processes could arise. If the latter is the case, the terms could be used interchangeably or one of them could be dropped. I will return to this question later in this chapter, when I will give an illustration of what sort of findings can be made using the map.

Having a systematised map of empathy would, thus, direct reasearchers' attention to the problems in terminology that are otherwise likely to be missed. An example of what such a change in thought from providing definitions to mapping empathy would mean, comes from the previously discussed distinction between high-level and low-level empathy. One possible motivation for talking about low-level and high-level empathy has been to argue that only one type of processes are necessary for empathy proper. As has been noted, Coplan argued that low-level processes are both neurally and functionally different from high-level processes and, thus, do not play a role in empathizing proper (2011). When guided by an empathy map, researchers would be interested in the relations between kinds of high-level empathy and kinds of low-level empathy. The discussion concerning what makes up real empathy would add nothing to it, and thus would be dropped. Hence, constructing and using an empathy map would encourage a more productive and friendly discussion between researchers, allowing that different theories of empathy can contribute to each other as long as they don't pretend to cover the whole ground.

Below is a preliminary map of empathy (*Figure 2).* Its contents are suggestive and inconclusive and should be revised as the research guided by the map unfolds. Indeed, one of the main reasons for having a map is that it would help lead researchers' attention to aspects of the conceptual framework that are in need of revision as well as to new research opportunities. In other words, it will lead to a more informed and fruitful research. The map could also be put to good use in medical practices where the lack or deficit of empathy is a concept officially used as a criterion for disorders like sociopathy, autism, and others. Patients are given drugs or forced into institutions for their 'lack of empathy'. It is very important to keep track of the differences between kinds of empathy that one may lack, as the treatment of patients should vary accordingly. It has, indeed, been argued that while autistic persons lack cognitive empathy, they do not lack emotional empathy and sociopaths are remarkably good at cognitive empathy, while they lack emotional empathy (See e.g. Smith 2009). It may be further investigated whether sociopaths are indeed lacking emotional empathy (so that they cannot share the emotions of others) or rather empathetic concern/ sympathy (the ability to care about whatever it is that others feel) and whether the former is depenent on the latter process, so that without the ability for emotional empathy one would

also lack ability for empathetic concern. At least *prima facie* this does not seem to be necessarily the case, but it could very well be. These questions about relations between kinds of empathy will become more salient as the map will be constructed.
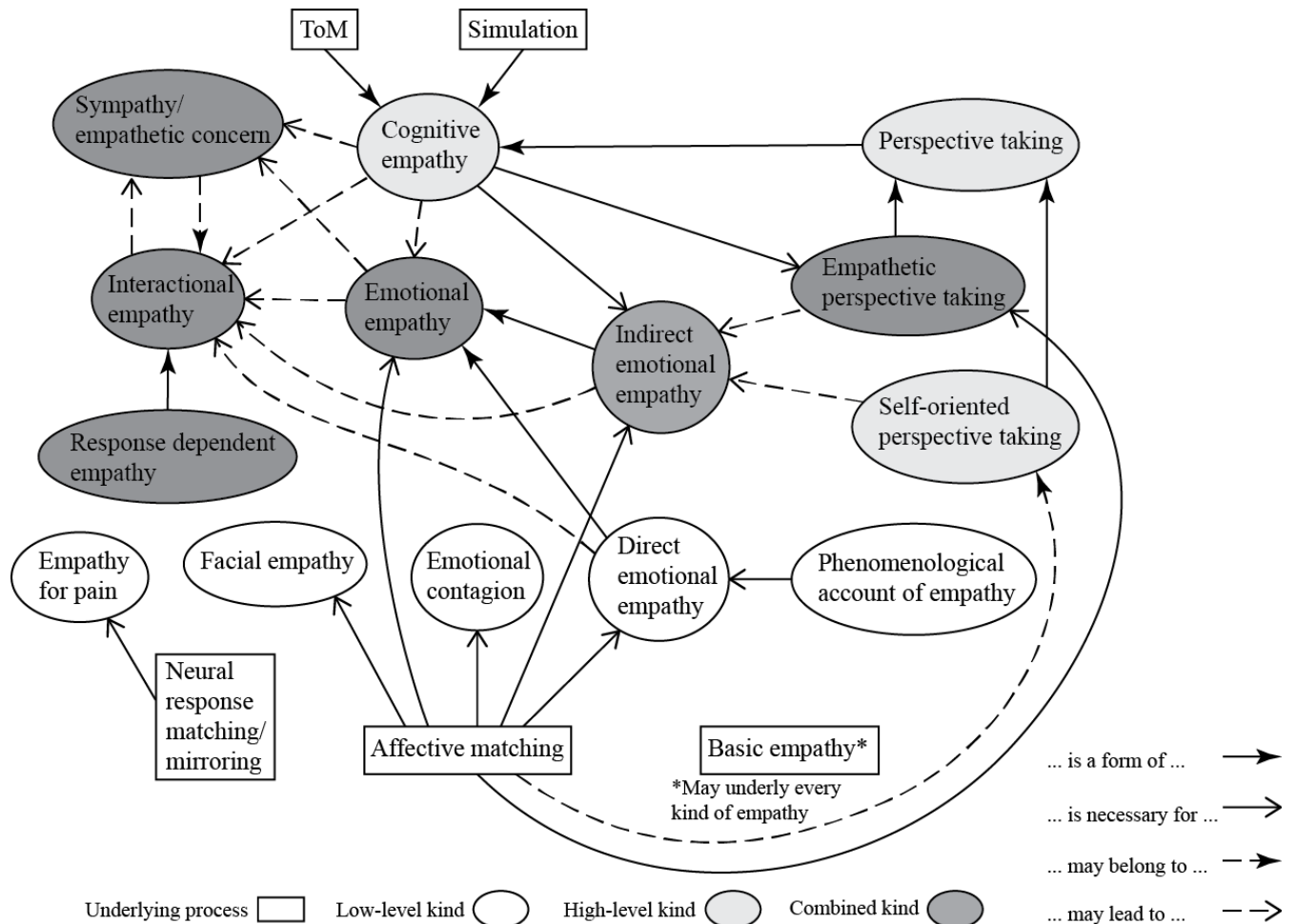

Figure 2

The empathy map must be accompanied by a taxonomy that includes the precise definitions of the kinds of empathy and empathetic processes that are presented on the map so that it is clear which processes are related to which processes and in which way. The taxonomy could be similar to the list of things that have been called empathy in empathy research that I provided in chapter 2.

I have pictured the connections between different phenomena on the preliminary map relying on widely used definitions of these phenomena as listed in chapter 2. However, the main task of the map is to bring our attention to the relationships whose nature or existence is debatable. In the following paragraph I will give an example of where this kind of

discussion could take us and how making use of an empathy map would lead to progress in the field.

I have used a dashed line where one kind of empathy or empathetic process may belong to another kind, but this former kind or process need not be instantiated when a state or phenomenon counts as an instance of the latter, broader kind. I have also used a dashed line where one kind of empathy or empathetic process can lead to having another kind of empathy, but is not necessary for having the former kind of empathy. The dashed line does not designate a dispute over whether one kind *does* play a role in another.[7] So, for example, cognitive empathy may lead to emotional empathy, but does not need to be present for someone to have emotional empathy with another. If a certain kind of empathy can only be had in virtue of other processes at work, a continuous line is drawn between that empathy kind and the latter processes. I have also used a continuous line when one kind of empathy is a form of another kind. This does not mean that the existence of a relationship presented by a continuous line could not be disputed. I will consider below an example of a possible dispute and discoveries that this kind of disputes can lead to.

In definitions of emotional empathy, affective matching is usually given as a necessary condition, that is, one has direct or indirect emotional empathy with another if one's emotion is sufficiently similar to the target person's emotion (this relation is presented on the map with a continuous line). Recall that direct emotional empathy is achieved without the mediation of imagination or any other forms of cognition. Dan Zahavi (2014) has also presented an account of empathy that is achieved without the mediation of cognition (the phenomenological account of empathy). On Zahavi's account, however, this kind of empathy does not require emotional matching. Thus, it might seem that the phenomenological account of empathy and accounts of direct emotional empathy are different accounts of the same phenomenon. Yet, there are important differences. Zahavi's account is meant to explain how we come to understand others and are able to recognize what states others are in. Accounts of emotional empathy, on the other hand, aim to explain our ability to share others' emotions. Thus, the phenomena that the phenomenological account and accounts of emotional empathy try to explain are not the same. Therefore, Zahavi's account does not compete with accounts of direct emotional empathy for a place on the map. But the phenomenological account of empathy may be related to accounts of

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[7] Note, however, that it can be disputed whether even a dashed line should be drawn between some kinds of empathy or empathetic processes. Researchers may well disagree over whether a process *ever* plays a role in a given kind of empathy.

emotional empathy by explaining how a person can come to share another's emotion without cognitively processing what the other feels. If Zahavi can explain how it is that we instantly see what others feel without engaging in cognitive processeing, then his account would also explain how we can *share* these emotions without the involvement of cognitive processes.

This is where we come across the question of whether direct emotional empathy should be equated with emotional contagion. In Smith's paper, where the term is originally introduced, direct emotional empathy is defined as a process that *may* or *may not* include awareness of the source of the empathizer's emotion (Smith 2009: 490-1). Emotional contagion, on the other hand, is defined as a process that does not include the recognition of another as the source of one's emotional state nor clear self-other distinction. Someone who *catches* another's emotion need not be aware that her state is in any way connected to someone else's. While broader in scope than emotional contagion, Smith's use of the term 'direct emotional empathy' seems to conflate two different phenomena, which should be distinguished from each other. On Zahavi's account self-other differentiation is centrally important. The lack of cognitive processing of other's states does not, in any way, imply that the other, as a source of empathy, goes unrecognized. Indeed, one cannot understand that the other is in some state without also identifying that there is an other, different from oneself, to whom this state belongs. If we can see what the other feels without the use of imagination or other cognitive processes, then we should be able to also come to feel what someone else feels without the use of these processes, while still recognizing that we feel *with* or *for* another. This is something quite different from feeling happy because others are happy around us without ever realizing why we feel good.

Thus, it may be more useful to distinguish between direct emotional empathy and emotional contagion, so that the former includes self-other distinction and awareness of the source of one's emotion and the latter does not. This illustrates how progress can be made in empathy research when it focuses on the possible relations between different kinds of empathy and empathetic processes. The purpose of the map is to enable discoveries of this sort.

Some of the kinds that I have depicted on the map (interactional empathy, response dependent empathy, and empathetic perspective taking) will be introduced in the next chapter, where I will re-evaluate Coplan's account and discuss which place should be held on the map by the kind of empathy that Coplan gives an account of.

4.2.1 What to include on the map

One objection that could be made against the usefulness of an empathy map is that we would still need criteria for including phenomena on the map and so the map does not escape the problems that definitions of empathy face. There are many ways in which this problem can be avoided. Firstly, relying on Scarantino's account of plurality of emotion kinds, I have suggested that it would make sense to call a category 'x kind of empathy' if most or all instances of that kind can sensibly be called empathy in English. This does not mean that we will end up including any phenomena whatsoever in the map – as the newly focused research unfolds, there may arise overriding reasons for excluding some phenomena. I will consider one such overriding reason in section 5.4. It may also turn out that some phenomena (and also philosophical theories) are reducible to others. Finally, two accounts of empathy are also competing for a place on the map if they are different accounts of the same phenomenon (same kind of empathy).

However, the map can also be presented in conditional terms, thus leaving aside the thorny problem of criteria of inclusion. Researchers could say that if X (e.g. perspective-taking) is a form of empathy, then it occupies a certain place on the map. But importantly, I have suggested that we should construct an empathy map because showing relations of *putative* forms of empathy on the map is a more fruitful approach than trying to fix necessary and sufficient conditions for empathy. So, independently of what is included on the map and on what bases, the map would be best suited for its task.

5. INTERACTIONAL EMPATHY AND THE PROBLEM WITH SUCCESS

In this chapter, I will illustrate how the map will take shape and how accounts of kinds of empathy can compete for holding certain places on the map by re-evaluating the role of Coplan's narrow definition of empathy in empathy research. I will show that she provides a definition of a kind of empathy that is supposed to play an important role in building our everyday relations. It is the kind of empathy we expect from others in our daily interactions with them. I will, thus, refer to it as *interactional empathy*. I will then identify a problem, that Coplan's account and a number of other philosophical accounts of empathy face if they aim to be accounts of this form of empathy. The philosophical accounts in question are those that take empathy to be something with success conditions, i.e., according to such accounts, one can try and yet fail to be empathetic. The problem that such accounts face is that the success criteria they propose are bound to be unrealistic, given the foundational role that interactional empathy is supposed to play in social interactions and understanding of others. Therefore, Coplan's account fails as an account of interactional empathy and if it is to be included on the map, it holds a different place. Coplan holds that her proposed kind of empathy has an important social role, and I deny that it could have such a role, but I do not deny that her kind of empathy is indeed a kind of empathy. There may be independent reasons for thinking it should not be included in the map, which I will touch upon briefly, but that is a different matter and not a position that I will set out to argue for. Finally, I will propose an alternative account of interactional empathy. The proposal, in short, is that success conditions for interactional empathy must be determined by the person with whom we try to empathize.

5.1. Re-evaluation of Coplan's account of empathy

Traditionally four types of definitions are distinguished: real definitions, nominal definitions, stipulative definitions, and explicative definitions. Real definitions are *discovered* by studying empirically which (natural) kinds people are referring to when they use a given term. To find a real definition of water, we need to discover what the essential properties of water are. Nominal definitions are discovered by studying the usage of a given term. In order to find a nominal definition of water, we need to study what people (often implicitly) take to be the necessary and sufficient conditions for applying the term 'water'. Stipulated definitions are not *discovered* at all. Stipulated definitions fix the necessary and

sufficient conditions for applying a *new* term or new conditions for applying an existing term (without any commitment to agree with the prior uses of the term). We can stipulate a definition for water so that the dark ooze of Twin Earth would be water even if it has nothing in common with water on Earth. Finally, an explicative definition (Carnap 1956) is a hybrid between a nominal and a stipulative definition. An explicative definition respects some previous uses of the term and is stipulative on others. Explicative definitions aim to improve existing terms or are proposed as good things to mean by those terms. (Gupta 2015: 3-8)

Coplan's project cannot be to give a nominal definiton of empathy because usage of the term ʿempathyʾ is too uncoordinated and diverse, nor can it be to give a real definition because there is no single natural kind referred to by ʿempathyʾ. As shown in chapter 3, Coplan is well aware that nominal and real definitions cannot be given of empathy. She also points it out in the paper that when people talk about empathy, they often mean self-oriented perspective taking, which on Coplan's account is only pseudo-empathy. (2011: 15) Coplan is also critical of stipulating new definitions of empathy as I have noted in section 3.1, which makes it implausible that her aim is to give a stipulative definition. This leaves us with the explicative definition as what Coplan is most plausibly aiming to give.

Empathy is achieved on Coplan's account when the empathizer is using the method that will *most reliably* lead her to having experiential understanding of another, or an understanding from the *inside*, as Coplan puts it (2011: 58). Thus the goal of empathy is to lead to an understanding of another. Whatever does that best, counts as empathy for Coplan. Recall that, on Coplan's view, self-oriented perspective taking does not reliably lead to understanding and is, thus, termed pseudoempathy, while other-oriented perspective taking is the most reliable method by which understanding is achieved and together with affective matching is termed empathy (sect. 3.2). Now, assuming that it is an *explicative definition* that Coplan aims to give, there must be a reason why a process that leads to nuanced understanding of another from the *inside* is a good thing to mean by empathy. Coplan gives us two central reasons which have both something to do with how we treat others.

Firstly, we should recognize that we are sometimes incapable of genuine empathy, rather than assuming that we empathize with others, because the latter assumption leads to unsuitable treatment of others. We sometimes think that we understand how the other feels, while we actually only have understanding of how we would feel in another's situation. Therefore, it seems that Coplan's definition is an improvement of what we often take empathy to be in everyday situations. Her suggestion is that it is better to mean other-oriented

perspective taking than self-oriented perspective taking since it leads to more appropriate treatment of others.

> It seems that we understand in the abstract that others are very different from us, but in our day-to-day lives, we lose sight of this fact and generally expect others to be just like we are, which causes us to get them wrong in many different ways. And it is not simply that we fail to understand others' subjective experiences; we often assume that we do understand them, which leads to a new set of problems. (Coplan 2011: 56)

The second set of problems, according to Coplan, is that when we use self-oriented perspective taking rather than other-oriented perspective taking we tend to take care of our own distress rather than the other's distress. That is, self-oriented perspective taking may be a relatively good candidate for being termed empathy but the fact that it does not give rise to the right kind of response, makes it an unsuitable candidate. We expect empathetic behaviour to arise from real empathy, but in the case of pseudoempathy, egoistic behaviour is more likely to follow.

> Imagining what it would be like for me to be in the awful situation you are experiencing makes it harder for me to modulate my emotions. I lose track of the fact that the experiences are actually yours and not mine and end up feeling so upset that I become completely focused on my own pain and what I can do to alleviate it. /…/ These effects are decreased in other-oriented perspective taking because I suppress my self-perspective, which makes it possible for me to accurately represent the distressing emotions as the other's. (Coplan 2011: 57)

To sum up, Coplan's definition of empathy is an improvement of what is often meant by empathy in everyday contexts. On her view other-oriented perspective taking together with affective matching is a better thing to mean by empathy because of the role that empathy is supposed to play in our social lives. Thus, it should be conceived of as an account of interactional empathy understood as a kind of empathy that reliably leads to forming social relationships. Interactional empathy would be a valuable part of the empathy map and plausibly what we mean by empathy in most everyday contexts. In the following section I will discuss a problem that Coplan's account as an account of interactional empathy faces.

5.2 The success condition

In addition to the requirement that the empathizer use the right method, namely other-oriented perspective taking, Coplan's account also requires that the method lead to a right result, namely affective matching. Affective matching means that the empathizer must acquire a mental state that matches a mental state of the target person. Whether or not one engages in other-oriented perspective taking is something that has to do with the empathizer

alone. But whether or not this process leads to affective matching is not entirely in the hands of the empathizer. Nothing about the empathizer can *guarantee* that it does. This depends on which mental states the target person has. Consequently, even if one does everything a good empathizer should (e.g. use the method of other-oriented perspective taking), it is not enough for one to be empathetic. There are also conditions that the target person must meet in order for one to count as empathetic. This is the mark of the philosophical accounts I am concerned with in this chapter. To give another example, let us consider once more the defintion of empathy provided by De Vignemont's and Singer's (2006). On this account, one is empathetic if and only if „(i) one is in an affective state, (ii) this state is isomorphic to another person's affective state; (iii) this state is elicited by the observation or imagination of another person's affective state; (iv) one knows that the other person is the source of one's own affective state"(2006: 435) Each of conditions (i), (iii), and (iv) can be met purely on the level of the individual, i.e., they are conditions that only concern the empathizer.[8] Condition (ii) is different in this respect. For (ii) to be satisfied, the person being empathized with – the target person – must have a certain mental state.

5.2 What is wrong with success

The success conditions for empathy in Coplan's account and in De Vignemont's and Singer's account as well as in other similar accounts (see e.g. Sober & Wilson 1997, Snow 2000, Goldie 2002) is that certain facts pertaining to the mental states of the target person must obtain. The problem with all such accounts is that they fail to specify *which* facts must obtain. To put the problem in another way, we can ask: *when* does one's mental state match a mental state of the target person? In trying to answer this question we seem to be faced with a puzzle.

If we say that matching requires qualitative identity between a mental state of the empathizer and a mental state of the target person, we make the success conditions for empathy practically impossible to meet. Mental states, especially those that are at issue when we expect empathy from others (e.g. the sadness from the loss of a certain loved one), are highly nuanced. It is simply beyond the power of another person to grasp their every aspect. Consequently, if we assume that to be empathetic one must have a mental state that matches or is isomorphic to a mental state of the target person in the sense of having a qualitatively

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[8] It might be pointed out here that, given that knowledge is factive, condition (iv) cannot be met on the level of an individual alone. However, De Vignemont & Singer do not seem to be using the term 'know' in a way that suggests a factive reading. It could be substituted with 'believe', 'think' or 'are aware of' without loss.

identical mental state, one is rarely if ever succesfully empathetic with another. This clashes with the assumption that interactional empathy is necessary for forming various social relations, like love and friendship, with others. But also, and perhaps more importantly, qualitative identity between a mental state of the empathizer and a mental state of the target person *is not needed*. It is just not true that for one to be empathetic with another, one must precisely grasp the other's mental state. We can empathize with someone suffering from depression without knowing *exactly* which flavor of depression that person is suffering from.

However, if we say that qualitative identity between mental states is not needed in order for the empathizer to successfully empathize with the target person, we are faced with the difficulty of explaining what affective matching or isomorphism between mental states consists in. It might be taken to be sameness of tone, so that happiness has the same tonality with euphoria and, thus, matches euphoria. But it may be hard to pinpoint what exactly counts as sameness of tonality.

What the success-based theorist is likely to say is that one's affective state has to be *sufficiently* like the target person's in order to empathize. Spelling out that 'sufficiently' is tricky. A possible approach could be that there need be no general rule, so that in different cases different facts will make the empathizer's state count as sufficiently like the target person's state, depending on the target emotion and other circumstances. Sometimes sameness of valence will suffice; other times a closer match will be needed, yet other times the states may match in other senses than in similarity. In the following section I will propose a basis for deciding what is sufficient in any given context in interactional empathizing.

5.3 Response-dependent success criterion

The above puzzle arises when we treat the target person in our theory as being relevant for empathizing only in being a subject of certain facts that are relevant for successful empathizing. This is the move that required us to specify what the relevant facts are. And, as the puzzle suggests, there doesn't seem to be a satisfactory way of doing that. In the following section I will propose that in case of interactional empathy, the solution is to assign a more substantial role to the target person rather than treating the target person as a mere container of affective states.

I will first provide some examples to show why it makes sense to assing an active role to the target person in determining what amount of affective matching, if any, is required in

any given situation for successful interactional empathizing. Consider mild sadness in response to someone's deep grief. Does this count as empathy? Well, it may be nothing close to empathy even though these affects share in tonality, if the empathizer has a very close elationship with the person who is grieving. The target person would plausibly not feel understood by a close friend, if that friend only felt mildly sad over her loss. She would not consider that friend to be anything close to empathetic. Yet, if a distant acquaintance felt mildly sad about the target person's grief, she might feel understood and consider the acquaintance to be empathetic. But the closeness of relatioship between the empathizer and the target person does not always decide the matter, either. We may feel that our lover, and friends, and parents need to feel about and react to our situation differently in order to feel that they truly understand. There seems to be no way of determining the intensity of affect required for empathy, without considering how the target person feels about this.

Another example demonstrates how sometimes no matching of affect is required for true understanding. Imagine a person who is afraid of flying but regularly travels by plane to not let the fear control her way of life. Intuitevely, she might feel understood by a close friend if that friend does not feel concern or anxiety (although the target person is very much having these feelings at that moment), but some degree of happiness and pride when entering the plane with her. Yet, if a stranger sat next to her in the plane and felt worried for her, she might also feel that the stranger is an understanding and empathetic person. It would be highly patronizing to postulate that, regardless of the reactions of the person with flying phobia, one of these mental states is in fact appropriate to match against her fear as she enters the plane and the other is not. The accounts that take affective matching to be a success-condition for empathy do poorly at explaining why it is that we can feel misunderstood even if there is affective-matching in some sense. These theories have also trouble to account for the different degrees of affective matching required not only across different situations but also in essentially similar situations.

What this shows is that it is simply not the job of an empathy theorist to say which mental states of the empathizer match against the mental states of the target person. This is something only the *target person* can decide. It is for her to decide how precise our understanding must be and whether sharing her affect amounts to an understanding of her. My proposal is, thus, that the success conditions for empathy are set by the target person. I will refer to this as *the response dependent success (RDS) criterion* of empathizing and the kind of empathy that meets this criterion *response dependent empathy*. The idea is that a

necessary condition for empathizing with someone (in this sense) is that the empathizer has a mental state that is judged or felt by the target person as a state that amounts to an understanding of her. In other words, she must respond affirmatively to the empathizer's mental states. This condition should be seen as a specification of the success conditions in theories like that of De Vignemont's and Singer's or Coplan's (if they aim to be accounts of interactional empathy).[9] Thus, both accounts could be modified (by adding the RDS criterion as a detector of when affective matching or isomorphism is achieved) to be accounts of response dependent empathy without other changes made to the accounts' existing conditions for successful empathizing. Adopting the RDS criterion does, however, add an extra requirement for successful empathizing – the target person must have some basic mindreading abilities. I will return to this point later in this chapter.

An interesting consequence of the RDS criterion is that it removes the need to know all the facts about the target person and her mental states, in order to tell whether empathizing has been successful. Finding out what the criteria are that the target person has for an appropriate mental state may well be a matter of trial and error, for both the empathizer *and* the target person. Indeed, I might not know which mental state I take to be necessary for someone to understand me, when someone is trying to empathize with me, until the other person actually is in that state. The job of the empathizer is just to do whatever it takes to elicit the right response from the target person. And the job of the target person is to check whether the attitude the empathizer has is appropriate or not. This proposal is quite controversial as it gives the target person pretty much unlimited control over a normative fact, i.e. whether a certain response is appropriate or not. However, there is a broader ethical rationale behind it: empathizing with another's feelings is in a certain sense meddling with the other's most private stuff, like physical intimacy. And, like for physical intimacy, it seems that the individual in this area is sovereign—even arbitrariness is allowed in this case. (Refusal to have sex can be based on all sorts of arbitrary reasons, and yet it is sufficient to make an action impermissible.)

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[9] There are accounts of other kinds of empathy whose function is not to provide true understanding of the target person. If affective matching is postulated as a necessary component of such kinds, then what amounts to affective matching is likely not determined by the target-person's response. The aim of most accounts of emotional empathy, for example, is to explain how we come to *share* others' emotions, not how we come to have true understanding of others. Thus, facts about the empathizer and the target person which determine whether the emotion felt by the empathizer is, indeed, similar (enough) to the target person's emotion, will plausibly be a suitable basis for deciding whether affective matching is achieved. What would be *enough* on these accounts, however, is beyond the scope of this thesis.

At this point, a clarification is in order. By target person's *response* I do not mean a behavioral nor a vocal response. Rather, I mean that the target person must feel or judge that she is understood. Put more colloquially, she must feel or judge that the empathizer is on the same page with her. This feeling is not something that one can choose to have or not to have, it is something that happens or does not happen. However, it is important to note that my feeling of being understood, *alone*, does not quarantee that the empathizer has response dependent empathy towards me. I may be deceived into thinking that the other person is feeling what I am feeling. Therefore, it is important that the empathizer is in fact sincerely, without ulterior motive, trying to achieve understanding of the target person. However, it may not be so important that she uses a specific method to come to have an appropriate affective state. Coplan argues that if I come to share another person's emotions by way of self-oriented perspective taking, that is, by asking myself what it would be like for me to be in another's situation, I will, at best, end up being pseudo-empathetic with that person. That is because self-oriented perspective taking is not a reliable way to achieve understanding of another – a more reliable way is to think of what this other kind of person, different from me, would feel in her situation. It is not obvious that the reliablity of the process by which something is produced adds value to that thing (see e.g. Zagzebski 2003). To illustrate this, Linda Zagzebski claims that a good cup of coffee which is made by a coffee machine that regularly makes good cups of coffee has no more value than an equally good cup of coffee that is made by a machine that mostly makes bad coffee. One might provide counterexamples to this claim. A copy of Wassily Kandinsky's abstract painting is not as valuable as the original. So, in case of artwork, the way it came to be is relevant to its value, while in case of other things, like a cup of coffee, it does not have to be. I do not intend to solve the question of which camp empathy falls into, here. But I think it is worth at least acknowledging that it is not obvious that there is only one route to empathy. In fact, when I expect a dear friend to empathize with me and she reacts to my situation in a way that makes me feel understood, it is not intuitive to think that she has still failed to empathize with me if she is, indeed, in relevant respects very similar to me and came to share my feelings by way of self-oriented perspective taking.

Response dependent empathy also requires that the person who is being empathized with has the ability for *some* empathy – otherwise she will just never recognize that others are trying to be empathtetic with her, and thus, she will never respond affirmatively. The target person, too, must have whatever low-level and high-level empathetic abilities that

underlie relational empathy. Most of the time, in simple cases where nuanced understanding is not needed for interaction, we do not need very advanced social abilities. People who do not suffer from any strong deficit of social competence, are generally not blind to others' general mental states (like sadness, tiredness, happiness, etc.). If we get it wrong, the mistakes can easily be corrected through communication. If I think that my friend is mad at me, but he is really just tired, he can easily correct me when I confront him about it. I will call this mindreading ability *basic mindreading*. In more complicated situations, when the target person expects a nuanced mental state from the empathizer, more effort is required both from the target person and the empathizer. However, the 'default predicament' is that we more or less feel that (most) others can understand us. We do not require a lot from strangers to feel that they count as empathetic or understanding and normally we can detect these general responses that we expect from them with ease. We may, indeed, require a lot more from people that we are in close relations with. This may make it harder for our close ones to empathize with us, but they are also in a privileged position for they know us much better than other people. Thus, in this case, too, it plausibly does not happen awfully often that we feel misunderstood, if the empathizer puts effort into trying to understand us. I will elaborate on these issues in section 5.5 where I will discuss possible criticism of my proposed account of interactional empathy.

5.4 The high standards problem

An important improvement of this view in comparison to the affective-matching views is that to know whether the empathizer has been successful, we do not need to have the viewpoint of an omiscient being. We need the viewpoint of the target person of empathy or her confirmation. And to be able to empathize we do not need to imagine being like the other in all minor details as some theories such as Coplan's suggest (see also Goldie 2002). Indeed, Coplan tells us that empathy is very difficult to achieve, while on the other hand she also suggests that it should have an important role to play in our social lives and building good relationships. Peter Goldie has proposed a very similar account of empathy to Coplan's account in his monograph „Emotions":

> A distinctive feature of empathy is *centrally imagining*, which means knowing and adopting the target person's psychological traits (and also psychological traits that are not obviously psychological, like being short). In addition to this the empathizer cannot have these traits consciously in mind, just as the target person is not reflecting on her psychological traits at all times. /---/ Thus, empathizing with another is nothing like contagion—nothing like catching an

> emotion in the way one catches a cold, for these necessary conditions for empathy are not necessary for, or even typical of, contagion; /---/. (2002: 198)

Later Goldie has argued that this kind of empathy is impossible to achieve due to practical reasons but also, and more importantly, because it is conceptually impossible (2011).[10] The practical problem is that which is also acknowledged by Coplan. Namely, it is just very hard to achieve empathy in this sense. But Goldie argues that it is also a conceptual impossibility because being an agent does not mean to be a container of mental states, but rather having an active role in realizing these states, in deciding what the states are that one is in, and committing to these states. Therefore, anyone trying to empathize with another in this sense would fail, for it is partly up to the target person to decide what it is that she feels, and this decision cannot be made in her stead. Thus, we can never really achieve other-oriented perspective taking (or in Goldies terminology empathetic perspective taking). This is an interesting point related to the question about what phenomena might be excluded from the map and what sorts of questions/disagreements about empathy are allowed by the empathy map. One question left open by the map is whether candidate kinds of empathy need to *actually exist* in order to have a place on the map. If Goldie is right in thinking that empathetic perspective-taking is conceptually impossible, then we should be *local eliminativists* or *local error theorists* about at least this kind of empathy. And hence, if Coplan's account is relevantly similar to Goldie's, it too may have to be excluded from the map.

Even if we only consider the practical difficulties, however, it is apparent that Coplan's account of empathy cannot play the essential role in our social relations that interactional empathy should because of the high standards that need to be met in order to count as empathizing. We would simply be able to empathize with people too rarely for it to have any important role in our actual relationships. If we want to learn about the kind of empathy that does have that role, then we need a different account of empathy.

5.4 Possible objections and replies

I will now consider some critique that could befall my view. First, someone might argue that if A is trying to be empathetic towards X and Y, who are identical in all respects except their standards for counting other people as empathetic, so that Y is more demanding, A could be empathtetic towards X and not Y while what goes on in A's mind is the same.

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[10] Goldie refers to this kind of empathy as simply empathy in the above citation, but calls it empathetic perspective taking in his 2011 paper.

This is true and should be seen as a merit of this account of empathy rather than as a fault in it, for we do expect different reactions to our feelings from different people depending on what relations we are in with them. Nevertheless, it might be important to note that I am not talking about independent standards for empathy that people could choose to have, so that some people would choose to demand more from others while some people would choose to be satisfied with less. Rather they have to have the feeling of being understood. They cannot just start expecting more of people when they actually already feel being understood. Of course people can lie about their feelings or deny what they feel but this will not erase the fact that the right sort of response is already there. So, in short, to have higher "standards"[11] for empathy, people need to feel differently.

A second objection that someone could make to RDS criterion of response dependent empathy is that it requires that the person that we are trying to be empathetic with is aware of it. For example, we could not empathize in this sense with someone in the room that we see but who does not see us. I do not think that this poses a problem for my theory. For response dependent empathy this could very well be the case. It is a face-to-face encounter or otherwise interaction based empathy[13]. This does not mean that we cannot be empathetic with people whom we do not encounter. Given that response-dependent empathy is not the only sense in which we can have empathy and other phenomena can count as empathy in other contexts, it is *only* response dependent empathy that we cannot have with people that are not present or do not interact with us.

Finally, by allowing that there is no single method for successfully empathizing it may be argued that I leave a loophole in my theory. For if someone does nothing at all (and is not willingly ignoring the target person), the target person might mistakenly interpret this as a willing unresponsiveness which she takes to be the right sort of attitude on the assumed empathizer's part. Thus, because of a crack in communication, the target person responds affirmatively and makes that person (who did nothing at all and did not even think of the target person) empathetic. I have touched upon this matter above, but I want to stress it once more that the feeling of being understood is not meant to be a sufficient condition on my account of interactional empathy. The empathizer must be trying to do something to achieve

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[11] Quotation marks are used to stress the fact that the term 'standards' is not used in the ordinary sense, here. The standards in question are not the kind that people could willingly choose to lower or raise.

[13] Response dependent empathy can be reached in exchange of letters, etc. So while it may be most common in face-to-face encounters, all that is really required is interaction.

affective matching or understanding of another person. It is up to the target's feelings to 'welcome' or not such efforts, but the effort has to be there.

Another side of this problem, however, is that it is likely that there are cases where the target person simply makes a mistake in mindreading and assumes that the empathizer is having the sort of affective states that are appropriate to the target person's situation, while in fact, these affective states are not present in the empathizer, although the effort is present.

A possible solution is to require that the target person get her mindreading sufficiently right, so that *at least* the (emotional) state that she reccognizes as being present in the empathizer, is really present. As suggested above, in most cases we do not expect a very specifically nuanced (emotional) response to our situation so a basic mindreading ability is sufficient to get it right. This is a *low standard* for successful empathizing. Normally, the target person does not have to put themselves in the other's shoes, often she might not even need to engage in any conscious cognitive processing (we can just see that the other is happy, sad, carefree, etc and confirm that it is a good response to our situation). Therefore, differently from empathetic perspective taking, this is easy to achieve for a normal person and this kind of empathy can play a central role in building relationships. Indeed, the empathizer also needs to have basic mindreading abilities, or she has very low chances of arriving to an emotion that may be confirmed as the right kind by the target person. Thus, interactional empathy, the kind that we build our relationships on, happens in collaborations and requires basic mindreading abilities from both ends. Interactional empathy is not done alone.

However, if the target person suffers from some empathy deficit disorder like an autism spectrum disorder, it will be harder for her to empathize with others in this interactional sense. And it will be harder for others to have interactional empathy with her, for often she will not be in a position to confirm that others understand her. This might leave an autistic person confused about whether others understand them just as they may be confused about whether they understand others. Often, however, patients with high-functioning autism are able to overcome their deficits with the help of different coping mechanisms, such as highly intellectual decoding of others' expressions and eye movements, to the point where many autistic patients with high intelligence get misdignosed because their symptoms are hard to discover (van Elst, et al. 2013, K. Koelkebeck, et al. 2014). Another coping mechanism for people with an autism spectrum disorder is expressing

themselves very directly and requesting the same precision of speech from others, which is also used in therapy to achieve better communication with the patient:

> Recognizing ASD as a basic disorder also implies that the doctors and therapists should adopt their own language and way of communication to the diagnosis. Based on own experiences, the language used should be less metaphoric and more straightforward and explicit to avoid further misunderstandings. (van Elst, et al. 2013: 194)

Thus, it is possible for us to, at least, engage in interactional empathy with people with a high-functioning variant of autistic spectrum disorder, though it may take considerably more effort, both from the empathizer and the target person, than it normally does.

5.5 Conclusive remarks

In this chapter I have examined a problem that a version of empathy theories face. Namely, many accounts of empathy such as proposed by De Vignemont & Singer, Goldie, and Coplan suggest that for successful empathizing, the empathizer's affective states must match with those of the target person. I have argued that a challenge that all such accounts need to overcome is to provide a satisfying definition of affective matching. I have shown that previous attempts to do this have not been convincingly conclusive. I then proposed a solution to this problem, in the case of interactional empathy, by introducing the response dependent success (RDS) criterion. According to my view, what makes the empathizer's affective state appropriate in interactional empathy is the target person's reaction. I have argued that this success criterion does not apply to empathizing *in general*, that is, one could be empathetic in some other sense without the RDS criterion being met. However, interaction-based empathy, the kind of empathy that we expect from others when we interact with them on daily basis, I have argued, is response dependent empathy.

In conclusion, there are two reasons to include the response dependent empathy in the taxonomy of empathy. First arises from how things are and the second from how things should be. The former reason is that in everyday life we sometimes count other people as empathetic only if *we* confirm that they feel as we do. We are not expecting them to come to feel *exactly* as we do, perhaps not even in a similar way. But there is a point at which we feel that we are being understood. That is the point at which interactional or response-dependent empathy is achieved. The RDS criterion explains how we can determine when someone succeeds in empathizing with another without having omniscient knowledge of that other. It also overcomes the high-standards problem that many accounts of empathy

face, namely the problem of demanding too much from the empathizer. This, in turn, explains how empathy can play a vital role in forming relationships and building trust.

The second reason to include the response dependent empathy in the empathy taxonomy comes from how things ought to be. It has been assumed that the empathizer counts as empathtetic if she does certain things in the right way. The RDS criterion defends the target-person from being patronized. No-one can come and say that they have tried enough and are now empathetic with the other person if that person does not feel that they are.

6. CONCLUSION

The research of empathy has been overshadowed by an ongoing debate over what to count as empathy. The goal of my thesis is twofold. Firstly, my aim was to carefully examine Coplan's narrow conceptualization approach to solving terminological issues in empathy research. Coplan's proposal is that since the things called empathy are not relevantly similar to be instances of one phenomenon, we should distinguish *empathy proper* from other processes that are being called empathy. In my thesis, I have argued that there is an alternative way to create a clear conceptual framework that distinguishes between the distinct phenomena that get called empathy and that it is the better way. I have proposed an empathy map as the best tool for carrying out future research in the field. Secondly, I have re-evaluted the role of Coplan's account in empathy research. With this I have illustrated the principles on which the map could be shaped.

Coplan argues that the dominating approach in empathy research is to use an umrella term of empathy which allows many different processes to be called empathy, thus risking with conflating and confusing importantly different phenomena that deserve to be distinctively coceptualized. I have shown that, in fact, most researchers make distinctions between different empathetic processes and that by carefully analysing the ways empathy research is being carried out, we can differentiate between three approaches to narrowing down the research object of empathy research. I have called these approaches the kinds view, the construct view, and the narrow view. On the kinds view there are different subspecies of empathy, which do not make up one thing that is empathy and on the construct view there are distinct empathetic processes that make up one multilayered thing that is empathy. The narrow view is the one that Coplan advocates. I have considered two objections that Coplan makes against using either of the first two approaches. The first objection is that specific terms that refer to forms of empathy or empathetic processes are not uniformly used. The second objection is that the things that get called empathetic processes or kinds of empathy do not have anything essential in common and calling them instances of empathy endorses the view that they do. I argued that a kinds view of empathy is not subject to the latter objection. By showing that emotion research and memory research are relevantly similar to empathy research, I have suggested that Scarantino's account of plurality of emotion kinds is adaptable to empathy research and that we can call a category 'x kind of empathy' if most

or all instances of that kind can sensibly be called empathy in English. But this way of thinking about kinds of empathy does not presume that all instances of all kinds of empathy share something essentially. I have argued that the kinds view of empathy is plausibly a better way to continue empathy research than adopting the narrow view. I have suggested that the problem of lacking uniformity in the use of specific terminology can be avoided by creating a systematised taxonomy of kinds of empathy and empathetic processes and by presenting these phenomena and their interrelations on a map that would help researchers keep track of possible distinctions and interrelations between kinds of empathy. I called this tool an empathy map. I gave examples of how using the empathy map would lead to progress in the field and provided a preliminary map that could be altered and shaped by future research. Finally, in the last part of the thesis I returned to Coplan's account of empathy to examine its real role in the research. I argued that Coplan is plausibly giving an explicative definition of empathy. Coplan shows that her definition of empathy is an improvement of what is usually meant by empathy in everyday contexts (self-oriented perspective taking) in virtue of leading to a more proper treatment of others. Thus, her account should be conceived of as an account of interactional empathy, understood as a kind of empathy that reliably leads to forming social relationships and fluent social interaction. Many researchers would disagree over whether this should be the function of empathy and since there is no independent ground for deciding what the function of empathy should be, I have proposed that we should abandon the efforts to define empathy proper and that we should not reserve the usage of the term to just one kind of empathy. However, interactional empathy would be a valuable part of the empathy map, and in the last part of the thesis I have assessed whether Coplan's definition of empathy can account for it. I have cast light on two problems that many accounts, including Coplan's account, face if they are aimed to be accounts of interactional empathy. The first worry is that they require that the empathizer and the target person have isomorphic emotional states, but fail to give basis for deciding when it is achieved. Additionally, accounts that require isomorphism of affective states or affective matching, do poorly at explaining why we can feel misunderstood even if affective matching is achieved. The second worry is that these accounts set too high standards for successful empathizing, thus making it impossible for it to have any central role in our social lives. I have suggested that these problems can be overcome if a more active role is assigned to the target person. Namely, I have suggested that rather than treating the target person as a container of facts that makes it the case that empathy is achieved, the target person should be given a say in whether someone is empathetic with her. I have argued that whether

interactional empathy is achieved or not depends on whether the target person feels or judges that the empathizer has sufficient understanding of her. It is for her to decide how precise someone's understanding of her must be and whether sharing her affect amounts to an understanding of her. I have suggested that in most cases we do not expect a very nuanced understanding from others. Rather, nuanced understanding is expected only in special cases and normally from people with whom we have close relationships. Thus, the default predicament is that people with normal social competence usually feel understood by others. And therefore, the standard that needs to be met for successfully empathizing is a low standard. Coplan's account, however, should be revised, if its aim is to be an account of interactional empathy, or otherwise, it holds a different place on the map. In this final chapter I have provided an illustration of how the empathy map may be shaped and how accounts of empathy can compete for certain places on the map.

In conclusion, I have defended a plurality of kinds view of empathy. Most contemporary articles that deal with empathy begin with a remark about the vagueness of the term and a proposal for a working definition of empathy or of some subspecies of empathy. This has created the impression that we have a vast amount of competing accounts of empathy, which in turn has become an obstruction in the way of fruitful communication and cooperation between researchers in the field. The central aim of my thesis was to show that the accounts are not competing accounts, but can complete each other and that a more productive and friendly research should be and can be achieved.

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Abstract
From Defining Empathy to Mapping Empathy

Empathy has gained a lot of attention over the last decades in philosophical, psychological, neuroscientific, and medical research and this interest is constantly growing. However, the research is overshadowed by a long ongoing debate over what empathy is and an agreement does not seem forthcoming. The dissertation is a careful analysis of possible options for overcoming the terminological issues with an emphasis on a critical assessment of a solution provided by Amy Coplan. This solution is to avoid conflation and confusion of phenomena that have important differences, by defining empathy narrowly. The dissertation is a criticism of Coplan's approach and a defence of the view that there is a plurality of kinds of empathy. I argue that the best way forward for empathy research is to create a systematised taxonomy of kinds of empathy and empathetic processes and that the best tool for this purpose is a map that presents the kinds of empathy and their interrelations. I have called this tool an empathy map. The thesis includes a preliminary empathy map and illustrative examples of how the map could take shape, lead to progress in empathy research and provide better understanding of the relevance of different types of empathy in diagnosing mental disorders and in everyday social relations.

Resümee
Empaatia defineerimisest empaatia kaardistamiseni

Empaatia on saanud viimastel aastakümnetel palju tähelepanu nii filosoofias, psühholoogias, neuroloogias kui meditsiinis ning huvi empaatia vastu kasvab jätkuvalt. Laiahaardelist uurimistööd varjutab aga uurijatevahelise üksmeele puudumine küsimuses, mis nähtust või nähtuseid tuleks empaatiaks pidada. Teesis analüüsin võimalikke lahendusi terminoloogilistele probleemidele empaatiaalases uurimistöös rõhuasteusega Amy Coplan'i pakutud lahendusel. Viimase järgi tuleks oluliselt erinevate protsesside ühtesulatamise ja omavahel segiajamise vältimiseks empaatia kitsalt defineerida. Minu tees kritiseerib Coplan'i lahendust ning kaitseb vaadet, et on mitmeid erinevaid empaatia liike, mis ei ole ühe protsessi osad, vaid erladiseisvad protsessid. Näitan, et edaspidine empaatiaalane uurimistöö peaks lähtuma süstemaatilise taksonoomia koostamisest, mis sisaldab erinevaid empaatia liike ja empaatilisi protsesse. Pakun välja, et parim tööriist niisuguse uurimistöö läbiviimiseks oleks kaart, millele kantakse erinevad empaatia liigid ning nende omavahelised suhted. Ma nimetan seda tööriista empaatiakaardiks. Tees sisaldab esialgset empaatiakaarti ning illustratiivseid näiteid sellest, kuidas võiks kaart kujuneda ning aidata empaatiaalast uurimistööd edasi viia. Samuti toon teesis näiteid sellest, kuidas empaatiakaardi koostamine ja kasutamine võimaldaksid paremat mõistmist sellest, mis rolli mängivad erinevad empaatia liigid näiteks psüühika- ja käitumishäirete diagnoosimisel ning normaalsetes sotsiaalsetes suhetes.

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